HOW ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS REINFORCE OR DETER HOSTILE

WORKPLACE BEHAVIORS IN THE MILITARY: A GROUNDED THEORY

APPROACH

by

Christina Staebell

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Organizational culture is the main predictor of hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Psychological safety, inclusive workplace culture, and bystander intervention all show promising effects on deterring hostile workplace behaviors. No research exists that explores military members' perceptions of how the military organizational culture influences the presence of these constructs and how these constructs influence one another and hostile workplace behaviors. The following grounded theory study explored military members' perceptions of how the military organizational culture influences the occurrence of hostile workplace behaviors. The role of psychological safety, inclusive workplace culture, and bystander intervention on hostile workplace behaviors in the military were also explored. This study's findings indicate that military members perceive that the military organizational culture influences hostile workplace behaviors through its level of support towards and among all members. A supportive culture was perceived to reinforce psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention, and these constructs, in conjunction with a supportive culture, were perceived to deter hostile workplace behaviors. In contrast, lack of support and biased treatment were perceived to deter psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention, and the absence of these constructs, along with a lack of support, were perceived to reinforce hostile workplace behaviors. The implications of this study's findings suggest that focusing on the military values of caring for and supporting other military members will increase psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention while decreasing hostile workplace behaviors.

Keywords: Discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying, psychological safety, bystander intervention, inclusive workplace, hostile workplace.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, who is my joy and my light.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Franco and Dr. Ogburn, for their help and

support along this journey.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

In 2020, the EEOC estimated relief for race-based and sex-based discrimination was $74.8 million and 153.2 million, respectively; there was also an estimated 106.1 million in litigation payouts (EEOC, 2021 a). These hostile workplace behaviors also cost organizations millions in lost profits, opportunities, recruitment, and training due to decreased morale, motivation, and increased turnover (Escartin, 2017; Hayes et al., 2020; Lassiter et al., 2021; Naseer & Raja, 2021; Tuckey et al., 2022). Though the profound impacts of hostile workplace behaviors on the organization, team, and individual are well documented, these behaviors persist. Significant efforts have been made through implementing federal and state laws, organizational policy, and organizational initiatives to curtail hostile workplace behavior (Buchanan et al., 2014; EEOC, 2021; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). Despite the significant time and resources dedicated to minimizing the occurrence and impact of hostile workplace behavior, their effects on employees, organizations, and society remain (Daniels et al., 2022; Lassiter et al., 2021; Yu, 2023).

Most of the efforts to manage hostile workplace behaviors focus on individual-level interventions that aim to change individual behaviors but fail to recognize the macro-level factors that are promoting and maintaining such behaviors (Hodgins et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013; Perry et al., 2021). The following research will explore how organizational factors of inclusive workplace culture, bystander intervention, and psychological safety impact the occurrence of hostile workplace behaviors in a military setting.

Background

Hostile workplace behavior in this study encompasses workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Though these behaviors are distinct from one another, they are all forms of workplace hostility, and all erode the organizational culture; therefore, for this study, these three behaviors will be explored under the umbrella of hostile workplace behavior. Hostile workplace behaviors have profound adverse impacts on organizations. The EEOC (2020) estimated a cost of 153.2 million to organizations for discrimination cases in 2020 alone and an additional 106.1 million in litigation payouts. These numbers do not consider the millions in lost profits incurred from decreased productivity and morale and increased turnover. (EEOC, 2021**;** Hayes et al., 2020; Tuckey et al., 2022).

Many interventions have been implemented to reduce the occurrence and impact of hostile workplace behaviors, such as implementing training, policy, and formal and informal complaint channels (Buchanan et al., 2014; EEOC, 2021; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). These interventions, however, have shown limited efficacy in reducing occurrences of hostile workplace behaviors due to their inability to influence organizational culture (Hodgins et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013; Perry et al., 2021). Research suggests that hostile workplace behaviors are best conceptualized as organizational-level issues rather than individual ones (Brown et al., 2020; Hodgins et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013; Latham, 2020; Perry et al., 2021; Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021; Tuckey et al., 2022; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021).

The work environment theory of hostile workplace behaviors posits that psychosocial work environment characteristics are precursors for hostile workplace behaviors and serve to propagate them (Tuckey et al., 2022). Workplace cultures normalize a culture of mistreatment and abuse of power through hostile interactions

among employees and between leadership and subordinates. Climates that encourage dominance, competition, masculinity, and conformity can create an environment of unhealthy rivalry, distrust, conflict, and a lack of empathy between employees rather than cooperation and respect (Berdahl et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2020; Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021). Not only do these workplace cultures experience increased occurrences of hostile workplace behaviors, but employees within these workplace cultures are also unlikely to challenge these behaviors as speaking up could reflect poorly on them; they may be perceived as causing issues or being too sensitive to fit within the established office culture (Buchanan et al., 2014; De Souza & Schmader, 2022; Hodgins et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2021; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021).

Rather than focusing on attempts to "fix problem people," additional efforts must be made to influence the organizational culture in which problematic behaviors can persist or be encouraged. Research suggests that to make organizational changes, an organizational culture must be present that supports and reinforces those changes at all levels of the organization (Hayes et al., 2020; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). Instead of policing "bad behavior" of problematic individuals, leaders should promote an organizational culture in which hostile workplace behaviors would be inconducive to the workplace culture.

Organizational culture can either promote hostile workplace behaviors or protect against them. Organizational factors such as dominance, competition, masculinity, and conformity can encourage workplace hostility (Berdahl et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2020; Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021). However, there are also organizational culture factors that can prevent and discourage such hostile workplace behaviors. Three organizational factors

that show strong efficacy in discouraging hostile workplace behaviors are inclusive

workplace cultures (Lee & Sunny, 2021; Leicht-Deobald et al., 2021; Moon &

Christensen, 2020; Triana et al., 2015; Ways et al., 2022), bystander intervention

(Einarsen et al., 2020; Ng et al.,2022; Sanderson, 2020; Stuart & Sz, 2021; Dover, 2020;

Escartin, 2017; Kuntz & Searle, 2023; Lassiter et al., 2021), and psychological safety

culture (Edmundson, 2019; O'Donovan &McAuliffe, 2020; Sanderson, 2020; Sherf et al.,

2021).

Inclusive Workplace Culture

The first organizational culture factor that promotes hostile workplace behaviors

is the fallacy of the need to conform to the prototypical worker (Hewin, 2003). This

fallacy describes the tendency for group members to attribute increased value, trust, and

respect to group members who are seen to be the prototypical workers. At the same time,

non-prototypical employees are less liked, have less influence, and are less trusted than

their prototypical counterparts (Glambek et al., 2020). Targets of discrimination,

Harassment, and bullying are most often targeted due to being different from the majority

group members (prototypical workers) in some way (Buchanan et al., 2014; Stuart

&Szeszeran,2021). Differences can be based on demographic factors but can also be

found in factors such as personality, demeanor, or beliefs. They do not conform to the

status quo and, as a result, may be viewed as less desirable to work with or less

competent (Glambek et al., 2020; Moon & Christensen, 2020). In these environments,

there is a lack of a culture of inclusion. Inclusive cultures are characterized by valuing

people's differences while creating a sense of belonging (Shores et al., 2011; Shores et

al., 2018). Inclusive cultures see the strength and value in individual differences and

encourage people to be their authentic selves at work rather than attempt to conform to the prototypical characteristics of people who most commonly or historically have worked in their profession (Perry et al., 2021; Randel et al., 2018; Shores et al., 2018).

Optimal Distinctiveness Theory

Optimal distinctiveness theory (ODT) creates a framework for an inclusive workplace culture. ODT is the theory that the two most basic human social needs are the need to belong and the need to be distinct (unique) (Brewer, 1991). A person is optimally distinct when these two competing needs are balanced (Brewer, 1991). Organizations that only emphasize belonging (commonalities) without regard for distinctiveness create an environment of assimilation and redundancy in which individuals are not encouraged to offer new perspectives, resulting in a limited scope of ideas and the exclusion of people who do not conform (Shores et al., 2018). Conversely, when organizations only emphasize distinctiveness without this being balanced by belonging, this can create a perception of otherness or tokenism in which people's unique attributes are extorted to benefit the organization; however, they are not treated as an insider (belonging). When people are treated with respect for their differences (uniqueness) and treated as valuable insiders (belonging), they are less likely to be responded to in exclusionary ways, such as discrimination, harassment, and bullying (Brown et al., 2021).

Bystander Intervention

Policy against workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying is only effective as people are willing to call out these behaviors when they occur. Typically, the responsibility for doing so is placed on the victim of these behaviors; however, research suggests that this rarely occurs (Buchanan et al., 2014; Cesario et al., 2018). Rather than

conceptualizing hostile workplace behaviors as a dyad interaction between perpetrator and target, a more recent understanding of how these behaviors persist acknowledges that bystanders play an active role in influencing the outcomes of these occurrences (Einarsen, 2020; Sanderson, 2020). The bystander effect describes when bystanders fail to act in a pro-social manner to help those in need (Einarsen, 2020). Seminal work by Latane and Darley (1968) describes three psychological processes that result in the bystander effect: Diffusion of responsibility, evaluation apprehension, and pluralistic ignorance.

Psychological Processes of the Bystander Effect

Diffusion of responsibility describes the tendency for bystanders to feel less personal responsibility to help a victim when other bystanders are present, as they assume that someone else will help (Einarsen et al., 2020). When bystanders fail to act due to a diffusion of responsibility, this communicates to other bystanders that the situation does not warrant action. Other bystanders may then experience evaluation apprehension to act, which is the fear of being judged publicly for overreacting or responding inappropriately to a situation (social costs of intervening). Research suggests that bystanders experience significant reluctance about intervening in socially hostile situations, so much so that bystanders are more likely to intervene in a situation where they are at risk of enduring significant physical harm for intervening than where there is the risk of enduring social harm of intervening (Fisher et al., 2011).

Lastly, a lack of bystander response in hostile workplace behaviors can lead to pluralistic ignorance among bystanders and the victim (Sanderson, 2020). Pluralistic ignorance is a phenomenon in which people perceive that their privately held beliefs and

opinions are different from those of the group; however, due to fear of judgment from other group members, their outward behaviors conform to that of the perceived group norm (Sanderson, 2020; Sargent & Newman, 2021). This inaction then perpetuates behaviors and social norms that do not reflect the majority's views (De Souza & Schmader, 2022; Sargent & Newman, 2021).

Bystander Influence

Bystander intervention occurs when a witness (bystander) to a hostile workplace behavior such as discrimination, harassment, or bullying intervenes to remedy the situation or prevent further escalation or harm to the victim (Kuntz & Searle, 2023). Though bystander intervention can alleviate a problematic situation, the impacts of bystander intervention are most apparent in how these acts of speaking up in response to hostile workplace behaviors can influence organizational norms by communicating that these behaviors will not be tolerated (Dover, 2020; Einarsen et al., 2020 Escartin, 2017; Kuntz & Searle, 2023; Lassiter et al., 2021; Sanderson, 2020). When organizational norms of civility and respect are established, employees are less likely to experience the psychological processes of diffusion of responsibility, evaluation apprehension, and pluralistic ignorance that cause the bystander effect (Einarsen et al., 2020; Sanderson, 2020).

Psychological Safety Culture

A precursor to an organizational culture that promotes bystander intervention is an organizational culture in which psychological safety is present. Research suggests that even when people possess the skills necessary to intervene as bystanders, they often do not because of actual or perceived risks of intervening, such as being viewed negatively

for reacting, harming workplace relationships, becoming the target of future hostile workplace behavior, and fear of retaliation (Edmondson, 2019; O'Donovan &McAuliffe, 2020; Sanderson, 2020; Sherf et al., 2021). To reduce the fears associated with bystander intervention, potential bystanders need to perceive that there is a culture in which speaking up does not result in negative consequences. A culture with psychological safety is one where employees can express their ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes without negative social or occupational consequences for doing so (Edmondson, 2019). When employees perceive that their organization values creating psychological safety to express differing ideas and values and admit mistakes, it communicates that speaking up in other organizational contexts is also psychologically safe. Psychological safety allows victims and bystanders to speak up in problematic situations without being inhibited by fear of negative appraisals from others for doing so (Kahn, 1990; Shea et al., 2021).

When organizations possess a culture in which it is psychologically safe to speak up, bystander intervention can occur, allowing for hostile workplace behaviors to be addressed at the lowest level possible and preventing these incidents from creating substantial adverse personal, financial, and organizational impacts. Organizations characterized by inclusion, psychological safety, and support for bystander interventions are not conducive to hostile workplace behaviors. Therefore, employees of organizations with these characteristics will be intolerant of such behaviors.

Biblical Integration

Inclusivity, confronting wrongdoing (bystander intervention), and psychological safety are all supported by scholarly research and scripture. Scripture calls us to defend the rights of those in need (bystander intervention) (*English Standard Bible*, 2001/2016,

Proverbs 31: 8-9) and to stop violence and oppression and pursue justice and righteousness (Ezekiel 45:9). We are also instructed to "Come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation (inclusivity) (1 Corinthians 14:26). Lastly, we are told not to be afraid or be silent but to speak up and share the message of the gospels (psychological Safety) (Acts 18: 9-10; Matthew 28: 19-20). These scriptures provide us with the psychological safety to speak the truth and the directives to be inclusive with one another and care for those in need.

Problem Statement

Research indicates that discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying are common occurrences in the workplace (Buchanan et al., 2014; Daniels et al., 2022; Lassiter et al., 2021) that have detrimental impacts on the victim, team, and organization (Escartin, 2017; Hayes et al., 2020; Lassiter et al., 2021; Naseer & Raja, 2021; Tuckey, 2022). Organizational culture is the main predictor of workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying (Brown et al., 2020; Hodgins et al., 2020; Latham, 2020; Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021; Tuckey et al., 2022; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). Organizational cultures that promote values such as dominance, competitiveness, and conformity are correlated with higher rates of discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying (Hodgins et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2021; Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021; Tuckey et al., 2022; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). However, many intervention efforts to reduce these hostile workplace behaviors focus on individual-level initiatives despite research showing minimal efficacy of such approaches (Dover et al., 2020; Hayes, 2020; Hodgins et al., 2020; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021).

Inclusive workplace culture, psychological safety, and bystander intervention all show promising efficacy in creating a pro-social workplace culture that is inconducive to workplace hostility (Edmondson et al., 2019; Einarsen et al., 2020; Shores et al., 2018). Inclusive workplace culture is effective in organizational diversity management (Lee & Sunny, 2021; Leicht-Deobald et al., 2021; Moon & Christensen, 2020; Triana et al., 2015; Ways et al., 2022). The value of inclusivity helps decrease hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, harassment, and bullying because when people are treated with respect for their differences (uniqueness) and treated as valuable insiders (belonging), they are less likely to be responded to in exclusionary ways such as discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

Bystander intervention effectively prevents unwanted behaviors, such as sexual assaults, through intolerance of behaviors associated with sexual assaults (Feldwisch et al., 2020; Kettrey & Marx,2021). Research indicates that when bystanders intervene in offensive or hostile situations, it can alter the social norms that have allowed such behaviors to occur, creating new social standards of civility and respect (Dover, 2020; Escartin, 2017; Kuntz & Searle, 2023; Lassiter et al., 2021). Bystander intervention communicates to others what behaviors are unacceptable in the organization (Einarsen et al., 2020; Sanderson, 2020).

Psychological safety is an antecedent for bystander intervention and inclusive workplace culture. Psychological Safety describes employees feeling safe to express differing views and perspectives and admit mistakes. Without psychological safety, an inclusive workplace culture cannot occur, as employees need to feel psychologically safe to express differing perspectives and opinions (Sherf & Isaakyan, 2021; Shores et al.,

2011; Shores et al., 2018; Ways et al., 2022). In organizations lacking psychological safety, employees perceive that they must conform to existing views and ideas to be treated as insiders (Shores et al., 2011; Shores et al., 2018). Without psychological safety, bystander intervention will be inhibited due to the social and occupational risks of speaking up in contentious situations (Einarsen, 2020; Sanderson, 2020).

A model incorporating these strategies (fostering an inclusive workplace culture and a psychologically safe bystander intervention culture) could effectively target discrimination, harassment, and bullying at the organizational culture level. This approach would create a preventative culture by instilling the values of a respectful and inclusive workplace while encouraging a corrective culture through psychological safety and bystander intervention.

Before implementing these strategies, further research is needed to determine what attitudes, norms, and values are embedded within the organizational culture that impede employees from acting in inclusive ways and addressing hostile workplace behaviors when they occur. At the time of this research, no qualitative research exists on how organizational culture within a military setting impacts the military's ability to create a more inclusive culture while promoting psychological safety and bystander intervention. Research is necessary to understand the factors that impede a culture of inclusivity, psychological safety, and bystander intervention in the military. From this increased understanding, intervention efforts can be tailored to support increased inclusivity, psychological safety, and bystander intervention in order to combat hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this grounded theory research qualitative study is to explore military members' experiences of inclusive workplace culture, psychological safety, and bystander intervention culture and how the presence or absence of these organizational factors influences their organizational culture pertaining to hostile workplace behaviors.

Research Question(s)

R.Q.1 How is psychological safety reinforced and deterred within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.2 How is inclusive workplace culture reinforced and deterred within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.3 How does the military organizational culture influence bystander behaviors?

R.Q.4 How are hostile workplace behaviors deterred within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.5 How are hostile workplace behaviors reinforced within the military organizational culture?

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

This research assumes that members will possess at least the minimal psychological safety needed to express their experiences in an individual interview. This research also assumes that members will be cognitively able to understand the terms discussed and provide feedback on their experiences. It assumed that participants will not intend to distort this study's findings. However, instead, participants will volunteer out of a desire to contribute to an increased understanding of the topic. Lastly, this research assumes that participants will be honest in their responses and that social desirability will not significantly impact their ability to do so.

A limitation of this study is the lack of a randomized sample. Volunteers for the study may hold opinions that are not representative of the military population. Additionally, there will likely be an overrepresentation of participants from the Air Force Reserves compared to other branches due to my connection with the Air Force Reserves through my service as an Air Force reservist. The views and experiences of participants from the Air Force reserves do not necessarily generalize to other branches of the military or different military statuses, such as active duty. There, however, is likely to be some commonality in themes identified as some values and norms can be observed across military branches. For example, all military branches have a hierarchical rank structure and possess core values such as service before self. This qualitative study intends to identify themes within a military work culture that may increase the likelihood of hostile workplace behaviors (discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying) and decrease inclusiveness, bystander intervention, and psychological safety. Some identified themes may be present in all or most military cultures, while others may be more specific to a particular military branch or military status (active, guard, or reserves).

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

This research is grounded on the theoretical foundations of optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991), Latane and Darley's (1968) theory of the three psychological processes that create the bystander effect: diffusion of responsibility, evaluation apprehension, and pluralistic ignorance, and psychological safety theory (Edmundson, 1999). The research examines how these three theoretical constructs influence one another and how these constructs influence hostile workplace behaviors.

Optimal distinctiveness theory asserts that the two most important social needs are the need to belong and the need to be distinct. Belonging fulfills the need to feel connected and accepted by others, while distinctiveness fulfills the need for individualization: to possess qualities that distinguish oneself from others. When a person can experience a sense of belonging to a group while retaining their distinctiveness, they are said to be optimally distinct (Brewer, 1991; Shores et al., 2011).

The three psychological processes that Latane and Darley (1968) theorized to create the bystander effect: diffusion of responsibility, evaluation apprehension, and pluralistic ignorance are foundational theoretical concepts of this study. Diffusion of responsibility describes people's tendency to feel less responsible for helping when other bystanders are present than alone. This diffusion of responsibility can result in the inaction of all bystanders due to a low perceived personal responsibility to do so. Evaluation apprehension, the second psychological process of the bystander effect, is the fear of responding inappropriately to a situation; it is the fear of social judgment. Bystanders experience evaluation apprehension in situations where no other bystanders are responding. This inaction by other bystanders creates a fear that if they react, it may be seen as a socially undesirable response. Bystanders then experience the bystander effect's third psychological process, pluralistic ignorance. Pluralistic ignorance is the belief that there is a more significant disparity between one's privately held beliefs and that of others in the group than there is. Based on other bystanders' inaction, bystanders perceive a lack of concern. They believe that other members do not share their concerns with the situation and do not express these concerns, leading to further inaction (Latane & Darley, 1968).

The final theoretical concept foundational to this study is the theory that psychological safety in groups increases members' willingness to take interpersonal risks within that group (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety is present in groups where people believe there will not be negative social or occupational consequences from expressing ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety cannot exist in groups that punish or humiliate people when they speak up or when there are any negative consequences for doing so. Psychological safety is shown to have an inverse correlation to the bystander effect and a positive correlation to bystander intervention. Additionally, psychological safety increases inclusion as people can feel safe expressing ideas and attributes they possess that are distinct from the group without fear of negative consequences or that it will impact their belonging.

The biblical foundations of these three theoretical constructs are based on the biblical concepts of love and acceptance of all people (inclusiveness) (*English Standard Bible*, 2001/2016, 1 Corinthians 14:26). Speaking up for those in need (bystander intervention) (Proverbs 31: 8-9; Ezekiel 45:9) and God's unconditional love for us. We are encouraged and can feel safe to express our sins (mistakes) without this impacting our relationship with God (psychological safety) (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Definitions

Bystander Intervention occurs when a witness (bystander) to a hostile workplace behavior such as discrimination, harassment, or bullying intervenes to remedy the situation or prevent further escalation or harm to the victim (Kuntz & Searle, 2023).

 Discrimination is defined as any facet of employment, such as "hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition

of employment," being negatively impacted due to a person's race, or gender (EEOC, 2021).

Inclusive Workplace Culture is a culture characterized by valuing differences in people while also creating a sense of belonging (Shores et al., 2011; Shores et al., 2018).

Psychological safety is the ability to express ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes without negative social or occupational consequences for doing so (Edmundson, 2019).

Sexual harassment encompasses a heterogeneous set of behaviors and occurs when people are targets of unwanted sexual comments, sexual propositions or requests, non-verbal sexual gestures, or sexual actions and assault (McDonald, 2012)

Workplace Bullying is "repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators. It is abusive conduct that is threatening, humiliating, intimidating, or work interference—sabotage— which prevents work from getting done or verbal abuse" (Lassiter et al., 2021).

Significance of the Study

This research will provide an increased understanding of the organizational factors within a military setting that influence hostile workplace behaviors. As discussed previously, hostile workplace behaviors have significant personal, social, and occupational effects. Identifying factors that influence workplace hostility is vital for formulating effective intervention strategies. When effective, interventions to reduce workplace hostility improve organizational health and decrease employee harm.

This research will also explore military members' experience with organizational factors that protect against hostile workplace behaviors, i.e., inclusion, psychological safety, and bystander intervention. Exploring these experiences is significant to

identifying in what contexts these organizational factors exist for military members, how they occur, and what barriers exist. Several organizational factors are perceived to be present in military settings that may be inconducive to inclusion, psychological safety, and bystander intervention. For example, military culture values conformity to military standards, customs, and courtesies (Airforce Handbook 1, 2021), which can be at odds with values in inclusive workplaces (Shores et al., 2018).

Military culture also values a strict rank hierarchy in which those with higher rank give orders, and typically, questioning these orders is discouraged. This significant power differential may create an environment in which psychological safety is challenging to achieve (Edmondson, 2019). Lastly, military culture values loyalty and service before self (Airforce Handbook1, 2021). These qualities have great strengths; however, the value of loyalty may create difficulties among military members to call out their fellow airmen when they are out of line and to speak up for themselves or others when they are being mistreated. The values of service before self may also create a sense that airman should not advocate for themselves because their needs are trivial, and their concerns should rather be with the needs of the mission.

Military values serve a needed purpose and benefit the military's objectives (Airforce Handbook1, 2021); however, findings from this study could inform how military values can be maintained in a way that creates the ability to have an environment of inclusion, bystander intervention, and psychological safety. Based on themes identified within this qualitative research study, intervention efforts can be focused on further developing protective organizational factors that are not strongly evident in military culture and targeting organizational risk factors that impede a respectful workplace

culture. Lastly, findings can inform how to incorporate inclusivity, a bystander intervention culture, and psychological safety in a manner that allows traditional military values to co-occur.

Summary

Hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying adversely impact all facets of an organization. Several interventions have been attempted to address these destructive behaviors; however, research shows limited efficacy of these interventions. A greater understanding of the organizational factors contributing to hostile workplace behaviors in the military is needed. Additionally, further knowledge of the protective factors of inclusion, bystander intervention, and psychological safety in the military is necessary.

