
Dissertations

Spring 4-3-2023

Exemplary Senior Navy Female Leadership: A Study of How Navy Female Leaders Use the Grit Characteristics Courage, Conscientiousness, Long-Term Goals, Resilience, and Excellence Versus Perfection to Create Extraordinary Results Within Their Organizations

Cache' Hapner
chapner@mail.umassglobal.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.umassglobal.edu/edd_dissertations



Part of the [Leadership Studies Commons](#), [Military and Veterans Studies Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hapner, Cache', "Exemplary Senior Navy Female Leadership: A Study of How Navy Female Leaders Use the Grit Characteristics Courage, Conscientiousness, Long-Term Goals, Resilience, and Excellence Versus Perfection to Create Extraordinary Results Within Their Organizations" (2023). *Dissertations*. 502.
https://digitalcommons.umassglobal.edu/edd_dissertations/502

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by UMass Global ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of UMass Global ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact christine.bombaro@umassglobal.edu.

Exemplary Senior Navy Female Leadership: A Study of How Navy Female Leaders
Use the Grit Characteristics Courage, Conscientiousness, Long-Term Goals,
Resilience, and Excellence Versus Perfection to Create
Extraordinary Results Within Their Organizations

A Dissertation by
Cache' J. Hapner

University of Massachusetts Global

A Private Nonprofit Affiliate of the University of Massachusetts

Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

April 2023

Committee in charge:

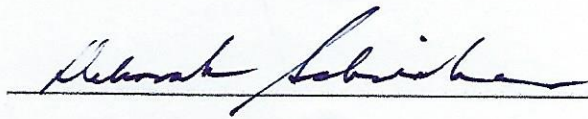
Deborah Schreiber, Ed.D., Committee Chair

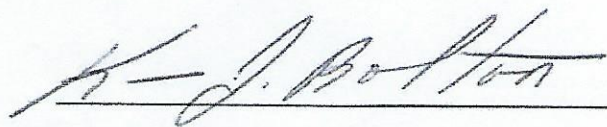
Karen Bolton, Ed.D.

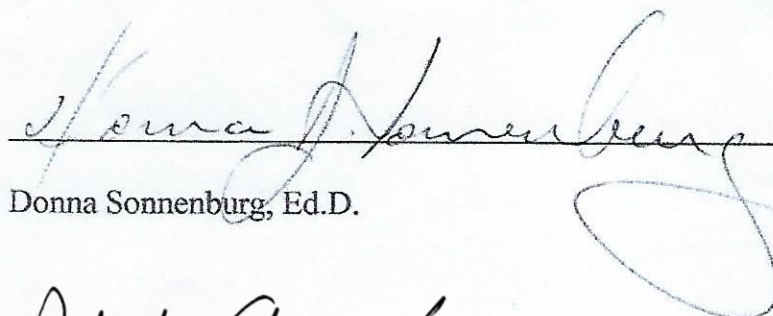
Donna Sonnenburg, Ed.D.

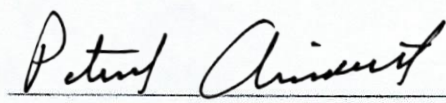
University of Massachusetts Global
A Private Nonprofit Affiliate of the University of Massachusetts
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

The dissertation of Cache' J. Hapner is approved.


_____, Dissertation Chair
Deborah Schreiber, Ed.D.


_____, Committee Member
Karen Bolton, Ed.D.


_____, Committee Member
Donna Sonnenburg, Ed.D.


_____, Associate Dean

April 2023

Exemplary Senior Navy Female Leadership: A Study of How Navy Female Leaders

Use the Grit Characteristics Courage, Conscientiousness, Long-Term Goals,

Resilience, and Excellence Versus Perfection to Create

Extraordinary Results Within Their Organizations

Copyright © 2023

by Cache' J. Hapner

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I give all honor and glory to God. He created a resilient, determined, and goal-minded woman; through him, I was able to complete my doctorate. I want to thank the late Dr. Julie Hadden, who felt I was a perfect candidate to conduct a grit leadership study based on my background as a senior Navy leader. You were right, Dr. Hadden. I got it done. I also think of our last conversation when you encouraged me to take chances and move back to the east coast to be closer to family. Your guidance was there when I needed it most.

Dr. Schreiber, you are the GOAT. If you don't know, it is the greatest of all time. I am telling you, if you do not know about Dr. Schreiber, you are missing out. You have truly motivated me. Dr. Schreiber guided me with preparing for the grit thematic study with eight other exceptional doctoral candidates and two other amazing faculty. She has been my champion the entire way. You constantly made yourself available, and toward the end, we were pushing. Without you, I could not have finished it. You, Dr. Bolton, and Dr. Sonnenburg made yourselves available and remained flexible to support my desire to complete my dissertation in year one. It speaks volumes of the support you have provided. You were essential and constantly improved the quality of my work. With my sincerest gratitude, I thank you.

To Dr. Pierson. Dr. P! and my Lacey Cohort, with whom I still meet weekly because we are awesome like that. Dr. P, you are such a treasure. Thank you for your genuine support; I hope I made you proud. Thank you for the snacks. I still have the note you gave me on my desk throughout this entire dissertation process. You were born with greatness- Rumi. I believe it, Dr. P because you were one of the many faculty and

supporting peers who told me to take it one day at a time. I did, and now I am at the finish line. To Mackenzie and Lawrence, I love you both truly. We have created a genuine friendship, and I am so blessed to know you and continue our friendship. Thank you for letting me vent and for your support and the slap in the face toward the end of getting this dissertation done.

Gabby! You are the one! True to your word, honest, and just a great mentor and friend. I was able to confide in you, and I believe we made each laugh along the way in this crazy process. Dom, I love you. I sometimes vented to you more than my cohort, which is crazy. Thanks for always listening and reminding me that this is what we do.

To my family, my children are a bit too young to understand all of the “wait a minute,” but this dissertation came at the right time when I could do it full time while being a full-time Mom. I am so blessed to have been able to be with you. I love you. To Dan, you were there through all my craziness. You kept loving me. Thank you for being my sugar daddy. Thanks Boo. To my Mom and Dad, I appreciate all the support. You have always believed I could do this and anything else. Well, here I am! I love you all, my siblings, and I know some details may have been lost in translation, but this was hard. I want you to know I am not unique; anyone can do anything. I am 40 and doing my doctoral dissertation. Do not let anything stop you. You can be resilient, overcome obstacles, and be whomever you want.

To all my military family and senior Navy female leaders who have mentored me and told me their personal stories of grit and resilience, you are the true heroes. I know this research will enhance leadership development and support the creation of personal grit. Thank you, UMASS Global, for allowing me to conduct such an impactful study.

ABSTRACT

Exemplary Senior Navy Female Leadership: A Study of How Navy Female Leaders
Use the Grit Characteristics Courage, Conscientiousness, Long-Term Goals,
Resilience, and Excellence Versus Perfection to Create
Extraordinary Results Within Their Organizations

by Cache' J. Hapner

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and describe how exemplary senior Navy female leaders used five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Methodology: This qualitative study used a phenomenological method to describe how eight senior Navy female leaders use five characteristics of grit to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations. Respondents were purposively chosen. The researcher collected data through interviews, transcripts, and artifacts that were triangulated and coded for themes using NVivo software.

Findings: Exemplary senior Navy female leaders use the five principles associated with grit to produce extraordinary results in their organizations. These principles are described in five major findings: staying true to their morals, caring for their people, communicating boundaries, getting the job done no matter what, and being flexible and asking for support in goal setting.

Conclusions: Three significant conclusions regarding leadership traits of exemplary senior Navy female leaders emerged. Courage emerged as the most pervasive attribute possessed by these leaders. Their actions demonstrated great courage in facing challenges

and advocating for their teams. This study revealed that courage, conscientiousness, resilience, and long-term goals are interconnected and collectively support the concept of grit as a complex phenomenon in leadership. Lastly, while excellence was acknowledged as a significant trait, these leaders did not dwell upon perfection as they viewed it as unrealistic.

Recommendations: The researcher recommends five action areas to improve grit leaders. Two are expressed below, while additional details are explained under implications for action. Develop a course that captures the pros and cons of operational duty while providing counseling to support senior Navy female leaders' challenges. Gather and compare research on grit from varied populations and organizations to identify common themes and trends. This would build a comprehensive understanding of grit as a leadership trait and its applicability in different contexts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	xiv
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background.....	3
History of Women in the Military	5
Female Leaders in the Navy	6
Role Description	7
Command Assignments	8
Impact	9
Evolving Leadership Styles in the Navy	11
Traditional Leadership Theories.....	14
Leadership and Grit-Related Traits (Gritty Leaders).....	16
Five Principles of Grit	18
Courage.....	18
Conscientiousness.....	18
Long-Term Goals.....	19
Resilience.....	19
Excellence Versus Perfection	19
Gap in the Literature.....	20
Research Problem	21
Purpose Statement.....	24
Research Questions.....	25
Significance.....	25
Definitions.....	27
Delimitations.....	29
Organization of the Study.....	29
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	31
History of Women in the Military	31
Early Years	32
Mid- to Late-20th Century.....	33
Today: 21st century	37
Female Leaders in the Navy	38
Role Description	39
Command Assignments.....	41
Naval Surface Warfare.....	42
Air Warfare	46
Submarine Warfare	49
Special Warfare.....	51
Naval Shore Support.....	54
Impact	55
Evolving Leadership Styles	60
Path to Leadership.....	60
Core Values.....	62

Honor	62
Courage	63
Commitment	63
Core Attributes.....	64
Integrity.....	64
Accountability.....	64
Initiative	65
Toughness	65
Theoretical Foundations.....	67
Transformational Leadership.....	67
Authentic Leadership.....	68
Servant Leadership	69
Theoretical Framework.....	70
Leadership and Grit-Related Traits (Gritty Leaders).....	71
Five Principles of Grit	73
Courage	74
Conscientiousness.....	75
Long-Term Goals.....	76
Resilience.....	77
Excellence Versus Perfection	78
Gap in the Literature	79
Summary	81
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	83
Overview.....	83
Purpose Statement.....	83
Research Questions.....	83
Research Design.....	84
Population	87
Target Population.....	88
Sampling Procedure	88
Instrumentation	92
Researcher as an Instrument	92
Field-Testing the Interview Questions.....	94
Expert Panel.....	96
Validity	97
Reliability	98
Internal Reliability.....	98
Intercoder Reliability of Data	99
External Reliability of Data.....	100
Data Collection	100
Interview Process	101
Limitations	103
Location	103
Sample Size	104
Observations	104
Researcher as the Instrument.....	105

Summary	105
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS.....	106
Overview.....	106
Purpose Statement.....	107
Research Questions.....	107
Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures	107
Population	109
Sample.....	110
Sample Procedure	111
Presentation and Analysis of Data	112
Data Analysis.....	113
Validity	114
Reliability	114
Research Findings.....	115
Research Question 1	116
Do What Is Morally Right	117
Take Care of Your People.....	119
Be Scared But Do It Anyway.....	120
Research Question 2	121
Communicate Boundaries.....	122
Write Everything Down.....	124
Delegate and Ask for Support.....	126
Research Question 3	127
Open Communication With the Team on the Direction of Goals	128
Align Division/Department Goals With the Commander and Senior Echelon’s Vision.....	129
Map Progress and Adjust as Necessary	130
Research Question 4	132
Getting It Done Is the Only Option.....	133
You Are Always Being Watched; Be the Example of the Right Way to Be.....	135
Have a Support System.....	135
Research Question 5	137
Perfection Is a Fallacy.....	138
Celebrate Progress With Your Team	139
Adjust Expectations as Needed.....	140
Key Findings.....	142
Courage.....	143
Conscientiousness.....	144
Long-Term Goals.....	144
Resilience.....	144
Excellence Versus Perfection	145
Summary	145
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	147
Purpose Statement.....	147
Research Questions.....	148

Methodology	148
Population	149
Major Findings.....	150
Stay True to Your Morals	151
Take Care of Your People	153
Communicate Boundaries.....	154
Get the Job Done No Matter What	156
Be Flexible and Ask for Support in Goal Setting	158
Unexpected Findings	159
Breaking the Stigma: Courage to Seek Counseling.....	160
Choosing a Career Over Having Children.....	162
Limited Discussion of Excellence Versus Perfection.....	164
Conclusions.....	166
Courage.....	167
Grit: Courage, Conscientiousness, Use of Long-term Goals, and Resilience	167
Excellence Versus Perfection: Absent from Senior Navy Female Leaders’ Mindset	167
Implications for Action.....	168
Develop a Course.....	169
Acknowledge Grit.....	170
Embrace a Growth Mindset	170
Contribute to Several Venues of Research	171
Join or Create a Grit Mentorship Community	172
Recommendations for Further Research.....	172
Researcher’s Remarks and Reflections.....	176
REFERENCES	178
APPENDICES	204

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Alignment Table: Five Characteristics of Grit	94
Table 2. Participant Criteria	112
Table 3. Grit Attribute Listed by Highest Frequency of Reference.....	116
Table 4. Themes Related to Research Question 1: Courage.....	117
Table 5. Themes Related to Research Question 2: Conscientiousness.....	122
Table 6. Themes Related to Research Question 3: Long-Term Goals	128
Table 7. Themes Related to Research Question 4: Resilience.....	133
Table 8. Themes Related to Research Question 5: Excellence Versus Perfection	138
Table 9. Summary of Key Findings.....	143
Table 10. Major Findings Related to Common Themes.....	150

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Navy Officer Rank Structure.....	40
Figure 2. Navy Enlisted Rank Structure	41
Figure 3. Carrier Strike Group	43
Figure 4. Fleet Concentration Areas and Operational Headquarters	46
Figure 5. Carrier Air Wing.....	48
Figure 6. Elements of Combat Power Assessment	52
Figure 7. Population, Sampling Frame (Target Population), and Sample.....	91

PREFACE

A significant body of emerging research supports the belief that grit is key to obtaining extraordinary results (Schimschal & Lomas, 2019). Three faculty and nine doctoral students from the University of Massachusetts Global identified a common interest in studying the relationship between grit and the power of passion and perseverance in professionals who accomplish extraordinary results. Through their shared interest, a thematic study was conducted by the nine doctoral students to identify and describe how exemplary leaders use the five principles associated with grit, courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection—to accomplish these extraordinary results within their areas of expertise. A phenomenological study design was used based on the framework of the five theoretical principles of grit. Specifically, the researchers sought to understand how study participants could persevere through adversity and achieve personal and professional goals, thus demonstrating grit (Duckworth et al., 2007). The concept of grit as a predictor of success has continued to gain attention from the research community since its wide release in 2007 (Perlis, 2013). More research is needed to explore the relationship between an exemplary leader's passion for persevering, the five principles of grit, and how they deliver extraordinary results (Mueller et al., 2017). Findings from this study will contribute to the emerging body of knowledge.

To develop consistency and reliability, the nine doctoral students collaborated with the three faculty leads to develop the purpose statement and research questions. The term *peer researcher* was used throughout the dissertation to refer to the thematic researchers involved in conducting this study. The peer researchers studied exemplary

leaders in the following fields: Gabriela Aldana, middle school principals in Los Angeles and Orange County; Nicholas Barron, Directors of Special Education working in districts with less than 5,000 ADA; Arah Broadnax, African American female entrepreneurs; Gurprit Dhillon, elementary school principals; Cache' Hapner, senior Navy female leaders (commissioned and NCO); Denise Jaramillo, public school superintendents; Maria Moore, directors of special education; Julie Pettitt, women who hold chief executive roles in higher education; and Michelle Stoker, elementary school principals.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The United States has a lower percentage of women in organizational senior leadership positions (29%) than the global average (51%; Grant Thornton, 2020). In male-dominated industries like the military, these numbers are even lower. Women average 25% of senior military positions worldwide, yet in the US Navy, women hold only 18% of the senior leadership positions (Campuzano, 2019; Polson, 2020).

Historically, women enlisted in the U.S. Navy for brief periods, usually one enlistment tour of 4 years, making them less likely to emerge as senior leaders (America's Navy, n.d.-c.; Kolko & Miller, 2018; Oyler et al., 2011; Polson, 2020). The trend today is quite different. According to the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (2011), since the beginning of the 21st century, senior female reenlistment rates during the first reenlistment (4 years) are at 20% compared to 11%, and during their second enlistment (up to 8 years) are at 33% compared to 26%. The final reenlistment is also at 58% (Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2011). The final reenlistment will take the service member to retirement, which can be 20 to 30 years of service. Unfortunately, as noted, these numbers represent just a small number of women in senior leadership positions.

Increased interest in senior female (Navy) officers comes from the range of expertise they bring to the operation of naval warships, aircraft, and submarines, as well as other occupations related to wartime tactics (Service Women's Action Network [SWAN], 2019). Personal observations in the field illustrate that senior female officers work closely with senior enlisted leadership to supervise crews and execute military operations while communicating directly with their commanding officers. Focusing on

overall responsibility, senior women leaders are adaptive, open to self-development, and create a solid leadership base to learn from and build upon (O’Conner, 2018). Research has shown that women in leadership provide diverse ideas, are resourceful, and produce significant results in increased profits (Grant Thornton, 2020; Johns & Moser, 2001; O’Conner, 2018).

Various theories link leadership styles to success (Bass & Bass, 2008). Many examples and stories relate to senior executives or military commanders who achieve a high leadership level but fail to harness the opportunity to achieve extraordinary results (Luning et al., 2021). The grandfather of leadership, James McGregor Burns (1978), stated, “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 2). General Richard Dannatt (2011) defined leadership as follows:

Leadership is visionary; it is the projection of personality and character to inspire people to achieve the desired outcome. Leadership is a combination of example, persuasion, and compulsion, dependent on the situation. A successful leader is an individual who understands him/herself, the organization, the environment in which they operate, and the people they are privileged to lead. (p. 43)

Dannatt’s (2011) fundamental leadership concepts include vision, personality, character projection, and the ability to inspire others. Duckworth et al. (2007) suggested that grit-related personality traits influence leader success more than intelligence and vision. Grit, defined as passion and perseverance toward long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007), reflects a complex phenomenon of determination and stick-to-it-tiveness (Kaplan-Thaler & Koval, 2015). Gritty female leaders focus on goals and instill passion in achieving and supporting organizational vision (Norkeliunas, 2015; O’Conner, 2018;

Schimschal & Lomas, 2019). Determination and tenacity to not let temporary setbacks become permanent are reflections of grit as well (Miller, 2017).

Current research on grit and military leadership is increasing. Studies by Luning et al. (2021), Duckworth and Gross (2014), and Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014) connect leadership personality traits to grit and exemplary performance in military organizations. Within the Navy, it is recognized that grit leadership principles create team viability and are critical in assembling cohesive units (Clark, 2016).

However, how female military leaders use specific grit-related attributes to succeed is less discussed in the literature. Current research describes grit in varied ways and often broadly, presenting an unclear summary of grit-related personality traits. Studies by Perlis (2013) and later Arias (2017) are unique, however, in that they support five specific principles of grit that incorporate the concepts described above. These grit-related principles include courage, conscientiousness, the ability to achieve long-term goals, resilience, and the capability to reach excellence versus perfection (Arias, 2017; Perlis, 2013).

This study explored how exemplary senior Navy female leaders use specific grit-related principles of courage, conscientiousness, ability to achieve long-term goals, resilience, and the capability to reach excellence versus perfection to create extraordinary results within their organizations.

Background

The following discussion provides the foundation upon which this research is based. This section presents current, seminal, and relevant literature to support the study of how exemplary senior Navy female leaders use grit to create extraordinary results

within their organizations. The line of logic is drawn from a sequential review of several concepts. The concepts begin with women in the military and continue with female leaders in the Navy, evolving into leadership styles, leadership, and grit-related personality traits, ultimately recognizing specific principles of grit and exemplary leader success. The problem and purpose statements of this study follow the background section.

Military leadership is rooted in continual training and leadership development. Regardless of gender, transformational leaders are crucial to the organization's (Navy's) success (Stoltz, 2015). Senior leaders in the Navy face challenges that a nonmilitary leader may not deal with regularly (Benmelech & Frydman, 2015). A Navy leader must effectively lead individuals within their command based on various leadership characteristics that produce skills and abilities supporting organizational success (Polson, 2020; Redmond et al., 2015). Even though the Navy provides simulated training, integrated training environments, and leadership development training, there is more to being a leader than what is taught (Perryman, 2021). It is about the leader's action that creates extraordinary results (Luning et al., 2021). This study was intended to reveal how the alignment of grit-related personality traits used by exemplary senior Navy female leaders contributes to extraordinary results within the Navy organization. Furthermore, using the grit characteristics in a high-tempo mission-oriented organization such as the Navy can assist by further understanding grit leadership characteristics in other organizations.

History of Women in the Military

In 1908, the Navy established the Nurse Corps (Goldsmith, 2019). Once World War I began, the military opened enlistments to women for the first time to fill other occupations besides nursing. Women during the war were loyal, continually proving their value in the service. Women continued to serve in World War II when General Douglas MacArthur stated, “They are my best soldiers; they worked harder, complained less, and were better disciplined than men” (Goldsmith, 2019, p. 19). The war years proved women could contribute no matter the job assigned. Though it has been almost 100 years since women have filled various jobs in the military, only since 2016 have women been able to serve in every military position, including special operations in combat (Goldsmith, 2019).

Currently, more women in uniform contribute through occupational specialties than at any time in history (America’s Navy, n.d.-c; Gipson et al., 2017). Additionally, the United States is progressing with women leaders in the military, but many other nations have had women leading in all occupations, including combat, for years (Goldsmith, 2019). After women supported the Civil War, World War I, and World War II, women progressed but only made up 1% of the military ranks. However, by 1980, the percentage of women serving jumped to 13% (Statista, 2021). Additionally, women in the service occupy 15% of active duty and 18% of National Guard and reservists.

The year 2022 marks 7 years since women could serve in combat roles (U.S. Department of Defense [DoD], 2012). Today’s Navy is especially integrated-because women are no longer excluded from combat missions (Polson, 2020). Besides serving on naval vessels, submarines, and aircraft, women are on the front lines in combat. For

example, Naval Officer Brie Coger is one of the most sought-after ordnance disposal officers, having completed two Afghanistan tours (America's Navy, n.d.-c).

The United States requires the most capable force to maintain operational readiness against adversaries. Senior Navy female leaders are proven exemplary through their diverse experiences, creating a foundation for lessons in best leadership practices (Hendon, 2020). For example, when Navy Commander (CDR) Sarah Collins was asked about women who serve in the Navy, she stated, "Courage, sacrifice, determination, commitment, toughness, heart, talent, guts, that is what these women are made of, to hell with the sugar and spice!" (Nuciari, 2006, p. 283). As stated by CDR Collins, her character descriptors of Navy female leadership further support the alignment of grit leadership characteristics and senior Navy female leaders.

Female Leaders in the Navy

Active-duty military service is not a traditional line of employment for most women (Finch, 1994). Nevertheless, according to the DoD demographics report (2020b), the percentage of women holding a leadership position in the U.S. Navy from fiscal year (F.Y.) 2000 to F.Y. 2020 was 20%. Those numbers are up 16.5% from F.Y. 2016. Senior Navy female leadership is no longer a rarity in today's Navy. Women have been leading Navy warships for over a decade, and the DoD recently posted an article congratulating the Navy on the 10th anniversary of women on submarines (Stoner, 2021). In the article, Mrs. Sabrina Reyes-Dods, the Women in Submarines coordinator at Commander, Submarine Force Atlantic, was asked what improvements women bring to submarines. She confidently stated,

Women make up 57 percent of degrees related to science and engineering. We want to attract the best and brightest for our submarines. They first incorporate senior navy female leadership, providing diverse input and an outside-of-the-box perspective. Senior females on submarines provided a foundation for mentorship for junior enlisted female submariners. (Stoner, 2021, p. 1)

The Secretary of Defense at the time, Robert M. Gates, commented, “Women are adaptable and aggressive, so they took head on the rapid expansion and the new opportunity being on submarines provided” (Stoner, 2021, p. 2).

Senior Navy female leaders put the mission above all aspects of their lives (Klenke, 2004). Therefore, this study is relevant and needs to define why senior Navy female leaders use the five grit characteristics to answer why these women are so successful. Recent supporting evidence confirming why some achieve goals while others fail is the understanding that passion, persistence, and grit matter more than talent alone (Duckworth, 2016).

Role Description

SWAN (2019) defines senior enlisted military female leaders as individuals with E-7 to E-9 enlisted ranks. The rank of an enlisted or officer sailor determines their level of responsibility. Each level of ranking means another step of advancement. A leader’s rank is not the same as paygrade. Paygrade supports administrative responsibility to include standard pay across all military services. For example, the E in E-7 refers to enlisted Level 7, and the O seen in officer ranking is for commissioned officers, and their seniority follows.

Officer ranks belonging to senior female naval officers are O5 and higher, representing the world's highest-ranking military leaders (SWAN, 2019). Senior officers represent the senior commander, the top-ranking officer in their organization. They are responsible for communicating the commander's intentions with the support of the senior enlisted leaders. The senior enlisted leaders communicate the operational and administrative intent of the command to the junior level, and midlevel sailors for continual improvement of the command, including enhancing command programs, missions' requirements, and budgets, ensuring training and professional development opportunities are available for all sailors (SWAN, 2019).

Often senior female officers have the expertise needed to operate naval warships, aircraft, submarines, or other occupations related to wartime tactics (SWAN, 2019). They often also work closely with senior enlisted leadership to supervise crews and execute military operations while communicating directly with their commanding officers. Senior officers focus on overall responsibility more than the duties and details of personnel that the senior enlisted leader maintains (Hendon, 2020).

Command Assignments

Women now serve in every aspect of the naval community, including the most recent special operations (Navy Seals) and submarines. Senior Navy female enlisted and senior officers are leading campaigns in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. During their tours in the middle east, female leaders lead in construction battalions, medicine, operations, intelligence, and military police (Naval History and Heritage Command, 2017).