These protective factors may be challenging to incorporate within traditional military values, such as conformity, respect for authority, and commitment/service before self. This research does not aim to challenge these military values but rather to explore how values of inclusivity, support for bystander intervention, and psychological safety may also be encouraged within the existing paradigm. When inclusivity is encouraged, hostile workplace behaviors are less likely to occur as people are allowed to be unique and still treated as a group member. A culture-promoting bystander intervention allows groups to self-monitor behaviors and address hostile workplace behaviors at the lowest level possible, preventing these behaviors from influencing the workplace culture. Lastly, psychological safety removes the fear of social or occupational consequences for speaking up or expressing differing opinions. The subsequent chapter reviews the

literature on hostile workplace behaviors, inclusive workplace culture, bystander

intervention, and psychological safety.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The following literature review addresses the current research on hostile workplace behaviors. The review will begin by discussing the impacts and prevalence of hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. Current strategies to address hostile workplace behaviors and the efficacy of these strategies will then be discussed. Lastly, a theoretical framework that includes inclusive workplace culture, psychological safety, and bystander intervention will be introduced as a possible strategy to reduce hostile workplace behaviors.

Description of Search Strategy

Multiple databases were employed to review this dissertation's research, including Ebsco, Military and Government Collection Ebsco PsychInfo, Psychology Database (ProQuest), and Psycharticles. The Jerry Farwell Library electronic records were also searched and Google Scholar. Most searches were limited to results within the last five years. However, this window was sometimes increased to capture seminal work on the constructs of interest or due to a limited number of applicable articles within the time frame. Search terms employed to locate research on hostile workplace behaviors include the terms "workplace bullying," "workplace sexual harassment," "workplace discrimination," "discrimination in the military," "sexual harassment in the military," and "bullying in the military." The terms "inclusive workplace culture" and "optimal distinctiveness theory" were employed to locate research on inclusive workplace culture. To locate research on psychological safety, the terms "psychological safety," "voice behaviors," "speaking up," and "employee silence" were employed. Lastly, to locate

research on bystander intervention, the terms "bystander intervention in the workplace," "bystander intervention and bullying in the workplace," "bystander intervention and sexual harassment," and "bystander intervention and discrimination" were employed.

For the biblical integration part of my research, I searched the terms of my constructs (bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination, inclusion, bystander intervention, and psychological safety) in Open Bible Info to locate relevant scriptural references. I also used the Alta Religion database and searched the terms for my constructs to find Christian commentaries on these topics and research articles from Christian Journals.

Review of Literature

Workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying harm victims, teams, and organizations. These hostile behaviors negatively impact workplace culture, organizational effectiveness, and employee retention (Hayes et al., 2020; Lassiter et al., 2021; Tuckey, 2022). They also have physical and mental health consequences for the victim (Escartin, 2017; Hayes et al., 2020; Lassiter et al., 2021; Naseer & Raja, 2021; Tuckey, 2022). Strategies to reduce workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying have shown inadequate efficacy due to their limited ability to impact organizational culture (Dover et al., 2020; Hayes, 2020; Hodgins et al., 2020; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). Therefore, a model that focuses on transforming the organizational culture is needed. The following literature review discusses the problem of workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying and reviews research findings on the efficacy of intervention strategies to reduce these hostile workplace behaviors. Drawing from what research suggests is the most significant predictor of workplace discrimination,

harassment, and bullying, a model is proposed for managing workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

Definitions of Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission describes race- and sex-based discrimination as containing any facet of employment, such as "hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment," unfavorably due to an applicant or employee's race or gender respectively (EEOC, 2021d). Workplace discrimination is unlawful, and organizations can be held legally accountable when it occurs. Workplace racial and sexual harassment are types of workplace discrimination. Examples of workplace racial harassment include racial slurs, offensive or derogatory remarks about a person's race or color, and the display of racially offensive symptoms (EEOC, 2021e). Examples of workplace sexual harassment include "unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature [as well as] offensive remarks about a person's sex, including the person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy" (EEOC, 2021e). These forms of harassment are unlawful in the workplace when they are so frequent or severe that they create a hostile or offensive work environment or result in an adverse employment decision (EEOC, 2021d, 2021e). The Workplace Bullying Institute defines workplace bullying as "repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators. It is abusive conduct that is threatening, humiliating, intimidating, or work interference—sabotage— preventing work from getting done, or verbal abuse" (Lassiter et al., 2021). Protections against being bullied in the workplace are not recognized under federal law. Therefore, victims of

workplace bullying cannot file a complaint to the EEOC for workplace bullying (EEOC, 2021b).

Impacts of Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

Empirical research findings indicate that workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying significantly negatively impact the victim, the witnesses, and the organization. For the victims, this can have impacts such as decreased work satisfaction, increased turnover, difficulties in work performance (Buchanan et al., 2014; Naseer & Raja, 2021; Tuckey, 2022) as well as physical and mental health effects such as poor cardiovascular health, sleep problems, depression, and anxiety (Hayes et al., 2020; Tuckey, 2022). Some victims may also respond aggressively or violently, creating safety concerns for the organization (Hayes et al., 2020). Victims are also at increased risk of health consequences such as PTSD and suicidal ideation (Lassiter et al., 2021). Research also suggests that employees who witness discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying may experience adverse impacts similar to the victim and may feel a lack of physical and psychological safety in their work environment (Escartin, 2017).

For the organization, discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying can result in costly litigations, decreased productivity, increased turnover, and reduced employee morale (EEOC, 2021a; Hayes et al., 2020; Tuckey, 2022). These hostile workplace behaviors cost organizations millions in lost profits, opportunities, and recruitment and training due to decreased morale, motivation, and increased turnover (Hayes et al., 2020). In addition, organizations can be held liable for these behaviors. According to the EEOC (2021a), discrimination and harassment cost organizations millions in financial and prospective review. In 2020, the EEOC estimated relief for race-based and sex-based

discrimination was $74.8 million and 153.2 million, respectively. There was also an estimated 106.1 million in litigation payouts (EEOC, 2021a). Researchers have concluded that:

> These (costs) include actual cash relief for charging parties or other aggrieved individuals, such as restored pay, compensatory damages, punitive and liquidated damages, and other items such as attorney's fees, fringe benefits, and training or tuition costs. There is also prospective relief that may be included that is associated with the resolution of the charge, including hiring, reinstatement, recall, or other actions that result in employment for the charging party or aggrieved individuals, as well as promotions and prospective fringe benefits (EEOC, 2021a).

> While workplace bullying is not unlawful under federal law, U.S. businesses are estimated to lose about $300 billion annually due to reduced productivity, higher absenteeism, increased turnover, and increased medical expenses from working in this stressful environment (Lassiter, 2021).

Prevalence of Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 2021a) received over 22,000 race-based and over 21,000 sex-based discrimination formal complaints in 2020 alone (Yu, 2023). Over 80% of women report experiencing sexual harassment in their lifetimes (Kearle, 2018). Research suggests that the prevalence of sexual harassment is even greater for women in hierarchical, male-dominated environments (Williams et al., 2023; Buchanan et al., 2014). Research indicates that 25% of racial and ethnic minorities in the military experienced racially based discrimination within the last year (Daniels et

al., 2022), and approximately 35% of Americans experience workplace bullying annually (Lassiter et al., 2021). These rates are also likely higher in the military as research suggests that hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying are most prevalent in male-dominated organizations, have a more authoritarian leadership style, and have more significant power imbalances (Balducci et al., 2020; Buchanan et al., 2014; Hodgins et al., 2020). According to a comprehensive RAND study of sexual harassment in the military, 21.57% of females and 6.61% of males reported experiencing sexual harassment, and 12.4% of females and 1.73% of males reported experiencing gender discrimination in the last year (Hayes et al., 2020).

Strategies to Reduce Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

Several strategies have been implemented to reduce workplace sexual harassment and discrimination, some of which are also used to reduce workplace bullying. However, formal initiatives to address workplace bullying are less common because organizations are not liable for workplace bullying under federal law (EEOC, 2021b; Hodgins, 2014; Hodgins et al., 2020). Strategies that are often used to address workplace discrimination and harassment include mandatory training, providing formal and informal avenues to file complaints related to discrimination and harassment, and implementation of antidiscrimination and harassment policies (Hayes et al., 2020; Hodgins et al., 2020a; Larsen et al., 2013; Zedlacher & Koeszegi, 2021).

Implementation of Training to Address Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

Companies often implement mandatory training as a strategy to decrease the occurrences of workplace discrimination and sexual harassment. Training is also

sometimes used to address workplace bullying concerns, though workplace training regarding bullying is less commonplace (Hodgins, 2014; Hodgins et al., 2020a; Hodgins et al., 2020b). Research suggests that workplace training alone has minimal efficacy in reducing discrimination, sexual harassment, or bullying (Hayes et al., 2020a; Larsen et al., 2013; Latham, 2020; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). Employees often perceive mandatory training on discrimination and sexual harassment as a requirement forced on them rather than valuable training (Hayes et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013). Additionally, these trainings are typically not informed by psychological theory and often do not implement research-based best practices in influencing attitudinal and behavioral modifications (Hayes et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013). Research on training efficacy shows that even in training that participants view as beneficial, benefits are lost if participants do not have the opportunity to practice what they have learned (Hayes et al., 2020; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020).

Mandatory training can also increase defensiveness among employees who feel that these trainings are targeting them or their demographic group as being the source of the problem, resulting in an "us" vs. "them" mentality among employees (Dover et al., 2020). Training often lacks a focus on bystander intervention efforts and allyship among groups that may foster a larger group identity in which all members work together as a part of the solution (Clark, 2019; Dover et al., 2020). Lastly, as discussed earlier, workplace bullying is often not addressed in these training sessions, which may lead to the exclusion of people experiencing a hostile environment due to bullying, causing them to feel that their experiences are less important and less likely to be taken seriously (Hodgins et al., 2014; Hodgins et al., 2020).

Complaint Process/Reporting

In addition to mandatory training, employees need to be aware that there are options for recourse available to them if they experience discrimination, sexual harassment, or bullying. Research suggests that employees should be provided with both formal and informal avenues for addressing their complaints, as providing the option to address these concerns informally can reduce the barriers associated with reporting (Buchanan et al., 2014; EEOC, 2016; Zedlacher et al., 2021). Employees have protection under the law from being discriminated against or sexually harassed at work. They can file a complaint through the Equal Employment Office Commission (EEOC) if these protections are violated (EEOC, 2021b). There are no such protections under federal law for victims of workplace bullying; therefore, they are not guaranteed to have any options for recourse (EEOC, 2021b; Hodgins, 2020).

Though providing formal and informal reporting options is essential, they are ineffective in preventing and remedying hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, harassment, and bullying (Hodgins et al., 2020; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). Victims of these hostile workplace behaviors can experience several barriers to reporting them. They may fear being stigmatized for reporting or fear that they will be retaliated against (Buchanan et al., 2014; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). In traditionally male-dominated jobs, reporting can hold additional stigma as it may be perceived that the victim is just not tough enough/is weak and that their concerns will be trivialized (Zedlacher & Koeszegi, 2021). This results in the focus of attention being on the individual's inability to cope in this environment rather than on the destructive attributes engrained within the environment (Hodgins et al., 2014). Qualitative studies on

workplace bullying indicate that victims of workplace bullying are resistant to reporting concerns of workplace bullying out of fear that their concerns will not be taken seriously, it will reflect poorly on them, or that no action will be taken as a result of their reporting (Hodgins et al., 2014; Hodgins et al., 2020; Zedlacher & Koeszegi, 2021). The EEOC (2016) Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workforce concludes that 70% of people who experience harassment never file a report or inform someone in authority (supervisor, manager, union rep) that it occurred.

In addition to barriers to reporting, there can be adverse effects of reporting. Employees who file discrimination or sexual harassment complaints are protected under federal law from being retaliated against for doing so (EEOC, 2021c). It is unlawful for an employee to be punished for filing a complaint. However, filing a complaint will have consequences for the complainant that may be difficult to avoid. The complaint process involves both parties (complainant and alleged offender) needing to take a defensive stance to prove their side of the story. Both parties are often asked to bring in witnesses who often also end up aligning with one of the parties. This results in a very divisive work environment, in which even when the complaint is over, regardless of the outcome, team members may no longer be able to work together due to the animosities that arise from this process (Hodgins et al., 2020).

The complaint process is also a reactive rather than proactive approach to addressing workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. Although victims of discrimination and sexual harassment must have this avenue of recourse, by the time a potential victim of discrimination or harassment decides to file a complaint, feelings of injustice have festered in the complainant to the extent that they are unlikely to have the

capacity to see their situation from a different perspective or resolve things amicably (Hodgins, 2020).

Lastly, there is an assumption that the complaint process can occur without bias impacting its course. However, research suggests that the complaint process is not truly unbiased, and power often favors power. For example, research indicates that human resource managers tend to be skeptical of employee accounts and more trusting towards managers' accounts in discrimination and harassment complaints (Hodgins, 2020).

Policy for Addressing Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that employees may not be discriminated against or harassed based on sex, national origin, color, religion, or race. There are no Title VII protections against workplace bullying; therefore, many organizations do not have a policy that addresses workplace bullying (Hodgins., 2020). Policy does not necessarily reduce the fears associated with reporting workplace discrimination and harassment and does not address the social consequences that can result from reporting (Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). Policy is also only effective at reducing discrimination and harassment when leaders communicate their commitment to zero tolerance of these behaviors and stress that remedial actions will be taken if these behaviors do occur (Hayes et al., 2020; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021).

Predictors of Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying: The Organizational Culture

Research suggests that the most significant predictor of workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying is the organizational climate (Brown et al., 2020; Hodgins et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013; Latham, 2020; Perry et al., 2021; Stuart and &

Szeszeran, 2021; Tuckey et al., 2022; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). The work environment theory of hostile workplace behaviors posits that psychosocial work environment characteristics are both precursors for hostile workplace behaviors and serve to propagate them (Tuckey, 2022). Climates that encourage dominance, competition, masculinity, and conformity experience more workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying (Buchanan et al., 2014; Hodgins et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2021). Increased hostile workplace behaviors are also found in workplace cultures with highly authoritative leadership styles, and many regulations and restrictions are present (Hodgins et al., 2014). Although this may appear counterintuitive, highly restrictive workplace cultures can breed stress and competition, increasing hostile workplace behaviors (Hodgins et al., 2020).

Workplace cultures can also normalize bullying, harassment, and discrimination when there is a culture of mistreatment (Hodgins et al., 2020; Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021). Additionally, these behaviors are normalized when they occur and are not challenged by peers or people in leadership (Hodgins et al., 2020; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). Research by Hodgins et al. (2020) found that hostile workplace behavior continues to occur despite a zero-tolerance policy in workplace cultures where there is an absence of calling such behaviors by peers or leadership. Organizational cultures can also normalize the abuse of power in both practice and organizational politics (Hodgins et al., 2020) when they allow people in power to treat subordinates disrespectfully. Research suggests that discrimination, harassment, and bullying often occur in competitive environments to exert or maintain power over others (Hodgins et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2021).

Military Cultural Risk Factors

Many organizational factors that can predict hostile workplace behaviors are often present in military cultures (Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). The military has a strict rank hierarchy and a strong push for assimilation into the existing culture. This assimilation process begins at the onset of a military member's service in basic training, where the aim is to break down military members of their existing habits so that military ideals can be adopted (Stuart& Szeszeran, 2021). The culture within the military is typically thought to emphasize hypermasculine behaviors, showing no weakness but rather strength and stamina. Though these attributes can be advantageous in the appropriate context, when these attributes are rigidly applied to all workplace situations, they can create conditions in which unhealthy rivalry, lack of empathy, and a dog-eat-dog culture flourish, which are all risk factors for hostile workplace behaviors (Berdahl et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2020; Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021).

Addressing and Preventing Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Through the Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is the most significant predictor of discrimination, harassment, and bullying and the most effective level to focus intervention efforts to reduce these hostile workplace behaviors (Hayes et al., 2020). Systematic organizational level change in culture is more effective at reducing rates of discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying than attempting to "fix problem people" by only focusing on punishing the perpetrators while ignoring how the larger system encourages or maintains these behaviors (Hodgins et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013; Perry et al., 2021;).

Inclusive Workplace Culture

To promote a culture that is free from discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying, organizations need to adopt a more inclusive culture (Perry et al., 2021; Randel et al., 2018; Shores et al., 2018). In inclusive work environments, employees are less likely to witness, experience, or instigate hostile workplace behaviors (Perry et al., 2021). Inclusive cultures value people's differences while creating a sense of belonging (Shores, 2011). These cultures stress the responsible use of power and develop protections against the abusive use of power (Hodgins et al., 2020). They encourage authenticity and see individual differences as creating opportunities for growth (Shores, 2011).

Optimal Distinctiveness Theory

Optimal distinctiveness theory (ODT) is a theoretical framework for creating inclusive workplace cultures. ODT postulates that the two most basic social needs are the need to belong and the need to be distinct (Brewer, 1991). Individuals' need for belongingness is fulfilled when they feel similar to others and like an insider in a group. Individuals' need for distinctiveness is fulfilled when they can bring their unique skills, abilities, and attributes to a group (Ways et al., 2022). In the seminal work on optimal distinctiveness theory, Brewer (1991) contends that "social identity can be viewed as a compromise between assimilation and differentiation from others, where the need for deindividuation is satisfied within in-groups, while the need for distinctiveness is met through inter-group comparisons" (p. 477). When a person has found a balance between these two competing tensions, they are optimally distinct. (Brewer, 1991; Shores, 2011).

When belonging and distinctiveness are out of balance, this can negatively impact the individual and the organization. Organizations relying too heavily on belonging can result in assimilation and redundancy. In this type of setting, individuals are not

encouraged to offer differing views and perspectives, which results in a limited scope of ideas. Current practices are rarely challenged, even when they are no longer effective (Randel et al., 2018; Shores et al., 2011; Shores et al., 2018). There is a perception that all workers need to conform to the mainstream ideas, beliefs, and values of the majority to belong to the group (Shores et al., 2018), and there is a lack of perceived safety that one can be one's true self at work (Brown et al., 2020).

When organizations rely too heavily on distinctiveness, this can create a sense of otherness and tokenism, where individuals with unique perspectives are valued only to benefit the team or organization. However, the individual is not treated as an insider. High levels of distinctiveness can result in feelings of being extorted for one's differences. Low levels of either belongingness or distinctiveness lead to feelings of exclusion (Shores et al., 2011; Shores et al., 2018), which is correlated with adverse outcomes for the individual and team, such as decreased organizational commitment, morale, and helping behaviors (Karrasch, 2003; Lee, 2019).

When individuals can achieve an optimal balance between belonging and distinctiveness, it results in positive outcomes for both the individual and the team (Shores, 2011; Shores et al., 2018; Ways et al., 2022). Inclusive climates encourage integration, synergy, and belongingness (Perry et al., 2020). Research applying ODT to workplace diversity initiatives indicates that diversity correlates with increased organizational effectiveness when organizations create a sense of belonging while acknowledging and encouraging unique views, skills, and qualities (Lee & Sunny, 2021; Moon & Christensen, 2020). Conversely, when organizations do not possess these inclusive qualities, diversity often correlates to decreased effectiveness due to increased

conflict and reduced information sharing (Leicht-Deobald et al., 2021; Triana et al., 2015). Organizations can eliminate the potential adverse effects of increased diversity by creating an inclusive environment characterized by a collective commitment to respect and value the contribution of all employees (Brown et al., 2020).

In workplace climates that value inclusivity, everyone is treated like an insider (belonging), and everyone is encouraged to retain their uniqueness (distinctiveness) (Perry et al., 2020). Behaviors that facilitate belongingness include (1) supporting group members, (2) ensuring justice and equity, and (3) sharing decision-making. Behaviors that facilitate team members feeling unique include (1) encouraging diverse contributions and (2) helping group members fully contribute (Perry et al., 2020).

Optimal Distinctiveness Theory and Hostile Workplace Behaviors

There is limited research on how optimal distinctiveness theory relates to hostile workplace behaviors. An assumption may be that a workplace culture that focuses on belonging would have minimal hostile workplace behaviors. However, one could also reason that such a culture could breed intolerance for any behaviors or attributes outside of the organization's cultural norms, making people who do not conform to these norms the target of hostile workplace behaviors. Conversely, it may be assumed that a workplace culture that values distinctiveness (uniqueness) would exhibit less hostility towards differences. However, members in this context may only be treated like an insider when their unique contributions benefit the group. Further research is needed to determine if either of these seemingly positive factors may contribute to hostile workplace behaviors when these factors are not balanced with one another and if a culture that promotes both belonging and uniqueness reduces workplace hostilities.

Inclusive Workplace Model

Inclusive workplaces occur not just randomly; they must be systemically created and reinforced (Hodgins et al., 2020). Shore et al. (2018) propose an inclusive workplace model in which organizations foster a promotion and prevention orientation to create an inclusive workplace. Promotion orientation influences practices such as advancing diversity, increasing involvement, and promoting respect, value, and authenticity. Prevention orientation is focused on compliance practices and policies, such as managing harassment and discrimination claims. While their model is promising, the prevention practices suggested have shown limited efficacy in curtailing hostile workplace behaviors, as described in the research previously discussed in this paper. Though these prevention practices are still necessary, prevention may be most effective when it primarily focuses on addressing the organizational culture by challenging organizational practices and norms counter to inclusivity. A more effective approach that will be examined in this research is for organizational leaders to transform the organizational culture by promoting an inclusive culture and preventing hostile workplace behaviors by instilling a bystander intervention culture characterized by psychological safety.

Bystander Intervention Culture

Prior research on hostile workplace behaviors often conceptualized these occurrences as a dyad interaction between the perpetrator and victim (Einarsen et al., 2020). However, more recent conceptualizations of hostile workplace behaviors acknowledge bystanders as active participants in these interactions that influence the occurrence, conceptualization, and sustainment of hostile workplace behaviors ((Einarsen et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2022a; Sanderson, 2020). As will be discussed, several personal,

social, and organizational factors are shown to influence how bystanders react to hostile

workplace behaviors (Einarsen et al., 2020; Ng et al.,2022; Sanderson, 2020; Stuart & Sz,

2021; Yu, 2023)

Theories on the Bystander Effect

The bystander effect describes when bystanders fail to act in a pro-social manner

to help those in need. Among the earliest theories on the bystander effect was that of

Latane and Darley (1968), who identified three psychological processes that prevent a

bystander from intervening: diffusion of responsibility, evaluation apprehension, and

pluralistic ignorance. The first of the three psychological processes is the diffusion of

responsibility, which describes the tendency for bystanders to feel less personally

responsible for helping a victim in distress when other bystanders are present. The greater

the number of bystanders present, the less responsibility individual bystanders feel to

intervene as they all assume that someone else will step up to help (Einarsen et al., 2020).

The second of these psychological processes is evaluation apprehension. Evaluation

apprehension is the fear of being publicly judged. This process is particularly present in

situations that could be seen as ambiguous, such as situations in which social/emotional

harm is present rather than physical harm. The third process is pluralistic ignorance.

Pluralistic ignorance occurs when a person perceives that their private beliefs and

opinions differ from those of the group; however, due to fear of judgment, their outward

behaviors conform to the perceived group norm (Sargent & Newman, 2021).

Hortensius and de Gelder (2018) added to Latane and Darley's model by

suggesting that personality traits, specifically sympathy and distress, impact the

likelihood of bystander intervention, whereas apathy creates the bystander effect.

Bystander apathy can result from multiple sources. One reason for bystander apathy is the belief that nothing will change due to intervening (Yu, 2023). This belief that nothing will be done often stems from organizational or social factors that allow these behaviors to persist (Hodgins et al., 2020; Stuart & Sz, 2021; Yu, 2023). Another reason for bystander apathy is a lack of knowledge of how hostile workplace behaviors impact the targets of these behaviors. If bystanders lack empathy for the target of hostile workplace behavior, they are unlikely to intervene (Ng et al.,2022).

Diffusion of Responsibility

Diffusion of responsibility describes the psychological process of feeling less personal responsibility to help when other people (bystanders) are present. The more bystanders present, the less personal responsibility a person feels to intervene in a harmful situation (Latane & Darley, 1968). One theory of the existence of the diffusion of responsibility is related to self-awareness. This theory postulates that when no other bystanders are present, the solitary bystander pays attention to themselves and the victim. In contrast, when other bystanders are present, the bystander pays attention to the other bystanders and the victim. The increased attention towards oneself experienced by solitary bystanders creates self-awareness of one's behaviors and what is expected of oneself in the situation (Lui et al., 2022). Cultural factors can also influence the diffusion of responsibility in collectivist cultures, such as China, which displays less diffusion of responsibility in groups than in individualistic cultures (Tu et al., 2011). This difference could be attributed to the belief in collectivist cultures that the group is more important than the individual. Therefore, bystanders are willing to exert additional effort if it means that it will benefit others (Lui et al., 2022). Social loafing can also create a diffusion of

responsibility as members assume that it is not their burden and that others in the group will likely help (Howell, 2011).