For many senior Navy females enlisted, the highlight of their naval careers is the senior enlisted position known as the Command Master Chief (CMC). No enlisted person is more senior at a Navy organization (Navy Command) than the CMC. Furthermore, many CMCs have become the leading enlisted personnel of aircraft carriers, leading over 4,000 enlisted men and women. There are also female CMCs who become the senior enlisted persons of various fleet commands alongside leading female officers. Fleet command is operationally or administratively in charge of one of the seven naval fleets (Hendon, 2020). Besides naval fleets, a fleet command can recruit training, cyber defense, fleet forces, medical, and other task-related operations commands. According to a Department of Navy publication *Celebrating Navy Women: Perseverance and Achievements* forward by the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Michael Gilday's wife, Linda Gilday, she stated that among all 142,000 women Navy pioneers, which she claims is a small representation compared to all the women leadership in the Navy, "women are celebrated, the many accomplishments they have achieved through hard work, grit, and determination [an example for all aspiring leaders]" (U.S. Navy, 2021, p. 4).

Impact

Senior Navy female leaders are responsible for personnel, themselves, and multi-million-dollar equipment across air and submarine warfare, naval shore support, special operations, and intelligence (Hendon, 2020). Throughout these venues, a leader exhibits exemplary action when demonstrating consistent commendable behaviors based on the demonstration of honorable actions of the right way to be (Fuentes, 2022; Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Extraordinary results occur when an exemplary leader's accomplishments and outcomes are remarkable, surprising, and exceptional, going beyond the standard

expectation, not something usual (Hougaard & Carter, 2018; O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000). Senior Navy female leaders are recognized as exemplary when they set such an example for those in their organization and inspire action producing extraordinary results (Campuzano, 2019; Kaplan-Thaler & Koval, 2015).

Some exemplary senior Navy female leaders may pay the ultimate sacrifice, proving country before themselves. A prime example is Senior Chief Shannon Kent, a cryptologic warfare specialist who served in Iraq, Baghdad, and Syria, ultimately giving her life on January 16, 2019, leaving behind her husband, who is also on active duty, and their two young children. Her example of grit leadership does not end with what was lost. She was described as having kind eyes and a friendly demeanor one usually does not find in a seasoned special intelligence operator who hunts the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) for a living.

In alignment with Duckworth's definition of grit—passion and perseverance toward long-term goals—Kent was described as having “20,000 goals at the same time and accomplishing all of them. She had drive and tenacity with everything she did. Anything she put her mind to, she got it done” (Skovlund, 2019, p. 3). When asked by her CMC what he remembers most about Kent, he replied, “She did not see anything as an obstacle, as anything more than a problem that needed to be solved. Nothing was unsolvable in her eyes” (Skovlund, 2019, p. 9). She was described as fearless by her male companions in the special operations community (U.S. Navy, 2021).

Another example of exemplary female senior leadership is Captain Shannon Polson, one of the first women to fly Apache helicopters (Polson, 2020). While leading a unit in Syria, Polson and her crew were notified that they were an active target on the

Syrian border. On her way to support a ground mission in desperate need of air support, she and her team decided to remain on the active enemy radar in pursuit of saving local ground troops. When Polson was asked about the opportunity to be an Apache pilot, Polson responded, “You have to be willing to push through things and not let others define your opportunities. You just do not quit. You do not give up” (Today, 2019, 2:12). Polson’s passion and leadership experience allowed her to lead several units. Additionally, after her active duty service, she led civilian teams for Microsoft and is the founder of the Grit Institute, committed to leadership development that focuses on grit and resilience leadership characteristics (Polson, 2020).

In alignment with the standard description of grit founded on passion and perseverance, these cited examples of hard work, goal accomplishment, and courage created personal and organizational success based on the person’s grit efforts (Miller, 2017). These are just two examples of hundreds in which senior female leaders’ stories prove to be a catalyst toward understanding how grit contributes to success. The characteristics attest to the full use of grit in leadership that assists in making hard decisions that change lives and motivate their teams, creating extraordinary results (Iskra, 2007).

Evolving Leadership Styles in the Navy

There is an abundance of examples to support military women in leadership. Research has developed various theories linking leadership styles to success (Bass & Bass, 2008). The grandfather of leadership, James McGregor Burns (1978), once stated, “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 2). General Richard Dannatt (2011) defined leadership as follows:

Leadership is visionary; it is the projection of personality and character to inspire people to achieve the desired outcome. There is no prescription for leadership and no prescribed style of a leader. Leadership is a combination of example, persuasion, and compulsion, dependent on the situation. It should aim to transform and be underpinned by individual skills and an enabling philosophy. A successful leader is an individual who understands him/herself, the organization, the environment in which they operate, and the people they are privileged to lead. (p. 43).

Dannatt's (2011) fundamental leadership concepts included vision, personality, character projection, and the ability to inspire others. These essential concepts of leaders with a trajectory of success align directly with the characteristics that Duckworth et al. (2007) theorized as grit leadership traits.

No matter the leader, understanding what makes them great and inspires their teams to accomplish greatness is always desired (Luning et al., 2021). Though there is a seemingly endless introduction to leadership theories, this section summarizes some top leadership theories that align with grit leadership. Additionally, an alignment is formed based on senior Navy female leadership through Navy core values and Navy leadership attributes.

The Navy's core values are based on three consistent principles. The Navy's core values are honor, courage, and commitment (America's Navy, n.d.-b). The core values align with the top four naval attributes of initiative, accountability, integrity, and toughness (America's Navy, n.d.-a). These closely align with gritty leadership characteristics, further supporting the need for additional research on naval leaders and

grit leadership. When core values and the attribute of toughness support actions in decision making by senior Navy female leaders, it further contributes to the need for this study.

The Navy's core value of honor is based on the part of the enlistment oath. "I will bear true faith and allegiance" (America's Navy, n.d.-b, para. 2). Honor is conducting oneself with integrity and being ethical in dealing with subordinates, superiors, and those not affiliated with the service and having honor by keeping your word and being responsible.

The core value of courage is part of the enlistment oath. "I will support and defend" (America's Navy, n.d.-b, para. 3). There are many demands of being a service member. Some are dangerous and difficult, but courage means making the best decisions for the nation. A person must have the courage to trust those they are working alongside many times in battle (America's Navy, n.d.-b). Courage also requires action for service without regard for personal consequences.

The core value of commitment is part of the enlistment oath, "I will obey the orders" (America's Navy, n.d.-b, para. 4). A service member must be committed to constant respect for subordinates and superiors and everyone's safety without regard to race, religion, or gender. Service members are continually reminded of human dignity and respect for humankind, even during adverse times.

Naval attributes build upon the Navy's core values. The four Navy attributes are integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness. The Navy attributes guide immediate action necessary for military operations (America's Navy, n.d.-a). These attributes are grounded in the ability to make tough decisions with integrity and honor.

America's Navy (n.d.-a) describes the four attributes critical to leadership.

Integrity is one's ability to align with their values. Accountability in the Navy means that the standards are to be continually maintained. Service members are hard on themselves, constantly critiquing themselves and each other to maintain focus and solve issues crucial to operational integrity. The initiative is continually striving toward excellence. The initiative also includes being open and providing input to new ideas and perspectives; naval leadership encourages ideas, and leaders can be leaders at every paygrade. Toughness is "tapping all sources of strength and resilience"; a sailor's constant demands physically and emotionally require constant toughness. Sailors "can take a hit and keep going" (America's Navy, n.d.-a, para. 5).

The combination of the Navy's core values and four naval attributes creates a foundation of evolving leadership styles in the Navy (Redmond et al., 2015). The Navy and what it requires from its leadership are constantly evolving. Each leader relies on their values combined with the Navy's core values and attributes taught to all sailors at bootcamp (Americas Navy n.d.-b). These foundational leadership traits support evolving leadership styles as each sailor evolves into new leadership roles.

Traditional Leadership Theories

Though many leadership theories exist, this study focused on how leadership theories based on transformational principles align with grit characteristics such as courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection (Arias, 2017; Perlis, 2013). No matter the leadership style, Hollis's (2014) research confirmed that military leaders use various forms of leadership; some of the most common leadership styles are transformational, authentic, and servant leadership.

Though Burns (1978) was one of the first sociologists to introduce the idea of a transformational leader, the work of Bass (1999) was most prominent in understanding transformational leadership. Transformational leaders transform organizations by staying true to their vision and empowering others to take responsibility for achieving the changes needed in the organization (Kim, 2014).

Authentic leaders are true to themselves. According to several works, authentic leaders must align with their values to obtain true happiness and success (Cha et al., 2019; Ibarra, 2015). Additionally, authentic leaders give much energy to maintaining self-awareness and self-regulation (Cha et al., 2019).

Although Greenleaf (1970) highlighted servant leadership over 30 years ago, in the last decade, it has gained traction, emphasizing the care for people within organizations (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). Historically, servant leadership lacks research compared to more common leadership theories, such as transformational and transactional, simply because there is a misconception that servant leaders are meek and lack engagement. This is far from the truth. Though servant leaders' goals and focus differ from other leadership styles, servant leaders are "proactive, ambitious and driven as other leaders. The primary focus is follower first" (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018, p. 265). A servant leader is known to put their needs after those of others, which requires discipline and courage, much in alignment with grit leadership characteristics.

As leadership has evolved from trait theory, behaviors, systems, and principal-centered leadership and improvement, the Navy is in alignment with research toward the best practices related to how leaders operate in the DoD and traditional civilian organizations (Thomas, 2009). The primary difference is that grit leadership is directly

aligned with Navy leadership because a naval leader must “make rapid decisions, be adaptable and flexible, and follow a servant and transformation leadership foundation” (Thomas, 2009, p. 1). According to Thomas (2009), naval leadership’s future focuses on decision making, adaptability, flexibility, and inspiration. Thomas went on to instruct successful military leaders in goal setting, determination, and accountable leadership, without apologies supporting leadership attributes to grit (such as goal setting, courage, and resilience). Thomas related the points that though military environments are chaotic and unpredictable, the leaders in those environments are critical to operational outcomes.

Leadership and Grit-Related Traits (Gritty Leaders)

Senior Navy female leaders face additional barriers besides being a leader—natural bias from being female and the stressors of working in an operational environment ensuring sailors’ livelihood is continually monitored and considered while producing extraordinary results. In alignment with grit leadership, these military leaders perform exceptionally in a contemporary culture that celebrates mediocrity (Kaplan-Thaler & Koval, 2015). Recent studies have shown the connection of military leadership to the five grit leadership attributes (Arias, 2017; Duckworth et al., 2007). However, research by Duckworth and colleagues has proven that grit is attributed directly to passion and perseverance toward goal accomplishment (Duckworth, 2016; Duckworth et al., 2007). Furthermore, additional research by Arias (2017) and Clark (2016) recommended that additional research is needed as grit is in its early stages among researchers.

A military leader’s demands require various gritty characteristics (Polson, 2020). Though the top five attributes related to grit are part of this study, grit can look like many

things to different people. Exemplary senior Navy female leaders use grit-related personality traits such as passion, perseverance, sweat, perspiration, and stick-to-it-tiveness (Kaplan-Thaler & Koval, 2015) to maintain a necessary pace toward accomplishing goals that result in extraordinary results in the Navy organizations they are leading. Ultimately grit is fighting hard, outworking others, taking risks, being determined, accomplishing goals, and using perseverance to accomplish challenging tasks in the most difficult situations of your life (Kaplan-Thaler & Koval, 2015). As indicated by the stories and research of this study's exemplary senior female leaders, what makes them unique? Kaplan-Thaler and Koval (2015) described grittiness: It is about hard work and excruciatingly hard work; you may not be the smartest, but can you be outworked? No, you cannot; that is one thing that is always in your control. You can always outwork those around you.

Despite all the research regarding leadership styles, achieving extraordinary organizational results is still complicated (Schimschal & Lomas, 2019). Regardless of whether the leader is being effective and using grit-related personality traits, naval leaders and leaders in any other organization are responsible for educating how to utilize grittiness to produce extraordinary results. It is more than education and training to be gritty; it is the understanding of how gritty people harness that grit to be successful (Thomas, 2009). Grit leadership is effective leadership (Jachimowicz et al., 2018). The challenge is skill development and applying exemplary leadership in the field. However, much of the previously stated research describes grit across various attributes or is stated as a collective construct.

Five Principles of Grit

Research by Perlis (2013) and Arias (2017) provides the needed structure to explore further the concept of exemplary leadership and the use of grit to accomplish extraordinary results. These studies support grit principles: courage, conscientiousness, the ability to achieve long-term goals, resilience, and the capability to reach excellence versus perfection (Arias, 2017; Perlis, 2013). These principles provide an applicable framework within which to explore the concept of grit and grit-related leadership because each encompasses several personality traits, psychological dispositions, and mindset described in earlier research (Duckworth, 2016; Duckworth et al., 2007; Jachimowicz et al., 2018; Kaplan-Thaler & Koval, 2015).

The following sections define and briefly describe each grit-related principle.

Courage

Courage is the mental, physical, and moral strength to pursue and accomplish a worthy goal despite the presence of danger or fear (Lee & Elliott-Lee, 2006; Schilpzand et al., 2015). For example, courageous behavior is following a personal vision and staying the course even if the idea is unpopular (Perlis, 2013). Courage, as with many preferred traits, needs to be exercised to improve proficient use.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is a fundamental personality trait that drives the desire and ability to be diligent, organized, achievement-oriented, self-disciplined, and reliable (Jackson et al., 2010; Perlis, 2013). It is common for conscientious leaders to have a solid moral character and lead with moral principles and values (Benmelech & Frydman, 2015). A conscientious leader is organized and is usually known as a perfectionist.

According to studies conducted by Duckworth et al. (2007) and Hough (1992), conscientious leaders possess achievement-based conscientious or dependable attributes.

Long-Term Goals

Long-term goals reflect the future top-level outcome that serves as a compass for sustained action, inspiring passion, and consistent focus over long periods (Duckworth et al., 2007; Jachimowicz et al., 2018). Leaders who intentionally set goals are passionate about completing them (Duckworth et al., 2007).

Resilience

Resilience is an individual's ability to adapt and recover from stress and adversity while maintaining or returning to positive mental well-being despite hardship (Grafton et al., 2010; Rice & Liu, 2016). Resilient leaders are adaptable to change and situational pressures. When considering the top leaders in the Navy, specifically women, it is no contest that when demanding pressures arise, women maintain high energy levels and adapt depending on the situation (Polson, 2020). Specifically, Navy leaders adapt and recover from stressful situations and can maintain the tasks related to operational necessity related to the lives of themselves and their sailors (Luning et al., 2021).

Excellence Versus Perfection

Excellence versus perfection is a mindset toward fulfilling one's purpose and prioritizing improvement over a perception of an ideal that may or may not be attainable (Arias, 2017; Duckworth et al., 2007; Perlis, 2013). Perlis (2013) stated, "Gritty people do not seek perfection, but instead strive for excellence" (p. 4). Though the two terms seem similar, in alignment with grit, leadership perfection is an interpretation based on someone else's perspective. A leader who strives for excellence is on a personal journey

where the end game is personal fulfillment and purpose (Perlis, 2013). Gritty leaders know that while striving toward excellence, they will encounter setbacks and disappointment but continually strive toward excellence (Polson, 2020).

Gap in the Literature

Current research on grit and military leadership is increasing. Studies by Luning et al. (2021), Duckworth and Gross (2014), and Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014) connect leadership personality traits to grit and exemplary performance in military organizations. As mentioned previously, it is recognized within the Navy that grit leadership principles create team viability and are critical in assembling cohesive units (Clark, 2016).

However, the way female military leaders use specific grit-related attributes to succeed is less discussed in the literature. Current research describes grit in varied ways and often broadly, presenting an unclear summary of grit-related personality traits. Studies by Perlis (2013) and Arias (2017) are unique, however, in that they support five specific principles of grit. These grit-related principles include courage, conscientiousness, the ability to achieve long-term goals, resilience, and the capability to reach excellence versus perfection (Arias, 2017; Perlis, 2013).

This study explored how exemplary senior Navy female leaders use specific grit-related principles of courage, conscientiousness, ability to achieve long-term goals, resilience, and the capability to reach excellence versus perfection to create extraordinary results within their organizations. Understanding the grittiness of senior Navy female leadership may support other current research suggesting grit affects retention in the military, schools, and marriage (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014). Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014) stated that grittier people stayed committed to their responsibilities—military

academy, school, and marriage—over three study areas. Additionally, to confirm grit as a dominant leadership trait, future research must “examine the association between various participants across many domains” (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014, p. 11).

Clark (2016) conducted an in-depth mixed-method study selecting random occupations, higher education, military, sales, business, and various blue-collar occupations that scored high on the grit scale created by Duckworth and Quinn (2009). Common themes in alignment with the five grit-related characteristics were hard-working, self-driven, pride in workmanship, tenacious natured, and able to take a job (verbally).

Clark (2016) did mention that further research is needed regarding grit and organizational success. Furthermore, Clark stated that though some research on grit had been conducted, the populations were limited, leaving room for needed research for other groups of people in various organizations. Much of the research regarding gritty leaders thus far has been supported by methodological approaches relying on quantitative research (Lacap, 2020). According to Clark (2016), “No known qualitative or mixed method studies of grit exist to cover a variety of populations which would add to a deeper understanding of the construct of grit and how it creates organizational success” (p. 53).

Navy female leadership and their grittiness remain an uncharted concept, and additional research is needed to understand how they obtain extraordinary results in the Navy organization (Arias, 2017; Clark, 2016).

Research Problem

Research has shown that women in leadership provide diverse ideas, are resourceful, and produce significant results in increased profits (Grant Thornton, 2020;

Johns & Moser, 2001; O’Conner, 2018). Within the Navy, it is recognized that grit leadership principles create team viability and are critical in assembling cohesive units (Clark, 2016). Senior female (Navy) officers bring a range of expertise to the operation of naval warships, aircraft, and submarines as well as to other occupations related to wartime tactics (SWAN, 2019). The problem, however, is that women hold only 18% of the senior leadership positions in the Navy (Campuzano, 2019; Polson, 2020); little research is available to describe how these senior Navy female leaders use grit to accomplish extraordinary results.

The Navy is an organization that must maintain a competent, exemplary workforce. Naval leaders operate with the understanding that the Navy is responsible for the nation’s security and prosperity via the control of sea lanes. Additionally, leaders are responsible for the ever-growing threat of the information revolution controlling cyberwarfare (Richardson, 2020). The Navy organization is unique, which makes the leaders who support it equally so. The Navy is built, maintained, manned, and employed differently than other military branches. Besides combat, each service supports naval leaders’ control, operates undersea components and warships, and protects the economy by securing sea lanes responsible for the global transport of goods, including weapons (Richardson, 2020). Naval leaders train and educate the Navy’s future leaders, creating urgency and instilling grit-based leadership principles in future sailors. The challenges that await the future of naval forces are no small feat. U.S. rivals, such as China, an acute threat operationally and tactically and a dominant force in cyber warfare, are a constant concern. Russia is also a concern because it has a relevant undersea warfare program (Richardson, 2020). All the while, the Navy must keep pressure on Iran and the Persian

Gulf while keeping some focus on North Korea's missile defense program. These challenges are constantly in the minds of naval leaders responsible for creating team cohesion to protect the nation and allies without hesitation (Clark, 2016; Fraser, 2016; Polson, 2020).

Being a senior Navy female leader brings complexities with global adversaries and daily personnel concerns. Senior leaders are responsible for young men and women who are uprooted and shipped to various locations around the globe and need financial, relationship, health, and other advice and mentorship (Morgan, 2004). Senior Navy female leaders assist with the emotional growth of young adults who join the service, knowing they need to instill life-supporting principles like courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection. Naval leaders are responsible for teaching other young men and women to be gritty enough to be in the business of violence management (Klenke, 2004). Klenke (2004) stated, "To complete the mission, the military relies heavily on leadership. The military is unique in developing leaders and charges them with decisions most adults will never have to make" (p. 110). It is essential to address how women in the Navy are both exemplary and gritty and how the characteristics of grit create extraordinary results within their organizations.

Leaders face various challenges, but gritty, exemplary female leaders persevere no matter the problems (Book, 2000; Clark, 2016). Perseverance is the "voluntary continuation of a goal-directed action despite obstacles, difficulties, or discouragement" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 229). Perseverance is a crucial leadership characteristic to the new but trending topic of grit, which according to Duckworth et al. (2007), is "perseverance and passion for long-term goals" (p. 1087).

Since the introduction of grit, additional research has supported the idea that grit is a common factor for women leaders (Caza & Posner, 2018; Duckworth et al., 2007). Researchers have created connections between grit and leadership, but no research has linked grit and Navy female leadership. This study provides an opportunity to create awareness of how senior Navy female leaders use grit in alignment with other leadership characteristics and create organizational success in a male-dominated organization (Book, 2000; Clark, 2016; Polson, 2020).

Redmond et al. (2015) examined the importance of grit leadership in the military; however, they did not apply the behaviors associated with grit to leadership success or female leadership, nor was the relationship between success and grit examined. This study will contribute to research on senior Navy female leaders, using the five grit characteristics and how they create extraordinary results in the Navy organization. Additionally, this study can create awareness in other organizations about using grit leadership principles (Arias, 2017). Creating the bridge between the gritty leadership of senior Navy leaders will provide a deeper understanding of effective leadership among military organizations that may provide a broader perspective outside of the military, supporting civilian organizations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and describe how exemplary senior Navy female leaders used five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results while they served in the Navy.

Research Questions

1. How do senior Navy female leaders use courage to accomplish extraordinary results?
2. How do senior Navy female leaders use conscientiousness to accomplish extraordinary results?
3. How do senior Navy female leaders use long-term goals to accomplish extraordinary results?
4. How do senior Navy female leaders use resilience to accomplish extraordinary results?
5. How do senior Navy female leaders use excellence versus perfection to accomplish extraordinary results?

Significance

A report published by the American Association of University Women (n.d.) concluded that there are stark numbers of women in underrepresented leadership. An abundance of research has been conducted to address the lack of senior female leaders and has supported the many benefits of female leadership (Bigelow et al., 2014; Crites et al., 2015; Kolko & Miller, 2018). Civilian organizations, political arenas, and the military lack female leadership representation compared to male colleagues. As published recently by McKinsey & Company, findings show that Fortune 500 companies with senior female leadership are significantly more profitable than those without (Hunt et al., 2018). With leadership comes responsibility. Research conducted on females in leadership positions has provided insight into behavioral characteristics that a female exhibits to utilize grit leadership to overcome additional stressors and responsibilities

while in leadership positions (Caza & Posner, 2018; Duckworth et al., 2007). For female leaders in the Navy, no current research exists to distinguish whether a relationship exists between exemplary female leadership and grit characteristics creating extraordinary results (Arias, 2017; Clark, 2016; Polson, 2020).

Caza and Posner (2018) revealed that grit positively impacts female leadership, adding consistency and determination among shared female leadership attributes such as emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and authenticity. Additional research has supported organizational grit leadership (Clark, 2016; Schimschal & Lomas, 2019; Sriram et al., 2018). Furthermore, studies link the military use of grit attributes to organizational success (Bullough et al., 2017; Duckworth & Gross, 2014).

Thus far, research has provided insight into leadership characteristics resulting in the gritty behavior of female leaders in the Navy (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Polson, 2020). Elaboration with more robust research supporting grit-related leadership characteristics that create exemplary leaders creates an understanding of how women overcome barriers and succeed in leadership (Luning et al., 2021).

Exploring the grit leadership of females in a military environment is the next step to understanding gritty leadership characteristics and how a leader operates with military units' high-tempo and operational requirements (Clark, 2016, Duckworth et al., 2007; Polson, 2020). There are conversations about grit leadership among females and how it has provided success in the Navy operational environment (Boies & Howell, 2009; Duckworth et al., 2007). Connecting senior Navy female leadership's struggles and their use of grit leadership characteristics to overcome barriers create additional research to support understanding among military organizations. Additionally, new research provides

a broader perspective outside the military, providing additional future research for civilian organizations.

Definitions

This section provides definitions of various terms relevant to this study.

Commanding officer. Also referred to as the CO, he or she is the officer in charge of the military unit, also called the command. The CO is the senior authority over the command, making decisions based on his advisors and following military law (My Navy Human Resources, n.d.-a).

Conscientiousness. The fundamental personality trait drives the desire and ability to be diligent, organized, achievement oriented, self-disciplined, and reliable (Jackson et al., 2010; Perlis, 2013).

Courage. The mental, physical, and moral strength to pursue and accomplish a worthy goal despite the presence of danger or fear (Lee & Elliott-Lee, 2006; Schilpzand et al., 2015).

Excellence versus perfection. A mindset toward fulfilling one's purpose and prioritizing improvement over perceiving an idea that may or may not be attainable (Arias, 2017; Duckworth et al., 2007; Perlis, 2013).

Exemplary leadership. A leader who demonstrates consistent commendable behavior based on the demonstration of honorable actions of the right way to be (Fuentes, 2022; Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Exemplary leaders are passionate about what they do and the people they inspire; they use personal purpose, values, and enthusiasm to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations (Kouzes & Posner, 2016).

Extraordinary results. Accomplishments in which the outcomes are remarkable, surprising, and exceptional; going beyond the standard expectation; not something usual (Hougaard & Carter, 2018; O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000).

Female senior Navy enlisted leader. A female at the rank of senior enlisted (E-7 to E-9). Also commonly referred to as chief petty officer (CPO), senior chief petty officer (SCPO), and master chief petty officer (MCPO; Naval History and Heritage Command, 2017). Besides paygrade, an enlisted senior Navy female leader (E-7 to E-9) represents the senior commander. They are responsible for communicating the commander's intentions to the crew and for continual command improvement, including enhancing command programs, missions' requirements, and budgets and ensuring training and professional development opportunities are available for the crew (SWAN, 2019).

Female senior Navy officer. A female at Level 5 (O5; commander) to Level 6 (O6; captain). Officer Levels 7-10 (O7-O10) are also senior officers at the flag officer level, including rear admirals with a star to indicate seniority. Female officers have the expertise needed to operate naval warships, aircraft, or submarines-or to engage in other occupations related to wartime tactics. Senior female officers work closely with senior enlisted leadership to supervise the crew and execute military operations while communicating directly with the CO. Senior officers focus on overall responsibility more than the duties and details of personnel that the senior enlisted leader maintains (SWAN, 2019).

Grit. A personality trait characterized by perseverance and passion results in achieving long-term goals that comprise five common characteristics: courage,

conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection (Arias, 2017; Duckworth et al., 2007; Perlis, 2013).

Reenlistment. To take an oath of service of enlistment again in the military for an agreed period is finalized by a written contract of service (My Navy Human Resources, n.d.-b).

Resilience. An individual's ability to adapt and recover from stress and adversity while maintaining or returning to a positive mental state of well-being despite hardship (Grafton et al., 2010; Rice & Liu, 2016).

Use of long-term goals. Reflects on using a future top-level outcome that serves as a compass for sustained action, inspiring passion, and consistent focus over long periods (Duckworth et al., 2007; Jachimowicz et al., 2018).

Delimitations

Roberts and Hyatt (2019) described delimitations as boundaries that narrow the scope of the study. This study was delimited to eight senior female naval leaders from the officer and senior enlisted ranks. All female leaders have served a full tour in the Navy, reaching full retirement with an honorable discharge. All delimited participants are retired from naval service. They had served at their most senior pay grade for at least 3 years before retirement. All participants have proven extraordinary results within the Navy organization. They had also received the highest award for their time in service with written recommendations for continued advancement in paygrade from their CO.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I presents the study's introduction. Chapter II consists of an in-depth literature review supported by Appendix

A, the synthesis matrix. Appendix A organizes extensive research related to the foundations of this study. The matrix provides an organized method of literature supporting grit-related leadership themes and characteristics and historical data related to theoretical foundations related to leadership and women in naval history. All related research is organized in Appendix A and outlined in Chapter II, supporting the theoretical foundation and the evolution of grit, its relation and trends with senior Navy female leaders, and how senior Navy female leadership obtain extraordinary results within their organizations. Chapter III details the research design and methodology, including the population and sample used in the study, the instrumentation of data gathered, and additional procedures supporting data collection. Chapter IV describes data analysis and the findings to include the study's results. Chapter V concludes the study with a discussion of significant findings, their implications, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study aimed to identify and describe how exemplary senior Navy female leaders use five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations. Chapter II examines the research and supporting literature on female leadership in the military (including early history), the theoretical foundation of grit leadership principles, and how such attributes may contribute to extraordinary results by senior Navy female leaders.

History of Women in the Military

Senior Navy female leaders currently fulfill a role similar to a department head, chief operating officer, or senior-level leader in a civilian organization. They manage personnel, provide financial counseling, and often advise recruits when purchasing their first home or securing childcare services (Leahy, 2004). Most importantly, however, senior Navy female leaders (as all military leaders do) must create a culture of loyalty and trust needed to support an environment ready and able to combat adversaries (Robinson & O'Hanlon, 2020).

To maintain the high-tempo environment needed to command and support young sailors at sea, senior female leaders must often overcome stress and fatigue to focus on goals, demonstrate perseverance, and instill a passion for achieving and supporting the Navy's vision. In their research, Luning et al. (2021) recognized such traits as *grit* in military leaders. Within the Navy, Clark (2016) described grit leadership principles similarly and noted that these behaviors ensure cohesive units and team viability.

The idea of grit in senior female military leaders is not new. Women have been working in high-caliber capacities since the Revolutionary War. It has been only recently, however, that the topic has started to gain high interest and traction in the literature (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018).

Early Years

Women in the United States have been part of every war since the start of this country (Hacker & Vining, 2012). Officially or unofficially, women have proven themselves as courageous and competent assets of military service (Small, 1998). Historically, war was perceived as men's work, where boys go to become men (Iskra, 2007). Because of the masculine mentality, women initially filled support roles such as nursing, cooks, cleaning, and laundry. The number of women who have served in the military has significantly increased since World War I. Two percent of women served in support roles. Currently, almost 15% of women serve in the military.

During the Revolutionary War, most people serving were young men because of the exigencies of the war. Approximately 20,000 women had provided support by the end of the war (Small, 1998). Though at the time, women were not enlisted, they were crucial in the war's success; specifically, during the "bleak winter at Valley Forge," women provided logistical support, braved the weather to provide food and clothing, tended to wounded soldiers, and mended uniforms (Small, 1998, p. 102). Additionally, some women refused to await approval to support in combat support, many disguising themselves as men to support the war efforts.

As in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War saw women as a necessity to support war efforts more than an opportunity to support gender equality (Hacker & Vining,

2012). Women expanded their influence and abilities to obtain food and needed clothing and other supplies during the Revolutionary War (Nuciari, 2006). Women's medical support and participation also increased. There was an increase in women participating in combat; many later revealed they were raised in military camps (Small, 1998). For example, Kady Brownell was born British but married an American officer. He became sick during the first battle of Bull Run, and she filled the position of the senior officer commanding the men who obeyed. She even led them into battles with heavy enemy fire (Small, 1998). During World War I, women were officially part of the uniformed service, besides being in the nurse corps for the first time. From a historical viewpoint, this was progress in allowing more opportunities for women to serve their country. Many described the time during the war as dealing with "indignities, a term we now call harassment, mostly at the hand of seniors" (Iskra, 2007, p. 4). Because of the lack of a proper rank structure for women, no method was established to report the harassment against senior officials (Iskra, 2007).

During World War I, the Secretary of the Navy declared that women could officially serve as yeomen and perform other administrative duties. A partial rank structure for all military services was not officially established until 1947 (Nuciari, 2006). Over 10,000 women served as nurses in the military during World War I, and 34,000 served in other support roles.

Mid- to Late-20th Century

Though traditional research has focused on the political and diplomatic understanding of war, other researchers have suggested a desire to understand what individuals and groups accomplished (Dawson, 2019; Goldsmith, 2019; Weatherford,

2009). Women who served during World War II were accomplished though subject to frequent harassment and hardships. Research revealed similar integrated wartime experiences between men and women (Dawson, 2019). Additional research revealed that women were not excluded from combat roles (Gildea, 2015; Pattinson, 2007). For example, as described in *Fighters in the Shadows: A New History of the French Resistance*, Gildea (2015) told the stories of women who were “skilled killers engaged in espionage” (p. 173). Additionally, Pattinson (2007) explained how the Special Operations Executive sought out women and trained them as spies because women were less likely to be exposed as war participants.

Stories of women’s contributions during World War II revealed their courage. For example, the accomplishments of women who served in the Army Nurse Corps (ANC) were extraordinary. Though the ANC had been well equipped to support war efforts since World War I, the need for the ANC increased as World War II was fought in various Pacific battles (Weatherford, 2009). Many nurses deployed with their respective armies, even departing ships and going to the shore, finding themselves in hand-to-hand combat (Weatherford, 2009). Additionally, some women joined the 3,500 prisoners of war (POWs) in Manila, the Philippines, from 1942 to 1945 (Weatherford, 2009).

Women who were supporting war efforts worked to exhaustion and some to death. In the war’s final months, over 1,000 nurses were hospitalized because of exhaustion (Dawson, 2019). Recognition was long overdue but received in the spring of 1944. A female officer was recognized on a ship convoy attacked by several submarines. She landed with the infantry in Sicily and was bombed through Palermo (Weatherford, 2009). The Surgeon General Norman Kirk stated, “Wet and bedraggled, wearing nothing

but pajamas and tennis shoes,” he added, “she got ashore and was again at work” (Weatherford, 2009, p. 25). Another courageous woman noted by Kirk was Officer Ruth Haskell. Haskell injured her back on the North African front lines. She did not tell anyone of her injury but joined the other foot soldiers and nurses in jumping from the ship to swim ashore, on her back a 55-pound pack. Haskell herself worked until her injury resulted in a spinal cord injury that paralyzed her (Weatherford, 2009).

Women served during World War II in every capacity imaginable, officially or unofficially, and women of that era had hidden roles and experiences (Dawson, 2019). However, they made complex decisions that affected the lives of men at that time and paved opportunities for women in military service for the long term. The women who served in World War II and before and after created long-lasting demands in the labor force for both genders. It increased the demand for the United States to conform to social and cultural norms, leading to gender equality (Dawson, 2019).

Similar to other historical wars, women were perceived as secondary participants. During the Korean War, 120,000 women were serving on active duty. These women served in the Women’s Army Corps (WAC), Women’s Air Force (WAF), and Navy and Marine Corps. Women served in crucial supporting roles during the Korean War, as nurses, medics, logistics, and communicators, among other needed occupations (Witt et al., 2005). Only 2 years after Congress passed the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act in 1948, the Korean War started. The Women’s Armed Services Integration Act allowed women to become permanent military service members for the first time. Patricia Johnson was a recruiter for the Navy during the Korean War. When asked about women’s participation, she stated, “Women wanted to get out there, wanted to do more

than administrative jobs, and did not want limits on what they could do” (Witt et al., 2005, p. 157).

Many of the 265,000 women who served in the Vietnam War were motivated by John F. Kennedy’s call to young people, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” (Small, 1998, p. 101). Of the 265,000, approximately 11,000 women served in Vietnam. Though other wars have some documented historical data regarding women’s combat-related services, minimal scholarly sources exist on women Vietnam veterans. Of the 11,000 women who served in Vietnam, “90% were nurses” (Small, 1998, p. 103). Other occupations included intelligence, communications, administration, and air traffic control. One valiant woman of note who died in the Vietnam war was Officer Annie Graham, who was 52 during her service in the Vietnam War. She also served in World War II and Korea before she died of a stroke during service (Ritchie & Naclerio, 2015). Officer Graham is one of eight women on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial War. Besides nurses, some other officers filled communication headquarters positions. For example, Officer Elizabeth Wylie worked in communication in Saigon. She blazed a trail for future women leaders as the first female naval line officer to hold a command position in a combat zone in 1972 (Ritchie & Naclerio, 2015).

Though almost 40,000 women served to support the Gulf War and similar operations in 1990, America has come a long way from the 1994 policy prohibiting women from ground combat assignments (Robinson & O’Hanlon, 2020). By the end of the 20th century and spearheading into the 21st century, women were accomplishing many firsts in the military. Though being the first to do anything is commendable, the

more a first is accomplished, the more it becomes a standard practice (Correll, 2021).

Women excelled at every opportunity. Women continued to break barriers, including the first female Navy fighter pilot, the first four-star general to serve in the Army, and the first female rescue swimmer (Polson, 2020). Additionally, the volume of women enlistments and war participation is just as impressive as all the firsts conducted in the final years of the 20th century. In the Gulf War, from 1990 through 1991, more than 40,000 women deployed to combat zones though they could not fill direct combat occupations (DeSimone, 2022).

In 1994 the “Risk Rule” was rescinded, allowing women to serve in combat roles, such as sailors and those in the aviation fields but not ground combat (DeSimone, 2022). Though not allowing direct combat roles to be filled by women, The USS Acadia was the first American warship to deploy to the Persian Gulf with a combined crew of men and women (Robinson & O’Hanlon, 2020). Women continued to be active participants in war into the 21st century.

Today: 21st century

In the early 21st century, though women could not directly serve in hand-to-hand combat roles, that did not deter them from doing what was necessary in a time of war. Leigh Ann Hester was awarded the Silver Star medal because she was with a convoy that was ambushed during her service in Iraq. She was the first woman to receive the Silver Star for combat action (DeSimone, 2022). In 2013, women could serve in direct combat roles. Since then, women have graduated from Army Ranger School, Navy Seal Officer selection, and other demanding duties that reflected the most physical, emotional, and mental challenges (Robinson & O’Hanlon, 2020). Though women do more than make

ground in combat, more than 300,000 have served in direct combat and support roles in Iraq and Afghanistan. Women continue to push the new normality that women serve in every opportunity and every capacity available in times of war (Polson, 2020).

Today's senior women of military service know no limitations. From integrated ships to women leading naval warships for almost a decade, female service members in the 21st century continue to pave the way for future female military leaders (Iskra, 2007). The Navy has had the first senior female officer lead a nuclear aircraft carrier (Stoner, 2021). Women lead surface ships, air squadrons, submarines, and combat units.

Going from the initial desperation of women serving in the war out of necessity, women continued to serve unofficially, supporting all military services since the Revolutionary War (Small, 1998). History has shown that after World War I, women were not a poor substitute for men, but they were a force of talent and motivated people who were just as capable as men (Weatherford, 2009). For the first time, the focus was not on whether women should serve in the military but on when and under what limitations. Senior female military leaders and their history are crucial in understanding the demanding conditions they endured and how these women overcame harsh conditions and used grit characteristics to push themselves toward success (Clark, 2016).

Female Leaders in the Navy

Senior Navy female leaders possess a personal foundation of leadership characteristics that they expand upon as they advance through the Navy ranking system. Through advancement in the Navy, other leadership principles are taught through Navy core values and Navy core attributes, which add to an already established leadership foundation based on personal morals and leadership characteristics (Americas Navy n.d.-

a; n.d.-b). This study focused on how senior Navy female leaders use grit and related leadership traits to create success and extraordinary results in the Navy organization.

Military leaders are rooted in continual leadership training and development. The Navy's core values and Navy core attributes are taught (Perryman, 2021). However, they have just added to an already exemplary foundation that senior Navy female leaders possess that creates actions leading them to be successful (Luning et al., 2021). A senior Navy female leader is rarely considered a scarcity in today's Navy. Women have been leading on naval warships for over a decade, and recently the Navy has celebrated its 10th anniversary of women on submarines (Stoner, 2021). Now with women leading in combat and the special forces for 7 years, the interest in senior Navy female leadership positions has exceeded the expectations of the Navy. The Navy is accommodating because of the high demand for women who want to serve in roles that were once closed to them (E. Moore, 2020).

Role Description

Senior female officers are the highest-ranking military leaders (SWAN, 2019). Senior officers oversee personnel not just in administration but also in emotional and physical well-being. The senior enlisted leader, depending on the command senior enlisted, referred to as the chief petty officer (CPO), command senior chief (SCPO), or command master chief (CMC), assists the first class petty officer (FCPO) with organizing the day-to-day operations to obtain the CO's intentions. The senior enlisted also ensure personnel are cared for emotionally and physically and are challenged in growth for personal and professional development. Figure 1 outlines the details providing clarity of advancement growth for senior Navy female officers and enlisted leaders. The Navy

requires the most capable and able leadership to maintain operational readiness. Senior Navy female leaders prove exemplary through their actions and accomplishments by creating a cohesive military unit with extraordinary results.

To be a CO of a surface ship, aviation squadron, or other command is to have the highest responsibility and authority over the sailors of the command. Being in command as a senior officer or the command senior enlisted is the highest point in any officer's or senior enlisted person's career (Ritchie & Naclerio, 2015). The higher pay grade and position are usually in alignment with increased responsibilities over the military equipment and personnel of the command. Figure 1 outlines the steps of advancement in the pay grade of senior Navy female officers. Figure 2 outlines the steps of advancement in the pay grade of senior Navy female enlisted.

Figure 1

Navy Officer Rank Structure

Paygrade of Officer	Rank	Abbreviation
O-10	Admiral	ADM
O-9	Vice Admiral	VADM
O-8	Rear Admiral (Upper Half)	RADM
O-7	Rear Admiral (Lower Half)	RDML
O-6	Captain	CAPT (CO)
O-5	Commander	CDR
O-4	Lieutenant Commander	LCDR
O-3	Lieutenant	LT
O-2	Lieutenant Junior Grade	LTJG
O-1	Ensign	ENS

Note. The descriptions in Figure 1 outline the paygrade process of advancement for junior and senior officers. Abbreviations are indicated for clarity to show officer progression to a senior leadership position.

Figure 2

Navy Enlisted Rank Structure

Paygrade of Enlisted	Rank	Abbreviation
E-9	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy	MCPON
E-9	Master Chief Petty Officer	MCPO
E-8	Senior Chief Petty Officer	SCPO
E-7	Chief Petty Officer	CPO
E-6	Petty Officer First Class	PO1
E-5	Petty Officer Second Class	PO2
E-4	Petty Officer Third Class	PO3
E-3	Seaman	SN
E-2	Seaman Apprentice	SA
E-1	Seaman Recruit	SR

Note. The descriptions in Figure 2 outline the paygrade process of advancement for junior and senior enlisted. Abbreviations are indicated for clarity to show junior enlisted petty officer progression to a senior leadership position.

Command Assignments

Women have officially served in combat roles for over 7 years (E. Moore, 2020).

Today’s Navy is an integrated force in which women and men command naval surface ships, submarines, air squadrons and lead special operations (U.S. Department of Defense [DoD], 2012). The Secretary of the Navy, Carlos Del Toro (2022), recognized the historical foundation on which women are rising to the occasion as top leaders.

Secretary Del Toro (2022) commented on the progressive momentum of the senior Navy female leaders at the Joint Women’s Leadership Symposium in Norfolk, Virginia July of 2022. Secretary Del Toro stated,

Women have come a long way in the Century that followed, growing stronger every time an opportunity to serve was expanded and accepted. It is a right to

honor and learn from the past, but we must keep this momentum. Women command warships, strike groups, and numbered fleets, including Vice Admiral Lisa Franchetti, who has excelled at all leading officer positions. (para. 19)

Secretary Del Toro mentioned how women lead in the tactical environment, supporting and creating security for our nation's safety. Secretary Del Toro stated, "Quite simply, we could not do what we do in the Navy without the grit, determination, and adaptability of our female teammates and leadership" (para. 29).

Naval Surface Warfare

The U.S. Navy Surface Fleet is enormous. To explain it as a powerhouse is an understatement by comparing the full capabilities of surface, subsurface, administration, aircraft, cyber, and space. The Navy has approximately 355 active and reserve ships, not to mention approximately 85 in planning or under construction (Seck, 2021). The most common naval surface warfare community vessels are aircraft carriers, large surface combatant ships, small surface combatant ships, and amphibious ships. The ships vary in size and capability, such as a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier with over 1,000 feet, and smaller vessels, such as a guided missile frigate which is 408 feet to a 197-foot coastal patrol boat. All variants of naval ships have a purpose and are constructed with specialties in mind when combined with a fleet, strike group, or amphibious ready group (ARG). Figure 3 shows what naval vessels may be attached to a strike group.

Figure 3

Carrier Strike Group



Note. From *In Brief: The Logic of Aircraft Carrier Strike Groups* (p. 5), by L. Thompson, 2019, Lexington Institute.

The main difference between strike groups and ARGs is that the largest ship in an ARG is an amphibious assault ship, such as a landing helicopter dock (LHD) or landing helicopter assault ship LHA (Seck, 2021). As Seck's (2021) research indicates, an LHD and LHA are similar, except an LHA has a well deck under the flight deck to support tactical watercraft. Many are approximately 855 feet long and outfitted for 3,000 troops and sailors (Seck, 2021). Just shy of an aircraft carrier, an amphibious assault ship specializes in troop transport using military water landing crafts. Amphibious assault

ships also operate and are supported by aircraft. No matter the grouping of naval vessels, when various ships operate together in a fleet, strike group, or ARG, they can support amphibious assault, nuclear warfare, electronic warfare, air warfare, and subsurface warfare.

March of 1994 was the first-time integration of women occurred to support a U.S. combatant ship to support naval missions (Goldsmith, 2019). Women serving on combat ships was a natural development 50 years after the repeal of the Risk Rule,-which prevented women from any combat-related duty (Hacker & Vining, 2012). With the progress of television and social media, the world noticed the nearly 41,000 women who supported the Gulf War (Naval History and Heritage Command, 2021b). By 1990, the Risk Rule was senseless with the continued media coverage and women courageous enough and eager to support their needed combat-related roles in the Navy (Hacker & Vining, 2012). This led to the 1994 integration of women and men on board the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Though the USS Eisenhower was the first aircraft carrier to integrate women, having women support military combat was not new (Correll, 2021). Women have supported combat efforts since the American Revolution and have remained consistent throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century (Naval History and Heritage Command, 2021b). For the first time, changes in the early 1990s allowed new opportunities for women. Though the USS Eisenhower was the first fully integrated warship with men and women, Lieutenant Commander Darlene Iskar was the first woman to command a ship. Iskar commanded the USS Opportune, a salvage ship led

through a patrol of the Suez Canal and Operation Desert Storm (Robinson & O’Hanlon, 2020).

Very few women have commanded naval warships. Amy Bauernschmidt currently holds one of the rarest combat positions in the world. Of the 11 U.S. Naval Fleet aircraft carriers, she is currently the only woman commanding one (Correll, 2021). Bauernschmidt is the first woman to command a nuclear aircraft carrier with almost 5,000 people onboard, equivalent to a small city. As Captain of the USS Lincoln, she manages over 60 aircraft that are the most advanced in the Navy. During an interview with Captain Bauernschmidt, some of her comments reveal gritty leadership characteristics that have led to her being one of the most influential and senior Navy female leaders. First, she is humble, stating, “There is absolutely no more humbling sense of responsibility than to know that I was selected to lead the men and women who have chosen to defend our nation” (Lendon et al., 2022, para. 10). Second, she is not afraid of a challenge. Attending the Navy’s Nuclear Power School prior to commanding the USS Lincoln, Bauernschmidt (2002) stated, “[It was] the most demanding academic program in the US military” (Lendon et al., 2022, para. 23). Third, she is courageous by being open to doing things outside of her comfort zone. Bauernschmidt said,

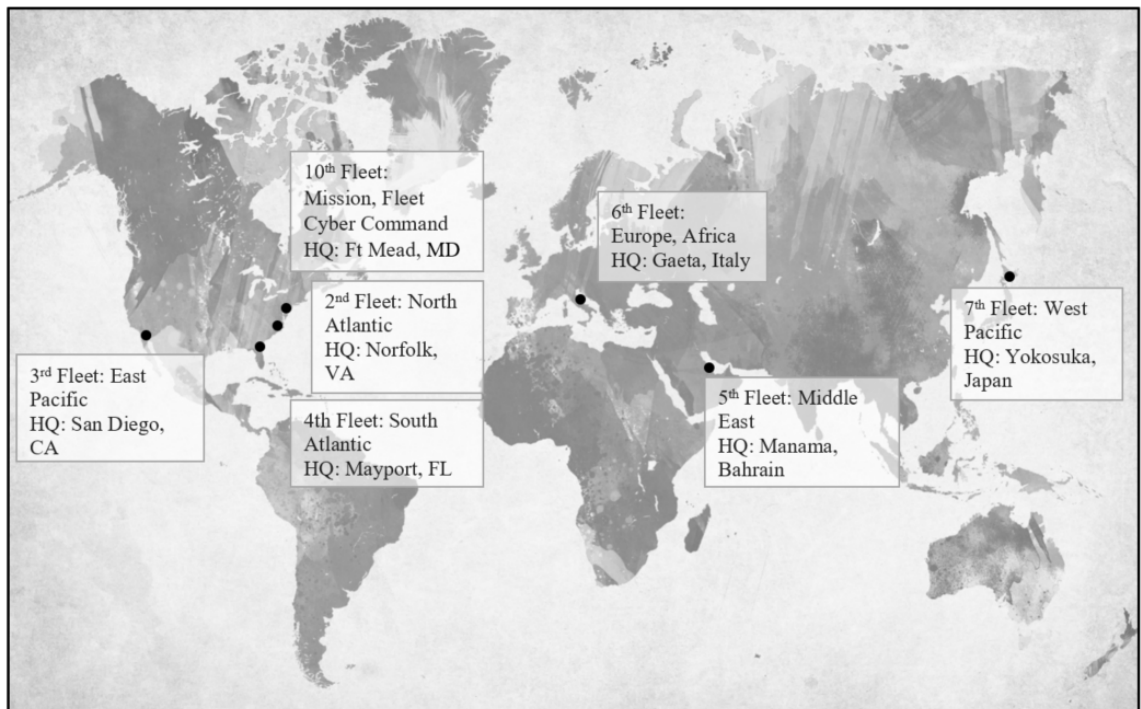
Each new job has strengthened my leadership and challenged me to be the best version of myself. Not every job I’ve done in the Navy is a job I wanted, but I learned and took everything out of every job I could. (para. 26, 30)

Besides senior Navy female officers, senior female enlisted also serve in highly visible leadership capacities on warships and as leaders of the seven military fleets. As seen in Figure 4, the seven fleets comprise sea service lanes and headquarters worldwide

for centralized military communication and assertions. Senior Navy female leaders lead in all seven concentrated fleet areas, supporting Navy leadership and their sailors worldwide.

Figure 4

Fleet Concentration Areas and Operational Headquarters



Air Warfare

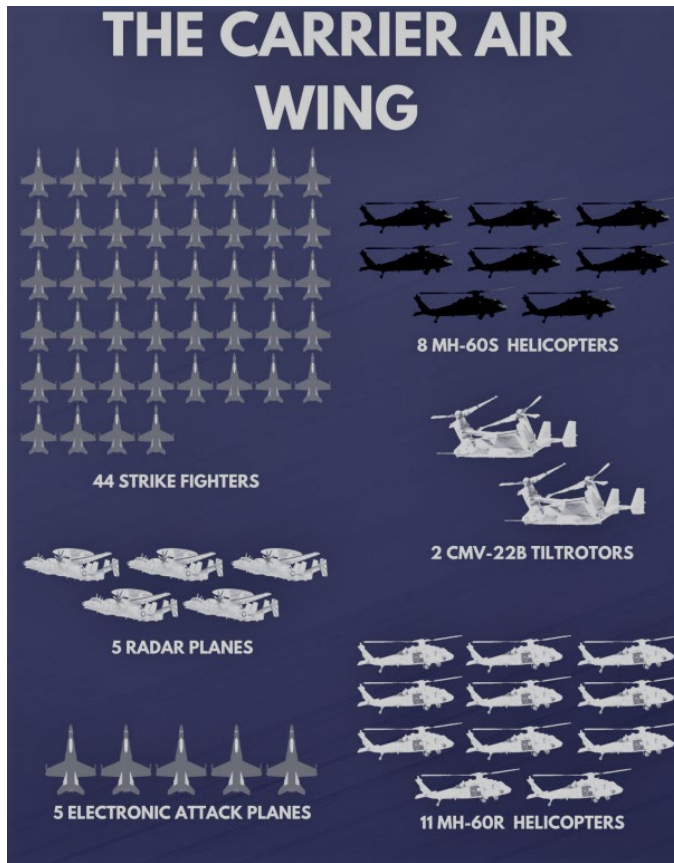
In the Navy aviation community, senior enlisted leaders are the backbone of the Navy (Leahy, 2004). They are responsible for mission requirements and personnel support such as mentorship and the overall well-being of sailors. Supporting sailors also include junior officers, a surplus in the aviation community. Young officers complete flight school and are sent worldwide to various aviation squadrons that operate and deploy the Navy's finest aircraft. These young officers are assigned to a division that a

senior Navy enlisted leader operates. Every division has a CPO or senior enlisted position that makes it all work. In aviation, the senior enlisted structure is different because of the hazardous conditions and maintenance requirements of naval aircraft. Navy aviation will have an MCPO and a maintenance specific MCPO who is an expert on the type of aircraft assigned and is responsible for the successful launch and recovery of the aircraft during operational missions.