Evaluation Apprehension

Social learning theory postulates that we look towards others to determine how to behave. In doing so, individuals look toward others' social cues to help them interpret and respond to a situation (Einarsen et al., 2020). When individuals observe that others do not have a visible reaction to a potentially offensive or harmful situation, they will likely interpret that the other people who witnessed this situation were not bothered by the occurrence and determine that they also should not be concerned and that responding to the situation would be overreacting. As a result, bystanders in the potentially hostile interaction do not intervene (Sanderson, 2020).

In turn, the inaction of these bystanders sends social cues to the perpetrator, victim, and other bystanders, which influence present and future behaviors. For the perpetrator, this inaction can communicate that their behaviors are acceptable, so they can continue to engage in such behaviors. For the victim, the inaction of bystanders can communicate that they should not take offense to the interaction since no one else appeared to find it inappropriate. They may second guess their feeling of being mistreated and try to mask any upset they are experiencing. Lastly, for the bystander, other bystanders' inaction may cause them to experience ambiguity in interpreting the situation. They may have an initial interpretation of the situation as offensive; however, when observing other bystanders' inaction, they may experience ambivalence about their interpretation and see the offensiveness of the situation as more ambiguous than it is.

When people experience ambiguity in interpreting a potentially harmful situation,

they are less likely to intervene out of fear that they will look foolish for overreacting

(Sanderson, 2020). Bystander research indicates that people are more likely to intervene

in highly dangerous situations when physical risks to intervening are much higher than in

low-danger situations (Fisher et al., 2011). The prevailing rationalization for this

surprising effect is that the perceived social costs of intervening significantly influence

bystanders. In a dangerous situation, there are little to no social costs of intervening, as

negative attributions of the bystander's intervention will likely not be present. However,

in situations that bystanders perceive as more ambiguous in harmfulness, as is often

present in situations that are socially or emotionally harmful (Sanderson, 2020),

bystanders often experience inhibition to intervene out of fear of acting inadequately in a

public setting (Einarsen et al., 2020).

Pluralistic Ignorance

The inhibition of bystanders to respond in a pro-social manner can lead to

pluralistic ignorance. Pluralistic ignorance is a phenomenon in which people feel their

views and interpretations are more out of sync with others than they are. It occurs when

people perceive that their private beliefs and opinions differ from those of the group;

however, due to fear of judgment, their outward behaviors conform to the perceived

group norm (Sanderson, 2020). When multiple individuals act inconsistently with their

own beliefs and conform to what is misperceived as the majority's beliefs, this

perpetuates behaviors and social norms that do not accurately reflect the majority's views

(De Souza & Schmader, 2022).

Studies suggest that people experience pluralistic ignorance regarding a wide

array of topics such as alcohol use, body image, bullying, environmental concerns,

LGBTQ stigma, mental health, race-related attitudes, and sexual and dating norms (Rosander & Nielsen, 2023; Sanderson, 2020; Sargent & Newman, 2021; De Souza & Schmader, 2022). These topics only represent a fraction of the areas researched on pluralistic ignorance, and people can experience pluralistic ignorance on any topic.

Research examining pluralistic ignorance in men shows that most men believe they feel more bothered by sexist or offensive comments than other men (Sanderson, 2020; Sargent & Newman, 2021). Men have also been shown to overestimate other men's sexist beliefs, comfort with sexism, and acceptance of rape myths (Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Fabiano et al., 2003; Kilmartin et al., 2008, 2015). Though pluralistic ignorance is not a gendered concept, pluralistic ignorance concerning the opinions of male co-workers can be particularly prevalent in male-dominated groups that value traditional notions of masculinity (Munsch et al., 2018). Theory and evidence suggest that dominant views of masculinity place unique constraints on men (Vandello & Bosson, 2013*).* Precarious manhood theory postulates that men experience a social fear that others will view them as not masculine (losing their man card) if they engage in any behavior perceived as effeminate or weak, such as expressing being offended by another's actions. In these environments, when men fail to express concerns about offensive behaviors, this leads to misperceptions about the views held within the group, causing further inaction and allowing for these behaviors to persist (De Souza & Schmader, 2022).

Pluralistic ignorance can cause people to conform to social norms that do not exist, contributing to the power of these illusionary norms (Sargent & Newman, 2021). Research suggests that controversial topics are particularly subjective to pluralistic

ignorance (Munsch et al., 2018; Sargent & Newman, 2021). Due to the misattributions created by pluralistic ignorance, even significantly hostile situations may go unchallenged by bystanders. (Sanderson, 2020).

Research suggests that opinions do not necessarily need to be changed to cause behavioral changes in bystanders' behaviors. Instead, simply identifying what the common perception of others is can significantly influence bystanders' likelihood of intervening (Sanderson, 2020; Siegal et al., 2023; Turketsky & Sanderson, 2018). For example, when fraternity students become aware that the majority of other fraternity students do not endorse rape-based myths, they become more likely to intervene in potential rape situations (Sanderson, 2020). When individuals become aware of the social norms, they are less likely to experience ambiguity from pluralist ignorance, which will decrease inhibition to act (Turetsky & Sanderson, 2018).

Organizational Influences on Bystander Intervention

Bystander intervention occurs when a witness (bystander) to a hostile workplace behavior such as discrimination, harassment, or bullying intervenes to remedy the situation or prevent further escalation or harm to the victim (Kuntz et al., 2023). The bystander effect describes the phenomenon of people feeling inhibited from engaging in pro-social behaviors in harmful or potentially harmful situations (Einarsen et al., 2020). Prior to intervening, bystanders weigh the potential costs and benefits of doing so (Katz, 2018; Yu, 2023). If the actual or perceived costs of intervening outweigh their sense of responsibility, they will likely not intervene (Kuntz & Searle, 2023). As previously discussed, ambiguity and pluralistic ignorance can cause the bystander effect.

Additionally, bystander intervention's actual or perceived organizational risks can cause bystander inaction.

Some potential employment risks bystanders could assume if they intervene are retaliation, dismissal, reprimand, poor performance appraisals, demotion, involuntary transfers, and deprivation of job benefits and overtime opportunities (Yu, 2023). Bystanders may also fear the social risks of being labeled negatively for whistleblowing or being associated with the victim; this could damage the trust and relationships needed for retention and promotion (Yu, 2023).

Bystander intervention is more likely to occur in organizations that encourage employees to identify and address workplace hostilities. Whereas the bystander effect (bystanders do not intervene) is more prevalent in organizations where hostile workplace behaviors are commonplace and employees are not encouraged to intervene (Kuntz et al., 2023). If individuals have reason to believe that intervening may result in negative consequences, such as adverse impacts on their employment or reputation within an organization, they will likely exhibit the bystander effect (Shea et al., 2021).

Organizational norms influence bystander's appraisals of acceptable or unacceptable behaviors in that context. If aggressive or hostile communication is normalized in a workplace, bystanders may see this as just how things are and not question it (Kuntz et al., 2023; Stuart & Sz, 2021). However, even when workers have adopted hostile interactions as a workplace norm and do not see it as inappropriate, it still negatively impacts employees and the organization (Hodgins et al., 2020; Tuckey et al., 2022).

Hierarchical organizations that place a high value on toughness, solidarity, compliance, and discipline may inadvertently discourage bystander intervention as such behaviors may be viewed as being in opposition to these values (Einarsen et al., 2020; Zedlacher & Koeszeg, 2021). In such organizations, there may be an increased fear of stigma by association (Zedlacher & Koeszeg, 2021). Stigma by association occurs when a bystander is associated with the victim and, due to this association, becomes the target of workplace hostility or other undesired effects. Their reputation within their workgroup could also suffer, and they could experience decreased job security. The fear of stigma by association is highest when bystanders perceive that their organization ignores or does not respond effectively to reports of hostile workplace behaviors (Yu, 2023).

Potential Efficacy of Bystander Intervention to Address Hostile Workplace Behaviors

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2016) recommends implementing bystander intervention training to reduce workplace discrimination and harassment. Though the EEOC does not manage cases of workplace bullying, research indicates that bystander intervention is an effective approach to decreasing its occurrence (Dover, 2020; Escartin, 2017; Kuntz et al., 2023; Lassiter et al., 2021). Bystander intervention would empower co-workers and provide them with the means to intervene when witnessing harassing or discriminatory behavior. (Yu, 2023). Bystander intervention shifts the focus from legal compliance and a victim/perpetrator isolated dyad towards a more holistic organizational approach in which all workers form a work culture where these behaviors are unacceptable.

An organizational culture that promotes bystander intervention would serve to alleviate some of the inefficiencies discussed in other approaches to reduce discrimination, harassment, and bullying in the workplace. For example, incorporating training that focuses on bystander interventions may empower participants to act in pro-social ways rather than focusing on what they should not do, as can often be the focus of discrimination and harassment training (Dover, 2020). It may result in less defensiveness by participants as participants can see themselves as agents of change rather than targets of bias-reduction initiatives (Dover, 2020). Additionally, bystander intervention resolves workplace hostilities at the lowest level, preventing costly litigations and disrupted work environments.

Bystander intervention has also been shown to buffer against the harmful effects of hostile workplace behaviors (Ng et al., 2022b). When bystanders intervene and validate their concerns, victims often experience less physical, cognitive, and emotional impacts from hostile workplace behaviors. Interventions by bystanders can also shape group norms by communicating that the behavior will not be tolerated. This makes future incidents of hostile workplace behavior less likely to occur.

Psychological Safety

Though promoting bystander intervention could have a promising impact in addressing hostile workplace behaviors, promoting such behaviors may not be enough to influence employees' willingness to do so. Employees must perceive a workplace culture in which it is safe to speak up (O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). Research suggests that even when people possess the skills necessary to intervene as bystanders, they often do not because of actual or perceived risks such as being viewed negatively for reacting,

harming workplace relationships, becoming the target of future hostile workplace behavior, and fear of retaliation (Edmundson, 2019; O'Donovan &McAuliffe, 2020; Sanderson, 2020; Sherf et al., 2021). In a study of nurses' bystander behaviors, the only antecedent for bystander intervention in hostile workplace situations was the absence of fear of consequences for intervening (Báez-León et al., 2016; Einarsen et al., 2020).

The perceived risks to bystander intervention can be minimized in workplace cultures that promote psychological safety. A culture with psychological safety is one where employees can express their ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes without negative social or occupational consequences for doing so (Edmundson, 2019). Psychological safety creates an environment where people can "speak up" without fear of negative consequences. Though organizational leaders may perceive that people should always speak up when something wrong is occurring, as this is the ethical thing to do, the moral argument alone for speaking up does not create a sense of safety. Rather, speaking up must be institutionalized and systemized by promoting a psychologically safe work environment (Edmundson, 2019). In many situations, speaking up can run counter to human instincts. Human instinct is towards self-preservation. Silence can feel like the safer option, while speaking up can be risky and effortful, and the benefits of doing so may not be realized (Edmondson, 2019; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020; Sherf et al., 2021). Due to the multiple barriers experienced in speaking up, additional efforts must be made to make employees feel safe doing so. Psychological safety may be a promising strategy for creating a sense of safety to speak up.

A psychologically safe environment for bystander intervention in hostile workplace behaviors would be an environment in which fear of overacting in ambiguous

situations would be minimized. Individuals would be respected for their opinions and would not fear adverse social or institutional consequences, even if their views differ from others. Psychological safety does not mean agreement with all opinions but rather an environment in which fear is not determining whether an employee speaks up in a potentially harmful situation. Psychological safety may also impact victims' ability to speak up for themselves without being inhibited by fear of negative appraisals from others for doing so (Kahn, 1990; Shea et al., 2021).

Benefits of Psychological Safety

Research has indicated many benefits to psychological safety. Psychological safety is correlated with organizational productivity, safety, learning, and innovation because employees feel safe about challenging things that are not working or conducive to the workplace culture (Edmundson, 2019; Jose et al., 2021; Obrenovic et al., 2020). Psychological safety is also correlated with loss prevention as employees experience less fear of speaking up when they make a mistake at work, which helps to identify and address what led to this mistake and minimize its negative consequences. When employees do not feel safe admitting mistakes, ineffective processes that may have contributed to the error are never realized, and the employee may attempt to cover up the mistake, which can cause costly consequences that could have been prevented (Edmundson, 2019; Sherf et al., 2021; Smeets et al., 2021)

The absence of psychological safety within an organization is correlated with many counterproductive behaviors such as organizational deviance, supervisor incivility, workplace incivility, negative workplace gossip, abusive supervision, knowledge hiding, and ostracism (Agarwal et al., 2022; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2019; Guo et al., 2021; Liu et al.,

2020; Klingberg et al., 2018). A lack of psychological safety is also correlated with employees being silent rather than speaking up, even when it would benefit the organization for them to speak up (Sherf et al., 2021).

When a workplace culture is established that is psychologically safe for bystander intervention, incidents of discrimination, harassment, and bullying can be addressed at the lowest level, preventing these behaviors from developing into more significant incidents that erode the organizational culture. Bystander intervention may prevent victims from needing to go through a complaint process to alleviate their concerns, which, as discussed previously, can negatively impact the victim, team, and organizational culture even when their complaint is substantiated. Lastly, a workplace culture characterized by inclusion, psychological safety, and a pro-bystander intervention culture will help develop organizational cultural norms of a respectful workplace environment in which hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, harassment, and bullying are not tolerated.

Biblical Foundations of the Study

Bystander intervention, inclusion, and psychological safety are all strongly supported in scripture. Scripture calls us to intervene as a bystander in any passage that refers to caring for others, such as our neighbors, those less fortunate, and those persecuted (*English Standard Bible*, 2001/2016, Proverbs 31:8-9; Ezekiel 45:9; John 15:12; Galatians 6:2; Isiah 1:17; Proverbs 21:13; James 4:17; Luke 25-37). Scripture calls us to act inclusively in verses that speak to our common humanity as children of God (1 Corinthians 14:26; Colossian 3:12). Lastly, scripture calls us to psychological safety in

verses about our relationship with God and our calling to spread the gospel's Good News (Matthew 28: 19-20; Acts 18: 9-10; Colossians 4:6).

Biblical Foundations of Bystander Intervention

Bystander intervention is strongly supported in scripture. In Proverbs 31: 8-9, we are called to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy" (*New International Version*, 1978/2011). We are also called to "put away violence and oppression and execute justice and righteousness" *(English Standard Bible*, 2001/2016, Ezekiel 45:9). We are instructed to challenge what we see and hear and "not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of (our) mind(s), that by testing (we) may discern what the will of God is, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

As discussed above, research suggests many reasons people do not intervene to help others (Einarsen et al., 2020; Ng et al.,2022; Sanderson, 2020; Stuart & Sz, 2021; Yu, 2023). One of these reasons is apathy. Apathy is the lack of empathy for a person or situation. Scripture calls us away from apathy towards a loving and caring disposition towards others. In John 15:12, we are instructed to love one another as God has loved us. We are also called to bear one another's burdens to fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). Lastly, we are called to be proactive in this approach; we are to seek justice, correct oppression (Isiah 1:17), and be the voices in defending the rights of those who cannot protect themselves (Proverbs 31:9). Scripture warns us against inaction, informing us that if we do not listen to the cries of those in need, our needs will also not be heard (Proverbs

21:13). We are told that it is a sin to know the right things to do and fail to do it (James 4:17).

Anyone can experience apathy; this is exemplified in scripture in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 25-37). In this parable, a priest and a Levite pass a man attacked, robbed, and stripped by robbers on the street. Rather than intervening to help this man, they show no concern for him and pass by him. Only the Samaritan stops and comes to his aid, showing him empathy and love. This scripture also speaks of the diffusion of responsibility in intervening. The Priest and Levite may have felt they had more important things to attend to and assumed that someone else would help, though if every person who passed by held this assumption, help would never be provided. Interestingly, the Samaritan stepped forward to help, reminding us that we do not need to hold a high-status position to do the right thing and impact others.

Inclusivity

There is also strong support in scripture for love, inclusion, and acceptance of others. 1 Corinthians 14:26 instructs us to "Come together; each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up" We are also told to "put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience" (Colossian 3:12). The love, inclusion and acceptance described in these verses is consistent with the values of inclusive organizations in which there is a culture of belonging (we all belong to the kingdom of God) and an appreciation for one's unique gifts, skills, and attributes (we are to come together, each of us with our unique songs, lessons, and interpretations).

Psychological Safety

God's relationship with his followers is characterized by psychological safety. We can be fallible and make mistakes, and this does not impact his love for us or our salvation in him (Ephesians 4:31-32). When we falter, he calls us to come to him and confess our sins, not for retribution but rather for forgiveness (1 John 1:19).

Just as a psychologically safe environment encourages people to speak up to discuss their opinions and concerns, we are also called in scripture to speak up and spread the word of God (Matthew 28: 19-20). We are not to be afraid and not to be silent, for God is with us (Acts 18: 9-10). We are told that death and life are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 21:13). Though we are called to speak up and share the good news, we are to do so in love (creating psychological safety) and not in hostility. We are told not to engage in talk that corrupts but instead use our words for building up and providing grace to others (Colossians 4:6).

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Summary

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Hostile workplace behaviors result in profound financial and organizational costs for organizations and significant economic, social, and psychological effects on the employees of an organization (Hayes et al., 2020; Lassiter et al., 2021; Tuckey et al., 2022). Training, policy, legal compliance, and complaint processes have all been used to reduce hostile workplace behaviors; however, these strategies have shown limited efficacy. Research on mandatory training shows little to no effect on actual hostile workplace behaviors (Hayes et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013; Latham, 2020; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020), and some research findings suggest that training can even have

detrimental effects on workplace hostility (Dover et al., 2020). Policy implementation does not reduce the fear of reporting or the social ostracism that could result from making a report (Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). Additionally, policy is not always stringently enforced (Hayes et al., 2020). Lastly, though reporting may address the perpetrators' behaviors, it does little to address the factors embedded within the organizational culture that allowed such behaviors to persist.

Research suggests that hostile workplace behaviors are an organizational-level issue rather than an individual-level issue, and individual-level intervention efforts will not impact the attributes of an organizational culture that are promoting and maintaining these behaviors (Brown et al., 2020; Hodgins et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013; Latham, 2020; Perry et al., 2021; Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021; Tuckey et al., 2022; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). Characteristics of the psychosocial work environment must be addressed to create new norms of civility and respect (Tuckey et al., 2022). Promoting an inclusive workplace culture in which both belonging and uniqueness are valued can create a culture in which there is not a strong social pressure to conform one's behavior to mirror attributes of dominance, competition, and masculinity, but rather cooperation and collaboration can occur amongst people with differing ideas and perspectives (Perry et al., 2021; Randel et al., 2018; Shores et al., 2018). These changes lead to a more respectful environment where workers can experience acceptance and belonging even if they are not the prototypical employees in their organization.

A culture encouraging bystander intervention is also vital to reducing hostile workplace behaviors. This intervention occurs at the lowest level possible, allowing for hostile workplace behaviors to be addressed as they occur, preventing them from eroding

the organizational culture. Bystander intervention can also influence the social norms within an organization that allow these behaviors to persist (Einarsen et al., 2020; Kuntz et al., 2023; Sanderson, 2020). When bystander intervention is a regular occurrence in organizational culture, this can alter employees' perceptions of what is and is not acceptable within the work environment, which in turn influences their behaviors to be more consistent with pro-social behaviors (Shea et al., 2021).

For bystander intervention and an inclusive workplace environment, a culture of psychological safety must first be present. If employees do not feel psychologically safe to speak up, they will not intervene in hostile workplace behaviors and will not feel safe to express any views or ideas that are not consistent with the dominant workplace culture (Edmundson, 2018; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020; Smeets et al., 2021). Psychological safety is present when employees can express their views and ideas without fear of adverse social or occupational outcomes (Edmondson, 2018). The following chapter outlines this study's research methodology to explore military members' perceptions of how organizational factors influence hostile workplace behaviors and their experiences with the protective factors of inclusive workplace culture, bystander intervention, and psychological safety.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Overview

The following chapter will describe the methods used in this study. The chapter begins by outlining the study's research questions. The study design will then be discussed with attention to the rationale for choosing this design. A description of the participants and the study procedures will then be outlined, followed by an explanation of the instruments and measurements used and the data analysis process. The chapter concludes by discussing the study's delimitations, assumptions, and limitations.

Research Questions

R.Q.1 How is psychological safety reinforced and deterred within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.2 How is inclusive workplace culture reinforced and deterred within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.3 How does the military organizational culture influence bystander behaviors?

R.Q.4 How are hostile workplace behaviors deterred within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.5 How are hostile workplace behaviors reinforced within the military organizational culture?

Research Design

This research study was qualitative and used grounded theory. Qualitative studies explore how individuals or groups experience a social or human problem (Creswell, 2013). The problem is explored through qualitative data collection, such as individual

interviews and participants' written accounts. From this information, an inductive

approach is used to establish themes and patterns (Creswell, 2013). The identified themes

and patterns exemplify the participants' experiences and the meaning they ascribe to their

experiences. They also provide a further understanding of the problem and possible

solutions for addressing it (Creswell, 2013). Participants are studied in their natural

setting, and attention is paid to the political, social, and cultural contexts that may impact

the views of the participants as well as how the researcher interprets them (Creswell,

2013).

   Qualitative research is not bound to examine cause and effect relationships only

as quantitative research does. However, qualitative research allows the researcher to

identify complex interactions of factors in any situation (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative

research allows for a greater depth of content to be explored to identify factors,

interactions, and processes that influence the problem, allowing for a complex and

detailed understanding of the issues (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research also allows a

greater understanding of the mechanisms or contexts that cause a particular phenomenon.

While quantitative research may show relationships and general trends, it does not

explain why people respond as they did in these studies, the context in which they

responded, or the underlying thoughts and behaviors that governed these responses

(Creswell, 2013, p. 40).

   In this study, qualitative research methods allowed information to be gathered on

organizational factors that influence hostile workplace behaviors from participants' views

and lived experiences rather than confining participants to respond only to factors

imposed on them by the researcher. While the study did include constructs of interest that

are supported by the research literature for exploration, specifically inclusive workplace behaviors, bystander intervention, and psychological safety, participants were not restricted in their responses to discussions of only these factors. A qualitative research approach also allowed for exploring contextual factors to understand better how these factors impact hostile workplace behaviors.

Qualitative research provided a voice for military members to express their experiences and perceptions. A crucial advantage of qualitative research is that it allows for voices that may otherwise not be heard (Creswell, 2013). A hierarchical rank structure may create difficulties for some voices to be heard. Due to the significant power disparities, members of lower ranks may not feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and experiences to high-ranking officials. Additionally, members of higher ranks may not have an avenue to express their concerns as doing so could be perceived as reflecting poorly on their leadership ability.

Quantitative surveys, such as the Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (DEOCS), are conducted with military personnel annually. These surveys allow military members to answer questions related to their workplace climate. However, these surveys consist primarily of multiple-choice questions, not allowing members to express their experiences outside the predetermined multiple-choice options. Additional quantitative data is unlikely to produce an increased understanding of the problem without first understanding the contextual factors, experiences, and perceptions of military members through qualitative methods.

This study specifically employed a grounded theory approach. This study design was selected because this research intends to generate a theory on the organizational

factors that influence hostile workplace behaviors. The purpose of a grounded theory study is to generate a theory of a process, action, or interaction from the views and experiences of study participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory is used when a theory is not available to explain a process, or if a theory is available, it has not been studied within the population of interest (Creswell, 2013). To the best of my knowledge, no research exists on how inclusive workplace culture, bystander intervention, and psychological safety impact hostile workplace behaviors for military members and how other organizational factors influence these constructs and hostile workplace behaviors.

A qualitative grounded research study fulfilled the purpose of this study to explore the organizational factors present in the military that impact hostile workplace behaviors. This research aimed to explore the interactions between any organizational factors in the military that may impact hostile workplace behaviors rather than examining only certain factors as occurs in quantitative research. This researcher did not assume to know how organizational factors impact inclusivity, bystander intervention, psychological safety, and hostile workplace behaviors and, therefore, sought to obtain further understanding of these dynamics. From the information gathered in this study, a theoretical framework was developed that informs intervention efforts to reduce hostile workplace behaviors. This approach provided increased awareness of factors that influence the presence of inclusion, bystander intervention, and psychological safety in the military.

Participants

Participants for this study were currently serving military members of any branch (Navy, Air Force, Marines, Space Force, Army, and Coast Guard). Participants working in any military status were also included (active duty, guard, and reserves). Members who work on a military base only in civilian status were not included. Participants were at least 18 years old, as this is the minimum age for enlistment in the military. Participants were all under age 64, as mandatory retirement occurs at this age. Military members of any race or sex could participate in the study.

Participants were recruited for this study using multiple methods and in multiple settings. Participants were recruited at the Air Force base, where I am assigned by talking to and emailing my colleagues. Participants were recruited at my civilian employment, a large healthcare organization in the Midwest, by discussing my research study at a Veterans Employee Resource Group (ERG) meeting. Lastly, Doctoral students in the School of Psychology at Liberty University were recruited through a recruitment email.