The Navy has various specific squadrons and aircraft with capabilities applicable to the mission. For example, visually displayed in Figure 5, the most common air squadrons and air wings are carrier air wings. They are the foundational unit attached to aircraft carrier ships. Besides air wings, there are also fighter squadrons with super hornet aircraft that conduct air and ground strikes (Naval History and Heritage Command, 2019). In addition, electronic attack fighters have jamming and imagery capabilities to jam the enemy aircraft's communication and use imagery later to plan attacks and surveillance on enemy territory. The Seahawks are one of the most common types of helicopters used in the Navy. They deploy on various types of ships, but their primary responsibility is antisubmarine and surface warfare, specifically during the replenishment of fuel and supplies.

Figure 5

Carrier Air Wing



Note. From *In Brief: The Logic of Aircraft Carrier Strike Groups* (p. 7), by L. Thompson, 2019, Lexington Institute.

Additional aircraft just as critical to aviation warfare are support aircraft. One of the most common is the E-2, known as the Hawkeye. The Hawkeye is a large propeller plane with a giant radar. Its primary purpose is to communicate and provide a picture to the entire strike group attached to the fleet. Another support aircraft is a C-2, a transport plane that carries personnel and equipment to aircraft carriers. Smaller aircraft may transport the supplies and personnel to other surface ships in the strike group (Naval History and Heritage Command, 2019).

As with the other warfare communities, women continued to find opportunities in the naval aviation community. Women who first entered or made a long-lasting impact in the aviation community were strong, tenacious, and courageous and had to overcome the gender stigma; they ultimately left a path for others to follow and do great things in the community. One of the many women worth mentioning is April Beldo, a retired CMC of the USS Carl Vinson. This aircraft carrier suited her because her entire history in the Navy comprised various aviation squadron commands. Being a senior Navy female leader, always volunteering for challenging assignments and excelling, she was asked to be the CMC of naval training, where all recruits enter the Navy, as well as the senior enlisted leader for the navy education and training command (NETC), which is Force CMC position, one of the top positions in the Navy (Naval History and Heritage Command, 2021a).

Submarine Warfare

Submarines go where few can go by exploring the ocean's depths and propelling at excess speeds under and on top of the seas. Known as the "Silent Service," submarines submerge more than 600 feet underwater and can stay submerged for months, stealthily conducting secret missions (Cote, 2019). No one knows they are there, but they are doing work other naval vessels cannot do (Johnson, 2022). The naval submarine and the community of submarines have come a long way from the first submarine, known as the "turtle," introduced before the Revolutionary War by inventor David Bushnell (Johnson, 2022).

About 70 submarines serve the USN. Of the 70, 53 are fast attack, 14 are ballistic missiles, and four are guided missile submarines. The ballistic missile submarines carry

54% of America's nuclear deterrent weapons, preventing the loss of a primary nuclear site should the United States use nuclear weapons against an adversary (Cote, 2019). Because submarines are out for extended periods and are small naval vessels, their lifeline at sea is supported by surface ships called submarine tenders. A submarine tender stays in the approximate area of operability without knowing exactly where a submarine is. They provide supplies needed for submarines at a moment's notice.

Being a submariner is hard service. Unlike the communication options onboard a surface ship provided by satellite access, submariners rarely communicate with family. Submariners get short timespans of access through a small floating antenna that is only cautiously raised, and its primary use is for official military communication (Kristensen & Norris, 2016). If personal email can be sent off the submarine during the short time the satellite is acquired for access, many would consider it luck. Postal mail can be delivered via submarine tenders, but it is a long slow process to deliver postal mail at sea. One of the many sacrifices submariners make is a lack of communication with loved ones during active missions at sea.

Not only are submarines a small specialty force, but the Navy has recently celebrated the 10th anniversary of integrating women into the submarine force (Stoner, 2021). The current Secretary of Defense, Robert M. Gates, stated, "Women are adaptable and aggressive, they took head on the rapid expansion and the new opportunity being on submarines provided" (Stoner, 2021, p. 2).

A CMC is the most senior enlisted position on a naval vessel (Hendon, 2020). Although the paygrade is the same for a CMC on submarines, CMCs are called the chief of the boat (COB) on submarines. Traditionally only men in senior enlisted positions

filled the role of COB. The first woman COB was recently selected to serve onboard the submarine USS Louisiana (Wamsley, 2022). Angie Koogler is the first woman senior enlisted to advise the CO onboard a naval submarine (Wamsley, 2022). Koogler commented, “There have been challenges. You have to keep going. There are going to be walls. You have to knock them down, but you can’t let them stop you” (Wamsley, 2022, para. 1).

Special Warfare

Navy special warfare, also called Navy special operations, are various occupational positions in which the sailors are trained in the most dangerous and highest-risk jobs needed to conduct special operations in the Navy. The types of duties include special warfare combatant craft crewman (SWCC), Navy Seals, special operators such as Navy divers, Navy divers salvage and deep sea, Navy diver explosive ordnance disposal, and other various ratings that conduct intelligence operations such as those assigned in special units such as intelligence, interrogation, and recon (Pfaff, 2022). All the Navy special warfare jobs and those in the special warfare community support role have additional weapons training. Most have also attended naval survival, evasion, resistance, and escape training to prevent abduction and what steps to take if abducted behind enemy lines (Pfaff, 2022).

The Navy’s special warfare community is small. The special warfare community has specific skill sets and advanced intelligence, showing relative combat power by analyzing the enemy’s capabilities using detailed war assessment. The assessments are conducted using elements of combat power assessment, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Elements of Combat Power Assessment



Note. From *Special Forces Detachment Mission Planning Guide* (p. 67), by U.S. Department of the Army, 2020 (https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/gta31_01_003.pdf).

The community being small does not equate to a less operational impact.

Approximately 14% of sailors who attempt Naval Special Warfare combat-craft crewmen complete it. The percentage rate of completion of Navy Seals training varies, but the completion rate in 2021 was 14% and only 10% in 2022 (Pfaff, 2022). Only one in four who attempt Navy Seals training will become an actual Navy Seal. Basic Underwater Demolition/Seals training is only one phase of becoming a Navy Seal (Pfaff, 2022). The Seals program includes additional physical, psychological, and safety requirements. The additional requirements in the special operations community come with persistence, resilience, and courage that support the grit in those who complete the arduous training

and maintain the necessary physical and conceptual requirements to stay in the community.

In 2015, the direct ground combat definition and the assignment were eliminated by Congress, opening almost 15,000 special forces positions to women already serving out of necessity (E. Moore, 2020). In truth, women have been serving with special forces for decades. However, only recently are they completing training and earning the official titles of SWCC boat officer, ranger, diver, and the many special operations-related occupations such as communications, intelligence, diving, parachuting, and demolition.

Only in the last 7 years have women been able to serve officially alongside men in special operations. The most recent official title was assigned to the first female sailor to complete Naval Special Warfare, combatant-craft crewman, and the first two women to complete Army Ranger School (Baldor, 2021). Some of the expected feedback from men in the special warfare community was concerned with the alignment of physical standards, possibilities of women becoming POWs, and increased sexual assault cases in the community. The contrary was the feedback from some of the most senior enlisted leaders in the special operations community. One CMC of special operations in Korea stated,

I don't care if they are a woman or not. If they can get through the most grueling training known to mankind which takes grit, commitment, heart, and soul that is needed to conduct the toughest battles for America, I want them on my team!

(Moyar, 2017, p. 181)

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter (2015) also commented on women in special operations during his speech *Remarks on the Women in Service Review* at the Pentagon, Secretary Carter stated,

As long as [women] qualify and meet the standards, women will be able to contribute to our mission in ways they could not before. They can drive tanks and fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat. Furthermore, even more importantly, our military will be better able to harness talented women's skills and perspectives. (para. 9)

Research shows that special operations duty is the world's most challenging and hazardous job (E. Moore, 2020; Pfaff, 2022; Polson, 2020). Opening more senior Navy female leadership positions in the special warfare community does not go without criticism. Though many skeptics comment negatively on women in the service, specifically in special operations, many brothers in arms have gone public to commend what women have brought to the community. Kirby, a retired admiral, said, "I've seen it for myself, in the long months at sea and combat waged by our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan; I saw their dedication every day" (Harkins & Losey, 2021 para. 5). Additionally, Sergeant Major Michael Grinston said, "Women lead our most lethal units with character, they will dominate any future battlefield we're called to fight on" (para. 7).

Naval Shore Support

The Navy is one massive, cohesive support element. The operational units considered deployable units cannot operate without shore support commands. Shore installations provide support through maintenance and repairs of equipment, training,

ammunition, fuel, medical support, food service, postal, and communication, among others (Gray, 2021).

Shore commands are primarily occupied by senior administrative commands and communication hub commands, supply, logistics, material, and maintenance, including technical support for broken equipment needed at operational units (Gray, 2021).

Operational sailors eventually need a rotation in which they can spend more time at home with family. Shore elements also ensure that all sailors have an opportunity to serve a shore station. However, sailors may also opt out of this option to remain competitive to serve at operational units.

Shore commands are also the primary installation commands for training (Gray, 2021). All operational units, including weapons training, submarines, air, and surface elements, have simulated environments to introduce new sailors to the operational environment they will encounter once attached to an operational command. Training installations include the inspector general office, which travels to all operational commands to ensure they maintain strict safety, ethics, and program guidelines that support naval personnel and equipment (Gray, 2021). The Navy could not function without the sailors who maintain the real estate, training, support, logistics, maintenance, and facilities at shore-based naval duty stations.

Impact

Female military leaders have striking commonalities that support exemplary leadership. Most have higher education and educated families, express high levels of grit and resiliency, and describe themselves as self-initiators and problem solvers (Tharion et al., 2022). These women challenge themselves while inspiring sailors to perform in

tireless conditions and training them to be technically proficient using multi-million-dollar equipment (Hendon, 2020). Military women have been fighting and participating in war efforts since the Revolutionary War (Small, 1998). Examples of the courageous efforts of women are important because though they may not be highlighted in history, their efforts show women perform similarly to men in times of war (Hacker & Vining, 2012). An example of a Senior Navy female leader performing in a combat role before the ban was lifted on women in combat in 2015 was Cryptologic Senior Chief Petty Officer (SCPO) Shannon Kent. When asked about her leadership and occupation, others described her as a “warrior, killer, and mother.” Though to some, that may seem an odd combination, any other senior Navy female leader can relate. Senior Navy female leaders have many hidden areas of expertise and courage when needed. Inside is a gritty woman who is needed at a time of war, but they are also empathetic, loving, supportive mothers, girlfriends, daughters, or wives at home.

Though any sailor knows what a cryptologic technician does and would most likely associate Kent with a desk job, she spent most of her naval career “wearing body armor and toting an M4 rifle, a Sig Sauer pistol strapped to her thigh, on operations with Navy Seals and other elite forces—until a suicide bombing took her life [in early 2019] in northeastern Syria” (Oppel, 2019, para. 2). Kent had been serving in operational units since 2006, 9 years before Congress allowed the recognition for women to serve in direct ground combat and special operation units. Kent was one woman of many who paved the way for women to serve in ground combat units. Kent was able to use her training in human intelligence and being fluent in seven languages to become a low-visible asset in scouting out possible threats and creating targets of possible enemy hubs for the special

force's teams (Skovlund, 2019). Kent was "a woman in special operations forces before there were women in special operations forces" (Skovlund, 2019, para. 26). Though many of her missions remain classified, her work in missions working with "The Mohawks" was described as dangerous, so much so that if caught they would be tortured and dumped in the streets. Regardless, Kent was there, and her final missions and Joint Service Commendation Medal stated she "contributed directly to the capture of hundreds of enemy insurgents and severely degraded enemy combat capability" (Skovlund, 2019, para. 22).

Kent was instrumental in paving the way for military women of the future to have opportunities in special operations. Kent was the first woman to volunteer and pass the Naval Special Warfare Direct Support Course, a month-long rigorous training program involving day-long ruck marches, hand-to-hand combat, long swims, and runs on minimal sleep and food (Skovlund, 2019). It is one of many courses required to become a Navy Seal. Additionally, after leaving every mission known as an asset and competent professional, her reputation supported opportunities for other women interested in nontraditional roles. In the end, Kent's husband, Joe, said that everyone saw Kent as a warrior first and a mother second; she would want to be remembered that way (Skovlund, 2019).

In 1908 when congress established the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps, one of the first women to serve was Lenah Higbee (Hacker & Vining, 2012). Eventually promoted to CPO, she was the most senior women nurse who served through World War I (Gavin, 2020). One of the first women recognized by the Navy Cross for her devotion to duty, she

was the first woman to be recognized by receiving a combatant ship honored in her name in 1944, the USS Higbee (Goldsmith, 2019).

Anna Der-Vartanian was the first woman who rose to the highest senior rank for MCPO in the Navy and was the most senior enlisted female in all military services (Hacker & Vining, 2012). She served in World War II and commented that most personnel treated her respectfully. As she rose in the ranks and became more senior, her authority was challenged a few times. When challenged, Der-Vartanian stated she would remain calm and professional and stated, “Fall in and pipe down” (Weatherford, 2009, p. 87). Der-Vartanian quickly reminded her sailors that they were in a war zone and should take heed and listen to the direction or risk hurting each other and destroying equipment. Der-Vartanian was known to be genuinely knowledgeable of Navy regulations and treated everyone equally. At times there were rumors concerning favor over the female sailors. Der-Vartanian was known to see each sailor as a sailor first, regardless of gender. Upholding strict standards, she set the path for future senior Navy leaders with examples of how to treat sailors equally.

ADM Michelle Howard was not only the highest-ranking woman in military history but also served as the vice chief of naval operations and was the senior in command over two fleet concentration areas (Naval History and Heritage Command 2021b). Howard was senior in command over Naval Forces Africa and Europe in 2016 and 2017. Howard retired after 36 years of faithful service.

Captain Rosemary Mariner, a trailblazer in naval aviation, has led the way for women in aviation. The first woman to get an aeronautical degree from Purdue University, she joined the Navy with a pilot’s license. After completing officer candidate

school, she was one of six women to earn her wings in aviation in 1974 (Iskra, 2007). She was one of the first women to fly Navy fighter jets. Not only did she pave the way for aviators, but she also continued to pursue surface warfare qualifications. She earned her surface qualification aboard the USS Lexington (CV-16) in 1982. As a naval officer, she became the first woman to command a squadron, VAQ-34, during Operation Desert Storm. After her command tour, Mariner continued to serve in the Pentagon and taught military strategy at the Naval War College.

Currently leading the Navy as a senior Navy Female leader is Captain Bauernschmidt (Correll, 2021). She has been the only woman to command a nuclear aircraft carrier. Though she has worked hard to rise to a senior position Bauernschmidt said she feels a sense of responsibility to support women as they progress in the military (Correll, 2021). Though women are making strides and proving themselves as senior officers in the Navy, only 13% of 3,075 officers are women (Lendon et al., 2022). Bauernschmidt felt it was time for her or any woman meeting the qualifications to command a nuclear aircraft carrier. She said it was evolutionary, not revolutionary (Lendon et al., 2022). Senior officers have been doing this job, and now it has the same qualifications, but a woman is in command. Though a lot has been accomplished, Bauernschmidt admitted, “While women have accomplished a lot. I look forward to the day we do not have to celebrate firsts” (Lendon et al., 2022, para. 27).

Kent, Higbee, Der-Vartanian, Howard, Mariner, and most recently, Bauernschmidt have paved the way for today’s Navy (Correll, 2021; DeSimone, 2022). The historical and current Navy is full of senior Navy leaders who are disciplined, courageous, and committed to their values and goals. As the Navy continues to have

fewer women do new “firsts,” senior Navy female leaders will continue pushing the standards, meeting military requirements, and serving alongside all other devoted sailors.

Evolving Leadership Styles

Though many leadership styles support character development and research revealing characteristics and leadership styles that result in organizational success, the research and data are abundant and can seem endless (Bass, 1999; Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 1970; Stogdill, 1948). With the research supporting leadership theories, it is essential to reveal the research relevant to naval leadership principals specifically for this research because the focus is senior Navy female leaders. This section and those following reveal the alignment of senior Navy female leadership characteristics to leadership theory. Navy characteristics build upon the Navy core values, Navy leadership attributes, and grit leadership characteristics: courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection that produce extraordinary results in the Navy organization (America’s Navy n.d.-b; Arias, 2017; Perlis, 2013).

Path to Leadership

Becoming a Senior Navy female leader is competitive and complex (Holden & Raffo, 2014). Senior Navy female leaders use evolving leadership styles provided through naval training and then navigate a difficult path toward advancement created to benefit a male-dominated organization (Hendon, 2020; Polson, 2020). First, there is time in service. On average, most considered senior in the Navy have at least 10 years of service (Hendon, 2020). Though that may seem minimal considering the responsibilities of a senior leader, most sailors gain experience early in their careers as they are

considered supervisors, if not middle management, in their first enlistment just under 4 years (Hendon, 2020).

Other considerations for promotion compared to peers are higher education, comparison in leadership qualities among one's peers, and higher qualifications needed for the Navy command to be operational at sea or during a time of war. Though there are many opportunities for senior leaders to get qualified to support the operational command, those who meet the demand are most considered for promotion (Calle, 2021). Other considerations are rankings against one's peers, additional qualification, additional training, community service, and direct subordinates who operate in a superior manner to other sailors.

A primary difference regarding the promotions of senior Navy female enlisted and senior Navy female officers is a process called chief petty officer (CPO) induction (Smith, 2022). Once promoted to the senior enlisted ranks, senior enlisted leaders endure a grueling 6-week training program comprising demanding physical, emotional, and leadership-based requirements. At the end of the induction process, there is a ceremony that the senior enlisted family, peers, and sailors attend to recognize other senior enlisted leaders who have accepted them because of the induction process.

Senior Navy female leaders sometimes may have made their promotion because they meet all the requirements for promotion on paper, and some because of their persistent ability to overcome obstacles and fair well over their peers. Nevertheless, there is rarely a time when provided an opportunity to support an operational command that senior leaders with resilience and personal values aligned with the Navy's core values

and attributes do not accept the advancement and opportunity to serve the best Navy in the world (Hendon, 2020; Iskra, 2007).

Core Values

The U.S. Marine Corps is a department of the U.S. Navy. Though the Navy had its core values of professionalism, integrity, and tradition after the 1991 Tailhook scandal, the U.S. Department of the Navy looked to its codepartment, the U.S. Marine Corps, to align core values (T. B. Webber, 2002). The Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment were absorbed by the U.S. Marine Corps in 1992 (Spall, n.d.). The Navy's core values are the foundation on which the Navy begins recruit training. Every sailor's baseline is learning and understanding the core values of the U.S. Department of the Navy, which is the "foundation of trust and leadership upon which our strength is based, and victory is achieved" (U.S. Department of the Navy, n.d., para. 1; Spall, n.d. para. 2).

Honor. The core value of honor is based on the part of the enlistment oath. "I will bear true faith and allegiance" (American Navy, n.d.-b, para. 2). The U.S. Department of the Navy ensures honor is part of the enlistment oath. It encourages service members by instilling that upholding the Navy's core values is a duty and privilege for service members. Additionally, the Navy instills honor, making it part of everyone's character. In detail, the U.S. Department of the Navy (n.d.) states honor as being accountable for one's behavior, additionally knowing that being in the Navy and serving Americans is the highest privilege. The core value of honor also aligns with integrity, ethics, truth, and being a problem solver.

Courage. The core value of courage is part of the enlistment oath: “I will support and defend” (America’s Navy, n.d.-b, para. 3). The U.S. Department of the Navy (n.d.) elaborates on the core value of courage, stating, “Courage is the value that gives me the moral and mental strength to do what is right, with confidence and resolution, even in the face of temptation or adversity” (para. 2). All services similarly speak of courage. Every military service has courage as part of its core values. The life of a sailor is demanding. It requires difficult decisions and actions that save or end life. Service members are often responsible for making tough decisions; courage is the foundation on which they make those decisions. The core value of courage also encourages sailors to embrace the demands of the Navy profession, encourage decisions based on the best interest of the Navy and the nation with little personal regard, and be loyal to the Navy by being honest and courageous (U.S. Department of the Navy, n.d.).

Commitment. The core value of commitment is part of the enlistment oath: “I will obey orders” (America’s Navy, n.d.-b, para. 4). The U.S. Department of the Navy (n.d.) elaborates on the core value of commitment: “The day-to-day duty of every man and woman in the Department of the Navy is to join together as a team to improve the quality of our work, our people and ourselves” (para. 3). Commitment is providing respect to the chain of command, caring for others, respecting personal ethics, being positive, encouraging solutions to problems, and continually exhibiting a high moral character.

The Navy’s core values provide a guiding baseline of positive values that anyone can use. The Navy’s core values and attributes aligned with traditional theoretical leadership foundations have proven in other contexts outside of the military to have a

direct correlation to self and others, which has proven to be inspirational and a supporting element in transformational leadership (Caza & Posner, 2021).

Core Attributes

The Navy's core attributes are designed for Navy leadership and created from the Navy's core values. Created by the 31st Chief of Naval Operations ADM John M. Richardson and his leadership team, they created the attributes of integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness as a baseline for leadership design when making decisions that affect the Navy, personnel, and the Nation (Price, 2015). The attributes support senior Navy officials' confidence and trust in independent commands, sailors, and the senior officers who make the decisions at those commands. Because each Navy command is decentralized but supports the operations of the Navy, trust in leadership is crucial in executing orders.

Integrity. Integrity is two-dimensional. Everyone is accountable for their actions and how they perceive and value their integrity (Price, 2015). The Navy is a diverse team environment. The second dimension of integrity is to other sailors and leadership. In the Navy, having the integrity to instill the Navy's core values and attributes as part of one's value system keeps one's motivation and integrity in alignment with the Navy organization. Additionally, by creating an alignment of values and the Navy's core values, there is no conflict of personal values encouraging self-fulfillment (America's Navy, n.d.-a).

Accountability. The Navy is an organization that is constantly self-assessing and setting goals and timelines. It continually pushes goals, funding, and personnel (Price, 2015). Though that seems aggressive, the Navy is full of people who desire to be

challenged and appreciate how the Navy creates ways to measure success. To meet the aggressive timelines and goals the Navy sets, personnel must align with the Navy's attributes. Aligning their values and ADM, Richardson stated, "We have to be our worst critic and make adjustments as required so that we can achieve the ends that we set about achieving" (Price, 2015, para. 4).

Initiative. The Navy is a demanding organization. The Navy holds the leadership accountable first. It is the leadership's responsibility to have the initiative to push themselves to drive the energy and productiveness of the operations in the command (Price, 2015). Leadership is also responsible for being empathetic and humble in recognizing great ideas (Americas Navy, n.d.-a). The most senior leader should be encouraging leadership at every level. The most junior sailor can have a solution to a problem. If they have the initiative to mention a solution, leadership should be supportive enough to hear it out and encourage it as a leadership training opportunity at every level.

Toughness. Toughness is a crucial attribute of military leaders, although many terms are used to describe toughness, perseverance, firmness, and grit, all having a similar foundation of meaning. It is about the characteristics that, no matter the term, allow leaders to be influential for themselves, their organizations, and their people (Kannangara et al., 2018). Finding motivation and inspiration from toughness is about where it originates. Physical toughness, emotional toughness, and strength from friends and family are all ways the Navy attributes use toughness to improve leadership. According to Price (2015), "In the end, we don't give up the ship, which is a measure of toughness and resilience" (para. 7).

The Navy prides itself as an organization of high moral quality (T. B. Webber, 2002). Senior Navy leaders are taught the Navy core values upon entry into boot camp and the latest attributes providing additional institutional values to support leadership in aligning personal values with Navy values. There is a clear distinction between daily societal values and military values. Rightfully so, the values of naval personnel direct all naval activities and operations. The alignment of the Navy's core values, attributes, and personal values supports a cohesive environment. In a military organization, the chain of command gives orders based on the Navy's vision, ensuring personal values align and support quick decision making while not compromising personal value systems.

Military values are not in alignment with societal values. Society proclaims individualism and self-expression, whereas everyone wears the same uniform in the military and conforms to baseline standards (T. B. Webber, 2002). This may seem like a virtuous way of thinking and an elevation to military values, but important values align with Navy values. Military members are put in unique situations and face problems that require a moral obligation to action (Luning et al., 2021). These decisions are made courageously and quickly. Senior military leadership has a hard line of moral character regardless of society's feelings. Individuals who cannot serve in the military or have negative moral character will never have the privilege and pressure to make a decision like those in the military do every day (T. B. Webber, 2002).

The Navy's core values and attributes align with the foundation concepts of grit. The primary leadership characteristics of grit are courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection. The Navy's core values and attributes encourage gritty characteristics among sailors and senior leadership (Luning et al., 2021).

Luning et al.'s research also supports that most military leaders are naturally gritty. Natural grit, along with Navy core values and attributes and establishing an alignment with theoretical leadership foundations, provides a direction for all leaders to encourage discussions of developing grit individually and organizationally and why it creates extraordinary results.

Theoretical Foundations

Though many theoretical leadership foundations exist and all contribute to leadership principles, not all are considered “best practices” (Thomas, 2009). There are many ways to define leadership, but in the context of leaders who create extraordinary results within their organizations, those leaders are in tune with their moral standing while inspiring others to conduct cohesive actions to create organizational success. Theoretical leadership foundations add to individual effectiveness; when combined with the proper leadership foundation, they result in organizational effectiveness. Hollis (2014) revealed that despite various leadership theories, senior military leadership commonly uses transformational, authentic, and servant leadership theories.

Transformational Leadership

Bass (1999) was a leading contributor to how transformational leadership works. Though Burns (1978) initiated transformational leadership, Bass continued his research by revealing the psychological aspects of why people respond and act toward transformational leaders. In addition, Burns was able to explain how transformational leaders are measured based on the influence they have on their followers. With over 23 years since Bass started his contributions to transformational leadership, meta-analysis

has shown that transformational leadership provides a positive outcome for personnel and organizations (Bass & Bass 2008).

Transformational leadership in a military organization is crucial because it generates change and allows new leaders to develop. The positive changes generated from transformational leadership change the followers and alter personal values that align with changes that create actions in a Navy organization (Luning et al., 2021). For the military to execute operational plans and strategic missions, leaders and leadership foundations must be used to encourage followers to take action (Hollis, 2014).

Research conducted by Caza and Posner (2021) revealed that transformational leaders succeed more, and the organizations they participate in also have more success. Additionally, their research revealed that transformational leaders tend to have more grit. Aligning transformational leaders' success with recent research supporting transformational leaders using grit as part of that success can be used for future research and leadership training. Because studies on grit and leadership behavior have minimal attention, the Caza and Posner (2021) study and studies conducted by Arias (2017) and Clark (2016) revealed the need for additional research on the alignment of grit and leadership.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leaders align their values with the organization's (Cha et al., 2019; Ibarra, 2015). Recent studies have shown that organizational innovation and authentic and transformational leadership have principles for organizational effectiveness and result in the "gold standard for leadership" (Cha et al., 2019, p. 634). Authentic leadership is when leaders are true to themselves in a transparent way, and their

leadership style is in direct alignment with their values and belief system (Groselj et al., 2021). Authentic leaders have the most satisfied employees of all other traditional leadership styles.

Authentic leaders and the military coexist because authentic leaders inspire trust and loyalty in their personnel, reflected in the organization (Groselj et al., 2021). The Navy trusts sailors to deliver and act based on the chain of command and orders given by superiors. If the superior uses authentic leadership principles, the baseline of trust and loyalty is present, resulting in quick decisions and actions necessary in a military environment (B. Webber & Forster, 2017).

Authentic leadership is the most difficult to portray consistently among the various leadership styles. Because of the transparent nature of the leadership style, leaders must be true to themselves, which means they must be vulnerable (Groselj et al., 2021). That is a challenging element for many leaders to accept because leaders are the initiators and contributors of action. They fear being perceived as weak if they are too transparent and have an off day. Regardless, authentic leadership looks different for every leader. It will only work if the leaders are authentic to themselves. There is no direct way to be authentic; one must search for what methods support transparency, moral perspective, balance, and self-awareness (Cha et al., 2019).

Servant Leadership

Though servant leadership was historically mentioned by Greenleaf (1970) as the leadership that cares for its personnel, compared to other theories, it has the least research. Servant leaders are known to put the needs of others before their own (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). With the constant change in practical leadership approaches, servant

leadership has a growing demand for the connection of values, ethics, and honesty it brings (Graham, 1991). Servant leaders are currently highlighted as employees who desire to be seen and treated respectfully. Historically traditional leadership focuses on profit, innovation, and development. Though innovation is a highlight, servant leaders serve their organizations while meeting goals and supporting personnel growth (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

A recent study by Ullah et al. (2021) has shown servant leadership to produce phenomenological effects regarding employee output in organizations. When comparing servant leadership to grit characteristics, the results were that grit characteristics and servant leadership provided an enhanced environment with productive, content employees. When the two constructs were compared, job performance was the best organizations had ever experienced.

Theoretical Framework

Leadership theories, characteristics, and traits are in constant flux depending on the “jangle fallacy” of how and when researchers and others use terms depending on the leadership discipline in question (Ponnock et al., 2020). Grit leadership aligned with theoretical leadership principles directly aligns with senior Navy leaders. Naval leaders must “make rapid decisions, be adaptable and flexible, and should follow a servant and transformational leadership foundation” (Thomas, 2009, p. 1).

Women are said to develop grit, specifically when they “persevere in the face of adversity” (Kannangara et al., 2018, p. 2). Research has shown that grit correlates with gender. Though some studies do not indicate gender differences and grit (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009), Kannangara et al.’s 2018 study revealed that

females scored significantly higher on the grit scale. Additionally, other recent studies have supported females to be grittier based on higher competency areas such as multi-tasking and perseverance (Calle, 2021; Christensen & Knezek, 2014; Lucas et al., 2015). Other studies revealed that female leaders in the military and retired military have high levels of grit, creating a relationship in which research can elaborate on how gritty Navy female leaders create extraordinary results in their organizations (Calle, 2021; Clark, 2016; Desing, 2020; Lauer, 2021).

Leadership and Grit-Related Traits (Gritty Leaders)

Senior Navy female leaders face additional obstacles by working in a high-tempo military environment that enhances their natural ability to obtain grittiness and use it to thrive in their organization (Kaplan-Thaler & Koval, 2015). Research has aligned military personnel with the common five grit leadership attributes courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection (Calle, 2021; Duckworth et al., 2007; Luning et al., 2021). Though research aligns military leadership and grit attributes, additional research is recommended because in-depth studies on grit-and leadership attributes are in their early stages (Calle, 2021; Clark, 2016; Lauer, 2021).

Being a gritty leader as a military member is essential because the job requires operational assets, personnel, and equipment that can aid or hinder the enemy (Hendon, 2020). The continual threat of life loss and lifesaving equipment raises the pressure. Leaders who possess gritty characteristics continually evaluate various scenarios in their minds—precisely, worst-case scenarios. Gritty leaders prepare like first responders (Kaplan-Thaler & Koval, 2015). Continually assessing the worst case provides the ability

to take quick action if a bad situation occurs. Through their personal development of grit, a gritty leader can react to an emergency confidently and calmly rather than cause panic. According to Kaplan-Thaler and Koval (2015), “This is where guts, resilience, initiative, and tenacity truly pay off. It takes mindfulness to understand the problem at hand” (p. 42).

Emerging research has revealed that people perceive success and happiness as more important than money and talent (Rego et al., 2021). Kaplan-Thaler and Koval (2015) stated, “Passion and perseverance, it turns out, matters more than talent and intelligence when it comes to being successful” (p. 10). What specifically about senior Navy female leaders supports natural grittiness or their commitment to work on the ability to obtain gritty style leadership attributes? The military environment provides continual risks, struggles, and challenges (Hendon, 2020). Grit allows senior Navy female leaders to take risks, continue a determined mindset, and accomplish goals, all while dealing with the difficulty of a high-tempo military environment (Polson, 2020).

Research supports the attractiveness of grit because of overall personal happiness (Singh & Jha, 2008). Through the ability of a growth mindset (Duckworth et al., 2007; Dweck, 2006), emotional stability through stressful events supports the understanding of meaning in life (Blalock et al., 2015; Von Culin et al., 2014). Research supports various verbiage to describe grit by pursuing the understanding that senior Navy female leaders have natural gritty attributes that align with the top five grit attributes. Some other common descriptors of grit are enhanced personal wellness, self-control, resilience, focused mindset, and understanding of perceived stress, creating individual happiness and self-awareness (Kannangara et al., 2018). With grit being associated with achievement

and goal accomplishment, research on how it relates to senior Navy female leadership is needed through a qualitative study to understand the intricate details of what these women do to harness grit no matter the obstacles.

What is so inspirational is how senior Navy female leaders continually push themselves—being the example to instill grit among their teams and organizations to create such efficiency producing extraordinary results. A senior Navy female leader cannot be only passionate, persistent, and resilient. Authentic gritty leadership inspires others to create efficient teams and future gritty leaders (Miller, 2017). According to Miller (2017), gritty leaders “make people want to become better and imagine greater possibilities for themselves. People who have this [grit] make us wonder, ‘What if I went after the hard things too? What if I devoted energy and time to cultivating my passions?’” (p. 59). Besides inspiring others to be gritty, additional research is needed to understand how leaders harness that grittiness consistently and use it to produce extraordinary results in their organizations.

Five Principles of Grit

Grit can be defined in several ways, but all varieties have similar terminology. According to Duckworth et al. (2007), grit is perseverance despite adversities and consistency of passion over time. Despite adversity and often failure, perseverance is to sustain the effort needed to obtain a goal despite adversity. Consistency of passion is continuing to remain committed and not wavering on passion toward that commitment. Grit attributes have been studied across many disciplines, such as education, marriage, communities, and the military, and have been proven beneficial (Calle, 2021).

Various research has created a platform for additional research to explore grit and how grit creates exemplary leaders who inspire teams toward extraordinary results in their organizations (Arias, 2017; Calle, 2021; Perlis, 2013; Von Culin et al., 2014). The research focuses on five primary principles related to grit, courage, conscientiousness, the ability to achieve long-term goals, resilience, and the capability to reach excellence versus perfection (Arias, 2017; Perlis, 2013). These gritty principles are the foundation of research to explore grit-related leadership described from earlier research (Duckworth, 2016; Duckworth et al., 2007; Jachimowicz et al., 2018; Kaplan-Thaler & Koval, 2015). The following sections go into detail about each grit-related principle.

Courage

Courage is the mental, physical, and moral strength to pursue and accomplish a worthy goal despite the presence of danger or fear (Lee-& Elliott-Lee, 2006; Schilpzand et al., 2015). Courageous leaders push themselves and take risks because it is part of their values. Even when no one demands the risk, courage is deep inside gritty individuals who know they must act. A perfect example is Miller (2017), who authored *Getting Grit: The Evidence-Based Approach to Cultivating Passion, Perseverance, and Purpose*. When asked by her publicist why she took a chance on her to publish her research on grit, Miller stated,

You did something I've never seen anyone else do in real-time before, and I wanted to know how it would turn out. Everyone always talks about taking risks, following your passions, and not playing it safe, but you're the first person in my life who has ever had the courage to follow her dream despite putting so many things at risk, inducing the possibility of failing. (p. 13)

The research is consistent among Arias (2017), Clark (2016), Duckworth (2016), Duckworth et al. (2007), Jachimowicz et al. (2018), Miller (2017), and Polson (2020), to name a few of the common researchers mentioning connection of exemplary female leaders to use of grit creating extraordinary results. Consistency and gritty attributes encourage impactful leadership and inspire followers to support the leader's vision (Rego et al., 2021). Leading with courage creates impact through courageous actions that inspire those in the organization and future employees and peers. Perseverance and courage are required to thrive, even amid adversity. Courageous leaders do not stop, even if that means changing things and reinventing themselves (Stoltz, 2015). Gritty leaders are courageous enough to be living, learning examples so people may see and have the courage to change their course of action to obtain more grit needed to live a more fulfilled life (Miller, 2017).

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is a fundamental personality trait that drives the desire and ability to be diligent, organized, achievement-oriented, self-disciplined, and reliable (Jackson et al., 2010; Perlis, 2013). Research has proven grit and conscientiousness to be related so that at times the terms are referred to with similar meanings (Crede et al., 2017; Ponnock et al., 2020). A similarity in the reference does not take away conscientiousness's impact on grit. Duckworth et al. (2007) summarized grit as a personality trait characterized by perseverance and passion, resulting in the achievement of long-term goals. Conscientiousness supports the desire and discipline needed to persevere, supporting the achievement of long-term goals. Several meta-analysis studies

concluded that the grit and conscientiousness relationship exist (Crede et al., 2017; Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Reed et al., 2012).

Conscientiousness is a personality trait, and it has been argued that with grit, which can be learned, it may seem unfavorable to want to change someone's personality regarding the conscientiousness and grit relationship (Crede et al., 2017). Duckworth made a statement regarding the relationship and recommended that some changes to the Grit-S scale should be made (Kamenetz, 2016). More research is needed that reveals the actions of gritty people through qualitative studies and alterations to the grit scale. Additionally, Duckworth stated that her published quantitative research clearly showed the relationship between grit and achievement and that conscientiousness is part of the grit family (Duckworth, 2016; Duckworth et al., 2007; Kamenetz, 2016). So, although conscientiousness and grit are similar, the purpose of conscientiousness is one of grit's five most favorable supportive traits. Together, they collaborate to form high predictors of success (Ponnock et al., 2020). Furthermore, there is a need to expand the reach of grit research to the military organization and senior Navy female leadership who tend to naturally possess gritty attributes (Calle, 2021; Kannangara et al., 2018; Lauer, 2021).

Long-Term Goals

Long-term goals reflect the future top-level outcome that serves as a compass for sustained action, inspiring passion, and consistent focus over long periods (Duckworth et al., 2007; Jachimowicz et al., 2018). Gritty characteristics support personal success outcomes with goal attainment (Sheldon et al., 2015). With the foundation of Duckworth's (2016) definition of grit being perseverance and passion for long-term goals, having long-term goals highlighted as one of the main attributes of grit is fitting.

Long-term goals are critical to grit because that is how gritty people channel their passion and create action toward their achievements (Miller, 2017). Having long-term goals and accomplishing them among life's obstacles creates fulfillment. Gritty leaders have goals. Most would even call them unrealistic. Gritty people set high-achieving goals because grit is required, creating an organized purpose for the passion gritty people have in personal fulfillment (Jachimowicz et al., 2018). Finally, because passion is a crucial component of grit, a combination of passion and perseverance related to long-term goal setting has been shown to increase concentration (Stoltz, 2015). This total immersion of concentration with passion toward accomplishments creates the energy needed to accomplish goals (Jachimowicz et al., 2018).

Resilience

Resilience is an individual's ability to adapt and recover from stress and adversity while maintaining or returning to positive mental well-being despite hardship (Grafton et al., 2010; Rice & Liu, 2016). The constant demands of Navy leadership require gritty leaders. Halliday et al. (2016) confirmed that resilience and gritty attributes support leaders with extreme responsibilities that help them deal with burnout. Unlike some studies on resilience, in which a person overcomes one obstacle when resilience is referenced with grit, it is not about overcoming adversity once or having one bad day. Resilience pertains to grit, and this study assesses how senior Navy female leaders can work diligently toward goals that seem impossible to most. Senior Navy female leaders have strenuous amounts of stamina over a long period, and no matter the bad days or adversities, they produce extraordinary results (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014). No matter the study, military, marriage, school, or sales representative, those in a study conducted

by Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014) showed that only with resilience through grit were participants able to persevere and be successful in their relatable subject area.

Additionally, though resilience is a part of the attributes that make up being gritty, resilience and grit both support productivity and overcoming mental fatigue and overload when challenged, supporting personal success (Raikes, 2021).

Excellence Versus Perfection

Excellence versus perfection is a mindset toward fulfilling one's purpose and prioritizing improvement over a perception of an ideal that may or may not be attainable (Arias, 2017; Duckworth et al., 2007; Perlis, 2013). If gritty people are courageous, tough, resilient, and goal-oriented and continually strive for high standards, why can't they work toward perfection? High expectations of oneself and what one wants to accomplish are reasonable and support self-improvement. Trying to be perfect is rigid, and no learning is obtained. A gritty person who strives for excellence views it as a challenge that requires patience and persistence. No matter the obstacles, a gritty person will strive to accomplish whatever the goal toward excellence is, and every challenge will look different regarding the level of excellence. Leaders who strive for excellence learn as they go and are not afraid of setbacks because they have the passion and resiliency to keep moving forward (Perlis, 2013). That is why excellence versus perfection is aligned with grit. No matter the obstacles, excellence allows a person to meet high standards but not impossible standards that may apply based on someone else's idea of perfection (Polson, 2020). Perfection is unattainable. Excellence can be "accomplished with effort, practice, and persistence. But pursuing perfection is futile. It can never be achieved" (Martin, 2019, para. 3).

Gap in the Literature

Though research supports that naval leaders positively affect organizational climate through gritty attributes, minimal research, if any, aligns the construct of senior Navy female leaders and how they use the five main characteristics of grit: courage, conscientiousness, achievement of long-term goals, resilience, and understanding of excellence versus perfection to achieve extraordinary results in the Navy organization (Duckworth, 2016; Duckworth et al., 2007; Wyatt-Thermil, 2021).

Studies by Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014) on how grit affects marriages, education, sales, and the military revealed that individuals are individually successful when they use grit to persevere. Grit supports the direction of passion, depending on the study area. Many studies reveal how grit creates success, especially in the education and personality arenas. Minimal research has been done on how grit affects organizations (Southwick et al., 2020). A study by Kannangara et al. (2018) revealed higher levels of grittiness in females than men supporting another avenue for this study, the concept of senior Navy female leadership and grit. Additionally, studies comparing females and grit, specifically military and retired military, support the foundation of research on Navy female leaders, their use of grit characteristics, and how they produce extraordinary results within the Navy organization (Calle, 2021; Clark, 2016; Desing, 2020; Lauer, 2021).

Research supports grit's correlation with success (Duckworth et al., 2007; Miller, 2017; Perlis, 2013). Military members have higher levels of grit (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014; Lauer, 2021; Luning et al., 2021; Polson, 2020), females score higher in grit than males (Calle, 2021; Christensen & Knezek, 2014; Kannangara et al., 2018; Lucas et al., 2015), and organizational grit leads to more cohesive and successful organization success

(Arias, 2017; Calle, 2021; Luning et al., 2021; Perlis, 2013; Southwick et al., 2020).

These themes and initial research support additional research to align exemplary female Navy leaders and the five grit characteristics: courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection and how they create success in the Navy organization.

Additional research has been recommended for grit and organizational success (Clark, 2016), specifically the need for various populations and grit leadership (Navy female leadership). Duckworth et al.'s (2007), Crede et al.'s (2017), and Lacap's (2020) foundation of their studies being quantitative meta-analyses all stated they were limited. All recommended additional research on grit outside of academic performance.

Additionally, these quantitative studies recommended an in-depth review of grit levels because many individuals are unaware of how gritty they are and may cause quantitative manipulation from personal input. By conducting a qualitative study and revealing rich data regarding the high-paced, complex military environment, senior Navy female leaders can recall and reveal memories of times they were most gritty and the outcomes. Those rich details support the research needed to find common grit themes in leadership. Clark (2016) and Iskra (2007) recommended future research that aligns with this study. Clark (2016) recommended a varied population and a qualitative study focusing on a more profound understanding of how grit relates to organizational success. Iskra's (2007) study was on military women-with recommendations for a qualitative study on women in the military, specifically the Navy and Marines, because her study was on senior Army officers.

Additionally, Iskra (2007) stated, “Women as a group have been disenfranchised and lack empowerment. They have been socialized to be deferential to authority, to be nice. Often told they cannot do things because they are women” (p. 221). In her recommendation for future research, Iskra stated that stereotypes are changing. Women are proving themselves and creating personal and organizational success. Additional research is recommended to study as many generations of women as possible. With the male dominance shifting in the military and business organizations, research is needed to show women’s strategies for success.

Summary

Studies on grit have gained traction since Duckworth received the 2013 MacArthur Award for transforming how people interpret grit and its role in self-control and success (Kamenetz, 2016). Duckworth defined grit as perseverance for long-term goals, a similar historical foundation of zeal before it was grit. Galton (1869) defined zeal as the capacity to conduct hard labor to live well. The familiar theme is perseverance and the need to keep going despite adversity to succeed. Hard work, whether called grit today or zeal in 1892, the similarity is working hard toward one’s passion for obtaining success.

In the 21st century, grit is the common favorable term for those researching people who are determined, strong, courageous, and resilient (Stoltz, 2015). Grit research and the other phrases that describe grit and the main attributes associated are popular and needed (Christensen & Knezek, 2014; Crede et al., 2017). The five most common grit leadership attributes are courage, conscientiousness, resilience, accomplishing long-term goals, and understanding excellence versus perfection (Arias, 2017; Perlis, 2015). Research exploring senior Navy female leaders using gritty attributes, among all the

demands of being a military leader, is needed to accomplish extraordinary results in their organization (Boies & Howell, 2009; Duckworth et al., 2007). Understanding senior Navy female leadership's use of grit provides opportunities to expand grit research to other constructs such as gender and grit, organizational grit, personal grit, and grit leadership.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Research methodologies include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods strategies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study used the qualitative strategy of phenomenological study to explore the experiences of senior Navy female leaders who obtained extraordinary results in their organizations. Phenomenological studies combine philosophy and psychology to understand the perceived experiences of the research participant (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The methodology for this study comes from collaboration with a thematic research team of nine doctoral students. Chapter III describes the methodology developed by this thematic team on grit leadership and additional details related to the specific study of senior Navy female leaders. Following is a summary of the sample population, data collection procedures (including instrument and venue), and measures taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the process.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and describe how exemplary senior Navy female leaders used five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results while they served in the Navy.

Research Questions

1. How do senior Navy female leaders use courage to accomplish extraordinary results?

2. How do senior Navy female leaders use conscientiousness to accomplish extraordinary results?
3. How do senior Navy female leaders use long-term goals to accomplish extraordinary results?
4. How do senior Navy female leaders use resilience to accomplish extraordinary results?
5. How do senior Navy female leaders use excellence versus perfection to accomplish extraordinary results?

Research Design

Research design is based on the type of research questions and hypotheses that need to be examined or explored. Three primary research designs include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Quantitative research focuses on experimental designs structured around equation models based on numerical data; qualitative research relies on nonnumeric data to explore phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Qualitative research focuses on understanding the participants' views of their personal experience as they lived the phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Though all qualitative research is similar in allowing the participants to describe their lived experiences, a phenomenological study is unique because the focus is on the perceived experience of the participant. With the focus being on the perception of the participant's reality, the research focuses on the participant's perspective on "the consciousness of human experiences" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 346).

As the quantitative research process describes, data are collected via surveys and analytical descriptors quantified by the numerical representation of gathered data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). On the other hand, qualitative data collection is conducted through interviews, observations of participants, and artifacts, including documents, news articles, photographs, and other items representing the participant's lived experiences (Patten & Newhart, 2018). Specifically, for a phenomenological study, the interview is an in-depth process. This in-depth process requires the interviewer to be experienced in listening, interview structure, prompting, and reflection. To support the interview process, the researcher records the interview with the participant's permission for further analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

A team of nine doctoral students representing the University of Massachusetts Global, with the support of university faculty, formed a team of similar interests regarding grit and the five common grit characteristics to conduct research. The group is referred to as the grit thematic research team. This team comprises doctoral students who conducted phenomenological research on different exemplary leadership populations with a foundation on five common grit characteristics (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, excellence versus perfection) and how those characteristics created extraordinary results in various organizations.

The grit thematic research team conducted several meetings and deliberated on various options for the most appropriate research method. After additional consultation, the team agreed that a qualitative research method would best contribute to the relevant lived experiences of the participants. Because the study focuses on the participants' experiences, the researcher must use open-ended questions to draw out the best concept

of the lived phenomenon of the participant. Additionally, the researcher validates the findings and creates common themes based on all the data provided by the participants. The researcher should also deeply understand the research based on personal experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The grit thematic team agreed that a qualitative research study grounded in phenomenology was the most intrinsic method for relevant rich data that can explore the unique phenomena of each participant (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

I interviewed willing participants with personal experience of the phenomenon as senior female naval leaders who created extraordinary results while serving in the Navy. These women have memorable experiences ranging from operational arenas to decisions that determine the life and death of peers, allies, and enemies, to the daily care of first-time sailors away from home who need assistance purchasing their first vehicle. This phenomenological research can reveal the participant's experience using grit leadership characteristics in the Navy, where exemplary women lead without context based on the five common grit characteristics (Arias, 2017; Clark, 2016; Perlis, 2013). Additionally, research by Arias (2017) and Luning et al. (2021) revealed the use of grit as an individual characteristic. It contributed to grit at the organizational level via a similar phenomenological, qualitative research design. Luning et al.'s (2021) study were related to military leadership and how those leaders create a culture of grit, creating extraordinary results. In alignment with the primary five grit characteristics, Luning et al.'s study was in the same context of grit leadership via the use of team, resilience and determination, mission, personal values, growth, and the proactive need to expound on grit characteristics that encourage growth as a leader.

The phenomenological research method supported data collection that aligned with my desire to examine the five common grit leadership characteristics: courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection (Perlis, 2013). The research problem was the research focus of the study, which is essential in a phenomenological study revealing the meaning of the event for the participant (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Additionally, the phenomenological research design revealed how these senior female gritty leaders reacted to various leadership situations, providing relevant data for this study. A qualitative phenomenological study reveals the feelings and values that drive decisions based on those individuals who lived and experienced the phenomena.

Population

Creswell and Creswell (2018) described a study population as a group of subjects about whom the researcher forms conclusions. The population is the largest group of subjects from which the researcher selects a narrower number to provide the needed personnel for the study.

This phenomenological study's population comprised senior Navy female leaders in senior enlisted and officer ranks. Of those who make it to retirement, only approximately 20% serve at least 20 years in the naval service or other maximum paygrades (My Navy Human Resources, n.d.-b). Data are limited. The exact number of senior Navy leaders who retire each day from active service is unknown. According to My Navy Human Resources (n.d.-b), retirees annually rise by approximately 40 additional personnel. Of the 2,190 naval personnel who retired in 2020, 18% were senior Navy females, resulting in approximately 390 senior Navy female leaders who retired in

2020 and an additional 40 female senior enlisted leaders each year after (DoD Office of the Actuary, 2018). The statistical number for senior Navy females who have retired from the Navy supports the population of this study was all 470 senior Navy female leaders (My Navy Human Resources, n.d.-a).

Target Population

The target population was the set of individuals taken from the whole population who met the outlining criteria outlined in this study (Creswell, 2012). Because of time and financial restraints, conducting interviews for research on the whole population was unrealistic (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). I chose a smaller viable population to represent the whole population. This target population numbered 138 senior Navy female leaders of the 470 who retired from the Navy within the last 3 years and met the requirements aligned with creating extraordinary results while serving the Navy organization.

Sampling Procedure

A sample population is the group of subjects or participants from whom the data are collected, representative of a larger population the researcher intends to generalize (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Attempting to interview 138 senior Navy female leaders because of time and resource constraints was impossible. The final sample for this study was eight senior Navy female leaders who had retired within 3 years of naval service and met five of the eight outlining criteria in the following sections. Additionally, the participants self-selected with input from the expert panel regarding the participants' being exemplary and producing extraordinary results in the Navy.

The sample size for a qualitative study can include 40 participants or fewer (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Research has stated that qualitative studies depend on the richness of data from participants and the researcher's ability to analyze the data more than the sample size (Patten & Newhart, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In-depth, rich data from a small sample of participants is valuable, specifically when the data are detailed, and an emotional reenactment of the phenomenon occurs for the participant (Patton, 2015).