The email invitation sent to prospective participants included the study's description and invited them to participate in a 1-hour individual interview if they were interested in contributing to the study. Members interested in participating were asked to click on a link that brought them to a short demographic questionnaire (Appendix A). The questionnaire asked them about their branch of service, if they are active duty, guard, or reserves, their rank, and years of service. They were also asked to identify their race and sex. Lastly, they were asked to provide their contact information for scheduling purposes. After completing this questionnaire, they received an email indicating that I

would contact them within the next week. From these three recruitment processes, 15 participants agreed to participate and completed the study.

Study Procedures

I obtained approval to conduct this study through Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I then solicit participants through email correspondence and word of mouth. The email invited recipients to participate in a 1-hour interview to discuss how their workplace culture influences hostile workplace behaviors. The email explained that specific occurrences of hostile workplace behaviors will not be the focus of this research. However, the interview will focus on participants' perceptions of how organizational and cultural factors within their work setting may influence hostile workplace behaviors. The email stated that members interested in increasing awareness and understanding of this topic are invited to participate. The email included a link to complete a short questionnaire to identify their military status, race, and sex. Once participants had completed this questionnaire, I contacted them by email to schedule an interview time. Participants were emailed a consent form (appendix B) for their signature after the interview was scheduled.

Participants engaged in semi-structured interviews. They could complete these interviews in person, via video conference, or by phone. The interview questions were emailed to all participants before the interview. Responses were audio recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai transcription software. I also took detailed notes during the interviews. Once the interviews were completed, participants were instructed that if they had any additional thoughts or information to share relevant to the topics discussed, they could email me with this information within the month.

Instrumentation and Measurement

Interview Questions

The interview questions for this research are located in Appendix C. Some of the questions that participants answered are provided below.

1. Please describe what occurs in your office when someone expresses an idea or opinion different from most people in the office. (psychological safety)

2. Please describe what makes someone an insider or experience belonging in your workgroup. (belonging)

3. Please describe how differences are treated in your workgroup or unit. Differences may include differing perspectives, values, cultures, personalities, or demographics. (uniqueness)

4. What barriers, if any, do you perceive in your work culture that may prevent yourself or others from being an active bystander in hostile workplace situations? (bystander effect)

This study's interview questions (see Appendix C) are informed by validated instruments in the construct of interest when available. Questions two and three, which explore inclusive workplace culture, have construct validity as they are formulated from the definition of optimal distinctiveness theory's conceptualizations of belongingness and distinctiveness. Interview question one pertains to psychological safety and has construct validity as it is formulated based on Edmondson's (1990) definition of psychological safety. Question four explores perceptions of factors that influence bystanders' behavior. Question five explores organizational or cultural barriers to inclusivity and psychological

safety. Lastly, question six explores other cultural or organizational factors that are perceived to impact hostile workplace behaviors.

Credibility

Credibility in this study was established through prolonged engagement, self-reflexivity, and critical appraisal. Prolonged engagement and learning of the culture are recommended to increase credibility when conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). I have acquired this awareness of military culture through 20 years of military service. While this increased experience and understanding of military culture may increase credibility, I must also be conscious not to allow my experiences and perceptions to influence how this study's findings are interpreted. To do so, I logged and examined any experiences, assumptions, and biases that might have influenced how I interpreted the research (Strauss, 1987). It was also necessary to create substantive validation by examining the understandings I have derived from previous research and assessing how this understanding can be incorporated into participants' experiences to co-create interpretations (Creswell, 2013).

Lastly, to build credibility, I engaged in a critical appraisal of the findings. Findings were appraised by having participants review the findings to determine if they accurately portray their experiences and meaning. Additionally, the interpretations were critically appraised by assessing if any data contradicted these interpretations (Creswell, 2013). Interpretations were modified until they represented the data obtained by participants.

Transferability

Transferability defines what characteristics a study's findings apply to (Creswell, 2013). Transferability describes the population, context, or other factors to which a study's findings relate. To demonstrate this study's transferability, I defined relevant characteristics, settings, and additional factors that may make participants' experiences unique in my discussion section.

Dependability/Conformability

The dependability and conformability of this study were built by maintaining audit trails for all steps in the research process. Audit trails outline the research process and evolution of codes, categories, and theory (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Audit trails provide a chronological narrative of the progression from interview data to interpretive results. Highly detailed descriptions of interview responses were also maintained to ensure that information was not missed.

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Data Analysis

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Transcription occurred through Otter.ai transcription software. I also took detailed notes and audio-recorded each interview. Transcripts were read several times, and memos were used to note critical concepts and ideas (Creswell, 2013). Three coding phases were employed: open, axial, and selective (Creswell, 2013). This analysis strategy is most appropriate in grounded theory as it consists of developing categories, interconnecting them, and then building a theory that explains the relationship between them (Creswell, 2013).

The open coding phase identified salient data information categories (Creswell, 2013). I used the constant comparative approach to saturate the categories/codes. I knew a category was saturated when no further information or insight arose from interview data

(Creswell, 2013). I then used axial coding to identify themes within the codes and used constant comparison to identify how codes and themes relate. This process informed my identification of the central phenomena that influence hostile workplace behaviors. The central phenomena were determined by the frequency and significance of how they were discussed (Creswell, 2013).

Once the central phenomena were identified, I engaged in selective coding by examining how the themes and codes may relate to or explain the central phenomena (Creswell, 2013). Information obtained through this coding process was organized into a theoretical model of how organizational factors influence hostile workplace behaviors. From the theoretical model identified, I formulated a theory of how categories within the model are related (Creswell, 2013).

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

Delimitations

This study was delimited to those currently serving in the military. It was also delimited to participants who expressed interest in sharing their opinions of how organizational factors impact hostile workplace behaviors. This study has been delimited to this population because the military has a distinct culture from other institutions. To my knowledge, no qualitative research exists about military members' perceptions of how their organizational culture impacts hostile workplace behaviors, psychological safety, inclusive workplace culture, and bystander behaviors. This study has been delimited to currently serving military members so that present-day organizational factors can be explored.

Assumptions

It was an assumption of this research that participants did participate in the study with ill intentions to distort its findings. Instead, it was assumed that all participating members did so because they wished to help increase understanding of the topic or, at minimum, did not wish to sabotage the study's aims. This study also assumed that all participants had enough understanding of the topic of hostile workplace behaviors to provide relevant responses.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that it is not quantitative and, therefore, cannot show correlations. If the topic of this study was examined through quantitative methods, the results could show the correlation between predefined organizational factors and hostile workplace behaviors. However, as discussed previously, quantitative data exists regarding hostile workplace behaviors in this setting. What is lacking is a greater context on this problem and the way in which military members perceive how organizational factors influence hostile workplace behaviors.

Another limitation of any research, particularly qualitative research, is social desirability. Participants may not want to be perceived as looking weak or too sensitive. My status as a military member may have impacted participants' social desirability. My military status may have increased social desirability because I may encounter some participants in the future. Conversely, it may have decreased social desirability as military members may be hesitant to be as open with a researcher who is external to the military out of fear that the concerns they expressed may be misunderstood.

Summary

The methods developed for this research study were selected to address best the present gaps in the research literature on hostile workplace behaviors. The research questions explored how military members perceive organizational factors influencing hostile workplace behaviors. The research design allowed a better understanding of the problem by exploring participants' perceptions and experiences. A grounded theory approach allowed theory to emerge on how significant categories are related and inform a model to address hostile workplace behaviors best. The following chapter will provide the results obtained from this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

The following chapter will review the study's purpose and research questions. I will then provide a brief overview of the study's data collection process. I will then discuss the descriptive results of my sample and conclude the chapter by discussing my analytic process and the study's findings.

I used grounded theory methodology in this study to explore military members' perceptions of how the military organizational culture influences hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. I also explored perceptions of inclusive workplace culture, psychological safety, and bystander intervention and how these constructs influence hostile workplace behaviors. In this study, I addressed the following research questions:

1. How is psychological safety reinforced and deterred within the military organizational culture?

2. How is inclusive workplace culture reinforced and deterred within the military organizational culture?

3. How does the military organizational culture influence bystander behaviors?

4. How are hostile workplace behaviors deterred within the military organizational culture?

5. How are hostile workplace behaviors reinforced within the military organizational culture?

Descriptive Results

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 currently serving military personnel. The study participants were recruited using three sources. The first recruitment method was requesting participation from my colleagues at the Air Force reserves base I am assigned to. From this recruitment, I obtained seven participants. I also recruited military members by discussing my study at a Veterans Employee Resource Group (ERG) meeting at my civilian workplace, a large healthcare organization in the Midwest. I obtained three participants from this recruitment. Lastly, an email was disseminated to doctoral students in the School of Psychology at Liberty University; I obtained five participants from this recruitment.

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics of the participants in my study. All participants interviewed have at least 16 years of military service. There were five females and ten males. Eleven participants identified as White, three as Black, and one as mixed race. There were nine participants from the Air Force, one from the Marines, one from the Navy, and four from the Army. Nine participants are officers, and six are enlisted. The range of enlisted ranking is E-6 to E-9, while the range of officer ranking is O-3 to O-6. Two participants are active-duty members, while 13 participants are guard/reserve members. All participants have been assigned a pseudonym to keep their identity confidential.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Name	Rank	Sex	Race	Years of Service	Military Branch	Military Status
Nadine	O5	Female	White	16+	Air Force	Reserves
David	O3	Male	White	16+	Army	Guard

Paul	O3	Male	Other	16+	Marines	Reserves
Noah	E9	Male	White	16+	Army	Active Duty
Jim	O4	Male	White	16+	Navy	Reserves
Sara	O4	Female	White	16+	Air Force	Reserves
Steve	O5	Male	White	16+	Air Force	Reserves
Damien	E-7	Male	Black	16+	Air Force	Reserves
Will	E7	Male	Black	16+	Air Force	Reserves
Chris	E7	Male	White	16+	Air Force	Reserves
Kayla	O5	Female	White	16+	Army	Guard
Racheal	E8	Female	White	16+	Air Force	Reserves
Sharon	O4	Female	White	16+	Army	Guard
Jermaine	E6	Male	Black	16+	Air Force	Reserves
Mark	O6	Male	White	16+	Air Force	Active Duty

Study Findings

Data Preparation

I conducted interviews with participants via phone, in-person, or video conferencing. I recorded and transcribed the interviews using Otter.ai and took detailed notes during interviews to safeguard against transcription errors. I then sent the transcriptions to participants to assess accuracy. I then uploaded the transcriptions into the coding software system Delve.

Grounded Theory Analysis

Grounded theory is a research methodology used to generate a theory to explain how a process occurs. Unlike many other forms of research, grounded theory aims to

develop a theory based on the research data iteratively rather than exploring the research data to confirm an existing theory (Omana et al., 2010). In my research, I utilized grounded theory to generate a theory on how organizational factors influence hostile workplace behaviors.

The interview transcriptions that I analyzed consisted of participants' responses to interview questions found in Appendix C. Participants' responses to these questions assisted me in identifying themes of what attitudes, norms, and values are present in the military that influence psychological safety, inclusion, bystander behaviors, and hostile workplace behaviors. Questions 1-4 and their subquestions assisted me in identifying organizational norms related to psychological safety, inclusion, bystander behaviors, and hostile workplace behaviors and assessing participants' perceptions and attitudes towards these norms. Questions 5 and 6 and their subquestions helped to identify any additional relevant factors that may influence psychological safety, inclusion, bystander behaviors, and hostile workplace behaviors. By analyzing the responses to these interview questions, I was able to identify categories of codes, themes, and central phenomena present in the norms, perceptions, and attitudes expressed by research participants. The categories I identified and how they relate informed my model of how organizational factors influence hostile workplace behaviors.

I began this analysis by reading through the transcript after each interview I conducted. I used open coding to identify the salient pieces of information in the transcript that would help answer my research questions. I used a word or brief phrase to code each piece of information. I then conducted and analyzed additional interviews using open coding and a constant comparison approach to assess how new codes support,

expand upon, or contradict previously identified codes. After conducting and analyzing five interviews, I noticed many participants referenced in their responses what the military culture was like 10-20 years ago. This reference to prior military culture appeared relevant to further understanding my research topic. Therefore, I modified my questions to include, "Have you noticed changes in how these things are responded to during your time in the military." This question was posed three times in the interview after participants answered questions about psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention. From analyzing interviews that included this additional question, additional information emerged that identified how the military culture has changed and how these changes have influenced hostile workplace culture.

I then conducted and analyzed an additional four interviews. After analyzing these interviews and using a constant comparison approach with my previously analyzed interviews, I noticed that many participants referenced the perception of biased treatment. I wanted to understand further what may be causing this perception. I did not add a question about biased treatment out of concern that this could be a leading question. However, when participants brought up biased treatment, I asked additional probing questions to assess what they believed was the reason some members appeared to be treated differently than others. From this probing, I was able to obtain additional information on participants' perceptions of biased treatment in the military and the influence this has on hostile workplace behaviors.

I then conducted and analyzed an additional four interviews and compared codes from these interviews with previously identified codes. The current interview questions appeared to appropriately explore my research topics of interest, so no further

modifications were made to the interview questions. I continued to conduct and analyze interviews until I reached theoretical saturation. I knew I had reached theoretical saturation when no new codes or expansion upon previous codes occurred from analyzing additional transcripts.

Through iteratively analyzing transcripts, I identified and continuously refined the codes that represent the critical factors that impact psychological safety, inclusion, bystander behaviors, and hostile workplace behaviors. Tables 2 and 3 show the codes identified through open coding. Table 2 illustrates codes related to positive outcomes (reinforcement of psychological safety, inclusion, bystander intervention, and deterrence of hostile workplace behaviors). Table 3 demonstrates the codes related to adverse outcomes (deterrence of psychological safety, inclusion, bystander intervention, and reinforcement of hostile workplace behaviors).

The number next to each code indicates how many participants expressed this sentiment in their interview. It is important to note that the numbers next to each code indicate how many participants expressed this opinion; however, this does not suggest that only this number of people believe this to be true, while the other participants disagree with this opinion. Instead, this number only indicates how many participants verbalized this opinion without being directly asked if they thought it to be true.

Table 2

Codes Related to Positive Outcomes

Positive Outcome	Codes
Psychological Safety Reinforcements	Mistakes are learning opportunities. (9)
	Not knowing is a teaching moment. (6)
	Problems are solved together. (10)
	Ideas are encouraged. (4)

Inclusion Reinforcement	Leadership encourages (1)
	Caring for others is prioritized. (4)
	Inclusion is built through mutual trust. (7)
	Inclusion is built through interdependence. (5)
	Inclusion is built through being well-liked. (1)
	Inclusion is built through a strong work ethic. (9)
	Differences are respected. (9)
	Everyone is given a voice. (2)
	Differing ideas are welcomed. (7)
	Inclusion is built through commonalities. (3)
	Inclusion is built by avoiding political or divisive topics. (3)
	Inclusion is built through shared experiences. (2)
	Inclusion is built through team activities. (4)
Bystander Intervention Reinforcements	Culture of caring for others (3)
	Culture of protecting others (3)
	Intervention is taken seriously. (7)
	Leadership encouragement to intervene (8)
	Culture values team/and service ethos (4)
Hostile Workplace Deterrents	Heavily communicated zero tolerance (6)
	Reports are taken seriously. (4)
	Culture of caring/supporting others (7)
	Safe to bring up concerns (5)
	Leadership support (7)
	Service values/ethos (3)
	Inclusive/team focus (8)

Table 3

Codes Related to Adverse Outcomes

Adverse Outcome	Codes
Psychological Safety Barriers	"Ingroup" and "Outgroup" differences in treatment (3)
	Rank/power differences (2)
	Fear of looking incompetent (2)
	Fear of stigma if not sure how to do something (4)
	New ideas are not welcome. (4)
	Mistakes result in blame and avoidance. (5)
	Mistakes put lives in danger. (6)
Inclusion Barriers	Preferential treatment impedes inclusion. (3)
	Barriers to inclusion for females (1)
	Barriers to inclusion for people whose values are not consistent with the military (2)

	Barriers to inclusion for people who are passive (3)
	Barriers to inclusion because of rank/status (2)
	Barriers to inclusion due to lack of diversity/ homogenous group (3)
	Barriers to inclusion because of different beliefs (3)
	Barriers to inclusion because of race (1)
	Barriers to inclusion for people who are not social (4)
	Poor performers are excluded. (9)
	Lack of time to build inclusion (2)
Bystander Intervention Barriers	Status/rank creates barriers to intervene. (7)
	Fear of occupational consequences creates barriers to intervene (3)
	Fear of social consequences creates barriers to intervene. (9)
	Bystander ambivalence creates barriers to intervene. (3)
Hostile Workplace Reinforcements	Power imbalances reinforce workplace hostility. (2)
	Social norms of masculinity reinforce workplace hostility. (2)
	Social norms of aggressiveness reinforce workplace hostility. (2)

I then identified themes within the codes by iteratively assessing commonalities between codes and assessing how they relate in axial coding. Table 4 summarizes themes derived from codes related to positive organizational outcomes, and Table 5 summarizes themes derived from codes related to adverse organizational outcomes.

Table 4

Summary of Themes Related to Positive Organizational Outcomes

Psychological Safety Reinforcements	Inclusion Reinforcement	Bystander Intervention Reinforcements	Hostile Workplace Deterrents
Mistakes are not treated punitively but rather responded to as teaching opportunities.	Emphasizing our commonalities and interdependence with one another	Communicating zero tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors	Leadership support

Not knowing how to do something or asking questions is met with help and support.	Caring for your fellow service member (the wingman concept)	Looking out for and caring for your fellow service member (the wingman concept)	An inclusive team-based focus that values and supports members
Ideas are elicited and encouraged.	Creating team bonding and team ethos	Wanting the best for your workplace, service ethos	The presence of psychological safety to bring up concerns
Problems are responded to collaboratively and supportively.	Valuing every member		
	Valuing a strong work ethic		

Table 5

Summary of Themes Related to Adverse Organizational Outcomes

Psychological Safety Deterrents	Inclusion Deterrents	Bystander Intervention Deterrents	Hostile Workplace Reinforcements
Openness to ideas is limited.	An excessively performance-based focus	Perceived social and occupational consequences	Preferential and non-supportive treatment
Mistakes are treated punitively for some people and in some work settings.	The perception of preferential treatment	Power disparities/in-group vs. out-group barriers	
Fear of negative appraisal or being viewed as incompetent			

I then used selected coding to identify the central phenomenon for each construct of interest. Selective coding was done by iteratively comparing codes and themes within and across research questions to identify core categories that explain how they relate. From this process, the central phenomena of caring/support, valuing, and unity emerged

in areas related to positive organizational outcomes. In contrast, the central phenomena of divisiveness, judgments, and a lack of support appeared in areas related to adverse organizational outcomes.

Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the central phenomena identified in this grounded theory approach and how themes and codes identified in this study relate to the central phenomenon and explain the research questions. The left columns in these tables indicate research question topics. The top row indicates the central phenomena identified. Rows beneath the central phenomenon indicate the themes and codes that represent that central phenomenon. Codes are in unbolded text, while themes are in bolded text. Many themes and codes fit into more than one of the central phenomenon categories; however, they were only placed into the one that most closely represents this phenomenon to avoid repetitiveness.

Table 6

How Central Phenomena Relate to Theme and Codes in Constructs Related to Positive Organizational Outcomes

	Caring/Support	Valuing	Unity
Psychological Safety Reinforcements	**Mistakes are not treated punitively but rather are responded to as teaching opportunities.**	**Ideas are elicited and encouraged.**	**Problems are responded to collaboratively and supportively.**
	Not knowing how to do something or asking questions is met with help and support.	Ideas are encouraged.	Problems are solved together.

	Mistakes are learning opportunities.		
	Not knowing is a teaching moment.		
Inclusion Reinforcement	**Caring for your fellow service members (the wingman concept)**	**Valuing every member**	**Emphasizing our commonalities and interdependence with one another**
	Leadership encourages	**Valuing a strong work ethic**	**Creating team bonding and team ethos**
	Caring for others is prioritized.	Inclusion is built through interdependence.	Inclusion is built through commonalities.
			Inclusion is built through interdependence.
	Inclusion is built through mutual trust.	Inclusion is built through being well-liked.	Inclusion is built by avoiding political or divisive topics.
		Inclusion is built through a strong work ethic.	Inclusion is built through shared experiences.
		Differences are respected.	Inclusion is built through team activities.
		Everyone is given a voice.	
		Differing ideas are welcomed.	
Bystander Reinforcements	**Communicating zero tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors**	**Wanting the best for your workplace, service ethos**	**Looking out for and caring for your fellow service member (the wingman concept)**

	Culture of caring for others	Culture values team/and service ethos
	Culture of protecting others	
	Intervention is taken seriously.	
	Leadership encouragement to intervene	
Hostile Workplace Prevention	**Leadership support**	**An inclusive team-based focus that values and supports members**
	The presence of psychological safety to bring up concerns	Service values/ethos
	Heavily communicated zero-tolerance	Inclusive/team focus
	Reports are taken seriously.	
	Culture of caring/supporting others	
	Safe to bring up concerns	
	Leadership support	

Table 7

How Central Phenomena Relate to Theme and Codes in Constructs Related to Adverse

Outcomes

	Divisiveness	Judgments	Lack of Support
Psychological Safety Barriers	**Mistakes are treated punitively for some people and in some work settings.**	**Fear of negative appraisal or being viewed as incompetent**	**Openness to ideas is limited.**
	"Ingroup" and "Outgroup" differences in treatment	Fear of looking incompetent	New ideas are not welcome.
	Rank/power differences	Fear of stigma if not sure how to do something	Mistakes result in blame and avoidance.
			Mistakes put lives in danger.
Inclusion Barriers	**The perception of preferential treatment**	**An excessively performance-based focus**	Lack of time to build inclusion
	Preferential treatment impedes inclusion.	Poor performers are excluded.	
	Barriers to inclusion for females		
	Barriers to inclusion for people whose values are not consistent with the military		
	Barriers to inclusion for people who are passive		
	Barriers to inclusion because of rank/status		
	Barriers to inclusion due to lack of diversity/ homogenous group		
	Barriers to inclusion because of different beliefs		

	Barriers to inclusion because of race		
	Barriers to inclusion for people who are not social		
Bystander Intervention Barriers	**Power disparities/in-group vs. out-group barriers**	Fear of occupational consequences creates barriers to intervene.	**Perceived social and occupational consequences**
	Status/rank creates a barrier to intervene.	Fear of social consequences creates barriers to intervene.	Bystander ambivalence creates a barrier to intervention.
Hostile Workplace Reinforcements	**Preferential and non-supportive treatment**		Social norms of masculinity reinforce workplace hostility.
	Power imbalances reinforce workplace hostility.		Social norms of aggressiveness reinforce workplace hostility.

Based on the information obtained from open, axial, and selective coding. I identified the core phenomena that explain how the military organizational culture influences psychological safety, inclusion, bystander behavior, and hostile workplace behaviors:

1. Military members perceive psychological safety, inclusion, bystander intervention, and the discouragement of hostile workplace behaviors as being reinforced when they feel that they and others are supported and valued.

2. Military members perceive psychological safety, inclusion, bystander intervention, and the discouragement of hostile workplace behaviors as being

deterred when they feel that they and others are not supported and biased

treatment occurs.

From these core phenomena, I constructed the theory that the military organizational

culture influences hostile workplace behaviors through its level of support towards and

among all members.

Research Question One Results

The first research question in this study was, how is psychological safety

reinforced or deterred within the military organizational culture? All participants could

identify aspects of their work culture that increased psychological safety (the ability to

express ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes). Common themes identified by

participants that increase psychological safety include a) mistakes are not treated

punitively but rather responded to as teaching opportunities. b) not knowing how to do

something or asking questions is met with help and support. c) Ideas are elicited and

encouraged, and d) problems are responded to collaboratively and supportively. Several

members also identified aspects of their work culture that deter psychological safety. The

themes identified were a) mistakes are treated punitively for some people and in some

work settings, b) openness to ideas is limited, and c) the fear of negative appraisal or

being viewed as incompetent

**Theme 1 Psychological Safety Reinforcements: Mistakes are not Treated Punitively
but Rather Responded to as Teaching Opportunities.**

All but one participant provided feedback that their organization responds to

mistakes supportively. Participants described that when mistakes occur, members are

encouraged to admit them and that the mistake is treated as a learning opportunity rather than being treated punitively. Participants indicated that when they or others make mistakes, they perceive that it is safe to come forward and admit the mistake, and their doing so will be responded to constructively. Nadine (O5, Air Force) described how mistakes are accepted in her organization:

It's just understood that we're all human and we make mistakes, and that's going to happen so long as you learn from it. That's the key. I think it's a reasonable belief that everybody will make mistakes and should make mistakes.