The final sample size of eight was chosen after careful consideration from the grit thematic team, faculty, and expert panel. Bias was considered, and after all possible bias was revealed and mitigated, a small unbiased sample of eight participants was considered. A small, unbiased sample tends to yield more accurate results in a qualitative study (Patten & Newhart, 2018).

This study aimed to understand how exemplary senior Navy female leaders use the common five grit characteristics—courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection—to accomplish extraordinary results while serving in the Navy. When selecting the sample for this study, I intentionally selected gritty senior Navy female leaders (defined by a detailed list of qualifying criteria) who had obtained extraordinary results under their leadership. For this reason, purposeful sampling was used to identify eight individuals who met all criteria for the research sample.

Selection criteria (described below for this study) drive purposeful sampling. As McMillan and Schumacher (2010) described, purposeful sampling occurs when the researcher “selects a sample that is representative of the population or that includes

subjects with needed characteristics” (p. 138). Additionally, purposeful sampling was selected because of the participants’ specialized experience as senior Navy female leaders who met the arduous specific criteria for this study. The participants’ selection met the study criteria. However, in alignment with purposeful sampling, the selected population had “information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated” (Patton, 2015, p. 215).

In addition to purposeful sampling, criterion sampling was also used. Criterion sampling occurs when the selected participants for the sample are based on preestablished criteria (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Using purposeful criterion sampling aligns with purposeful sampling, which is common in qualitative studies while defining criteria for the sample. Criterion sampling identifies predetermined criteria for qualitative assessment (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The criteria used for this study included eight exemplary senior Navy female leaders who meet five of the eight following criteria. The first four were required by the grit thematic team, the additional criteria were used to ensure the most exemplary senior Navy female leaders were selected as participants:

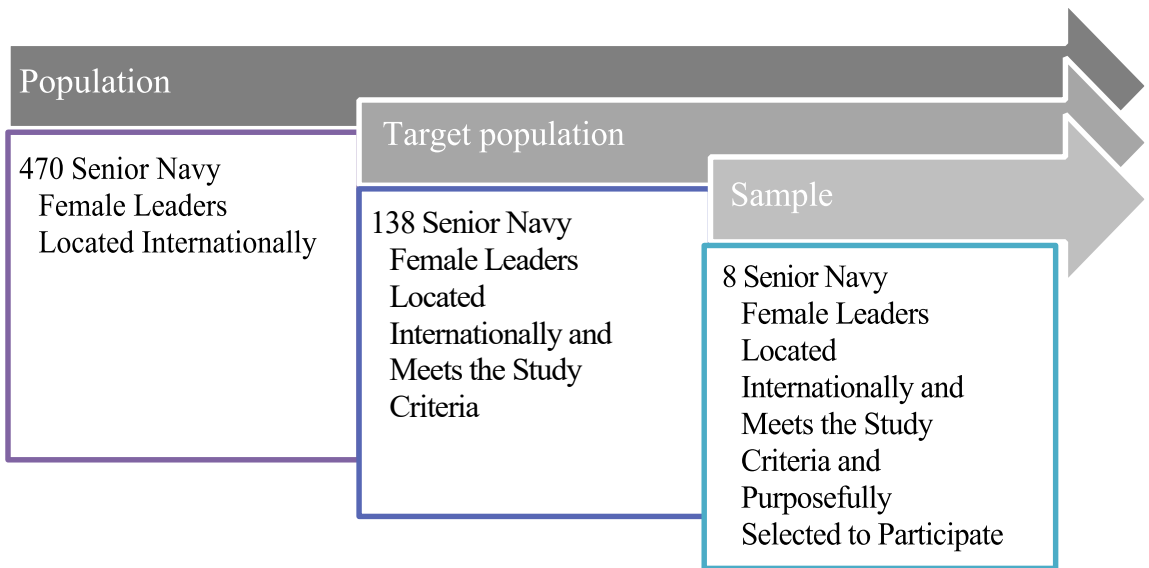
1. A minimum of 3 years of experience as a senior leader
2. Evidence of extraordinary results
3. They have been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal or equivalent for their duty station for performing their duties while serving as a senior leader.
4. They are retired from naval service.
5. They were recommended for retention to the maximum time they could serve in service by their commanding officer or superior.

6. Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences related to the Senior Enlisted Academy or Naval War College
7. Recognition by peers
8. Leader of a related professional association in their field. For example, officer association president, senior enlisted leader president or other related office positions, and leader of newly developed naval vessels.

Ultimately, eight participants were selected based on the criteria, and this group represents the target population. Figure 7 illustrates this qualitative phenomenological study’s population, sampling frame (Target Population), and sample population.

Figure 7

Population, Sampling Frame (Target Population), and Sample



Senior naval leaders complete a contract with their judge advocate general (JAG), a military lawyer. The JAG ensures all senior naval leaders are issued a gag order, a military protective order. The gag order mandates that information up to top secret is

protected, ensuring the preservation of naval operations and personnel. Any information that can degrade national security is kept a secret (Naval Justice School, 2022). Because some protective orders are active until the war ends, a process involved concludes, or until the DoD lifts the protective order, the participants in the study could not be on active duty. Selecting recent retirees mitigated a possible infraction related to mandatory protective orders the senior leaders may have been obligated to uphold during the interview process. Additionally, because a court authority issues protective orders, protective orders for active-duty military members are issued under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which no longer applied to the participants of this study because they are retired from active-duty service, providing an element of protection for the research participants (Naval Justice School, 2022).

Instrumentation

This section discusses the tools used in conducting this phenomenological study, including the researcher as a primary instrument of the study, the semistructured interview process, the selection and use of the expert panel, and the pilot interview process.

Researcher as an Instrument

As the researcher, I represent the instrument in this study—the individual performing the research and asking the questions generated and selected by the grit thematic team and supporting faculty members. Interviews are a standard data collection method for qualitative research studies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The interviews are semistructured with open-ended questions generated to evoke various responses depending on the participant. Conducting semistructured interviews allowed me, with

knowledge about Navy leadership and naval organizations, to probe deeper into the participant's responses.

I documented and recorded all questions and responses throughout the interviews. The interviews were conducted via live Zoom meetings, and audio recordings were utilized. Video recording was not used.

I documented and recorded all questions and responses with clarity and ensured the questions were directly aligned with the research questions developed by the thematic team and the purpose of the study. I was confident using the qualitative method with semistructured, open-ended questions. My 20 years of experience, 12 of those years as a senior enlisted female leader with two Middle Eastern combat tours, provided the background and experience needed to probe and examine the participants' experiences.

This phenomenological research study included some structured interview techniques, including probing as necessary to ensure adequate data were collected. The grit thematic team worked together to create open-ended questions and probes to reveal rich information on exemplary leadership's use of grit leadership and the five common grit characteristics—courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection—to create extraordinary results in their organizations.

The grit thematic team was divided into pairs and assigned a faculty member for oversight and support. The researchers developed operational definitions for the five main principles of grit and then developed and aligned interview questions to the research questions. The faculty and researchers met several times to edit and add to the operational definitions and interview questions based on the literature review. Table 1

shows the alignment of interview questions to the research questions for this study (see Appendix B for the complete list of interview questions).

Table 1

Alignment Table: Five Characteristics of Grit

Research question (RQs)	Interview question (IQs)	References to Support IQs
1. How do senior Navy female leaders use courage to accomplish extraordinary results?	1, 2	Arias (2017) Lee & Elliott-Lee (2006) Miller (2017) Perlis (2013) Schilpzand et al. (2015)
2. How do senior Navy female leaders use conscientiousness to accomplish extraordinary results?	3, 4	Arias (2017) Crede et al. (2007) Jackson et al. (2010) Perlis (2013) Reed et al. (2012)
3. How do senior Navy female leaders use long-term goals to accomplish extraordinary results?	5, 6	Duckworth et al. (2007) Jachimowicz et al. (2018) Sheldon et al. (2015)
4. How do senior Navy female leaders use resilience to accomplish extraordinary results?	7, 8	Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014) Grafton et al. (2010) Raikes (2021) Rice & Liu (2016)
5. How do senior Navy female leaders use excellence versus perfection to accomplish extraordinary results?	9, 10	Arias (2017) Duckworth et al. (2007) Martin (2019) Perlis (2013) Schilpzand et al. (2015)

Upon approval from the other researchers and faculty, authorization was given to conduct a field test of the interview questions.

Field-Testing the Interview Questions

Each member of the grit thematic research team conducted a field test with a participant who met all the requirements to be interviewed for the study but would not be

a contributing member of the research. The field test was a live interview that supported what would occur for the other eight research participants. The method created a realistic environment that contributed rich, relevant information about what makes senior Navy female leaders gritty and how they use their grittiness to create extraordinary results in the Navy.

In support of the field test, an observer—a research expert—was present to support the trustworthiness of the data collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The observer took notes, gave feedback based on questions provided by the thematic team (Appendix C), and made additional recommendations for consideration. The interview was recorded with the approval of the participant. The observer commented on follow-up questions and whether additional probing questions were necessary. The observer was critical in ensuring I interviewed the participants professionally, keeping the tone and flow adequate to ensure the unique phenomenon of the participant was captured while not getting off task. The observer's comments and observations supported the validity of the interview process. Input from the observer and follow-up questions from the participant (Appendix D) supported the needed edits to the interview script (Appendix B) and protocols.

After we conducted their field test, received observer feedback, and discussed recommended changes with all researchers and faculty about making adjustments before conducting the interviews for data collection (Patten & Newhart, 2018), faculty and the grit thematic team met to make appropriate changes to the interview script for future use. For this research study, the field test was conducted with a senior enlisted Navy female leader with whom I served in Iraq and who contributed to saving my life. The interview

was rich in data and served the purpose of the field test, providing information on misinterpreted information or limitations that allowed for correction before the formal interview process for data collection occurred (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Expert Panel

To support the validation of the study, an expert panel was formed. The expert panel contributed to validating the questions for the interview, and ensuring the right participants were selected for the study and aligned with the research criteria.

Additionally, they ensured the proper instrumentation was addressed and brought forth the pertinent data. The expert panel was also consulted after data collection, validating, and verifying themes.

The expert panel of three members was formed to align with the needed validity. Each panel member had to meet three of the following six criteria:

1. Served at least two full active-duty Navy tours concluding with at least 6 years in a senior leadership position.
2. Served a full active-duty tour and taught leadership courses at the Senior Enlisted Academy or the Naval War College.
3. Has a doctoral degree in education or leadership-related field.
4. Has a master's degree in education or leadership-related field.
5. Received the medal of honor for extraordinary service, the Caption Joy Bright Hancock, or the Master Chief Anna Der-Vartanian Leadership Award.
6. Has conducted a Navy first. An example of a Navy first is the first Navy female submariner or the first female captain to command a nuclear carrier.

Validity

Roberts and Hyatt (2019) described validity as the degree to which the researcher ensures that what is being measured for research is being supported by the proper instrument. Additionally, can the researcher trust that what is found is true? The grit thematic team developed the interview questions and script with University professors to ensure their expertise in validating the instrument for data collection. All nine researchers from the thematic team field-tested the interview questions and a draft interview script. The researchers used the same interview questions with their population of interest.

Upon testing the instrument for use, minimal feedback was provided, adding to the instrument's validity (Patten & Newhart, 2018). Because I was the instrument for this qualitative study, my expertise and feedback reduced limitations. To reduce the possibility of limitations, I conducted the following:

1. Worked with the grit thematic team to ensure seminal authors verified all operational definitions.
2. Worked with other thematic team members to ensure the validity of the interpretation of the grit characteristics to include grit-related recent research to support the grit characteristics.
3. Used verified authors and grit-related research to conduct draft interview questions based on the operational definitions.
4. The grit thematic team members reviewed with faculty all drafted research questions to ensure they covered each definition based on the five common grit characteristics.

5. The thematic team convened several times to revise and give feedback and suggestions toward changes related to the interview questions to include additional probes to support additional research.
6. The faculty reviewed the final script and interview questions and provided approval.

Reliability

Reliability is the level to which the research produces consistent and standard outcomes because of the researcher's process analysis (Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). Additionally, reliability is referred to in qualitative studies as the study's dependability. Methods must be in place to support the dependability regarding the accuracy of the used instrument (Patton, 2015). To support the reliability of this qualitative research study, I used the instrument for the interview the same way with each participant. The instrument was field-tested and edited by all thematic researchers and faculty. The same questions were asked all the participants in the same way for each interview. I used the same interview guide and script approved by the thematic team and supporting faculty.

Internal Reliability

Internal reliability refers to the triangulation of data that can be collected from interviews, observations, and artifacts that support the data and research of the study (Patton, 2015). In addition, Patton (2015) stated that triangulation supports various data entry opportunities to aid the dependability of the research. Data triangulation was used in this study to ensure the research conclusions were certain, meaning the research collected was supported by evidence (Guion, 2002). Additionally, specific results mean what evidence reassured through triangulation supports my conclusion (Guion, 2002). Of

the four types of triangulation data, investigator, theory, and methodological, to validate data triangulation, data triangulation is most common in qualitative studies and supports this study's research (Patton, 2015). The strategy to ensure data triangulation is conducting in-depth interviews with the participants who meet all criteria of a gritty senior Navy female leader in addition to the criteria approval of the participants by the expert panel. Once all interviews were conducted, triangulation of data was established through research outcomes that all participants received to validate common themes of grit. The expert panel and validation of the participants supported the data's reliability by evaluating the collected triangulation data.

Intercoder Reliability of Data

I transcribed the data for common themes, but another team member also analyzed the data. Creswell and Creswell (2018) described an intercoder agreement as when a scholarly peer is selected to review the data collected to ensure data interpretation and provide the same interpretation. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated, "By determining the extent to which two or more persons agree about what they have seen or heard [then], there is consistency in measurement" (p. 182). Ten percent of data collected during the interviews were presented to an outside researcher who is a doctor in the education field and a senior naval leader meeting the same criteria as the expert panel. The outside doctor in education, nonrelated to the research study, confirmed common themes and trends and validated the frequency themes among the collected data. Though there is no standard percentage or agreement among qualitative researchers, the base is 85% to 90% as the standard with the alignment of evidentiary support in qualitative research (Harry et al., 2005). In addition to the percentage validation, many qualitative

researchers also prefer to use other professionals in the field of research to ensure common themes are matched and in agreement.

External Reliability of Data

The thematic group of peer researchers all used the interview instrument with the support and input of university faculty. Each researcher conducted a field test of the interview instrument, allowing for a review of bias, time allotment, and the relevance of data related to the study. This validation ensured internal reliability while eliminating factors associated with external reliability. Additionally, when conducting a phenomenological study, it is challenging to reproduce external data reliability; phenomenology relies on the participant's lived experience to support evidence. The participants of a phenomenological study internalize their interpretation of observations and experiences, making replication difficult regarding external reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data Collection

This study obtained qualitative data through in-depth one-on-one interviews. The qualitative data collection enabled the participants to explain unique phenomena in a narrative format because they understood each phenomenon as it happened. The goal was to collect narrative specifics related to the study to reveal rich details as experienced by the individual. The power of using a qualitative research method is the revelation of understanding not through numerical data as in a quantitative study but the uncovering of thinking through complex situations and experiences that can be recreated in real life to alter future leadership attributes in leaders and organizations (Stutterheim & Ratcliffe, 2021).

I conducted all eight interviews over Zoom because of the varied placement of the participants in various international locations. Audio recordings were included in all Zoom interviews; no video was conducted or recorded. I did not alter the approved instrument and protocols the thematic team and supporting faculty approved. Data collection for this research was organized and prepared using the transcribed data from participants who volunteered. NVIVO software was used as a tool to support common themes based on the transcribed data.

Data collection did not begin until approval was received via the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Global Institutional Review Board (UMIRB; Appendix E). The approval of the UMIRB is critical to establishing consensual baselines to protect the university, researcher, and participants. The UMIRB ensures the participants give consent, protections are in place from unacceptable risk, ethical standards are met, research is conducted with integrity by competent researchers, research complies with applicable legislation, rules, and regulations, and confidentiality is obtained for all participants. In addition to the UMIRB approval, I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Human Subjects Research Certification (Appendix F) to conduct research with willing participants. Before the interviews, I presented the CITI certification to all eight research participants.

Interview Process

Once I received approval from the UMIRB (Appendix E), the following steps were taken to obtain participants for eight Zoom interviews:

1. I consulted with the expert panel, and an email (Appendix G) was sent to recommended senior Navy female leaders describing the study and outlining participant requirements.
2. Once the names of potential participants were received, an email was sent to each (Appendix G) outlining the study and the required characteristics. The potential participants were asked to self-select, confirming that they meet the requirements of exemplary leaders and at least five of the eight criteria, with the first four being mandatory. To support the timeliness of interview scheduling among the researcher and participants, if email was not an effective method of reaching the participant, follow-up emails, text messages, and other social media methods for communication were also used as appropriate.
3. Once the eight exemplary senior Navy female leaders were selected and agreed to participate in the study, a 60-min interview session was scheduled via Zoom. An email was sent to the participants with four attachments: an acknowledgment of participation related to the research details (Appendix H), an informed consent form (Appendix I), and the Research Participant's Bill of Rights (Appendix J).
4. Interviews were conducted with each participant, and I confirmed the participant had received all documents to proceed. Additionally, verbal consent was confirmed and recorded at the interview's introduction.
5. I verified clarification of the interview process and asked all 10 open-ended questions and probes regarding the five common grit leadership characteristics that the leaders could attribute to extraordinary results while they served in the Navy.

6. The interviews were recorded via the Zoom record option for further analysis. The Zoom transcripts were held in a password-protected Google drive. All data collected during the research process were maintained for at least 3 years per the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Title 45: Public Welfare, Part 46 (45 C.F.R. 46), which protects humans participating in research (Protection of Human Subjects, 2009). I also documented handwritten notes based on observations and nonverbal cues. The notes were held under lock and key and protected and maintained for at least 3 years per 45 CFR 46.
7. Interview participants were asked to provide artifacts that supported their leadership based on their interview responses.
8. After the interview, I coded using NVivo software to identify coding patterns and create themes for all research participants.

Limitations

Every study has some limitations, and this one is no exception. I reveal the limitations so those reading the dissertation know I am aware of the limitations and transparently support the research (Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). There were four limitations that I felt needed to be disclosed for transparency and relevancy because some other limitations were out of my control.

Location

Once senior Navy female leaders retire, some conduct contracting work, some relocate to their original home of record, or some stay near major supporting naval stations to continue employment relevant to what they did during their time on active service. With the study participants being located worldwide, it was difficult to

consolidate a delimitation area. Forcing consolidation to one specific region would further limit the participants than the criteria requirements. No geographical limitations were required to ensure that the most qualified and applicable participants could be selected for the study. I focused on meeting the participants' required criteria to ensure the grittiest senior female leaders would produce the richest experiences related to grit leadership and the production of extraordinary results in the Navy. Additionally, using a vast geographical area for participants produces "diverse sources," which strengthens qualitative research, creating broad interest in the sample instead of limiting it to a single source (Patten & Newhart, 2018, p. 114).

Sample Size

Of the approximately 470 senior Navy female leaders who could meet the criteria to participate in the study, only eight were selected to be interviewed. The sample size was restricted based on the consensus of the thematic team to support the limit of generalization for the population sample. The number was also reduced to support the timeline requirements to conduct the necessary research to support the study.

Observations

Observations of the research participants were near impossible with the geographical disparity of the research participants and COVID-19 variants and other international virus concerns such as Monkey Pox on the rise. Creating in-person contact to conduct interviews and support observational assessments was not an option. Not conducting observations limited data analysis to the combination of interviews and artifacts.

Researcher as the Instrument

Patton (2015) stated that the researcher is the instrument in a phenomenological qualitative study. I am qualified and have proven experience as a prior senior Navy female leader with 20 years of experience conducting interviews. Because of the commonality of senior female leadership experiences in the Navy, the concern for bias was at the forefront of my mind to ensure it did not affect the development of emerging themes. To mitigate bias, I relied heavily on faculty and peer reviews for intercoder reliability of themes along with the expert panel and field test of the interview to reduce the possibility of bias.

Summary

This phenomenological study aimed to explore the five common grit characteristics demonstrated by exemplary senior Navy female leaders and how their use of the grit characteristics of courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection contributed to their creating extraordinary results in their Navy organizations. Chapter III defined the purpose of the study, the research questions, the qualitative research design using the phenomenology method, the population, sample, instruments to conduct research, validity and reliability and how they produced dependable results, the analysis of data process, and possible limitations for transparency. Chapter IV presents the findings from the research, and Chapter V reveals and discusses the significant findings, conclusion, and further research recommendations.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

This qualitative phenomenological study is one of nine conducted by a thematic research team at the University of Massachusetts Global, supported by faculty, to conduct studies with various populations about how five common grit attributes are used in leadership. The five common grit attributes researched in this study are courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection (Perlis, 2013). The specific focus population and organization of this study was senior Navy female leaders who are exemplary and use the five characteristics of grit leadership while serving in the Navy, contributing to extraordinary results. Through perseverance and consistent use of grit, extraordinary results can be obtained. Any leader who is willing to learn more about their leadership style and to use grit leadership can create extraordinary results, just as senior Navy female leaders do every day.

Overview

The previous chapters introduced this study in the background explanation and the significance of the study. Examining the literature revealed theories of leadership, the history of the Navy, and Navy female leaders' use of grit attributes, and how they may have contributed to extraordinary results. Chapter IV reveals further research that supports that the grit and military relationship, though increasing, is limited and related to gender and specific military branches (Duckworth & Gross, 2014; Luning et al., 2021). This research is supported by a comprehensive list of participant criteria to align with real-life scenarios. Personal interviews with senior Navy female leaders and how their use of grit in various Navy operational scenarios reveals and connects prior research on

natural leadership traits in senior women related to military organizations (Clark, 2016; Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and describe how exemplary senior Navy female leaders used five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results while they served in the Navy.

Research Questions

1. How do senior Navy female leaders use courage to accomplish extraordinary results?
2. How do senior Navy female leaders use conscientiousness to accomplish extraordinary results?
3. How do senior Navy female leaders use long-term goals to accomplish extraordinary results?
4. How do senior Navy female leaders use resilience to accomplish extraordinary results?
5. How do senior Navy female leaders use excellence versus perfection to accomplish extraordinary results?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

This research method relies on narrative-rich data that explores a specific phenomenon, specifically five common grit characteristics, and how when used in leadership, it produces extraordinary results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research explores participants' understanding as they lived the phenomenon (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2010). Besides the qualitative data collection method, a phenomenological research method was applied. The data collection process was deliberated on by nine UMass Global doctoral candidates and supporting faculty to ensure the research questions approved by the thematic group and faculty would encourage data related to the participant's perspective on their personal experiences as they lived them.

Most of the data collected were through one-on-one personal interviews with the participants. Eight interviews were conducted, and all participants met the requirements to participate in the study. Additionally, the expert panel members also reviewed the list of participants to ensure all criteria for the study were met. The interviews comprised 10 interview questions with 10 probes related to the primary 10 interview questions.

Additional probes were available as necessary, but they were not necessarily due to the structural design of open-ended questions in support of fluid conversation.

The 10 questions and probes supported the qualitative phenomenological research method by aligning the five common grit leadership characteristics: courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection (Perlis, 2013). The research method through the interview questions revealed how senior Navy female leaders reacted to various leadership situations, providing relevant data needed to support this study. The research questions were asked in order and unchanged by me as indicated on the approved thematic team interview script (Appendix B) that was agreed upon by the thematic group and supporting faculty. Additionally, I remained conscious of the process, and any additional information shared by the participants was due to their natural telling of their experiences and was not introduced or led by me.

Eight senior Navy female leaders were interviewed. Each participant received a copy of the interview questions, definitions of the five common grit attributes, and the UMIRB Participants' Bill of Rights (Appendix J). Additionally, I received signed copies of the participant's informed consent form (Appendix I) and distributed the acknowledgment of participation (Appendix H). The willingness of the participant was also verified verbally and recorded during the start of the interview. Each interview was approximately 1 hour in length. All interviews were conducted over Zoom. Each Zoom recording was uploaded for a transcript to be created. All transcripts were created through Zoom or Otter. After each interview, a transcript was downloaded and sent to each participant for questions and review before coding.

Common themes were generated from the transcripts of each participant, but the interviews were not the only method for data collection. As expected, qualitative data collection observations and artifacts such as documents and articles were also examples of participants' lived experiences (Patten & Newhart, 2018). A combination of observations, in-depth interviews, and artifacts provided the needed triangulation to support the research to conclude how senior Navy female leaders' use of grit contributes to extraordinary results.

Population

My Navy Human Resources (n.d.-b) explains how only 20% of those who serve in the Navy make it to retirement. Minimum retirement in most cases is at least 20 years of service, excluding major medical issues when retirement is deemed mandatory. Though data are limited regarding retirement, specifically for senior Navy female leaders, the specific data of retirees in 2020 was 2,190. Of the 2,190, 390 were senior Navy

females (My Navy Human Resources, n.d.-b). According to the DoD Office of the Actuary (2018), data suggest that of the annual Navy retirees, 18% are female, concluding that approximately 40 senior Navy females have been added each year since 2020. I used these data to include a baseline population of 470 senior Navy female leaders (My Navy Human Resources, n.d.-a).

A target population was set meeting a defined outlining criterion that met this study (Creswell, 2012). Because of resource limitations, attempting to assess whether all 470 senior Navy female leaders met the outlining criteria for this study and then conducting those interviews was unrealistic. I narrowed the baseline to a smaller variable by assessing who had retired and who had retired within the last 3 years of service, creating a new baseline target population of 138 senior Navy female leaders for additional assessment regarding the other outlining criteria to be a participant for this study.

Sample

Criterion and purposeful sampling were used in addition to the participants' requirement to meet the study criteria to form the final participants of the study. The final sample size was eight senior Navy female leaders. The sample size was determined after careful consideration by the thematic team, faculty, and expert panel. Bias was considered and mitigated, and though no specific number is required to conduct a qualitative study, a small, unbiased sample tends to yield accurate results in qualitative studies (Patten & Newhart, 2018). Purposeful sampling was used because all the selected participants have specialized experience as senior Navy female leaders who met the specific outlined criteria of this study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Criterion sampling was also used because the intent of the research was to find exemplary senior Navy female leaders who are gritty as defined but with the qualifying criteria as a baseline and who could reveal through a semistructured interview how they obtained extraordinary results in the Navy.

Sample Procedure

The criteria used for this study included eight exemplary senior Navy female leaders who met five of the eight following criteria. The first four were required:

1. A minimum of 3 years of experience as a senior leader
2. Evidence of extraordinary results
3. They have been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal or equivalent for their duty station for performing their duties while serving as a senior leader.
4. They are retired from naval service.
5. They were recommended for retention to the maximum time they could serve in service by their commanding officer or superior.
6. Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences related to the Senior Enlisted Academy or Naval War College
7. Recognition by peers
8. Leader of a related professional association in their field. For example, officer association president, senior enlisted leader president or other related office positions, and leader of newly developed naval vessels.

Unsure of the participation, I initially reached out to 15 participants who met all the study criteria. Of the 15 contacted, eight agreed to an interview. The expert panel and I reviewed the eight participants. All participants met the study criteria. I worked with

each participant to schedule time for the Zoom interview and answer any questions they had regarding the study.

To protect all eight participants' privacy, all eight were assigned a number allowing the organization of participant details by number and verification that each participant met the outlining criteria. Baseline demographic data were the same for each participant, such as gender, because this is an all-female study. They are all senior Navy female leaders, and all are retired from naval service. As shown in Table 2, all participants met the top four criteria (as required) and one other of the eight criteria to be considered for an interview and participate in the collection of research for this study.

Table 2

Participant Criteria

Criterion	Participant							
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Three years' experience as a senior leader	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Evidence of extraordinary results	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Received the meritorious service medal or equivalent recognition	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Retired from Naval service	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Recommended for retention	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Has published material at the Naval War College or Senior Enlisted Academy		X	X		X		X	X
Recognition by peers	X	X		X			X	

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Chapter IV reveals the research details and analysis of data collected from one-on-one personal interviews of the eight senior Navy female leaders who met the

participant criteria as previously indicated. The details of the collected research in this chapter were gathered from interviews, artifacts, and observations. The initial analysis and organization of the data were done with NVivo software. Coding was conducted to form themes based on the theoretical framework of this study, which includes the five common principles associated with grit: courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection (Arias, 2017, Perlis, 2013). Additional tools were also used to support coding count and themes among the data. The grit thematic team and faculty formed and approved the research questions, and the questions were not altered. Additionally, transcripts were reviewed by participants and experts in education to ensure the credit and accuracy of the research.

Data Analysis

I used a theoretical orientation to support the explanation of the theories derived from the participants' data. Inductive processing was used to organize the data into themes to generate a theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Inductive processing involves "searching the qualitative data for patterns and themes without entering the analysis with preconceived analytical categories" (Patton, 2015, p. 551). The themes were developed into patterns and compared to the personal experiences based on the participants' narratives. Those themes again aligned with existing literature to support grit and the five common characteristics.

NVivo software was the primary tool for supporting common themes based on the transcribed data. Before using NVivo, I read each interview transcript, personal notes, and artifacts several times and reviewed them in detail to form initial themes and

frequency counts. Besides NVivo, Otter.ai was also used, an alternate audio transcript tool like the Zoom audio transcript method.

Validity

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) recommended that when conducting qualitative research, ensure the study's validity by using several methods to support accurate accounts of proper measures to ensure heightened validity of the research. McMillan and Schumacher's recommended strategies to increase the validity of research when used together. Five of the 10 recommendations to validate qualitative research were used. As recommended by McMillan and Schumacher, "Multimethod strategies, participant language; verbatim accounts, mechanically recorded data and participant review" supported agreement validation by the researcher and participant (p. 330). Besides the recommended strategies of McMillan and Schumacher, the data collection instrument was tested and approved by nine UMass Global thematic team members and three supporting faculty. The instrument was unaltered from its approved state. Each participant also reviewed for clarity the final transcript before data were analyzed, further supporting the study's validity.

Reliability

I took several steps to ensure the reliability of the qualitative analysis. Patton (2015) stated that an uninterrupted instrument is required to support data reliability and accuracy. As stated, nine thematic team members from UMass Global and three supporting faculty created and tested the instrument. Keeping alignment with Patton's recommendations, the instrument was unchanged and was used the same way with each participant. Additionally, I used intercoder reliability to ensure that the coding and

themes produced were consistent and reliable. The research directly aligned with the variables and principles of grit as introduced by Perlis (2013). The expert panel and validation of participants, and third-party validation of the transcripts, ensured reliability by creating data triangulation (Patton, 2015). Upon completing a third-party review of 10% of the collected data, an 85% similarity of common themes and trends was validated, aligning evidentiary support of the qualitative research.

Research Findings

Each interview was conducted to support the expected data's consistency and to remain aligned with the approved interview script (Appendix B). After conducting the eight interviews with senior Navy female leaders who met the established criteria for participation first, I read and reread the transcripts, artifacts, and notes to find any noticeably common themes among the data. Then each transcript was sent to each participant for approval of use for coding of themes.

NVivo is the primary tool of choice common among qualitative researchers. NVivo provided the ability to code and categorize the transcript data identifying themes and patterns supporting relationships between various data points. Based on the data organized in NVivo, common themes were revealed in the transcribed data. Themes were included in the research based on the highest frequency of mention of the theme and had to be mentioned by six of the eight participants. Each theme was structured around the five research questions on grit leadership and supported the common grit characteristics of courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection (Arias, 2017; Perlis, 2013). Table 3 shows the frequency of five common grit attributes based on percentage.

Table 3

Grit Attribute Listed by Highest Frequency of Reference

Theme	Frequency of reference	# of participants	% of attribute
Courage	138	8	30
Resilience	127	8	23
Long-term goals	118	8	18
Conscientiousness	80	8	15
Excellence versus perfection	72	7	14

As shown in Table 3, the highest mentioned grit characteristic was courage, with 30% of representation among participants and a frequency count of 138. As mentioned, the data show a high mention of each characteristic. However, the least mentioned grit attribute among senior Navy female leaders was excellence versus perfection at 14% and a frequency count of 72.

Research Question 1

How do senior Navy female leaders use courage to accomplish extraordinary results?

The UMass Global thematic team and supporting faculty defined courage as the mental, physical, and moral strength to pursue and accomplish a worthy goal despite the presence of danger or fear (Lee & Elliot-Lee, 2006; Schilpzand et al., 2015). Courage has the highest frequency count in this study with the most significant representation among the participants.

To gather data supporting the research question, each of the eight participants was asked two questions about courage with following probing questions. The results yielded three themes related to courage with 138 frequencies. Seven artifacts were provided by

five senior Navy female leaders who participated in the data collection process. Table 4 shows the revealed themes along with the frequency and supporting artifacts. Following Table 4 are details of the research gathered for the themes supporting courage.

Table 4

Themes Related to Research Question 1: Courage

Theme	# of interview sources	# of artifact sources	Total # of sources	Frequency
Do what is morally right	8	2	10	89
Take care of your people	8	2	10	34
Be scared but do it anyway	7	3	10	15
Total				138

Note. Observations of the participants could only be conducted based on the researcher’s notes recorded during the Zoom interviews. In-person observations of the research participants were near impossible with the geographical disparity of the participants.

Do What Is Morally Right

Doing what is morally right had the highest frequency of mention of the three themes related to the grit attribute courage. For courageous leaders, doing what is morally right comes more naturally than some, as represented by the highest frequency. All eight senior Navy female leaders mentioned that doing what is morally right was something they felt they must do, and often it was unpopular among peers or leadership. Participant 5 provided an artifact that was a disciplinary report for her doing what she felt was morally right by investigating a ship that lost propulsion in the South China Sea. Participant 5 went against a superior officer’s orders in doing so. Participant 5 was never promoted after leaving that ship, commenting, “I have no regrets.” Participant 5 stated,

We were conducting routine procedures in the South China Sea when we got word that an allied vessel found another surface vessel with distressed refugees. We were short on fuel and behind schedule. The CO said we could take a quick assessment topside but not enter the ship to save time and for safety reasons. We spoke with a Taiwanese man topside that made the situation seem dire—loss of propulsion, with no other food or water provisions, and 10 dead onboard. Another officer reported the status, and the executive officer made the call to leave provisions but to get back on schedule. My gut was wrenching! I jumped on board with one of my leads who knew me. He knew I had a keen sense and was going regardless. I think for safety, he supported. We discovered that 30 men and women died, and some resorted to cannibalism. It was all we needed to see that it was a humanitarian emergency. We got support from local allies who took over and helped isolate the men and women in good health. If not, they surely would have all died. I would say almost 120 onboard. I was never promoted again after that. When you know something is wrong, you can sense it; you need to act! I had a moral obligation to do so, and because I did, lives were saved that day.

Calle (2021) mentioned that during her research on military personnel, she noticed that military members stood up for their principles, values, and beliefs when dealing with opposition or adversity. The example of Participant 5 proves she was courageous, potentially facing isolation, physical harm, and evidently, her career because she received professional repercussions.

Participant 2 told how she was the CMC onboard during an integration period when women became part of a previously all-male crew. The female sailors were on a

rotation of temporary duty away from their primary job to work as administrative assistants. Because of the time away from their primary jobs, the ratio of female promotions to males was meager. Participant 2 ensured all sailors took time in rotation, allowing the females to learn their assigned Navy job.

Doing what is morally right is as simple as knowing right from wrong (Stoltz, 2015). Acting on what is right from wrong is a different story. As Participant 3 stated,

You know what is right, and you do it. It's not that simple. You choke down all the anxiety and ideas about the aftermath. Whom will it hurt, and whom will it help? If I don't act, who suffers? My sailors do, those young sailors that have not figured out when to use their voice yet. I will always speak for them. I did until the day I retired.

Take Care of Your People

When mentioning courage and doing what is morally right, Participant 3 did what she felt was morally right, but her focus was still on her sailors. All eight participants mentioned crew morale, caring for sailors, and supporting peers and senior managers.

Participant 1 put this concept plainly: "Take care of your sailors, and they will take care of you. It is really that simple." Participant 3 provided an artifact of an article stating that during her tenure supporting naval missions in Afghanistan, she had the highest mission accomplishment ratings with the least casualties for her operating area. When asked during the interview about her success, she stated,

Everyone is worried about the mission. Some leaders use scare tactics, but that doesn't help. Safety briefs are essential, and the mission is critical, but with no

trust and loyalty of my team and me as the leader, it's not getting done anyway. What is that doing to them mentally if I use scare tactics instead of support? I see them as people, not a number or future casualty. I want them to know we support one another. They trust me and know they are my priority. My team was structured this way, and the mission got accomplished repeatedly. We continued to be successful, and those men and women got to go home at the end of deployment. Sometimes they reach out to me now. They want to say thank you. They think they owe me something. I learned more from my sailors and marines than they could ever know.

Of the eight senior naval female leaders, all have stories about how their personnel were a primary reason for their success. Additionally, they all felt personally responsible for the well-being of their sailors even though they were retiring. All eight participants said they supported sailors well into retirement through mentorship or administrative support. Participant 7 stated during her interview, "When asked what my job is, I say it's a passion for people because, to me, that's what it is."

Be Scared But Do It Anyway

In alignment with having the grit attribute of courage, Participant 1 worked on the flight deck of several aircraft carriers. When I asked her what part of being courageous is pushing past fear to create action, she stated,

I work the flight deck, so seeing limbs and fingers get pinched and ripped off second nature. That is the scary stuff, yes, but if you treat everything with that level of fear and delicacy that is landing and moving aircraft, you can have that same attitude and courage toward any action you want to pursue. You will get so

much done, you may have some fear, but you will push yourself to action and accomplish amazing things.

It is common for senior Navy female leaders to think fast and make decisions that affect their livelihood, team, and multi-million-dollar equipment (Hendon, 2020).

Participant 6 mentioned how one cannot focus on just the scary stuff in the Navy. You must know no one is trying to kill you though it sometimes feels that way intentionally. Just keep moving and do anything to keep growing and learning.

Research Question 2

How do senior Navy female leaders use conscientiousness to accomplish extraordinary results?

The UMass Global thematic team and supporting faculty defined conscientiousness as a fundamental personality trait that drives the desire and ability to be diligent, organized, achievement-oriented, self-disciplined, and reliable (Jackson et al., 2010; Perlis, 2013). Research has aligned the meaning of conscientiousness directly with Duckworth et al.'s (2007) definition of grit as passion and perseverance toward long-term goals. When both grit and conscientiousness constructs were compared, research has shown that the result is a high achievement (Crede et al., 2017).

The conscientiousness theme was ranked four of five compared to the other common grit characteristics regarding frequency count. Conscientiousness was mentioned 80 times, and no artifacts were provided. Nevertheless, being a conscientious leader is an essential characteristic, and some research related to conscientious leaders alone explicitly has supported the military environment and producing high-performance levels (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014). Senior Navy female leaders' interviews who met

the study criteria have demonstrated through their narratives that they produce extraordinary results.

To gather data supporting the research question, each of the eight participants was asked two questions about conscientiousness with following probing questions. The results yielded three primary themes related to conscientiousness with 80 frequencies. Table 5 shows the primary revealed themes along with the frequency count. No artifacts were provided for the characteristic of conscientiousness. Following Table 5 are details of the research gathered for the themes supporting conscientiousness.

Table 5

Themes Related to Research Question 2: Conscientiousness

Theme	# of interview sources	# of artifact sources	Total # of sources	Frequency
Communicate boundaries	8	0	8	38
Write everything down	8	0	8	25
Delegate and ask for support	7	0	7	17
Total				80

Communicate Boundaries

Communicate boundaries revealed the highest frequency count related to conscientiousness. All eight participants revealed that professional and personal boundaries in communication were important to their leadership principles. Communicating boundaries supported time management and revealed by all eight participants how they most effectively support their organization toward completing tasks and action items related to supporting the Navy organization. Participant 1 stated,

As a senior leader, I want to be available 24/7, but that's unrealistic. I communicate time and personal boundaries so I can refocus. Then I am more attentive to what my sailors and leadership need from me.

The participants provided several strategies for remaining conscious of priorities and responsibilities, keeping their sailors in the forefront while balancing personal time, family, and personal and professional development. For example, Participant 7 explained how during deployment, because one is working, qualifying, and standing a watch rotation, the days run into one another, leaving little room for balance and requiring the need to be self-disciplined to be more critical. Participant 7 said,

Underway there are minimal boundaries. You work 24/7 but take naps occasionally, so you're always available. When you're in port and get to be with your family, it's hard for some people to remember that a balance has to be in effect now. The family deserves some of my time as well. It's tough, it's constant back and forth communicating your boundaries, fighting for time with your spouse and kids.

All participants mentioned being honest and immediate when leadership tried to push down an agenda with an unrealistic timeline. Participants mentioned it is necessary to remain diligent on the schedule and requirements in the Navy because immediate changes require Navy commands to be operational on short notice. Participant 4 said,

You must remain flexible but push for updated information regarding the schedule as much as possible. Those details keep your team motivated. No one works well with last-minute changes, even less so if it's not in your crew's favor.

When asked about the competing demands required of senior Navy female leaders and how they stay organized, Participant 4 mentioned,

Once, I had a boss whose favorite saying was it's my way or the highway.

Though it was frustrating, I always responded to him with current factual information and in a professional manner. Treating people with respect and an even tone, no matter what, the best way is always to communicate and stay on track. I noticed he was always elevated and pushy with others. Because I always remained calm and neutral, he was more inclined to have an open dialog with me so that I could get more done for my division and team.

All participants mentioned how boundaries had supported their ability to be conscientious, resulting in managing more work and producing more remarkable results.

Write Everything Down

All eight participants mentioned they write down their encounters as they walk and attend meetings around their organization. This was consistent among all participants and all types of naval commands. Writing everything down was the second strongest theme of conscientiousness with 25 mentions. Many participants felt that being senior Navy female leaders with many responsibilities to organize their time, they write down what the person they are engaging with is saying. It shows the person you are interacting with that they are valid, and you are listening to their thoughts or concerns. For example, Participant 2 said,

I even write down interactions with people. It's how I show them I honor their time. I may remind them the next day of something we discussed or how I thought more about it and give them an opinion. Or if they needed help or insight and I

needed more time to think about it. I always get back to the person I'm engaging with. It builds loyal, honest relationships. The world is too small not to make as many friends as possible.

Additionally, Participant 7 agreed by commenting, "When you write something down someone is saying, it shows your honoring the information they are providing and what they say is important. That speaks volumes to people."

Regarding conscientiousness, seven participants mentioned they always had a little green notebook, which is common among sailors. It is a notebook that is usually easy to access and fits easily in a uniform pocket. It is a tool sailors use to write notes in transit while standing watch or whatever they deem necessary and worth keeping close. Participant 5 commented in detail on her use of the "little green notebook," using it to troubleshoot equipment issues. She stated,

We call it the little green notebook. I don't know one leader without one in their back pocket. You never know when you will be tasked, asked a question, or given great information you may need to refer to later. I even got to the point of putting plastic tabs and colors representing notes at sea and in port. I never got rid of those notebooks. Several times when our network crashed underway, I went back to one of my old green notebooks and found the fix from an old command we used that fixed something similar. When I transferred from that command, I made a word document of all the at-sea-related notes for my sailors to use.

Though all senior Navy female leaders interviewed had terrific examples of their accomplishments and tips on staying organized, Participant 1 said, "I'm not organized,

not even a little bit. No one knows that because I write everything down, create a priority list, and get to work.”

Delegate and Ask for Support

Seven participants mentioned that delegation and support contributed to their success as leaders. Among the seven participants, they mentioned delegation and asking for support or assistance in their daily operations 17 times. The seven participants all mentioned that though they know how essential delegation is, it is a struggle to allow someone to help with what they feel is their responsibility. Participant 2 mentioned,

I’m still working on it, but I’m the best person with the most experience for almost any task. I had to learn to let stuff go. Stuff was getting done well, not as perfect as I could have, but that is not the point. I was exhausted, and my young leaders could not learn new skills. Now they are.

All participants reflected that handling every task personally removes the opportunity for someone on their team to engage in a learning leadership opportunity. An example of senior Navy female leaders providing leadership opportunities was when Participant 3 stated,

I engage my new officers and next-in-line leaders, such as senior petty officers, in the decision making. Even emergencies sometimes if the time is allowed. I want them to start thinking strategically and under pressure. Those are the best leaders in an operational environment who can think under pressure and produce great ideas and solutions.

Additionally, the participants commented on where they go if they need to learn a new skill. Participant 1 said,

I know I'm the senior enlisted for my department, but I don't know everything. I'm in my position because I'm a lifelong learner. It's important to ask or tell people you will get back to them if you are unclear.

In alignment with Participant's 1 comment, Participant 5 said, "I watch those doing it right. I go to them and ask for help. Never be too old or set in your ways to learn something new." Being able to delegate and ask for support aligns with O'Conner's (2018) assessment of senior women leaders. He stated they are committed to their responsibilities, adaptive, and open to self-development and learning.

Research Question 3

How do senior Navy female leaders use long-term goals to accomplish extraordinary results?

The UMass Global thematic team and supporting faculty defined long-term goals as a top-level future outcome that serves as a compass for sustained action, inspiring passion and consistent focus over long stretches of time (Duckworth et al., 2007; Jachimowicz et al., 2018). The theme of long-term goals was ranked three of five compared to the other common grit characteristics regarding frequency count. Long-term goals were mentioned 118 times, and two artifacts were provided. Long-term goal setting is an essential quality of leaders, specifically because it supports leaders' ability to direct and guide their team members, resulting in motivation for themselves and their team (Miller, 2017).

To gather data supporting the research question, each of the eight participants was asked two questions about conscientiousness with following probing questions. The results yielded three primary themes related to setting long-term goals with 118

frequencies. Table 6 shows the primary revealed themes along with the frequency count. Following Table 6 are details of the research gathered for the themes supporting long-term goals.

Table 6

Themes Related to Research Question 3: Long-Term Goals

Theme	# of interview sources	# of artifact sources	Total # of sources	Frequency
Open communication with the team on the direction of goals	8	0	8	52
Align division/department goals with the commander and senior echelon's vision	8	2	10	38
Map progress and adjust as necessary	8	0	8	28
Total				118

Open Communication With the Team on the Direction of Goals

Open communication with one's team regarding goals was the highest of the three constructs with a frequency of 52 regarding long-term goals. Participant 1 explained how she uses her team, and they have an open dialog regarding goals for the team.

I know it's ultimately my project, and though I'm the department head, I use my technical experts when planning our goals. They are the ones doing the hard work. They tell me immediately if the timeline is inadequate or if we need resources. I expect that from them. I go back and discuss with other leads based on their feedback. I trust them completely.

Participant 6 also commented on the team's role in open communication toward planning long-term goals:

Everyone in my command is a team member. If there is something my department needs me to help them with goals and vice versa, we bring it up at the planning board for training [PB4T] or the operational meeting. That is when you voice conflict with resources, installations, and outages. Don't be silent. It affects everyone, and that is the best way to get it out in the open and discuss solutions right then and there.

Understanding the direction of goals creates purpose and accountability.

Participant 2 mentioned that the team could track progress toward completion by setting goals and providing opportunities for innovation should the goal change. Additionally, measuring progress allows the team to celebrate and be accountable to each other (Von Culin et al., 2014).

Align Division/Department Goals With the Commander and Senior Echelon's Vision

All eight senior Navy female leaders interviewed commented on goal alignment with the CO's and senior echelons' visions. Though the CO of the ship has overall authority and responsibility for the crew, operations, and aircraft, they also must report to senior authority. Usually, the commander will be part of an echelon command directly responsible for their area of responsibility to conduct operations, as shown in Figure 4.

Aligning goals with those of the senior command ensures that all leadership is working toward the same vision. Two of the eight participants provided artifacts showing how goal alignment with the senior echelon's vision results in command recognition. One artifact was a naval message resulting in the command receiving Battle E. The Battle E is

a painted blue E, usually on the bridge wing of the ship showing all other ships that they are superior in their performance of operations (Navy Site, n.d.). When I asked Participant 6 how they aligned their goals with the command, she said,

We work hard as a crew, but even our captain has a boss. If he goes rogue, it can prevent our access as a ship to awards and recognition on the waterfront.

Everyone is working for someone. I try to remember that when I feel like what I need to get done is not the priority. We must be flexible but set a hard line when our divisional priorities keep getting overlooked as well. It's a balancing act that requires constant open, honest communication.

Participant 8 cited receipt of the John Paul Jones Navy Award for inspirational leadership contribution. Participant 8 commented that her team and command support are why she won that award, stating, "I never want to be doing my own thing. I'm a team player. I keep my division aligned with the command's vision. This award is a testament to the amazing crew who supported me." Regarding goal alignment and support, Participant 2 said,

I may have a list of priorities, but every morning at the department head meeting, my boss or the executive officer may have a different vision. There may even be an emergency dealing with the crew and resources. I remain flexible, so I can adjust my department's goals with the ship's priority, which is simply good leadership.

Map Progress and Adjust as Necessary

All eight participants agreed that having a plan toward goal completion through mapping progress and being flexible as needed was necessary. A frequency of 28 for this

result supports Participant 3, who made the following comment related to mapping progress toward goals, “How else will you know where you are and where you are going.” Several participants mentioned that mapping goals regarding inspection and training cycles is crucial to support the crew’s upcoming operational deployments.

Participant 1 mentioned,

When the inspection cycle approaches, we set a long-term map of how we will accomplish our goals. Every quarter we adjust and reengage where we are. It’s critical to catch issues with goal accomplishment early, especially since our inspection timeline is complicated. We can flex, but our inspection cannot. Constant reflection is critical.

Participant 3 mentioned a meeting in which all departments have input:

Our planning board for training is critical for planning and setting goals. We forecast for an entire year to know when we will be operational or have access to more resources which is critical for some ships because they are worn down and break often. Though we forecast a year, we take a hard look at 6 months and an almost stable forecast of 3 months. It’s critical to let our sailors know what’s going on. They need the time to mentally process extended time away from family and luxuries such as phones, the internet, music, their favorite food. It seems small, but it’s essential to our sailors.

Regarding the mapping of goals changing, Participant 8 said,

In the Navy, we have a saying, Semper-Gumby, meaning stay flexible. We can put all the details and attention into our planning as a military unit. War, international assistance, and environmental disasters can throw the whole

schedule to the wind. As a team, we address the issue, then return to the drawing board and map out a new plan for the crew and its operational duties.

Research Question 4

How do senior Navy female leaders use resilience to accomplish extraordinary results?

The UMass Global thematic team and supporting faculty defined resilience as an individual's ability to adapt and recover from stress and adversity while maintaining or returning to a positive mental state of well-being despite hardship (Grafton et al., 2010; Rice & Liu, 2016). A key element of grit-related resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity (Richard, 2020). Though adversity initially has a negative connotation, resilience is most associated with regulating emotions.

The theme of resilience was ranked two of five compared to the other common grit characteristics regarding frequency count. Resilience was mentioned 127 times, and four artifacts were provided. In the Navy, having resilience is crucial, as suggested by Kaplan-Thaler and Koval (2015); one never knows in life when the worst-case scenario will occur. Additionally, they mentioned that one's ability to be resilient should the worst case arrive creates calming mindfulness to deal with the issue.

To gather data supporting this research question, each of the eight participants was asked two questions about resilience with following probing questions. The results yielded three primary themes related to the setting of resilience with 127 frequencies. Table 7 shows the primary revealed themes along with the frequency count. Following Table 7 are details of the research gathered for the themes supporting resilience.

Table 7

Themes Related to Research Question 4: Resilience

Theme	# of interview sources	# of artifact sources	Total # of sources	Frequency
Getting it done is the only option	8	4	12	58
You are always being watched; be the example of the right way to be	8	0	8	39
Have a support system	8	0	8	30
Total				127

Getting It Done Is the Only Option

All eight senior Navy female leaders told stories of their experiences related to resilience in a confident manner. Not only were they confident, but I noted they were very causal in reliving some of their experiences that some might consider unnerving. When Participant 1 was asked about cultivating resiliency, she stated, “It doesn’t matter what I have going on personally. I have a job to do. The job is going to get done, period.” Participant 2 relived the honor of taking one of her closest shipmates home, telling her story of resilience, saying,

I had to fly my sisters’ body (we call another female chief sister), who died from an aggressive form of bone cancer to her husband, a Gunnery Sergeant I served with in Iraq, so he was like a brother to me. No one knew she had it. She complained of back pain but was so focused on getting ready for deployment and underway. Standing watch, taking care of sailors, and completing missions. She was a beast. She did whatever it took to care for our ship and sailors until, one day, she didn’t get up from her rack. She was gone just like that, gave everything.