Jim (E-9, Navy) explained the presence of a work culture in which there is an assumption of positive intent:

There's assumed positive intent, which is something that we like kind of tossed around as a term quite a bit. Before we jump to conclusions or we judge someone, we have to assume that they were trying to do the right thing until it's kind of proven that they weren't.

Sharon (O4, Army) normalized the occurrence of mistakes:

Mistakes kind of just come with the territory. So, we've had to just roll with it. And you know, you try to look for success, but if they do make a mistake, then you use that as a training moment to help them along the way.

Kayla (O5, Army) described how acknowledging potential mistakes is encouraged:

I think that the first thing I can think of is like our commitment to acknowledging when people do bring to light near misses. You know, from a medical perspective, things like that. So like, we almost did this wrong, but we are able to stop it beforehand. You know, that kind of stuff, safety issues and things like that. You know, people get awards and recognized for things like that, which I think helps sort of build that psychological safety.

Steve (O5, Air Force) described how he encourages others to bring forward mistakes.

Most mistakes, you know, I really do try to give people the benefit of the doubt that they're innocent mistakes, even if they're repetitive mistakes in the sense that it's not from a lack of effort or care. So I, you know, I always like to foster an environment of, you know, having a work center where if there's mistakes that we can, you know, talk through it, do some reeducation, maybe explain things in a different way to help people understand how to do that task a little bit better.

Jermaine (E6, Air Force) discussed mistakes as teaching moments. "Mistakes are treated as a teaching moment. They (people in the office) are taught how to do it correctly or something like that. I mean, everybody makes mistakes, so it's not a big deal."

Theme 2 Psychological Safety Reinforcements: Not Knowing How to Do Something or Asking Questions is Met with Help and Support

All members expressed that in their current work culture when someone does not know how to do something or asks questions, they are responded to with help and

support. This theme describes participants' perception that others are willing to invest their time and resources to help each other obtain additional training, understanding, and guidance and that this is done encouragingly. Mark (O6, Air Force) described the help provided in his unit when someone struggles to understand how to perform their job functions.

> We try to teach them, motivate them, encourage them. We try to bring them along with us to observe, you know, left seat, right seat, sort of. Watch me do it or instruct them on how to do it, and that's repeated.

He described that if this still does not remedy the problems, barriers may be explored.

> So, like, if you do that multiple times and the person still doesn't know how to do a task, then you start to have hard conversations with that person about, you know, what's the problem here? You know, are you struggling to learn? Is it not your natural gift set, or skill set, or what? Why are you struggling to meet this task? And then, you know, if it's a mismatch, like they're in the wrong job, then we can reassign them to another job or find them another position. If it's really just a training deficiency or competency deficiency, we try to resolve that through training or sending them to a class or something like that. And if it's still unresolved, then we'll look to remove them or reassign them.

Chris (E7, Air Force) discussed the support members provide to others who do not know how to do something at his reserve base:

> I think this is fairly common because you have a disparity between those who work full time and those who are traditional reservists. Yeah, you know, I was

trained on this once before, and I was fully qualified; however, I just don't really remember. Usually, they get a lot of support from the full-time staff, and they kind of walk them through it because there's an understanding that they only serve (as a reservist) two days a month and some tasks you may only do once a year.

Theme 3 Psychological Safety Reinforcements: Ideas are Elicited and Encouraged in the Work Setting.

All participants commented that different ideas are welcomed and encouraged in at least some areas of their setting through such methods as leadership eliciting ideas from others, rewarding new ideas, and being open to implementing new ideas. Mark (O6, Air Force) normalized the human fear surrounding presenting a new idea to a group but also acknowledges the presence of an environment in which it is safe to do so:

> You know, I say the personal risk because it can feel risky to speak up for the first time, and it can feel risky to put your ideas out there in a room full of people that may have a different opinion or different kinds of experiences to draw on. But I think, when those voices speak up, it's welcomed, you know, even if the people sitting around the table don't agree, it's at least heard and understood.

He discussed that being tactful in approach is helpful, "If done tactfully right so using the right tactics, so, I'm not disagreeing in an aggressive way but suggesting an alternative perspective or viewpoint. I would say most leaders I've had have been very receptive to disagreements or dissent."

Chris (E7, Air Force) discussed how intuitive thinking is rewarded in his organization.

I will say the maintenance group specifically really encourages like intuitive

thinking. And they reward innovation. Okay, so there are awards that are given

out for Innovator of the Year, and so they like to find people that are seeking to

develop new ways of looking at the same problem to better, you know, our

processes within the group.

Will (E7, Air Force) expressed the openness to trying new ideas in his work setting:

I think we do really good brainstorming and thinking outside the box. If I'm the

senior, and most knowledgeable person there, I welcome the other ideas and stuff

like that as long as it falls within the regulation. Let's give it a try and see how it

works. Because you never know what kind of good ideas you have. So, if somebody

has a good idea, we can try it as long as it's within our guidelines.

Theme 4 Psychological Safety Reinforcements: Problems are Responded to Collaboratively and Supportively.

All participants report that in their work setting when someone expresses a

problem, it is addressed positively by providing help and support to the person

experiencing the problem. They also discussed that problems are addressed

collaboratively and that the member is often connected to needed services as a result of

expressing a problem to others. Will (E7, Air Force) described how support is offered in

his work area to co-workers experiencing problems:

We have a pretty good unit. So, when those issues come up, whether it's a personal thing or teamwork, we have sit-downs. There are times when we walk into our office and have a sit-down conversation with the person having an issue, whether it's family, whether it's relationship, whether it's just dealing with stuff at work.

David (O3, Army) discussed that members are connected to resources when issues arise.

Sometimes, it's, uh, behavioral health problems, and the soldier might not have the money or the insurance to cover counseling. Or maybe it's financial struggles, and there's a program that, you know, with a signature, I can help them have access to some sort of financial assistance.

Jermaine (E6, Air Force) shared that problems are addressed with an open-minded perspective:

With an open mind. We'll see what the problem is, and we'll talk about the problem. And depending on what the problem is, it may go in one direction or another direction. So, if it's something to do with, let's say, personal issues, that person may get recommended to talk to someone else outside of our unit.

Theme 5 Psychological Safety Barriers: Perception that for Some Members or in Some Work Settings, Mistakes are Treated More Punitively

Conversely, to theme one, mistakes are treated as teaching opportunities; some participants responded that mistakes are treated punitively for some members and in some work settings through things such as singling out members, ridicule, and harsh disciplinary actions. Will (E7, Air Force) expressed that in his particular office that he supervises when mistakes occur, they "work through it, sit down, and talk it out. We figure it out, and we move past it." He, however, reports that at his unit level, when he makes a mistake, this is responded to differently:

> If I make a mistake, or if there's a mistake made in our shop, they (leadership) will go on a witch hunt to figure out who did it. In the morning meetings, they are screaming. I've gotten into many fights, and they've gone off because they all assume it's me. It is assumed every time that it is always my fault.

Damien (E7, Air Force) reported that in his present unit, "mistakes are treated as learning opportunities." However, in the past, mistakes were sometimes met with ridicule. He formally worked in a maintenance unit up until 2018. He describes that in maintenance, mistakes were often met with ridicule:

> People would make jokes about it by saying, "I can't believe you don't know that after you did such and such," or "Are you sure you know what you're doing?" Kind of side comments said in a joking manner. But they gave they gave kind of a dig.

Sara (O4, Reserves) discussed that how mistakes are responded to in her organization is dependent on how well-liked you are and if you are in the "in-group" or "out-group." She reported, "I'm definitely in, so I feel safe, but I have seen people receive what seems like pretty harsh disciplinary actions against them in situations."

She contrasts this with the lack of disciplinary action against someone in the "in-group."

> I was a bit frustrated, last year we had a member who had a pretty severe incident, and it was recommended by the JAG (legal office) to remove one or two levels of rank from this person, but it was the commander's decision, and our commander ended up not choosing that, and the person was like really not punished at all, which was surprising to me. But I think that person is like kind of on the, you know, inside of things. So, it depends.

Theme 6 Psychological Safety Barrier: Openness to Ideas is Limited

While all participants commented that ideas are welcome in at least some areas of their work setting, five participants caveated that there is also, at times, a culture in which new ideas are met with resistance. One of the participants reported that openness to ideas varies by workgroup, while a couple of other members reported that ideas are well received by people who are liked or in the "in-group" in the unit; however, they are not well received by others. Steve (O5, Air Force) remarked that there have been challenges in changing the culture.

It's a culture that has been there for a long time, and there's a lot of folks that have been in for as long, or longer than I have that, uh, have a really hard time changing their way of thought, and the way things have been done because it's comfortable for them.

Steve (O5, Air Force) did go on to say that there have been improvements in receptiveness to new ideas during his time in the military:

I think that mindset overall has changed to a large extent. Especially with the Global War on Terror and the way that, umm, we operated in the Middle East, we were forced to trust our smaller unit leaders quite a bit as we became a lot more decentralized. We had smaller unit leaders running patrols and missions and making decisions that previously they weren't responsible for making.

Noah (E9, Army) reported that the openness to new ideas is dependent on the situation:

If your operating model is not outdated, if it is still effective, then there is zero room for you to bring in your good ideas on how to change. And I know, I know, I said that very strongly. But again, what do you need, right? You don't need a bunch of amateur men trying to figure out how to reload their weapons in the middle of a firefight. What you need is for them to keep rounds moving downrange. However, if you have people bleeding out and dying of wounds, what you need is young infantrymen to find new ways to stop the bleeding faster.

Sara (O4, Reserves) discussed a lack of change to processes. "Being in the military, like we've done things the same way forever, and a lot of times it can be frustrating, and it doesn't make sense why we still do things in an archaic way."

Jim (O4, Navy) reported that some teams he has worked with in the military have been open to new ideas while others are not. He reports that on the teams where they are not open to new ideas:

> It creates a stigma around being a person who would suggest something that might be, you know, controversial in terms of process improvement or a different outlook on how to do things. And so, what's been the results in some of the programs that I've worked in is that they seem to not have matured for five to seven years. So, they kind of feel like they're just kind of rehashing the same kind of thing that they've been doing.

Sara (O4, Reserves) and Jim (O4, Navy) discussed how a person's social status within the unit may impact their ability to present new ideas:

Sara (O4, Reserves) shared, "Honestly, there's probably people in our squadron that don't feel comfortable having a differing opinion or offering different insights just because they're not sure if they're in or out (in–group or out-group)."

Jim (O4, Navy) reported:

> So, if you're viewed as an insider, if you're accepted, your views are welcome. And if you're not, then you might have the right idea, but it will be met with skepticism before it's accepted. And that's the soft cultural kind of way of things. It's like if you're part of it, if you're on the inside, okay, we can kind of trust what you're saying and doing and ideas and thoughts you bring to the table.

Theme 7 Psychological Safety Barriers: Fear of Negative Appraisal or Being Viewed as Incompetent

Although all members report that when a member does not know how to do something, they are helped and supported, several members also reported that because the military work culture is highly performance-oriented, there can still be a stigma attached to not knowing how to do something. Respondents discussed that this can create a fear of being perceived as incompetent and may deter people from admitting they are unsure how to do something or need additional help. Jim (O4, Navy) remarked on the assumption people have in his office that they should know and not have to ask questions:

> They're adults, you know, they're like, I would say older, meaning like mid-30s and above, and nobody's ever said this, but I do think that they feel that they are supposed to be competent and that if they have to ask questions, then there's a reluctance to ask too many questions because they'll be viewed as incompetent or unable, like not knowing something that everybody else should know, and I don't really understand that because it doesn't make sense to me. But I do see it all the time, and then later, when something comes up, we're like, why? What happened? Why didn't you ask questions?

Paul (O3, Marines) commented on the manner in which mistakes are addressed in the Marines:

> I don't really know a professionally appropriate way to say this, but (there is) a lot of shaming, kind of an unofficial model that pain retains, and if somebody makes a mistake or is unable to complete a task that is reasonably within their purview, there's a lot of mockery, and I'd say demonstrate (that you can do something) or you're getting highlighted just as a joke, and we laugh about it and move on. But then there's a really high chance that you don't do that again, and you figure it out.

He goes on to discuss the stigma of lacking proficiency in the Marines:

> I think a barrier to psychological safety is that there's just this stigma or negative
> stereotype with lacking proficiency. Although the way to correct it is to ask for
> help, so that doesn't make a lot of sense in my mind and probably not yours either.

He reports that remedial programs exist for people who struggle to understand how to perform aspects of their job, but those who need these programs are stigmatized. "One is the technical proficiency that's expected and how if you can't deliver whatever the standard is, you are definitely judged. There's a stigma around remediation in the Marine Corps."

Sharon (O4, Army) discussed the lack of vulnerability present in the military:

> The vulnerability that comes with allowing people kind of to see your
> vulnerabilities and to see that you don't know. There's not a lot of vulnerability in
> the military, right? And so, like, there's so many people who have this facade of,"
> I got it all figured out," you know? It's like, okay, that's great, but do you really?
> You know, you're hitting your knees. A lot of people end up having anxiety,
> depression, things like that because it's almost like a dissociation trying to get
> through, so they don't feel safe to share their feelings. You know, that comes with
> stigma and all that as well.

She went on to discuss the fear of looking incompetent for asking questions:

> I think that's just getting back to that fear of not belonging, like, there's no stupid
> questions. Yes, there are, like if you have a question, it tells what you know and
> what you don't know. If it's something that people expect that you should know by
> now, I think you question that person, and sometimes even asking can be

intimidating because you don't want your peers to think that you don't know what you're doing.

Summary of Psychological Safety Reinforcements and Deterrents

All respondents expressed the presence of factors in their work environment that increase psychological safety. Most respondents reported experiencing support when they make mistakes, do not know how to do something, have an idea, or are experiencing a problem. Some respondents, however, perceive a lack of support when they make a mistake or have a differing idea. Some respondents also expressed a fear of looking incompetent.

Research Question Two Results

The second research question was, how is inclusive workplace culture reinforced and deterred within the military organizational culture? The themes identified in this section are that the military creates inclusion by a) emphasizing our commonalities and interdependence with one another, b) caring for your fellow service member (the wingman concept), c) creating team bonding and team ethos, d) valuing every member, and e) valuing a strong work ethic. Themes identified that deter inclusion include a) an excessively performance-based focus and b) the perception of preferential treatment.

Theme 8 Inclusion Reinforcement: Focus on Common Military Culture and Interdependence

Several participants discussed that being in the military and the values instilled through military service break down barriers to inclusion. The military culture was perceived to allow members to transcend their individual experiences and unite on something more significant: dedication to the mission. This theme describes an interdependence between members where working effectively together is more important than individual and group differences and where anything that could be perceived as divisive is avoided. Mark (O6, Air Force) discussed how military training forces members to move past their own experiences and focus on working with others to be a part of something bigger than themselves:

From day one, that you enter the military, I'm talking about basic training day one. You're sleeping next to people that are different from you. They're from a different part of the country. They're from a different socioeconomic class. They're from a different belief system. And you don't care about any of that; all you care about is getting through basic training, and you quickly learn that your ability to get through basic training is tied to their success, and their help and your ability to help them and all those things.

So I think you immediately, you know, push those things to a side for something that's bigger, and that's mutual success, and then that sort of continues as you come out of basic training with a sense of camaraderie, collectivism in the sense that you all survive this together and you now are part of something bigger than yourselves. And that carries over into your military service. You know, when you show up to your first duty station, you're surrounded by people who don't look

like you, who came from different parts of the country and, in some cases,

different parts of the world, but you're working together.

You know, you're trained. If you're competent, you do your job well, and the

same for them. Like you don't look at those other differences, they don't stand out

to you necessarily. You know, so I think the military is good at pulling you out of

what you had. You may have had a very insular upbringing, or, you know, life up

to that point, and you are then put into something that's much bigger than that.

Steve (O5, Air Force) discussed his perception that the military culture breaks down

barriers and increases opportunities:

I always tell people I think that military service is the best thing to help break

down like racial, and religious, and cultural barriers. You know, because we all

wear the same clothes, we all do the same job. You know, personally, I feel that

I've seen people of different cultures and different races have better chances to get

a supervisory role and get promoted than in the civilian world.

Several members also discussed that in the military, topics that could be seen as divisive

are avoided. Steve (O5, Air Force) shares how he does not engage in certain topics of

conversation at work:

I'm always big on trying to make sure, the best I can, to have some kind of

professional barriers. You know, I don't like talking about religion at work with

my peers, or especially people who work for me. I don't like talking about

anything that can turn into like a political or emotional topic.

Jim (O4, Navy) also discusses how personal opinions on things that could be viewed as

divisive are put aside in the military:

But being in the military, we're kind of taught to, like, put those things aside and just

focus on the mission which is what I do. So, we rarely get into like personal

conversations. If it does happen, it's because we work with civilians, so if it does

happen, you know, sometimes they (the civilians) say things that are controversial, or

maybe I don't agree with, and I really don't engage in that.

Sharon (O4, Army) discussed that these topics are avoided in her unit to create unit

cohesion. "We typically steer clear of things like politics and religion and things like that,

you know, just because we don't want to create any kind of breakdown to unit cohesion

and start putting people on different sides."

Theme 9 Inclusion Reinforcement: Caring for your Fellow Service Member

(Wingman Concept)

Several members discussed how the military value of caring for and looking out

for your fellow service members increases inclusion in the military. Every branch of

service has guiding principles of caring for your fellow service members. For the Air

Force, this is called the wingman concept, and for the Army, this is called a battle buddy.

The essence of this principle is that military members should ensure the safety and well-

being of their fellow service members. Nadine (O5, Air Force) explained how the

wingman concept increases inclusion:

So, I think that's where the wingman concept comes into play, to, like, kind of

look out for your wingman. Being inclusive to the individual who maybe isn't

always part of the big groups and going out to do different things but making sure

that they're still included somehow.

Jermaine (E6, Air Force) described the welcoming environment in his work setting:

I think everybody feels like a belonger, or an insider, or part of the group. I don't think anybody feels like an outsider. But I think that comes with being welcoming and like hey, if you have questions and basically giving people a voice to feel comfortable to speak their mind and things like that. I think that kind of makes you feel welcome and just being helpful to that person.

Will (E7, Air Force) discussed the respect that occurs for others in his office:

I think the thing that builds inside or belonging in our particular unit is just trust. And that trust is built, like I said, by negatives and positives. It isn't just this is a really good person who is really personable; it is built off of like, hey, if I mess up, I'm gonna help you and vice versa. And we build on that situation; it isn't about you. There are really good people, but can you trust them? So, if I come to them with something, and I said, hey, I'm having a real problem with this, and I don't know how to work through it. So, I'm going to ask for your help. And then when you can get that help and, you can get empathy and compassion with it.

Theme 10 Inclusion Reinforcement: Focus on Team Building, Team Ethos, Shared Experiences, and Creating Community

Many members discussed how the military's focus on team ethos has helped to build inclusivity. Participants discussed how team bonding and a sense of community are achieved in the military through team activities, shared experiences, and a team ethos that values maintaining quality teams and relationships. Sharon (O4, Army) reports that in her unit, they engage in team activities to bring people together:

Every year, we create T-shirts and that kind of brings a sense of belonging. You know, when you have something like that, and you can wear it like with pride,

and we all have the feeling, like that's one thing. Also, what we do at least once a

year is we all come together at what we call Camp Dawson, which is like a huge

training facility. We'll have a campfire and cookout. You know, play cornhole,

things like that. And every Christmas party, people can bring their families down,

we have Santa come, we have a big line, and people just wear civilian clothes and

kind of get to know each other.

Kayla (O5, Army) explained how her unit uses group formations to promote

inclusiveness:

We do unit formations that we all have to be there for as staff members, which is

kind of cool. That shows that, you know, we are all part of the unit, which is

important for them to see. And then when we do promotions, we all promote

everyone in formation, and then everyone's there. So, if you're an E3, E4, or

whatever, you're being promoted in front of, you know, a surgeon and like the sort

of higher-ranking folks, which is pretty cool. So, we get treated the same as

everyone else.

Paul (O3, Marines) described how a team ethos increases inclusion:

But I think the expectation is like there's equal expectation of everybody to

contribute. So, shared responsibility is a high priority. I don't know that a lot of

Marines would describe it as that but that's just what I know from studying my

studies. The shared responsibility as a component of culture, I think opens a lot of

doors to conversations that maybe wouldn't happen in civilian employment

environments.

Nadine (O5, Air Force) explained how shared experiences increase inclusion:

I think that during (training) exercises definitely, I've noticed everybody, every

team that comes back from (training) exercise, they have stories and pictures, and

they laugh, and they have inside jokes, and I think that's really good for, you

know, I think that would be the ideal way. That's why I think the army has it

right, where they deploy as a group, as a unit, because then they're all, for the

most part, all included.

Theme 11 Inclusion Reinforcement: Every Member is Valued

Several members shared that their unit's culture values every member. They

perceive that members' opinions are treated as important and that every person

contributes to the mission. This theme describes participants' perception that they are

valued and respected no matter who they are or what their job position in the military is.

Mark (O6, Air Force) described the message of inclusion in his unit:

I think the kind of consistent beating of the drum that every voice matters, that we

value diversity, that, you know, the going around the room and giving everybody

a chance to speak. The way leaders react to dissenting opinions or when, umm,

comments are made, or something helps others to see that it's okay to speak up,

you know, and their idea is welcome.

He goes on to share how this is communicated:

You also fight hard to make sure those things (exclusion) don't exist, right? So,

like I have a monthly meeting with every new person in the squadron, and that

was the one thing I emphasized the most. That, like, we want you to be different.

David (O3, Army) discussed that as a commander, he tries to instill inclusion and value

into all his unit members:

Another big part is understanding what an individual's contributions really mean on the larger scale. One thing that I like to do every time I have a new soldier come into my unit is I have them come and have a meeting with me. I like to introduce myself and get to know them a little bit, what their background is and, what brought them to the unit and what brought them into the military in general, and just kind of break down the commander and new private barrier a little bit and humanize myself to them.

Then I also like to explain to them, kind of, the breakdown of why their job is important and, for example, like, what if I have a new cook. I break down the number of cooks that I have compared to the number of soldiers that they are supporting.

He went on to share that he also encourages all members to have a voice:

New ideas and diverse thoughts because I want everyone to feel like they have a voice, even if their ideas may not be the greatest. I want them to at least feel heard so that, you know, they'll be considered and validated. Their (ideas) are not always implemented, but they'll at least be heard and validated.

Nadine (O5, Air Force) discussed how commanders value the input of their members:

Most of our leadership over the last several commanders, and I think there are very few exceptions, are willing to listen and be open to ideas. I think, for the most part, leadership accepts feedback and accepts ideas. They don't always implement them, and I think that's fine. I think as long as they're listening, and

they're hearing, and you see some sort of impact. I think that it's been pretty

steady in that realm of leadership.

Jermaine (E6, Air Force) explains how people are given a voice and able to feel

empowered:

I think it all comes from the top supervisors. Just basically, giving people a voice,

making them feel that they have a voice, feeling empowered, that they can, you

know, openly, you know, of course within reason, say what's on their mind, of

course, gotta respect rank and stuff like that, but being able to voice their opinions

and not worrying about repercussions. Just make them feel included in the

process.

Theme 12 Inclusion Barrier: Perception of Preferential Treatment

Some members perceived disparities in treatment among members, and that rank,

race, or status disparities create barriers to inclusion. This theme depicts the perception

that some people are offered preferential treatment while others are treated as less

valuable or there is a perceived bias against them. Will (E7, Air Force) discusses that

although political conversations are not supposed to occur in uniform, they do, and these

can create a division based on race. He reports having heard other military members say

things such as "Black people do things and always want to blame somebody else, and

"Why do these Black people get all these privileged women still out here protesting?"

He also shares that there is a bias against people of color in his unit:

Here's the bias. I think it's a huge difference in how people are treated. I think every

person of color, Black, Hispanic, or Asian, is more harshly punished in situations

than would be somebody who doesn't look like that, you know. I see favoritism when it comes to hiring into different positions. I see this in my unit, I see the good ole boy system, and it hasn't gone.

Two other members also discussed that they have heard others discuss a perceived bias against people of color in their unit but felt that this perception was inaccurate, and differences in treatment were not race-based but rather merit-based.

Sharon (O4, Army) reports that one Black woman discussed her perception that her race is the reason she did not have the same opportunities as others. Sharon (O4, Army) reported that as a White person, she might be unaware of some of these experiences; however, she also feels that people can have a perception of favoritism when there are other determining factors:

> West Virginia doesn't have a lot of different demographics as a whole. And so I think that there could be that perception, but as the commander, I would be willing to have that discussion with anybody because everybody gets performance reviews every year. And to be able to pull those up and say, like, look like here's yours, right? And then here are some other people. Let's compare these. What have you volunteered for? Like I left my family for almost an entire year. And the point is, I honestly believe that if I had not done that, I wouldn't have been given the opportunity to become a commander, like I had to sacrifice that.

Someone else might say, well, you know, I didn't have this opportunity, but it's like, okay, but what have you done in your career? You know, what extra classes have you taken? What duties have you volunteered for? Have you gone to schools to advance yourself? Or how much energy have you given? And then, once you measure it as like apples to apples, you could have a better understanding of that.

Nadine (O5, Air Force) discussed that she does not feel there is a perception of racial bias in her current unit, but in her former unit, there was a perception among Black females that they were being treated inferior to White females.

They (the White females) would say things like they (the Black females) didn't have a good attitude they didn't want to do their jobs. The Black females would say things like that, they're (the White females) favored, you know, especially by like, like NCO, they get the better jobs. But a lot of the time, what I noticed in these groups was that the White females were higher ranking because they've been around longer, right? And then we have the other group (Black females) who were newer.

She went on to discuss that because they were new and therefore lower ranking, they performed less desirable jobs, as do all military members until they obtained a higher rank. Mark (O6, Air Force) discusses how the military hierarchy can create barriers to representation, causing some voices and concerns to not be heard:

I think there are still situations that people could find themselves in where they feel like they're such a minority or they're such an outlier that their voice doesn't

matter as much. And that's probably not unique to the military, but the military

hierarchy kind of doubles down on that because if you're low in rank and you're

the minority, you're certainly going to feel like your voice is very, very small. You

know, you just kind of can play those scenarios out and I think the lack of

representation sometimes can be a hindrance.

Several other members discuss the perception of a "Good ole boys club." Sara (O4,

Reserves) explains:

If you're in, you could be enlisted or an officer, but if you've been in the same drill

unit for a long time, you're kind of basically in like the good ole boys club, and

some of those people are able to do less, and they still are accepted. It's almost

like middle school. Like you don't know sometimes what makes you check the

box to be in or out. I mean, if you're just well-liked, it's not often, but some people

that are well-liked don't seem to work that hard, and they can just kind of get by

kind of skate, you know, skate by doing the bare minimum.

Theme 13 Inclusion Reinforcement: Valuing a Strong Work Ethic

Several members communicated that inclusion occurs from proving yourself

through your contributions to the group/mission. Participants said the primary way to be

accepted is to have a good and reliable work ethic and to help your team. This theme

depicts the sentiment that members who contribute to the team will be treated as insiders.

Kayla (O5, Army) discusses her experience with being accepted as the first female

medical provider in the infantry in her unit:

It was difficult, but the thing about them (the infantry unit) in general, especially

their leadership, I felt like they did not put out a sexist vibe at all. They were

"prove to us that you know what you are doing." So they were that way with

anyone that came into there. They're very protective of their own people, and they

wanted to know that I knew what I was doing. And when I did that, I was

accepted and supported.

Chris (E7, Air Force) also discussed how work performance equates to inclusion in his

military experience:

I've served in several different positions and worked with several different ethnic

groups, so I have a fairly good understanding. Usually, what makes someone

considered an insider is someone who has been there for some time and has

shown a consistent quality work ethic and profit. So, doing your job well

consistently really kind of gets you in with the crowd because that's what is

necessary.

Theme 14 Inclusion Barrier: Excessively Performance-based Orientation that does not Value People who are Struggling

Several members, however, discuss that military culture is excessively

performance-oriented, and this excludes members who are not top performers or do not

have personality characteristics that are stereotypically associated with success in the

military, such as not being assertive and aggressive. While no participant expressed they

did not measure up to this high-performance standard, several expressed that when

military members do struggle to achieve this standard, they are less accepted. Noah (E9,

Army) discussed that military culture can devalue and, therefore, limit the potential of its

members:

> Yes, you know, does every infantryman leader need to project confidence and
>
> inspire confidence in their subordinates? Yes, right. But just because, you know,
>
> this 18 or 19-year-old soldier doesn't present him or herself now for the infantry as
>
> the next Audie Murphy doesn't mean that they don't have the potential to be a
>
> good leader. Does that make sense?
>
> I think you can cut off a lot of talent too quickly by not letting it develop, right?
>
> You cut the flower before it blooms, and then you don't get the full effect. It's a
>
> performance-based organization. But you're talking about being in a place where
>
> you need to have certain performance standards and requirements. Now, does
>
> every infantryman need to be able to run a six-minute mile? No, they don't. They
>
> absolutely do not. Does every infantryman need to have some sort of stamina to
>
> deal with mental and physical stress over prolonged periods? Yes. Every infantry
>
> leader needs to be able to deal with stress and ambiguity and still make good
>
> decisions. But if you don't run fast, you're not (considered) a good leader. If you
>
> look like you're overweight, you're not (considered)a good leader. You know, if
>
> you talk softly, you know, if you're not assertive, if you're not aggressive, you're
>
> not (considered) a good leader. Right, and you're not leadership potential either.

Paul (O3, Marines) discussed how members in the Marines who struggle at their job are

excluded:

>I hate to say that, but really, the Marine Corps is a performance-oriented
>
>organization. So, at any level, if you are good at your job, you are welcomed and
>
>accepted, and if you are not, you tend to be avoided.

He goes on to describe how officers can get written off for not being strong enough

performers and then separate from the service:

>A lot of officers that are not strong performers and are kind of written off because
>
>of what I described earlier. I think there's a lot of talented officers separating after
>
>four years that could have a lot to contribute, were they in a different occupational
>
>field or under a different leader.

Summary of Inclusion Reinforcements and Deterrents

All members could describe ways the military organizational culture reinforces

inclusion. There was a perception that subscribing to a common military culture and

adapting military values helped to create inclusion through interdependence and

commonalities. Several participants also noted that military members avoid discussing

things that could be considered divisive and instead focus their team and on the mission.

Many voiced the perception that every military member is valued in their organization

and supported and cared for. Other members report, however, that there can be

preferential treatment and a lack of support for people with performance struggles.

Research Question Three Results

Research question three was, how does the military organizational culture

influence bystander behaviors? The themes identified in this section that reinforce

bystander intervention include a) looking out for and caring for your fellow service

member, b) wanting the best for your workplace/service ethos, and c) communicating zero tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors. The themes identified that deter bystander intervention include a) perceived social and occupational consequences and b) power disparities/in-group vs. out-group barriers.

Theme 15 Bystander Reinforcement: Looking out for and Caring for your Fellow Service Members.

Throughout the interview, all participants referenced a culture of caring for and protecting the well-being of their fellow service members. This theme was present when participants discussed psychological safety and inclusion reinforcements, and this same theme emerged when participants discussed bystander reinforcements. Chris (E7, Air Force) shared how members look out for one another in his unit:

This tends to be especially from senior leaders, the feeling of, or a desire to, protect those who are junior (ranking). You'll give a situation, and they'll get defensive and say that, how could you let that happen to our junior members, and, you know, there's almost like a mentor fatherly type perception of like, I'm not gonna let someone hurt the person underneath me because I care for them.

Paul (O3, Marines) also discussed a culture in which higher-ranking individuals look out for members of lower rank:

Yeah, like one of my peers could walk in, (and) say or do some pretty obnoxious things, and we're just gonna shake it off and move on. But if it were to involve any of my junior personnel, it would be very differently received, and a sort of protectiveness occurs over the junior personnel. Like, I've seen sergeants

criticizing or correcting junior personnel, and their own sergeant showed up,

willing to fight off the other sergeant to protect his own because it's none of that

guy's business.

Theme 16 Bystander Reinforcement: Wanting the Best for the Workplace/Service Ethos

Participants discussed that many military members strongly desire to uphold a

positive work environment and unit reputation, and due to this concern for their work

culture, they would likely intervene when something occurs that may threaten to impact

their work climate adversely. One member reported that when people call someone else

out for doing or saying something inappropriate, they do so to prevent that person from

doing or saying something that harms their career or negatively influences other

members. Sara (O4, Reserves) explained how this is communicated in her unit:

It's more of like a protective countermeasure to say, like, hey, just FYI, like, this is

what they're talking about. This is kind of crossing that line. So, I think, yeah, I

think most people feel pretty comfortable like it's more protective.

Noah (E9, Army) shared how inappropriate behaviors get called out to protect the unit's

service ethos. "And it's a pretty professionalized process. On the team level, you know, in

the infantry, it's like, hey, you know, that's not cool, or, hey, that's probably not in

alignment with our service ethos."

Noah (E9, Army) went on to describe how leadership exemplifies this service ethos:

So, I think leadership that reinforces service ethos and values is really useful. And

what I mean by reinforced, I do not mean a special brief because that's usually

seen as disingenuous, right? You know, like, oh, great, we got another lawyer for

a commander or whatever, right? I think that it's seen as disingenuous, but when

that leader catches wind of something that is not in alignment with the ethos or the

values and says hey, I want everyone to hear me, clearly. This is not my intent. It

sends a clear and strong message that the expectation is that, you know, we act in

accordance with our values and our ethos.

Theme 17 Bystander Reinforcement: Communication of Zero Tolerance

All participants described a message of zero tolerance for hostile workplace

behaviors conveyed in their unit through training, leadership communication, and support

services. Members discussed that leadership communicates a consistent message that

they have zero tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors and encourages members to

speak up, which reinforces bystander intervention.

Chris (E7, Air Force) teaches classes on bystander intervention to military

members; these classes were formally referred to as Green Dot. The premise behind this

training is to increase situations that do not create harm (green dot situations) and to

intervene (bystander intervention) in potentially harmful situations (red dot situations).

He shared how military members have received this training:

We teach bystander intervention courses and Green Dot and things like that.

Those are pretty well perceived. Especially green dot training, which was the

initial effort for bystander intervention. And the way that I judge that (training

effectiveness) in the maintenance group is, so maybe there is a cultural joke, and

then someone says, hey, you know, that's a red dot thing. It's like, okay, well that

that training was effective because people are recognizing, like, hey, maybe these

jokes are inappropriate.

Chris (E7, Air Force) goes on to discuss the support that leadership provides to these

initiatives:

When we do our training, commanders will usually voice their perspectives on

certain situations, such as sexual assault. It was stated during last sexual assault

awareness training by the group commander that she would not tolerate people not

intervening. She wouldn't tolerate people just being a bystander and not stepping

in. And then if that was the case, there would be a meeting with her directly on

their values and whether the military is a good fit for them or not.

Jim (O4, Navy) discussed that zero tolerance is communicated but also discussed that

although this communication is helpful, there is no perfect answer:

I mean, first of all, we get training on all kinds of different things. And there is

emphasize from leadership down that it's everybody's responsibility to report this

behavior, and then there's also anonymous phone lines that we can call and talk to

people and report these things. So, they sort of try to remove the obstacles and

barriers. So, I definitely think there's a positive approach to it. But we have this in

place for things like suicide as well, and it doesn't always work. You know, so

there's no foolproof answer.

Jon Quintas explained how bystander intervention is encouraged by leadership:

I've seen senior leaders in the past encourage that (bystander intervention)

behavior. So, there are different reporting pathways to help protect the reporter

and the reportee depending on circumstance. But I've seen senior leaders like O5-

O6 level officers commend that individual in front of large formations or provide

some sort of reward for the willingness to step forward and assert themselves.

Theme 18 Bystander Intervention Barrier: Perceived Social/Occupational

Consequences

Although members perceive a culture of zero tolerance, many still believe there

would be negative social or occupational consequences for intervening as a bystander in a

hostile workplace situation. Participants expressed that this could result in being excluded

from the group, being seen as overreacting and being overlooked for advancement

opportunities. Jim (O4, Navy) discussed the consequences he endured when he

interjected in a hostile workplace situation.

So, the consequences are like being left off communication. So, if there's email

communications amongst groups, not being included, not being consulted,

advised. So, it's not directly to your face but in action. And sort of cutting you out

is another way to say it. Because let's say one of my supervisors asked me a

question about something my team is doing, and I don't know why they're doing

it. Then that creates a question, why don't you know, and then that just kind of

snowballs.

He continued to explain:

You always run the risk of becoming an outsider. So, when we're talking about being an insider, you gotta read the culture, and the dynamics, and the people, and the situation, but you definitely run the risk of being ostracized. To some degree, I was ostracized because I stood up to this individual by other people on the team. But I would call that in a very passive aggressive way, and that's lingered, that's gone on for the whole last year.

Mark (O6, Air Force) discussed the fear of being seen as overreacting to a situation and how this could impact your career:

The perceptions that may follow or potential changing of opinions about them and stuff. You know, a lot of times, the people in command have a heavy influence on outcomes and assignments and opportunities you do or do not get, and so, I think, you don't want them to think you're an oddball. Because the military is a hierarchy, I think people will always experience some trepidation around the fear of how others might perceive you for overreacting to a situation or oddly reacting to a situation. Oddly doesn't mean something that other people who aren't in the situation or of that culture would look at and say, well, it looks fairly normal, but oddly, as in it is odd to that culture,

Sharon (O4, Army) expressed the potential social consequences of intervening:

I think the fear of not belonging, right? I think that's all of our biggest fear. So, the fear is that if I do that, I will be tapped out or no longer be part of that. Which I need to be part of this group, right? Because that's how I thrive like that is my connection. These are my relationships. And so not just the military, but in any

group. Right, even at church. It's like the fear is that I will no longer be accepted, or loved, or included by the people if I stand up to them.

She went on to discuss how this could also result in occupational consequences:

Because then you become part of the problem, right? If you're the person who is vocal about whatever you observed, then now you're the problem, and so it could affect your career. It could affect the opportunities that you're given, and it could affect your promotion. Usually, it's your supervisor, right?

Kayla (O5, Army) explained how the perception that there would be a social fallout could be a barrier:

From the leadership or from the culture of the unit, I don't really think there is anything other than maybe perceived social, you know, fallout. I wouldn't say that there would be a social fallout based upon previous like, experience or, like, what the culture sort of dictates, but maybe, for some people, that's kind of how they feel in general.

Theme 19 Bystander Intervention Barrier: Power Disparities/In-group Vs. Out-group

Some members said power differences due to rank or status could interfere with being an active bystander. They discussed how the military hierarchy could create a barrier to being able to intervene if the offender is someone of higher rank or status.

Some participants also discussed the perception of a good ole boys' system where members who have been around a long time or are well-liked are not challenged. Nadine (O5, Air Force) described her perception of a good ole boys' system that is above reproach:

> I would kind of say, like, the good old boy system or whatever. But yeah, you don't dare confront their inappropriate behavior because they've been there forever. And, you know, they run the place; they know all the things. They're the most knowledgeable, you know, stuff like that. So, I think it definitely happens.

She goes on to describe how status could create barriers:

> Yeah, so I think there's that flying dynamic, right? They are kind of the gods, you know, and they kind of can do no wrong and they hold the mission. You know, sort of even just their demeanor and stuff is a little more arrogant. Not all of them, I am making a generalization, but I mean, certainly I've experienced it. So, you know, somebody that is, you know, serving food, versus, you know, the people that fly the planes, I think there's that idea that what one person is doing isn't as important as someone else is. And so, I think that could prevent somebody from standing up to certain people if they see certain behavior.

Damien (E7, Air Force) described how rank has prevented him from intervening:

> It was offensive to me, but maybe not to them. They're all laughing about it. Oh, yeah. I haven't responded. I've never responded to those. I didn't want to be an

outcast. They were higher ranking than me. So, I didn't want it to impact my

career.

Noah (E9, Army) shared the barriers to intervening in a situation where the offending

person is well-liked:

Just like I described for what I faced, right? You don't want to be ostracized,

right? So, the barrier is which side of the popular curve are you on if you

intervene, right? Yeah. So, if you got that one person who's just always a jerk, and

you know, he's harassing somebody or assaulting somebody, you're pretty safe to

intervene, right? Yeah. You're not going to be on the other side of the ostracism

curve. But if the in-group is giving somebody a hard time, I think that's a barrier.

Yeah, you don't want to face ostracism.

He also explained the influence that leadership has in reinforcing good or bad behaviors:

I mean, at every level in the military, at every level, it boils down to power

imbalance. So, if that leader, or if that person that is senior, is either conducting or

supporting some sort of denigration of another person, that's the barrier, and that's

the key, right? Supporting, so, you know, you get a platoon sergeant in the

infantry who goes down to the platoon area and sees that, you know, a couple of

the young Joe's are picking on another one. And if he doesn't correct that

behavior, then and there, he is supporting the behavior.

Paul (O3, Marines) described that if someone in a lower rank calls out a behavior, they

could be seen as a traitor: I know that junior ranks tend to receive it very differently

because somebody's getting punished for it more often than not, which can look like you are turning on one of your own. Or kind of a traitorous role.

Summary of Bystander Intervention Reinforcements and Deterrents

All participants identified aspects of the military organizational culture that reinforced bystander intervention in hostile workplace behaviors (discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying). Participants described a work culture where it is communicated that there is zero tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors and also a culture where leadership is supportive and encourages members to intervene in hostile workplace situations. They also described a culture where service members look out for and care for one another and care about their work culture's integrity. Several participants shared that adverse social or occupational consequences may result if someone intervenes in a hostile workplace situation, and power imbalances may deter people from intervening.

Research Question Four Results

The fourth research question was, how are hostile workplace behaviors deterred within the military organizational culture? All participants provided ways in which the military organizational culture deters hostile workplace behaviors. All themes identified in this section reflect themes present in other sections, such as a) leadership support, b) the presence of psychological safety to bring up concerns, and c) an inclusive team-based focus that values and supports members.

Theme 20 Hostile Workplace Deterrent: Leadership Support

This theme echoed the previously discussed themes that leadership communicates the values of treating others with respect and takes reports of hostile workplace behaviors very seriously. Jermaine (E6, Air Force) described how leadership creates an environment that is not conducive to hostile workplace behaviors:

> So, whatever that negative behavior is, I think a person's supervisors set the tone when a person comes by (saying) hey, we won't tolerate biases, we won't tolerate discrimination, and that's the tone in the environment, and if it does happen, it is addressed swiftly, firmly, and fairly.

Noah (E9, Army) shared how his leadership instilled service values of treating others with respect:

> I've been fortunate in my career. Even in the infantry, I had a commander who made it very clear that he expected people to be treated with dignity and respect. Right, and I had a couple of great commanders in civil affairs. It's not just people being treated with respect but upholding the values of honor and integrity.

Sara (O4, Reserves) discussed how her leadership communicated a zero-tolerance stance:

> For example, umm, we had a briefing a couple of years ago and probably like two years ago, our commander said, listen, you know there's zero tolerance for, like, sexual harassment, and that includes, like, jokes and certain things, like, everybody should feel free to be comfortable at work, like, we shouldn't be telling dirty jokes.

Steve (O5, Air Force) stated how he communicated support for people who bring up hostile workplace concerns:

It's 100% driven by leadership. I'm always very vocal with people. I mentioned it at every single commander's call, every single squadron stand up, like hey, if you see something that's wrong, you gotta say something, you know, we're gonna support you.

Kayla (O5, Army) expressed how training on the subject has made everyone aware of what the standard is:

Mandatory training, you know, the sexual assault, sexual harassment, equal opportunity (trainings). You know, we're so used to it. It's almost like a good thing that we're used to it because it means that it's not new information for anybody. Everybody's like, oh, yeah, I'm familiar with this, and this is how I'm supposed to be. I think that that's a good thing.

Racheal (E8, Air Force) shared how having female leadership has influenced perspectives:

I think having a lot of female leadership, honestly. I don't think that's the only thing, but I think it helps to have female leaders who have worked in security forces and maintenance, you know, which are two of the highest known squadrons for having fixed mindsets and being, you know, more discriminatory towards others. I think because we bring it up all the time. Like we talked about it. And I know for me personally, like when we talked about our DEOCS (climate survey) just a couple years ago, I shared stories, like personal stories, of the things that I had to deal with when I was in security forces as a female. And I think that kind of

changed some perspective on how they're communicating, especially with the

women that are coming in.

She went on to share how her commander reiterates this message:

I think we've got a great commander who is very vocal on these subjects and has

told all of our members there is zero tolerance, you know, but is a very personable

person. I do feel like that has led a lot to where people are feeling more

comfortable bringing up things.

Theme 21 Hostile Workplace Deterrents: Psychological Safety to Come Forward: Zero Tolerance/Regulation/Reporting Paths

Participants discussed several factors that make people feel less fearful about

reporting hostile workplace behaviors, such as being aware that military policy protects

them against hostile workplace behaviors and that leadership does not tolerate these

behaviors. Additionally, there are multiple avenues for reporting such behaviors so that if

a member is uncomfortable bringing up a concern to their supervisor, there are other

ways to report. Noah (E9, Army) described the outcomes if someone does engage in

hostile workplace behaviors:

It doesn't matter what you think. If you catch yourself on the wrong side of this,

you'll be standing in front of the commander, you know, and that's not code for

anything. If you catch yourself on the wrong side, you'll face UCMJ action.

Will (E7, Air Force) explained how a culture of zero tolerance is established:

When you have somebody in charge that lets you know this is not going to fly.

The point goes across. When people start conversations that aren't appropriate

right, they know you're not having that conversation. Just no ifs, ands, or buts; you will not have that conversation here.

Nadine (O5, Air Force) discussed the multiple reporting paths that are present to correct hostile workplace behaviors:

I think that also there's avenues if there's a hostile work environment. They're able to seek out the first sergeant, they're able to seek out the commander, and if they don't feel comfortable there, they can come see us (Equal Opportunity). I mean, so I think there's at least tools in place.

Sharon (O4, Army) also mentioned the multiple supports available to members who experience hostile workplace behaviors. "So, I feel like there's a lot more opportunities, a lot more resources where people can go, different avenues. So that they can report without feeling like there's going to be any kind of backlash."

Theme 22 Hostile Workplace Behavior Deterrents: Inclusive Work Environment: Team Values/Caring

The theme of valuing and caring for your fellow service members and team was again present when describing hostile workplace deterrents. Kayla (O5, Army) expressed how having a positive work culture has been a deterrent to workplace hostility. "I would say that again, kind of just the basic culture that we have in the unit that I'm in now is, open door policy, positive, supportive, all that. So, I think that, in general, that's a deterrent."

Sharon (O4, Army) also explained how being a part of a great unit helps protect the work environment from being a hostile workplace. "And so, there's a lot of pride in

our unit. And so, I would say, you know, whenever you've worked hard and your part of something that's really good, you don't want somebody to spoil that." Racheal (E8, Air Force) discussed that although there is the presence of some inappropriate behaviors in her unit, there is also an increased awareness of how this impacts morale in the unit:

> I think in maintenance, it's still there. Like negative commentary and negative jokes that are inappropriate are still present. Like I'm not gonna sit here and pretend like they don't exist, but I do think it's less than it was in the past because people have a better understanding of how it negatively impacts the entire squadron.

Research Question Five Results

The fifth research question is, how are hostile workplace behaviors reinforced within the military organizational culture? The themes identified in this section are that the military organizational culture reinforces hostile workplace behaviors through a) biased or preferential treatment and b) social norms of masculinity and aggression. Most participants felt the military organizational culture deters rather than reinforces hostile workplace behaviors. Only one member expressed the perception that the organizational culture reinforces hostile workplace behaviors in his current work setting. A few participants expressed potential factors within the organizational culture that they hypothesized may reinforce hostile workplace behaviors. Paul (O3, Marines) explained risk factors that may be present in certain areas of the military for being a victim of sexual harassment. "In the junior ranks, I think that the probability of sexual harassment is much higher. Probably as a function of isolation in a very masculine environment."

Noah (E-9, Army) discussed that valuing the personality trait of aggressiveness may cause increased hostile workplace behaviors:

> Seventeen to 20-year-olds that we put at the very tip of the spear, and we expect them to shoulder along with them and pull through, right? So, you need them to be aggressive. What does that mean? Well, with your aggressive view, you have other behavioral patterns that follow with that. Can you effectively eliminate those? I don't know if you can with that age group.

He went on to discuss that with this age group, they may not be able to comprehend the consequences of their actions and know when to turn on and off aggressive behaviors:

> I also expect that you know, depending on which research you look at, 24 to 20 years old is when your brain fully comprehends consequences. And with that, you know, I would attribute things like empathy and other critical thinking skills, right? And so, you've got these, you know, 17 to 20-year-old, you know, junior soldiers, that are wearing a uniform but have very little life experience. (They) don't process consequences very well and are missing some other critical thinking skills. And you put them in a high friction, high stakes environment, where you know, failure means literally death, and I expect that you're going to have some of these things that outsiders might consider to be dysfunctional behaviors or patterns.

Additional Relevant Findings

Theme 23 Presence of Hostile Workplace Behaviors in Participants' Early Military Careers

An additional theme that emerged in my findings was how the military culture has decreased the frequency and acceptance of hostile workplace behavior in recent years. Many members shared their experiences of hostile workplace situations in their early years in the military. Kayla (O5, Army) described her experiences being a woman in field artillery:

> Yeah, so in field artillery, I would say their culture was very specifically misogynistic. Overtly, I was, like, the second female officer that they ever had. So, they didn't have a ton of experience with females, although, you know, they have female NCOs. So, my experience of them was that regardless of how many times over, I proved to them that I was good at what I did, I was overtly ridiculed and kept at arm's length.

Racheal (E8, Air Force) shared her experience of not being accepted as a woman in security forces:

> Having been prior security forces, there are a lot of inappropriate gestures, comments, name-calling, and non-acceptance of females in that working environment. (There were) several things I did not bring up because I was younger and mostly a young Airman, and I didn't really know what to do. There was a time that I did bring something forward to a flight chief because I was concerned about my own personal safety. And it was bypassed. I was told that I shouldn't bring my personal problems to work, and unfortunately, the problem was with somebody that I was posted with that evening, so after that, I didn't really try to bring anything up again until I got a little older, became a supervisor,

had more training and higher rank to kind of throw around, if you will, to back me up.

Sharon (O4, Army) discussed being sexually assaulted in her office and how she ended up receiving reprisal from her boss:

> I was sexually assaulted in my office. And my supervisor was sitting there. And this guy came into the office, just like on an obsession rampage. And so, I walked out because I was like, What the hell, like, whenever I walked past him, I had one of those zip-down sweatshirts on because it was cold, and he literally pulled down the zipper and started rubbing my boobs. I left and then went back into the office to talk to my supervisor about it, and he was like, you know, Sharon, this can happen, and I don't think he meant it that way, and all the typical things.

She discussed that she was not going to report the assault due to fear of reprisal, but a friend of hers convinced her to do so.

> The second that I reported it, everybody found out because nothing's a secret, you know, and then people are treating me different, and I remember one of the guys telling me that another guy had told him you can't be friends with her because she will report you.

She went on to describe how her supervisor retaliated against her for reporting. "He tried to treat me like crap because he got in trouble for it. And so, I ended up leaving that unit. So, I was like, this is too much drama."

Steve (O5, Air Force) discussed needing to intervene when their leadership was sexually harassing a couple of female soldiers:

> Their supervision wasn't doing anything about it. But their senior NCOs and staff were part of the problem. You know, like their senior master sergeants, making comments and jokes with them. About, like, wanting to see their underwear. Just like gross, creepy shit, that's like, let's swap this one. I got wind of it, and from what they told me, they had an extreme fear of trying to bring it up because they didn't think they were going to be taken seriously and since it was their immediate supervisors who were the issue.

Kayla (O5, Army) shared the consequences of her intervening in a hostile workplace situation. "I went to being like, the lady there that nobody really wanted to talk to because I was not trustworthy and not part of the group and had a negative spot on me."

Noah (E9, Army) also describes how there were social consequences for him when he intervened in a hostile workplace situation over ten years ago:

> And I actually faced a bit of ostracism for a couple of months after that. I got in the middle of it. I put my body between the guy getting picked on and the couple of guys who were kind of starting to form a circle around them and took him back over to the barracks and got him out of it. And so, you know, I don't know how much colorful language you want, but you can imagine the colorful language directed towards me for a few months, (and) there and some insinuations as to my sexual preferences.

Theme 24 Present Military Culture is Perceived to be Less Receptive to Hostile Workplace Behaviors.

Another theme that emerged was that participants feel that the military culture has evolved. Cultural norms within the organization have become more respectful and supportive of all members. These changes have resulted in a decreased tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors.

Mark (O6, Air Force) discussed how he has seen a culture change in what behaviors are tolerated in the military:

> Umm, but back then I would say it was very much more common. I will say, like, even like recent past, reflecting back 10-15 years as an officer, I don't see a lot of that, and I can't recall seeing much of it at all. So, for example, in the enlisted day when I was working maintenance, we did have a couple of female maintainers in the shop, and there were some guys that made pretty explicit jokes in their presence, you know, and I wasn't necessarily directly involved, but you could hear them and knew that was going on, but because of the social norms and the male-dominated career fields that they were in, those females had to umm also, you know, laugh it off, and kind of act like it didn't bother them. Which, you know, when you reflect back on that, is just completely inappropriate and should not be tolerated.

Racheal (E8, Air Force) shared the culture changes that she has seen in her unit towards less acceptance of hostile workplace behaviors:

As far as I'm aware, I think there's been a huge shift. Recently, I have noticed that

a lot of the language being used or the jokes that are being said have changed and

shifted to be more appropriate in the workplace. Some of the guys, even some of

the older guys that have like, you know, have had that kind of mentality, older

mentality, ingrained into their system, have like, started reframing like they'll start

saying something, and they're like, oh, wait. I shouldn't say that.

Kayla (O5, Army) shared the conversations she has with fellow military personnel as a

military medical provider and noted that the culture appears to be improving. "I feel like

they're improving overall anyway because the soldiers that I've seen cycle through

medical providers; when they provide feedback to me about what's going on, it seems like

it's a better overall experience for them.

Summary of Common Themes Expressed by Participants Across Topics of

Psychological Safety, Inclusion, Bystander Intervention, and Workplace Hostility.

A common theme that was present as a reinforcement among all constructs

explored (psychological safety, inclusion, bystander intervention, and the discouragement

of hostile workplace behaviors) was the presence of supporting and valuing your fellow

service member. This principle is called the wingman concept in the Air Force and the

battle buddy concept in the Army. The concern for the well-being of your fellow service

members was perceived to increase psychological safety among participants by making

them feel safe and supported to bring forward mistakes, questions, ideas, and problems

while knowing that their unit members and leadership will support them. Supporting and

valuing your fellow service members was also perceived to increase inclusion by focusing

on interdependence and common purpose. The wingman concept was also perceived to

increase bystander intervention as there is a perception that service members should look out for one another and help form a positive working culture for everyone. Lastly, it was perceived to decrease hostile workplace behaviors by focusing on team values and mutual support.

A theme that was present as a deterrent among all constructs explored (psychological safety, inclusion, bystander intervention, and the encouragement of hostile workplace behaviors) was the perception of preferential, biased, or non-supportive behaviors. Some participants felt that preferential treatment was given based on being in a high-status position, others thought there was a presence of a good ole boys' system, while another member thought this was based on race. Other members felt that any disparate treatment was merit-based and that those provided additional opportunities had earned them. Still, others felt that the military focused excessively on performance, and those who struggled to meet this standard were not supported or valued.

Summary

Responses obtained from participants indicate that the military organizational culture helps develop the principles of caring for (Wingman concept) and valuing fellow service members. These principles reinforce psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention while also decreasing hostile workplace behaviors. Participants also discussed that military culture increases psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention by focusing on team and service ethos. Military values are instilled in members to care about the integrity of their team, its members, and the mission. These values help to advance members past their individual preferences and biases toward a more cooperative and inclusive whole.

Several members, however, felt that aspects of the military organizational culture deter psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention and reinforce hostile workplace behaviors. One theme of this is the presence of power disparities in the military. These power disparities were perceived to, at times, result in preferential treatment based on factors such as status, rank, race, or whether or not a person is in the "in group" or "good ole boys club." This preferential treatment was perceived to cause barriers for some people to experience psychological safety and inclusion and to be able to intervene in hostile workplace situations.

Members discussed that in the military organizational culture, there is a communicated zero tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors, and they feel that leadership is supportive of creating an atmosphere that is inconducive to hostile workplace behaviors. At the same time, members still perceive that there would be negative social or occupational consequences for intervening in a hostile workplace situation. Many members discussed examples of hostile workplace behaviors they encountered in the military early in their service careers. These members and others commented on the perception that the culture has improved and that there is a decreased tolerance for such behaviors.

In the following chapter, I will discuss this study's findings and how they compare to previous research on my topic. I will also discuss how findings further the understanding of how the military organizational culture influences hostile workplace behaviors, psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander behaviors. Lastly, I will discuss the limitations of my study and my recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

This chapter discusses my research findings and how they compare to previous research findings pertaining to hostile workplace behaviors. I will also discuss how this study advances understanding of its purpose: to explore military members' perception of how the military organizational culture influences psychological safety, inclusive workplace culture, bystander intervention, and hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. I will then discuss the practical implications of these findings, their limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

Themes

Research Question One Themes

Research question one explored how psychological safety is reinforced and deterred within the military organizational culture. Psychological safety was shown to be reinforced by the military organizational culture through organizational practices of a) treating mistakes as teaching opportunities rather than responding to them punitively. b) not knowing how to do something or asking questions being met with help and support. c) ideas being elicited and encouraged, and d) problems being responded to supportively. The military organizational culture deterred psychological safety through organizational practices of a) responding to mistakes punitively in some settings and for some people, b) a limited openness to ideas, and c) a low tolerance for performance issues, creating a fear of negative appraisal and being viewed as incompetent.

Research Question Two Themes

Research question two explored how inclusive workplace culture is reinforced and deterred within the military organizational culture. This study's findings indicate the military organizational culture reinforced inclusive workplace culture through organizational practices of a) emphasizing commonalities and interdependence with one another, b) emphasizing looking out for and caring for each other (the wingman concept), c) creating team bonding and team ethos, d) valuing every member, and e) valuing a strong work ethic. The military organizational culture deterred inclusive workplace culture through a) an excessively performance-based focus and b) the perception of preferential treatment.

Research Question Three Themes

Research question three explored how the military organizational culture influences bystander behaviors. This study suggests the military organizational culture reinforced bystander intervention in hostile workplace situations through a) an emphasis on looking out for and caring for other service members (wingman concept), b) wanting the best for your workplace/service ethos, and c) communicating zero tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors. The military organizational culture deterred bystander intervention through a) perceived social and occupational consequences of intervening and b) power disparities.

Research Question Four Themes

The fourth research question explored how hostile workplace behaviors are deterred within the military organizational culture. This study suggests that the military organizational culture deterred hostile workplace behaviors through a) leadership support,

b) the presence of psychological safety to bring up concerns, and c) an inclusive team-based focus that values and supports members.

Research Question Five Themes

The fifth research question explored how hostile workplace behaviors are reinforced within the military organizational culture. This study suggests that the military organizational culture reinforced hostile workplace behaviors through perceived biased and non-supportive treatment. Another theme identified in this study that was not directly related to the study's research questions was that the military's efforts to reduce hostile workplace behaviors appear effective. Participants perceived that their present work environment is far less conducive to hostile workplace behaviors than their military work environments were 10-20 years prior.

Core Categories

The military organizational principle of caring for and valuing your fellow service members (wingman concept) and exemplifying high regard and accountability to your team and service was perceived by participants to reinforce psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention and deter workplace hostility. In contrast, power disparities and an excessive performance-based focus in the military organizational culture were perceived to result in preferential treatment and a lack of support that deterred psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention and reinforced hostile workplace behaviors.

Even when participants felt personally supported and valued, if they perceived that others were not this impacted their own perceptions of how psychologically safe, inclusive, and receptive to bystander intervention their organizational culture was. There

appeared to be a perception that if there is any non-supportive or biased behavior, this indicates a risk that anyone could be the target of bias if they, for various reasons, were no longer held in high regard. Additionally, when participants perceived that they or others were not supported or biased behaviors were present, they perceived that their work environment was more conducive to hostile workplace behaviors. Only when participants perceived that both themselves and others were supported and valued did they feel a presence of psychological safety, inclusion, and an ability to intervene in hostile workplace behaviors. Also, participants perceived that hostile workplace behaviors towards anyone would not be tolerated in supportive work environments.

The core categories identified in this study indicate that the following core phenomena exist to explain how the military organizational culture influences psychological safety, inclusion, bystander intervention, and hostile workplace behaviors:

1. Military members perceive psychological safety, inclusion, bystander intervention, and the discouragement of hostile workplace behaviors as being reinforced when they feel that they and others are supported and valued.

2. Military members perceive psychological safety, inclusion, bystander intervention, and the discouragement of hostile workplace behaviors as being deterred when they feel that they and others are not supported and biased treatment is present.

Theory Development

The military organizational culture influences hostile workplace behaviors through its level of support towards and among all members. Military organizational cultures that make members feel supported and valued result in a psychologically safe

and inclusive culture as members know that their organization will help them if they are struggling or bring up a concern, making it feel safe to do so (psychological safety). They also know that they have value in their organization, which increases their ability to show up authentically and experience a sense of belonging (inclusion). A culture that supports and values its members, in turn, increases a sense of accountability among service members to intervene on one another's behalf in a hostile workplace situation (bystander intervention). Lastly, when there is an organizational norm of supporting and valuing all members, there will be a decreased tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors.

A perceived lack of support towards any member results in the absence of psychological safety, as members will believe they will not be supported if they bring up struggles or concerns. When support is not present, members will fear that bringing up difficulties will result in judgment or biased treatment. They will experience decreased inclusion through increased social pressure to conform with others to obtain belonging and experience a lack of safety to be distinct. A lack of support decreases bystander intervention because of the belief that bystander intervention will result in adverse social and occupational consequences for the bystander. An organizational culture that does not emphasize support for all members allows hostile workplace behaviors to persist due to a decreased awareness and concern about how these behaviors impact military members and the military culture. Figure 1 illustrates how a supportive organizational culture influences psychological safety, inclusion, bystander behaviors, and hostile workplace behaviors, and Figure 2 illustrates how a non-supportive organizational culture influences these factors.
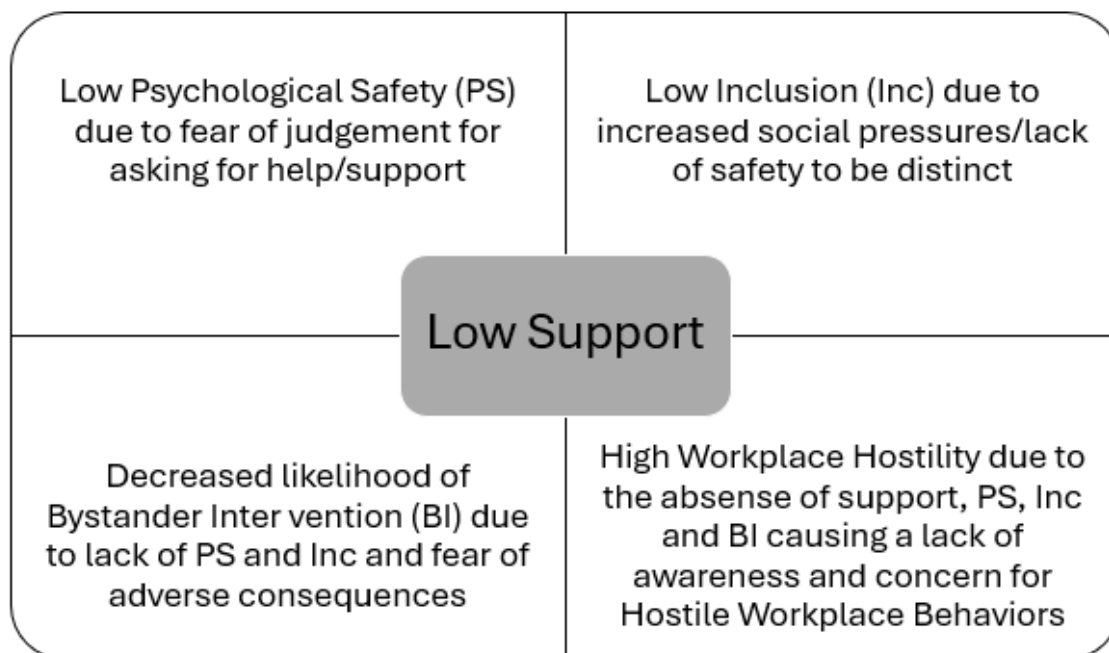
Figure 1

Theoretical Model of How Supportive Cultures Influence Psychological Safety, Inclusion,

Bystander Behaviors and Hostile Workplace Behavior
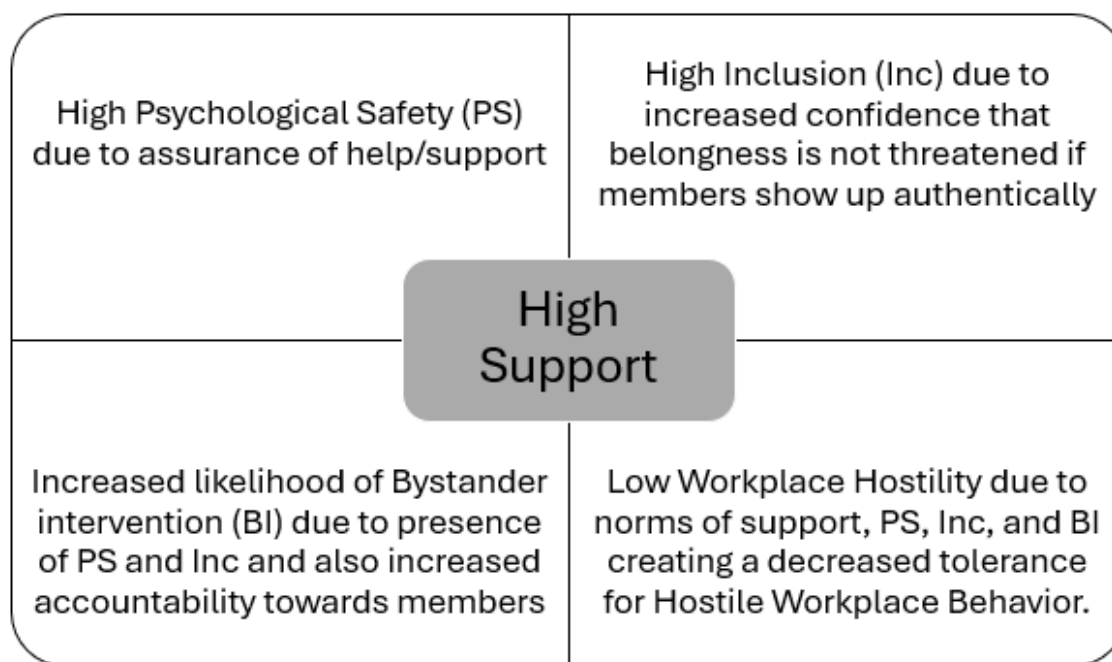
Figure 2

Theoretical Model of How Low Support Cultures Influence Psychological Safety,

Inclusion, Bystander Behaviors and Hostile Workplace Behaviors

Low Psychological Safety (PS) due to fear of judgement for asking for help/support	Low Inclusion (Inc) due to increased social pressures/lack of safety to be distinct
Decreased likelihood of Bystander Inter vention (BI) due to lack of PS and Inc and fear of adverse consequences	High Workplace Hostility due to the absense of support, PS, Inc and BI causing a lack of awareness and concern for Hostile Workplace Behaviors

Low Support

Discussion of Findings

Psychological Safety Findings

The findings from this study are primarily consistent with the psychological safety research from Edmondson's (1991) seminal work on psychological safety and subsequent research. According to Edmondson (2019), psychological safety is present in work cultures where employees can express their ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes without fear of social or occupational consequences for doing so. The organizational factors identified in this study that participants perceived to reinforce psychological safety reflect these concepts. Participants perceive psychological safety to be present in their organization when they and others can admit mistakes, and their doing so will be responded to in a helpful way in which the member is taught how to avoid the mistake in the future. There is an assumption of positive intent that the mistake was not made maliciously or negligently. There is also a perception that it is okay to ask questions

and for members to admit when they are uncertain of how to do something. Members can share ideas on how to improve processes, discuss problems, and receive support.

The factors that were perceived to deter psychological safety in this study were also consistent with research that indicates psychological safety is not present in environments with negative social or occupational consequences for admitting mistakes, expressing ideas, identifying problems, and asking questions (Edmondson, 2019). Some participants expressed that for some people and in some work settings, it is not safe to admit mistakes, that openness to new ideas is limited and can be dependent on your social standing in the group, and that it can be difficult to ask questions or acknowledge that you are uncertain how to perform a task due to a fear of being viewed as incompetent.

There was some evidence from participant responses that psychological safety may be experienced differently in the military than in other organizations. For example, some participants expressed the need for an upper limit on psychological safety in the military as performance issues must be taken seriously due to the need for military excellence to achieve the mission. This belief, however, is inconsistent with research on psychological safety, indicating that psychological safety is correlated with improved organizational outcomes such as increased productivity, safety, learning, and innovation (Edmundson, 2019; Jose et al., 2021; Obrenovic et al., 2020).

In the military, performance issues and mistakes can have fatal consequences and thus must be taken seriously. However, psychological safety has been shown to reduce risk and fatalities (Edmonson, 2019). When employees do not feel safe admitting mistakes, ineffective processes that may have contributed to the error are never realized. The employee may also attempt to cover up the mistake, which can cause costly

consequences that could have been prevented (Edmondson, 2019; Sherf et al., 2021; Smeets et al., 2021)

When there is a fear of bringing up concerns and asking questions, this can result in critical information not being communicated, which can have disastrous consequences (Edmondson, 2019). Additionally, when members do not have the psychological safety to admit mistakes, there is an increased likelihood that it will lead to repeated and more significant mistakes in the future (Chao et al., 2021; Edmondson, 2019; Obrenovic et al., 2020). Having the psychological safety to admit mistakes does not mean that there will be no disciplinary consequences for mistakes that were due to not following procedure or negligence; however, when psychological safety is present, it does improve the likelihood that those mistakes will be brought forward so corrective action can occur and mistakes will be less likely to be repeated (Chao et al., 2021; Edmondson, 2019). Psychological safety also increases the likelihood that honest mistakes will be brought forward, allowing for faulty processes that may have caused the mistakes to be improved and for the mistake to be corrected prior to further harm occurring (Chao et al., 2021; Wan et al., 2021).

Another perceived necessary limitation on psychological safety in the military is openness to new ideas. Participants perceived that new ideas could adversely impact the military mission. In situations of imminent harm, solutions demonstrated as successful must be implemented, and there is little room for trying other methods. However, even in situations of imminent harm, when established methods fail, there needs to be room for innovative ideas to improvise. When imminent harm is not present, the military must be receptive to new ideas to advance (Lateef, 2020; Wan et al., 2021). A receptiveness to

new ideas does not suggest that all ideas must be implemented or thoroughly explored.

However, when members do not feel they can present new ideas to improve processes,

the status quo will precede, and processes will become outdated and ineffective

(Edmondson, 2019; Lateef, 2020; Wan et al., 2021). There were mixed findings on how

new ideas were received by leadership, though most respondents report that leadership

and others have favorable responses to new ideas.

This study's findings show that some members perceived psychological safety to

be less present for some members than others, which could adversely impact the military

organization. Employees who do not experience psychological safety within their

organization are more likely to exhibit counterproductive behaviors such as

organizational deviance, supervisor incivility, workplace incivility, negative workplace

gossip, abusive supervision, knowledge hiding, and ostracism (Agarwal et al., 2022;

Erkutlu & Chafra, 2019; Guo et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020). 2020).

Psychological safety is significant in preventing hostile workplace behavior

because it is a prerequisite to speaking up in hostile workplace situations (Einarsen et al.,

2020; Sanderson, 2020; Shea et al., 2021). This study's findings suggest that most

participants perceive psychological safety in their workplace. Additionally, this study's

findings indicate that participants' attitudes and behaviors are aligned with the principles

that create psychological safety.

Inclusive Workplace Culture Findings

This study's findings on organizational factors that increase inclusive workplace

culture have both consistencies and inconsistencies with current research findings on

inclusive workplace culture. Research on inclusive workplace culture suggests that

workers experience inclusion when they feel a sense that they are treated as valuable insiders (belonging) and also are respected for their differences (distinctiveness) (Moon & Christensen, 2020; Shores et al., 2018; Shores et al., 2011). One theme in this study that increases inclusion in the military is adherence to a common culture, military culture. Some participants felt that adherence to military culture allowed members to transcend cultural differences and unite on a common military culture. This assumption creates a strong emphasis on belonging with little focus on distinctiveness.

Research on optimal distinctiveness theory, however, asserts the importance of both belonging and distinctiveness in creating inclusion. Belonging fulfills the need to feel connected and accepted by others, while distinctiveness fulfills the need for individualization: to possess qualities that distinguish oneself from others (Brewer, 1991; Shores et al., 2011; Shores et al., 2018; Ways et al., 2022). This theory also suggests that organizations that emphasize belonging (commonalities) without regard for distinctiveness create an environment of assimilation and redundancy. This emphasis on belonging over distinctiveness can result in a lack of encouragement to offer new perspectives, resulting in a limited scope of ideas and the exclusion of people who do not conform (Brown et al., 2020; Randel et al., 2018; Shores et al., 2018).

Notably, in this study, the only participants who referenced that an emphasis on commonalities increases inclusion in the military were White males. Though this cannot be known from this study's findings, White males may experience less distinction between their culture and the culture in their military work setting because, in most military settings, White males are likely to be the numerical majority. According to the Department of Defense (2022), White people comprise over 70% of the Department of

Defense. The same study reflects that males comprise over 80% of the Department of Defense (DOD, 2022). No participants, irrespective of sex or race, discussed any difficulty adhering to military principles and values, which are integral to military culture.

Optimal distinctiveness theory postulates that the two most important social needs are the need to belong and the need to be distinct (Shores et al., 2018). Based on the findings from this study, how these factors are balanced in a military setting may differ from other settings. The military may differ in how it achieves inclusion, as adherence to commonalities in military values and principles is desirable. Additionally, adherence to military values and principles such as the wingman concept, team ethos, and service excellence were shown to be protective in this study against hostile workplace behaviors and to increase inclusion.

A strong emphasis on commonalities in this context may be able to occur concurrently with an appreciation for individual differences, as many participants expressed the perception that different perspectives and ideas are encouraged in the military. There was some evidence, however, that not all members experience being an accepted and valued member of the team equally. Many members reported that preferential treatment exists in their work setting, though there were differing opinions on the basis for this perceived preferential treatment. Some members noted the presence of a good ole boys' system where people in positions of power and status can get away with things that others cannot.

One Black male member interviewed reported bias against him in his current work environment. He discussed being singled out when issues arise in his work setting,

and he also perceives that many members are not interested in interacting with him until they learn that he does not conform to so-called race stereotypes. He reports that people in his unit say things about him, such as "Will loves hunting and ATVs, so he's not one of them. No, he is different." This participant's responses suggest that while there is an environment where commonalities are valued, if someone does not conform to those commonalities, they may be "othered" and not seen as a group member. The two other Black males interviewed did not have this perception and felt that their work setting was inclusive to everyone. Several female participants report experiencing bias against them due to being female in their past military work settings but not presently.

The perception among some participants that not all members are able to experience inclusion may adversely impact the military. Research on inclusion suggests that feelings of exclusion lead to decreased organizational commitment, morale, and helping behaviors (Karrasch, 2003; Lee, 2019). In contrast, inclusive climates encourage integration, synergy, and belongingness (Perry et al., 2020). Additionally, research indicates that in inclusive workplace cultures, diversity correlates with increased organizational effectiveness due to the presence of a work environment in which all people can experience a sense of belonging while being encouraged to share their unique views, skills, and qualities (Lee & Sunny, 2021; Moon & Christensen, 2020). Conversely, when organizations do not possess these inclusive qualities, diversity often correlates to decreased effectiveness due to increased conflict and reduced information sharing (Leicht-Deobald et al., 2021; Triana et al., 2015).

While inclusion in any setting must emphasize uniqueness and belonging, the balancing of these factors in a military setting may weigh more heavily on belonging.

However, the commonalities that create belonging must focus on factors that unite rather than create division, such as military principles, values, and dedication to the mission. When commonalities are based primarily on status or group affiliation, this creates power imbalances that may lead to preferential treatment. This preferential treatment, in turn, may increase workplace hostility.

Good work performance and a strong work ethic were the most frequently cited reasons someone would be accepted and included. Nearly all members reported that if someone proves to be a hard worker and an asset to the team, they will be treated as an insider. However, there was also a perception that if a person struggled with job performance, they may struggle to achieve inclusion in their team. Further efforts to engage and advance members who struggle with performance issues may help inclusion. Additional training, cross-training, or reassignment may help members to serve as an asset in their work setting more effectively.

The significance of inclusion in reducing hostile workplace behaviors is that when a work setting is inclusive to everyone, it will be less conducive to hostile workplace behaviors because when people are treated with respect for their differences (uniqueness) and treated as valuable insiders (belonging), they are less likely to be responded to in exclusionary ways such as discrimination, harassment, or bullying (Brown et al., 2021).

Bystander Intervention Findings

The organizational factors perceived to influence bystander intervention in this study show both consistencies and inconsistencies with research findings. Research on bystander intervention suggests that bystander intervention is more likely to occur in organizations that encourage employees to identify and address workplace hostilities.

Whereas the bystander effect (bystanders do not intervene) is more prevalent in organizations where hostile workplace behaviors are commonplace, and employees are not encouraged to intervene (Einarsen et al., 2020; Kuntz et al., 2023; Sanderson, 2020).

Participants reported that leadership regularly communicates zero tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. Intolerance towards hostile workplace behaviors is not just communicated as an organizational policy but also as an organizational cultural expectation. The message of zero tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors has permeated the culture, and participants expressed awareness that leadership will hold those who engage in such behaviors accountable. Participants also perceived that many bystanders would speak up in hostile workplace situations out of a duty to care for their fellow service members and to be accountable to their team.

Though there was a perception that these factors would reinforce bystander intervention, few members could reference a time they had witnessed a bystander intervene in a hostile workplace situation. Many participants reported that they would intervene if they witnessed a hostile workplace situation; however, most participants did not feel that they had been in a situation that reached this threshold. One member discussed that he never intervened when his colleagues told jokes he found offensive. He reported that he chose not to because he feared it would impact his career as he was lower ranking than others involved. He did note, however, that if someone were being directly harmed, he would intervene. There appeared to be the perception that explicitly hostile workplace behaviors would not be tolerated; however, less severe forms of workplace hostility may go unchallenged.

This hesitancy to intervene could be due to evaluation apprehension. Evaluation apprehension is one of the three psychological processes Latane and Darley (1968) discuss in their seminal work on the bystander effect. Evaluation apprehension describes when bystanders fail to intervene out of concern that they may be judged for overreacting (Einarsen et al., 2020; Sanderson, 2020). Power disparities were another deterrent to bystander intervention, as some participants perceived that it would be difficult to intervene in situations where the offender is of a higher rank or status. Research suggests that if individuals have reason to believe that intervening may result in negative consequences, such as adverse impacts on their employment or reputation within an organization, they will likely exhibit the bystander effect (Shea et al., 2021).

Though several protective factors for bystander intervention were noted, at the same time, there was the perception that intervening could have negative social or occupational consequences. Research suggests that if the actual or perceived costs of intervening outweigh a person's sense of responsibility, they will likely not intervene (Kuntz & Searle, 2023). The perceived negative consequences in this study were mainly in the form of being excluded from the group. Participants also expressed some concerns that intervening could adversely affect one's career. Additionally, there was an indication that it may be difficult to intervene without escalating the situation into a significant issue when perhaps only a subtle correction was needed. Paradoxically, the frequent communication of a zero-tolerance policy towards hostile workplace behaviors in the military could create difficulty in intervening, as addressing a hostile workplace situation may escalate the problem more than intended or needed for a resolution of the issue to be achieved. As a result, there could exist a perception that the behaviors need to be severe

before they can be addressed by members, as calling out such behaviors could be perceived as overly harmful to the person responsible. Bystander intervention could be perceived as "turning on your own," as one member described it.

The military's emphasis on zero tolerance does not appear to highlight ways to intervene in a hostile workplace situation at the lowest level through practices such as redirecting and verbal correction. In this study, bystander intervention was defined to participants as "when a witness (bystander) to a hostile workplace behavior such as discrimination, harassment, or bullying intervenes to remedy the situation or prevent further escalation or harm to the victim." Many respondents only referenced reporting the incident when discussing bystander intervention. Though reporting is a form of intervention, there can be several barriers to making a report. Research suggests that most hostile workplace behaviors do not get reported due to fear of stigma or retaliation (Cerio et al., 2018; EEOC, 2016; Hodgins et al., 2014; Hodgins et al., 2020; Zedlacher & Koeszegi, 2021). Additionally, reporting does not allow members to remedy the situation at the lowest level possible. When members are able to resolve the issue without making a report, it may prevent the divisiveness and animosities that can result from reporting (Hodgins et al., 2020).

Military members appeared aware that leadership opposes hostile workplace behaviors and that victims of such behaviors have multiple avenues for recourse. However, there does not appear to be a focus on the bystander's role in these situations. Military members do not appear to receive instruction on how to intervene in hostile workplace situations, and there also does not appear to be a message of zero tolerance toward retaliation against the bystander. When organizations encourage bystander

intervention it increases bystanders' accountability to intervene and decreases the fears associated with doing so (Clark, 2019; Dover et al., 2020). An increased focus on the role of the bystander in influencing the outcomes of these situations is needed in order to move away from conceptualizing workplace hostility as a dyad interaction between only the perpetrator and target. A bystander focus would help to move toward recognizing the influence bystanders have on the outcome in hostile workplace situations (Einarsen, 2020; Sanderson, 2020)

Hostile Workplace Behavior Findings

Hostile workplace reinforcements and deterrents in this study were consistent with research, which suggests that hostile workplace behaviors are organizational-level issues rather than individual ones. The work environment theory of hostile workplace behaviors posits that psychosocial work environment characteristics are both precursors for hostile workplace behaviors and serve to propagate them (Tuckey, 2022). Work cultures that encourage dominance, competition, masculinity, and conformity experience more workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying (Buchanan et al., 2014; Hodgins et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2021). In contrast, work cultures that establish norms of cooperation, support, and respect experienced decreased workplace hostility (Einarsen et al., 2020; Sanderson, 2020).

Participants were all able to explain multiple ways in which the military organizational culture deters hostile workplace behaviors. For example, zero tolerance of hostile workplace behaviors, such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying, is frequently discussed by leadership and in training and briefings, and all participants appeared to be aware that their organization was against such behaviors. There was

additionally the perception that leadership encourages people to come forward with concerns of hostile workplace behaviors and would take these concerns seriously. The general perception was that the culture is inconducive to hostile workplace behaviors because of an inclusive team-based focus where members treat each other with respect and value.

Many members could not describe how the military organizational culture reinforces hostile workplace behaviors. Participants were asked, "How does the culture within your work setting impact, either by reinforcing or deterring, the occurrence of hostile workplace behaviors?" All participants answered how the culture deters hostile workplace behaviors. Only one participant described how his current workplace culture reinforces hostile workplace behaviors, and he said this was through the presence of a good ole boys club (preferential treatment). From participant responses to other questions, insights were gleaned on how the military organization culture may inadvertently reinforce hostile workplace behaviors. Several participants during the interview expressed the perception of preferential treatment and the perception that there could be social and occupational consequences for bystander intervention. These perceived issues could increase risk factors for hostile workplace behaviors. Preferential treatment may result in perceived organizational injustices that increase feelings of frustration and hostility; additionally, when preferential treatment exists, it can create power imbalances that allow hostile workplace behaviors to go unchallenged (Hodgins et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2021). Perceived social and occupational consequences for intervening in hostile workplace situations also make it easier for hostile workplace behaviors to go unaddressed (Kuntz & Searle, 2023; Shea et al., 2021; Yu, 2023).

Lastly, as discussed in the previous section, the military appears to emphasize deterring hostile workplace behaviors through a focus on punishing the perpetrator rather than focusing on creating an organizational culture that is inconducive to hostile workplace behaviors. Telling people what they should not do is an individual-level intervention that only focuses on the perpetrator while ignoring how the larger system encourages or maintains these behaviors (Hodgins et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013; Perry et al., 2021;). Research suggests, however, that hostile workplace behaviors are best conceptualized as organizational-level issues (Brown et al., 2020; Hodgins et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2013; Latham, 2020; Perry et al., 2021; Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021; Tuckey et al., 2022; Zedlacher & Koezegi, 2021). An increased focus on the organizational culture and bystanders' role in influencing this culture could help create an environment where when hostile workplace behaviors do occur, they are addressed immediately by bystanders. Bystander intervention would prevent these behaviors from escalating into increasingly problematic behaviors.

Biblical Integration Findings

The findings of this study depict parallels to how scripture calls us to treat one another. The theme of looking out for and caring for one another exemplifies the scriptural calling to care for your neighbors and those persecuted (*English Standard Bible*, 2001/2016, Proverbs 31:8-9; Ezekiel 45:9; John 15:12; Galatians 6:2; Isiah 1:17; Proverbs 21:13; James 4:17; Luke 25-37). The theme of an emphasis on a common military to increase inclusion is similar to scripture that speaks to our common humanity as children of God (1 Corinthians 14:26; Colossians 3:12). Lastly, the theme of problems and mistakes being met with support (psychological safety) is consistent with scripture

encouraging us to express our sins (mistakes) without fear that this will negatively impact our relationship with God (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Implications

Implications for Understanding Military Culture

The findings of this study suggest that military members have mostly conducive and positive attitudes toward psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention. Previous research has described the military as characterized by competition emphasizing hypermasculine behaviors, showing no weakness, unhealthy rivalry, and a lack of empathy (Stuart & Szeszeran, 2021). The participants in this study, however, highlighted a culture of cooperation, encouragement, and respect. The majority of participants in this study were in leadership roles and were able to highlight how they and their peers encourage a respectful workplace culture and emphasize caring for and valuing all members. Additionally, all participants seemed to understand the importance of deterring hostile workplace behaviors.

The military organizational culture poses several protective factors against hostile workplace behaviors that should be emphasized to deter hostile workplace behaviors. The military cultural value of looking out for your fellow service member (wingman concept) could be an effective focal point in training and communication by highlighting all members' responsibility to be active bystanders to their fellow service members. The military culture's emphasis on excellence and service ethos may also tie in nicely to help members understand the importance of creating a respectful work environment where all members can thrive and where hostile workplace behaviors are corrected.

Implications for Psychological Safety in the Military

For a respectful workplace culture that is intolerant of hostile workplace behaviors to exist, psychological safety must first be present. People will not address concerning behaviors unless they perceive that it is psychologically safe to do so (Edmondson, 2019; O'Donovan &McAuliffe, 2020; Sanderson, 2020; Sherf et al., 2021). Presently, psychological safety appears to be encouraged more so because military members view it as the right thing to do rather than also the effective thing to do. Increased awareness among military members of how psychological safety can increase service excellence through mishap prevention and process improvement would further reinforce psychological safety. Additionally, further education on how psychological safety relates to the ability to create a respective workplace culture may be helpful.

Implications for Inclusive Workplace Culture

Inclusion in the military appears to relate to an adherence to a common military culture and being an asset to the team. As with psychological safety, an inclusive workplace culture is developed when members support and value one another. In the military, more emphasis appears to be placed on creating a sense of belonging than on valuing distinctiveness. While creating a sense of belonging is effective in creating team cohesion, some potential may be lost by not also emphasizing distinctiveness. Research on diversity and organizational performance indicates that diversity correlates with improved organizational performance, but only when an inclusive workplace culture is present (Moon & Christensen, 2020). Additionally, valuing inclusivity helps decrease hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, harassment, and bullying because when people are treated with respect for their differences (uniqueness) and treated as

valuable insiders (belonging), they are less likely to be responded to in exclusionary ways such as discrimination, harassment, or bullying (Brown et al., 2021).

A significant deterrent to inclusion was the perception of preferential treatment. It was not within the scope of this study to determine if this perceived preferential treatment was based on actual disparate treatment; nonetheless, even the perception of unequal treatment can impact unit cohesion and result in increased hostility and a decreased sense of value. Military leaders should examine their processes for any inherent bias and also increase transparency with members on how they make decisions regarding opportunities and advancements.

Implication for Bystander Intervention

Bystander intervention is presently taught to military members in the context of preventing sexual assaults. However, this training does not currently address using bystander intervention to respond to hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. Presently, military training on hostile workplace behavior focuses on what members should not do rather than what they should. Bystander intervention training can capitalize on the military values of looking out for your fellow service member (wingman concept) by empowering members to act in pro-social ways through bystander intervention (Yu, 2023). Rather than training that conceptualizes members as prospective offenders, bystander training conceptualizes participants as allies and agents of change (Dover, 2020).

Implications for The Deterrence of Hostile Workplace Behaviors

A macro-level focus on how the military organizational culture influences hostile workplace behaviors must regularly be assessed, as reinforcements and deterrents will

change over time. As several participants discussed, the military organizational culture used to be more permissive toward hostile workplace behaviors 10-20 years ago. However, cultural norms of decreased tolerance and an increased awareness of how workplace hostility adversely impacts the military have reduced acceptance of these behaviors.

Implications for Theory and Practice

At the time of conducting this research, no other research existed that explored military members' perceptions of how the military organizational culture influences psychological safety, inclusive workplace culture, bystander behaviors, and hostile workplace behaviors. This research advanced theory on these constructs by identifying how they relate to one another and how they are experienced in a military context. The findings of this research suggest that military participants perceive psychological safety and inclusion when they feel they and others are supported and valued. Support and valuing of members, in turn, increased a sense of accountability to their fellow service members to intervene on their behalf in a hostile workplace situation. Additionally, cultural norms of supporting and valuing others decreased tolerance for hostile workplace behaviors.

The findings of this research also suggest that military members perceive a lack of psychological safety and inclusion when they perceive biased or preferential treatment and feel that they and others are not supported. When biased treatment and a lack of support were perceived, participants felt that bystander intervention would have adverse social and occupational consequences for the bystander. When biased treatment and a lack of support were present, hostile workplace behaviors were able to persist as there

was decreased awareness and concern about how these behaviors impacted military members and the military culture.

Limitations

Study Sample Limitations

A significant limitation of this study was the lack of a randomized sample. Members who volunteered for this study may hold opinions that do not reflect most service members. Their willingness to participate in a study examining hostile workplace behaviors may indicate a strong disposition towards caring for military members and wanting to improve their experiences. All participants interviewed were in a mid to high-ranking echelon (E6+ for enlisted and O3+ for officer), with nearly half of the participants being officers between the ranks of O4-O6. Participants were also all seasoned military members with at least 15 years of service. This demographic of military members may experience psychological safety, inclusion, bystander behaviors, and hostile workplace behaviors far differently than newer and lower-ranking military members.

Additionally, participants were mainly mid to high-level supervisors and leaders within their units. Although the participants interviewed appear to perceive the importance of psychological safety, inclusion, bystander intervention, and deterring hostile workplace behaviors, this does not indicate that first-level supervisors do. Not all military branches were equally represented in this study, and there was an overrepresentation of Air Force Reserve members. The study also did not have a broad representation based on race. Eleven participants identified themselves as White, three as Black, and one as mixed race.

Although, in many ways, this study's sample was fairly homogenous, it is noteworthy that the intent of this study was not to explore participants' direct experiences with hostile workplace behavior, psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention but rather their perceptions of how the military organizational culture influences these factors. The tenure and leadership experience of this study's participants may have helped to provide important insights into these factors that newer and lower-ranking military members may not be privy to. Nonetheless, valuable information on the perceptions of how the organizational culture influences hostile workplace behaviors, psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander behaviors for a broader representation of military members was unable to be obtained due to this limitation.

Additional Limitations

An additional limitation of this study is that it is not quantitative and, therefore, cannot show correlations. If the topic of this study was examined through quantitative methods, the results could show the correlation between predefined organizational factors and hostile workplace behaviors. However, as discussed previously, quantitative data exists regarding hostile workplace behaviors in this setting. What is lacking is a greater context on this problem and how military members perceive organizational factors to influence hostile workplace behaviors.

Another limitation of any research, particularly qualitative research, is social desirability. My status as a military member may have increased participants' social desirability because I may encounter some participants in the future. Conversely, my being a military member may have decreased social desirability as participants may be

hesitant to be as open with a researcher external to the military out of fear that their concerns may be misunderstood.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study aimed to identify how the military organizational culture influences psychological safety, inclusion, bystander behaviors, and hostile workplace behaviors. Based on the themes identified in this study, participants generally perceived that the military organizational culture provides psychological safety for admitting mistakes, asking questions, sharing ideas, and discussing problems. Further research is needed to assess if this perception can be quantitively validated. Research has not been conducted using Edmondson's Psychological Safety Scale (Edmondson, 1999) to assess psychological safety in military work environments. Further research is also needed to determine the relationship between the military's emphasis on commonalities and its receptiveness to distinctiveness. Additional research is also necessary to assess if military members' perception that military members would intervene in hostile workplace behaviors is grounded in actual behavior. Lastly, further research is warranted to evaluate whether the themes identified in this study are also present among military members from a broader military sample with increased diversity in racial and rank representation.

Summary

The findings of this research indicate that characteristics of the military organizational culture can reinforce or deter hostile workplace behaviors. When military core values of supporting and valuing fellow service members are emphasized, this may lead to a more psychologically safe and inclusive workplace environment in which bystanders experience minimal barriers to intervene when hostile workplace behaviors

occur. A highly supportive environment characterized by psychological safety and inclusion also creates an environment in which hostile workplace behaviors are uncommon because they are inconducive to the workplace culture. Conversely, when there is a perception of biased treatment and a lack of support, this is inconducive to psychological safety, inclusion, and bystander intervention, as military members do not experience the safety needed to speak up, act authentically, and intervene on behalf of their fellow service members. This leads to increased hostile workplace behaviors as these behaviors are not challenged when they occur, and there is minimal concern or awareness of the detrimental impacts of hostile workplace behaviors on the individual and the overall culture.

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APPENDIX A: Demographic Survey

1. What is your current branch of service?
   a. Air Force
   b. Army
   c. Marines
   d. Navy
   e. Coast Guard
   f. Space Force

2. What is your current military status
   a. Active duty
   b. Reserves
   c. Guard
   d. Other (please specify)

3. How many years of service do you have?
   a. Less than 2
   b. 2-4
   c. 5-10
   d. 11-15
   e. 16+

4. What is your current rank
   a. E1-E3
   b. E4-E6
   c. E7-E9
   d. O1-O3
   e. O4-O6
   f. O7-O10

5. What is your gender
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Non-binary

6. What is your race?
   a. Caucasian
   b. Black/African American
   c. Asian
   d. Hispanic
   e. American Indian

f. Other (please specify)

APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Hostile Workplace Behaviors in the Military: A Grounded Theory Approach to the

Role of Organizational Factors

Christina Staebell

Liberty University

School of Psychology

You are invited to be in a research study on organizational factors that influence hostile workplace behaviors in the military. You were selected as a possible participant because you currently serve in the United States military. Please read this form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be in the study.

Christina Staebell, a doctoral candidate in the School of Psychology at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: This study aims to understand how organizational factors influence hostile workplace behaviors such as discrimination, harassment, and bullying in the military. Organizational factors that have been shown to influence workplace hostility in other settings will be explored, including inclusive workplace culture, bystander intervention, and psychological safety.

R.Q.1 How are hostile workplace behaviors reinforced within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.2 How are hostile workplace behaviors deterred within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.3 How is psychological safety reinforced within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.4 How is psychological safety deterred within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.5 How is inclusive workplace culture reinforced within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.6 How is inclusive workplace culture deterred within the military organizational culture?

R.Q.7 How are bystander behaviors influenced by the military organizational culture?

Procedures: If you agree to this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Allow me to use your demographic screening survey in their research.

2. Participate in a 30-60-minute interview with me. Interviews can be conducted in person, via video conferencing, or by phone. The interview will be recorded for transcription.

3. If there is any additional information that you would like to share after the interview, you will provide this to me by phone or email within one month of your interview.

4. After I have transcribed your interview, you will be asked to review the transcription to ensure accuracy.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: This study is expected to benefit society by identifying how organizational factors influence hostile workplace behaviors. This knowledge can then inform intervention efforts to reduce hostile workplace behaviors in the military.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject.

Research records will be stored securely, and only I will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others cannot easily overhear the conversation.

- All documents will be stored on a secure and password-protected computer.

- Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and stored on a password-protected computer; I will be the only person with access to this computer.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Christina Staebell. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ or at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Gilbert Franco, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record or video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____

Signature of Investigator   Date

APPENDIX C: Interview Protocol

Please describe what occurs in your office or unit when you or someone else makes a mistake at work. (Psychological safety)

1a. Please describe what occurs in your office when someone expresses an idea or opinion different from most people in the office (psychological safety).

2. Please describe what makes someone an insider or experience belonging in your workgroup. (belonging)

2a. Are there any people in your workgroup who seem excluded? Why do you believe they are? (belonging)

3. Please describe how differences are treated in your workgroup or unit. Differences may include differing perspectives, values, cultures, personalities, or demographics. (Uniqueness)

4. Bystander intervention occurs when a witness (bystander) to a hostile workplace behavior such as discrimination, harassment, or bullying intervenes to either remedy the situation or prevent further escalation or harm to the victim

4a. What have been your experiences with being a bystander in hostile workplace situations?

4b. What made you choose to act (or refrain from acting) in this situation?

4c. Would your likelihood to intervene be impacted by the type of hostile workplace behavior (discrimination vs. sexual harassment vs. bullying)? If so, why?

5. What barriers, if any, do you perceive in your work culture that may prevent yourself or others from being an active bystander in hostile workplace situations?

5a. What barriers, if any, do you perceive there to be in your work culture that may prevent an inclusive workplace culture?

5b. What barriers, if any, do you perceive in your work culture that may prevent psychological safety?

6. How does the culture within your work setting impact the occurrence of hostile workplace behaviors?