Having control over your mind when you feel fear is one of the most critical ways to harness one's grit (Kaplan-Thaler & Koval, 2015). Participant 5 said,

I was an IC [Interior communications electrician] Chief. We had a small shop next to one of the trash processing rooms. I remember hearing blood-curdling screams from the space. A sailor had his finger caught in the machine that processes plastic. We called medical emergency, and only our newly reported junior medical tech arrived. Without another moment of hesitation, I took out my pocketknife and cut his finger off. He seemed relieved. We did not save the finger, but the young medical tech stopped the bleeding the sailor got to stay in the Navy.

Regarding the constant reminder that being resilient and returning to a positive mental state, Participant 8 said,

No one wants to talk about getting the hard stuff done. It's a constant self-assessment for me to remain disciplined. Some of the stuff I have done makes me sound crazy, but it is quite the opposite. The discipline needed to get it done over and over is the most genuine act of self-love. It means you are uncompromising to what you feel must get done. I'm this way with everything. I do everything with this much intensity, which is why I live a life I built today, and it's everything I ever wanted.

Doing whatever it takes can mean many things to many people. Though the details are limited, Participant 6 relived some decisions she made during the interview regarding resilience. She was uncompromising, stating,

I served 30 years in the Navy. I am a combat veteran. You have no idea the things I have done. Trust me, you do not want to know. I would do it all again to save those sailors and civilians.

You Are Always Being Watched; Be the Example of the Right Way to Be

Setting an example as a leader is always a known with the job. All eight participants had examples of prior leaders who taught them the right ways to be and the wrong ways to be. With a frequency count of 39, there was plenty of discussion regarding the responsibility that comes with senior leadership. For example, Participant 2 stated, “Being a leader is an honor. That is why I ensure the way I act and speak is the same way our future leaders should learn to act and speak.”

Regarding a poor example, Participant 4 said, “Do as I say and not as I do is a cop-out. It is a leader’s way of saying that what I’m doing as a leader is a part-time gig. I don’t hold back. If I see it, I hold them accountable.”

Leaders who set a positive example by demonstrating the right way to be can inspire their team and peers to follow suit (Bel, 2010). Participant 7 mentioned how being a senior leader is a full-time job:

Being a sailor, especially a leader in the Navy, is a full-time job. They see you at the grocery store and want to introduce you to their family. If they get a flat tire or are in trouble, you are the first one they call, and better believe I will always pick up and get you the help you need.

Have a Support System

Being resilient always requires effort. Most participants mention how exhausting it can be to build themselves up repeatedly and not get discouraged by the constant battle

of doing the right thing and being available to their sailors. All eight senior Navy female leaders mentioned that having a support system was critical to their success, but their description of that support system was different for all participants. Having someone to confide in when things are difficult was highly recommended. Participant 3 said, “Have a mentor or confidant. It doesn’t have to be at your command but have someone you can talk to when it gets hard.” Participant 7 mentioned,

I have mentors who live halfway across the world. It does not matter where they are; we have a trusting relationship. I may need guidance, reassurance, or technical knowledge. If I reach out, they always make themselves available, and I do the same for them.

Participant 4 commented in response to ways to boost mental well-being:

Being a leader at the top can be lonely. I would say it is more so for a senior female leader. Usually, at an operational command, you are one of three senior female leaders; if you’re lucky, you may be one of one. Every female issue becomes your issue. It’s tough. Have a support system you can lean on. Whether it’s calling home or someone from church, ensure you have access to people who can pick you up.

Having a support system can aid in leadership development. Clark (2016) mentioned that a leader being a continual learner of others provides learning through experiences that can support professional development and continued growth. Participant 5 made a comment relating to surrounding oneself with the right people:

I always look at who is doing the right thing and if it’s something I want to do. I surround myself with those I want to emulate professionally and personally.

Constant growth through relationships is crucial. I surround myself with the right kind of people.

Research Question 5

How do senior Navy female leaders use excellence versus perfection to accomplish extraordinary results?

The UMass Global thematic team and supporting faculty defined excellence versus perfection as a mindset toward fulfilling one's purpose and prioritizing improvement over a lofty idea that may not be attainable (Arias, 2017; Duckworth et al., 2007; Perlis, 2013). The theme of excellence versus perfection was ranked five out of five compared to the other common grit characteristics regarding frequency count. Excellence versus perfection was mentioned 72 times with one artifact. Each participant mentioned that striving for perfection is unattainable. They deal with senior leaders who must explain this or have their sailors exhausted to the point of failure being the result. If perfection is ever the end goal, the most likely result will be micromanagement and obsessiveness, which can cause one's team stress and anxiety (Perlis, 2013).

To gather data supporting the research question, each of the eight participants was asked two questions about excellence versus perfection with following probing questions. The results yielded three primary themes of excellence versus perfection with 72 frequencies and one artifact. Table 8 shows the primary revealed themes along with the frequency count. Following Table 8 are details of the research gathered for the themes supporting excellence versus perfection.

Table 8*Themes Related to Research Question 5: Excellence Versus Perfection*

Theme	# of interview sources	# of artifact sources	Total # of sources	Frequency
Perfection is a fallacy	8	0	8	29
Celebrate progress with your team	7	1	8	22
Adjust expectations as necessary	7	0	7	21
Total				72

Perfection Is a Fallacy

When I asked Participant 2 of a time when prioritized improvement was more important than a lofty ideal, she stated,

We were prepping for an INSURV inspection. We planned to prepare for all the required drills to pass inspection. I worked my team into the ground. We did every practice drill at 95% or better, and I kept pushing. My leading petty officer [LPO] finally got the courage to talk to me privately and say Senior, what are we trying to accomplish? The team is tired. The inspection is in 2 weeks. Maybe a little rest and partial drill refresher training can keep us in the right mindset while getting the needed rest we need. Then we can be at 100% physically and emotionally on drill day, which is better than an actual 100% score. He was so right. He is a master chief now.

Additionally, Participant 2 provided the award citation for her division, called the Red E, which is excellence in engineering and survivability. She commented that working toward perfection lacks inspiration and motivation for a team: “It’s not

obtainable. No matter what my team gives me regarding effort, I tell them and show them they are appreciated.”

Participant 4 also mentioned an example when improvement was the priority:

There are times between deployments when you have a crew turnover. Every ship and command is different, so you must learn the nuances of that command, whether it’s equipment or how admin is conducted. Sometimes, we get underway for drills, and all the leadership realizes most of the crew is junior to the command. We must remind ourselves to be in a mentorship and training mode. If we browbeat the team on what they don’t know, it’s discouraging, and we will never perform as we could.

Participant 1 mentioned that she is a top-performing leader, giving this false assumption around her that she’s perfect. Participant 1 said, “When you’re a top performing leader, everyone perceives you do things perfectly. Nothing is farther from the truth. You do your best; no one has ever faulted me for that.”

Participant 7 mentioned regret as a young leader striving for perfection. She said, I used to try and work toward perfection. I always yelled and never gave constructive or positive feedback to my team. That is when I first made Chief. I forgot my people helped make me a Chief. It was a painful learning curve. It could have been so much easier. I know that now.

Celebrate Progress With Your Team

In leadership, understanding what makes teams accomplish greatness is always desired (Luning et al., 2021). Participant 3 described a great example of understanding her people and recognized that progress may look different for each of her sailors:

Every sailor is not created equal. I had to remind myself that some ratings are not sea-going ratings, so what they felt was hard was easy for my other troops and me. I had to find a way to appreciate their progress in getting qualified on shipboard requirements while acknowledging my senior sailors who already were qualified without anyone feeling inferior. You must pay attention, or those new sailors will hermit on you and hide away, afraid to try new things.

Participant 4 learned from a mentor an easy way to show appreciation for progress when she racked her brain to devise ways to show appreciation. Her department head stated, "Have you just told them?" Participant 4 never forgot that and realized many times it just takes someone to tell you your efforts are appreciated.

Participant 6 liked to use her team to celebrate each other. When asked what strategies she used to help prioritize continual improvement, she said,

Every quarter I would have my team create a sounding board for the sailor who was the most productive and supportive team member. It comprised how they treated people, technical expertise, and anything my team could think of to give each other the advantage. Whoever won would get an extended paid weekend approved by our XO. My team eventually started promoting each other to ensure everyone got an extended weekend.

Adjust Expectations as Needed

Though adjusting expectations as needed had the lowest frequency mention of 21, there was no shortage of conversation as the senior Navy female leaders had plenty of examples when they had to be flexible to support their commanders, sailors, and the mission. Participant 1 gave an example of overcoming barriers with her example:

Sometimes many explanations are needed. I call it a controlled failure. We also call it leading up the chain of command. Sometimes when the department head or CO push you to do something, but you know it cannot be done, they don't want to see it. You know, as the leader, it will fail. You have to be emotionally intelligent. Compromise, make the needed changes seem like their idea, and lighten the blow. Have a plan for when they come to terms. Then, it's all about recovery at that point.

An excellent example of what shaped a senior Navy female leader's mindset toward improvement over achieving perfection was a story told by Participant 7:

Sometimes you know the plan is off and don't know where the issue is. Get outside help. I once told my XO I bit off more than I could chew. He asked other officers if anyone had some time to help me make the operations plan for deployment. Many saw it as a great learning opportunity, and I went from a team of one to three. After that, it became common practice to have a team of officers and senior enlisted create the OPS plan since it affects the operations of the entire ship. It's a great way to show how a process needs to be changed and improved for the better.

Sometimes there is a misconception that the willingness to be flexible equates to being indecisive, but that is far from the truth (Thomas, 2009). Participant 5 had an example of some senior officers who had unrealistic expectations regarding shipboard networks, and stated,

The officers from the Pentagon are funny. They have no concept of operational networks or resources. I explain that shipboard resources and Pentagon resources

are not the same. Meaning we are broke in comparison. I remind them that our network has secure boundaries [and are] more strict than shore buildings due to the possibility of siege. They look surprised and never consider that as a possibility. I explain to them their current reality. They are usually disappointed but understand where I'm coming from after a complete explanation.

Leaders can have a clear vision and be uncompromising toward that vision and still recognize that adjustments to the plan are needed (Thomas, 2009). Working toward excellence requires goals to be met and accomplished effectively. Senior female leaders revealed they were willing to be flexible and ask for help while celebrating the journey with their team members.

Key Findings

This qualitative phenomenological study used two main approaches to gather data. Eight one-on-one interviews were conducted first, followed by gathering artifacts from the eight interview participants. The acquired data were subsequently coded, and trends emerged. Subthemes, as well as overarching themes, became evident. Significant findings related to the principles of grit were determined by six or more interviewee citations with a frequency count of at least 15 mentions during the interview process. Data triangulation strengthened the study's validity by artifacts relevant to the identified themes. The relevant findings are presented in Table 9 with the related frequency counts.

Table 9*Summary of Key Findings*

Grit attribute	Theme	# of participants	Frequency	# of artifacts
Courage	Do what is morally right	8	89	2
	Take care of your people	8	34	2
	Be scared but do it anyway	7	15	3
Conscientiousness	Communicate boundaries	8	38	0
	Write everything down	8	25	0
	Delegate and ask for support	7	17	0
Long-term goals	Open communication with the team on the direction of goals	8	52	0
	Align division/department goals with the commander and senior echelon's vision	8	38	2
	Map progress and adjust as necessary	8	28	0
Resilience	Getting it done is the only option	8	58	4
	You are always being watched; be the example of the right way to be	8	39	0
	Have a support system	8	30	0
Excellence versus perfection	Perfection is a fallacy	8	29	0
	Celebrate progress with your team	7	22	1
	Adjust expectations as needed	7	21	0

Courage

1. Do what is morally right was identified by all eight participants, two artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 89.
2. Take care of your people was identified by all eight participants, two artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 34.

3. Be scared but do it anyway was identified by seven of the eight participants, three artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 15.

Conscientiousness

1. Communicate boundaries was identified by all eight participants, no artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 38.
2. Write everything down was identified by all eight participants, no artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 25.
3. Delegate and ask for support was identified by seven of the eight participants, no artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 17.

Long-Term Goals

1. Open communication with the team on the direction of goals was identified by all eight participants, no artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 52.
2. Align division/department goals with the commander and senior echelon's vision was identified by all eight participants, two artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 38.
3. Map progress and adjust as necessary was identified by all eight participants, no artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 28.

Resilience

1. Getting it done is the only option was identified by all eight participants, four artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 58.
2. You are always being watched; be the example of the right way to be was identified by all eight participants, no artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 39.

3. Have a support system was identified by all eight participants, no artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 30.

Excellence Versus Perfection

1. Perfection is a fallacy was identified by all eight participants, no artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 29.
2. Celebrate progress with your team was identified by seven of the eight participants, one artifact was provided, and the frequency count was 22.
3. Adjust expectations as needed was identified by seven of the eight participants, no artifacts were provided, and the frequency count was 21.

Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study focused on how exemplary female senior Navy leaders use the common five grit characteristics that Perlis (2013) introduced as courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection. Using the common grit attributes produces extraordinary results in the Navy organization. Eight senior Navy female leaders volunteered to participate in a one-on-one interview. All participants met the qualifying criteria of the study, verified by the expert panel and me.

Of the data collected, the one-on-one interviews with the participants provided the majority of input. I took observation notes during the interviews, and the participants provided 16 artifacts that supported the research to form a triangulation of the information provided. With all data collected, 15 themes emerged through the coding process summarized in this chapter. All facts and conclusions as they aligned with the five research questions were covered in chapter IV. Themes and frequency counts were

also provided, telling the story of eight exemplary senior Navy female leaders who created extraordinary results during their time in the Navy. Chapter V summarizes the major findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This qualitative phenomenological study is one of nine conducted by a thematic research team at the University of Massachusetts Global, supported by faculty, to conduct studies with various populations on how five common grit attributes are used in leadership. The research focused on how senior Navy female leaders use five common grit characteristics—courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection—in the Navy to produce extraordinary results.

Though this specific research population focused on senior Navy female leaders, the thematic team also conducted similar studies to explore how leadership populations in various professions use the five common grit characteristics and contribute to extraordinary results in other organizations. Through perseverance and consistent use of grit, extraordinary results can be obtained (Arias, 2017; Perlis, 2013). Through the one-on-one interviews, artifacts, and research notes, rich narrative data were gathered, and common themes were identified through coding procedures that revealed key findings from the research. Chapter V concludes all forms of this study, including five major findings, three unexpected findings, implications for action, and recommendations for future research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and describe how exemplary senior Navy female leaders used five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results while they served in the Navy.

Research Questions

1. How do senior Navy female leaders use courage to accomplish extraordinary results?
2. How do senior Navy female leaders use conscientiousness to accomplish extraordinary results?
3. How do senior Navy female leaders use long-term goals to accomplish extraordinary results?
4. How do senior Navy female leaders use resilience to accomplish extraordinary results?
5. How do senior Navy female leaders use excellence versus perfection to accomplish extraordinary results?

Methodology

The methodology for this study was a qualitative, phenomenological design. The research method focused on narrative storytelling that explored a specific phenomenon, specifically five common grit characteristics, and how it produces extraordinary results when used in leadership (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research explores participants' understanding as they lived the phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The qualitative design was structured around five common grit characteristics as introduced by Perlis (2013). The five common grit attributes are courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection.

Data were collected primarily from one-on-one personal interviews conducted over Zoom, artifacts, and my notes. As expected, qualitative data collection, observations, and artifacts such as documents and articles also examined participants'

lived experiences (Patten & Newhart, 2018). Nine doctoral students created the interview protocol as part of a thematic research team at the UMass Global with three supporting faculty. The approved interview script (Appendix B) consisted of 10 questions, each with two probing questions, and was unchanged from the approved state for all eight interviews that I conducted. Eight senior Navy female leaders agreed to participate in the study. All participants met the research qualifying criteria verified by the expert panel and me.

Common themes were generated from the transcripts of the participants. There were 15 clearly defined themes, three themes per grit attribute. A third-party validator reviewed the coding of one interview, supporting my coding that was similar. Upon completion of the third-party review of 10% of the collected data, an 85% similarity of common themes and trends was validated, aligning evidentiary support of the qualitative research.

Population

The population was formed from a baseline population of 470 senior Navy female leaders (My Navy Human Resources, n.d.-a). Because of resource limitations, it was unrealistic to collect data from all 470 senior Navy female leaders who met the outlining criteria for this study. I narrowed the baseline to a smaller variable by adding a narrow retirement window of 3 years, creating a new baseline target population of 138 senior Navy female leaders. Of 138 senior Navy female leaders, 15 were asked to participate and met this study's outlining criteria. Of the 15 possible participants, eight agreed to participate.

Major Findings

As described in the previous chapter, this qualitative phenomenological study identified 15 key findings, or common themes, related to the following five characteristics of grit: courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection. Of the 15 key findings, five were identified and described by all eight study participants. I designated this 100% recognition and discussion of a theme as a major finding.

Of the five major findings in this study, two related to the grit characteristic of courage, and an additional three related (i.e., one each) to the grit characteristics of conscientiousness, long-term goals, and resilience, respectively. No major finding related to the grit characteristic of excellence versus perfection was uncovered. Table 10 shows the major findings of common themes aligned with grit attributes.

Table 10

Major Findings Related to Common Themes

Grit attribute	# of themes	# of major findings
Courage	3	2
Conscientiousness	3	1
Long-term goals	3	1
Resilience	3	1
Excellence versus perfection	3	0
Total	15	5

The five major findings of this study are the following:

1. Stay true to your morals.

All eight participants communicated that staying true to their morals was a courageous act, because often it leads to unpopular feedback from peers and superiors.

2. Take care of your people.

All eight participants recognized that courageous leaders make their people a priority. Taking care of people is at the root of exemplary leaders' ability to have individual and organizational success.

3. Communicate boundaries.

All eight participants, as senior Navy female leaders, mentioned that they are conscientious about prioritizing their time and energy and recognized how communication of personal and professional boundaries gave them the capacity to support their organization while balancing other personal responsibilities.

4. Get the job done no matter what.

All eight participants, as senior Navy female leaders, described themselves as resilient enough to get the job done no matter the obstacle.

5. Be flexible and ask for support in goal setting.

All eight participants mentioned that long-term goals are accomplished through the ability to be flexible and ask for support in goal setting.

Stay True to Your Morals

All eight participants communicated that staying true to their morals was a courageous act, because often it leads to unpopular feedback from peers and superiors.

All senior Navy female leaders interviewed provided examples of how it required courage to stay true to their morals. However, it often resulted in negative feedback from

others in their organization. All participants mentioned that morals also supported their ability to make decisions. This major finding relates morality and the grit characteristic of courage, which is consistent with research by Polson (2020) and Redmond et al. (2015) which suggested that when gritty leaders stay true to their morals, they adhere to their values guiding decision making, leading to personal and organizational success.

Leaders who possess courage as a primary leadership attribute contributes to being a positive example by demonstrating the right way to inspire their teams and peers to follow suit (Bel, 2010). All participants in this dissertation study relayed the importance of how others may perceive their actions. Similar to research by Schimschal and Lomas (2019), these individuals appeared to embody the proper morals contributing to inspiring behaviors in themselves and others, leading to gritty leadership and extraordinary performance.

Though all participants gave examples of exhibiting courage by staying true to their morals during times of adversity, Participant 5 not only risked her safety but acknowledged that she would make the same decision again to sustain her moral beliefs and values. The circumstances involved a stranded refugee vessel she boarded, going against her senior officers' orders. It ultimately ended her career, and Participant 5 was forced to retire, but she saved the lives of civilians lost at sea in a courageous act driven by staying true to her morals. Ultimately having grit and staying true to your morals can be mutually reinforcing if you stay aligned with your values and are willing to adapt to maintain your integrity (Schimschal & Lomas, 2019).

Finally, the eight exemplary senior Navy female leaders in this study who all acknowledged needing the courage to stand up for their morals, reflect a finding

consistent with Calle's (2021) research described in Chapter II. Calle (2021) introduced her research on military personnel, stating that military members stood up for their principles, values, and beliefs when facing opposition or adversity. Participant 5 in this study provided a prime example of exhibiting the courage to stay true to her morals while facing potential isolation and physical harm.

Take Care of Your People

All eight participants recognized that courageous leaders make their people a priority. Taking care of people is at the root of exemplary leaders' ability to have individual and organizational success.

All eight participants gave narrative examples that no matter the mission's importance, they always held their team and sailors in high regard, and they were a priority. For reference, Participant 4 mentioned,

My young sailors come in from boot camp immersed in fear. I feel it is my responsibility to mentor them and show them to respect our job and the responsibility that comes with it more than fear. Those are my kids out there; they know I'm here to show them how to do the job safely and correctly.

Most participants referenced sailors as "their kids," which aligns with the suggestion from Jachimowicz et al. (2018) that a gritty leader's passion leads to personal desire and, when aligned with results through sincere efforts, predicts high performance. Keeping the priority of people aligned with high performance, all eight participants mentioned results of positive crew morale, caring for sailors, and supporting peers and senior managers. This finding aligns directly with Duckworth (2016), who stated that having the courage to care for others "is a crucial ingredient for success" (p. 121).

The grit attribute of courage received repeated mention in this study and relates to two of the five key findings. Many reputable current writings have described courage as simply assuming responsibility for mistakes (Dweck, 2006). Kouzes and Posner (2016) reported that 21% of the participants interviewed in one of their studies stated that courage is a necessary leadership attribute. Research by Duckworth (2016) described gritty leadership and how this type of leadership support builds strength and courage among team members and encourages action.

Communicate Boundaries

All eight participants, as senior Navy female leaders, mentioned that they are conscientious about prioritizing their time and energy; and recognized how communication of personal and professional boundaries gave them the capacity to support their organization while balancing other personal responsibilities.

All participants mentioned how setting boundaries had supported their ability to be conscientious, resulting in managing more work and producing more remarkable results. This finding is consistent with Caza and Posner's (2018) assessment of grit and its effect on leadership behavior. Conscientiousness, defined as being organized and detail-oriented, supports leaders in making informed decisions based on challenging assignments in a fast-paced Navy environment. Furthermore, conscientiousness is associated with a strong work ethic, a proven quality that motivated team members seek in organizational leadership (Jachimowicz et al., 2018).

Conscientiousness is the desire to be self-disciplined and reliable through diligence and organization (Jackson et al., 2010; Perlis, 2013). All participants mentioned that being conscientious contributed to their ability to produce extraordinary results.

Furthermore, consistent with research by Perlis (2013), participants stated that conscientiousness aided in setting boundaries, being reliable, and attracting support from team members. Jachimowicz et al. (2018) suggested that such outcomes increase open communication among leaders and foster collaboration and teamwork toward long-term goals, creating a sense of purpose and buy-in among the team.

When there are no boundaries and time is mismanaged, it becomes overwhelming for leadership. As senior female leaders, all participants stated that when they communicated their boundaries, it was not driven by emotion though that was often the perception from peers and superiors. Hendon (2020) related similar situations in her study, stating that though senior Navy female leaders experience unique obstacles that “result in hidden and open forms of gender bias and discrimination,” they overcome them by maintaining high levels of emotional intelligence and remaining conscientious with the right attitude (p. iii).

One example of communicating boundaries was described by participant 3 when she mentioned how she was competing with another male senior enlisted leader regarding an early promotion for their sailors:

I had evidence of my sailor’s work in the recent quarter, including the command effects. My male counterpart had not prepared for the meeting and spoke about how he felt his sailor produced more in the same quarter. The second I asked him to show me where and how he produced the claimed results, he told me I was taking it personally; he was making a banter to elevate me when I came prepared with the work my sailor had done. Anything I said, he would state, “calm down, don’t get so upset.” Though I remained calm, he was attempting to make me seem

emotional. It took everything in me to remain calm. My sailor got the promotion.

Women leaders deal with emotional perception all the time, which is exhausting.

Senior Navy female leaders who are conscientious about allocating their time and energy and openly communicate boundaries are more likely to succeed in goal achievement and leading their teams effectively (Caza & Posner, 2018). Vasconcelos (2018) stated there is room for additional research on the stigma of emotions of senior military women specifically related to male-dominated organizations and the hindrance of female promotion.

Get the Job Done No Matter What

All eight participants, as senior Navy female leaders, described themselves as resilient enough to get the job done no matter the obstacle.

All exemplary senior Navy female leaders who participated in this study needed to reference how the issues they resolve during high-tempo, operational, minimal resource environments require more resilience than they could have imagined. Participants discussed times when they would push themselves past exhaustion to get a job done. For example, Participant 2 said that one day, after she took care of her personnel and realigned the deployment watch bill, she realized the ship needed a senior flight officer. Participant 2, without hesitation, assisted in getting three broken aircraft off the deck that night. Participant 2 was commended for all her efforts the next day at breakfast, and stated, "I don't remember any of that." This example of Participant 2's day was similar among all the senior Navy female leaders (study participants), when working past exhaustion is standard, and they still produce extraordinary results.

The example described is consistent with Calle's (2021) comparison of grit leadership and female leaders in the military. Calle reflected on a military leader's resilience toward hard work and described it as on autopilot and referred to the phenomenon as "the state of grit"; "being on active duty means being resilient enough to perform and succeed consistently through grueling situations" (p. 34).

Similar examples of a grueling military environment were mentioned by Harms et al. (2013). Although associating grit with success, he assigned a negative connotation to continually being in a state of grit, describing that when an individual maintains focus and determination to the point of exhaustion, the cost can be an imbalance between self-care and self-compassion. Though being in a state of grit can help one achieve great things, maintaining balance is critical. As a prior senior Navy female leader, I view the state of grit as a time when an individual can still be highly productive in an automatic state.

Finally, this study's participants recognize that it takes significant resilience at times to get the job done no matter what. It supports earlier research by Kaplan-Thaler and Koval (2015), who described the relationship between grit and fear. Scary is not in the vocabulary for gritty, senior Navy female leaders; fear is, but only to the extent of due diligence and respect for risks. The protocol is to stay calm; make decisions with a clear mind. Nothing progresses with doubt and uncertainty; that is one of the reasons senior Navy female leaders with grit are resilient and disciplined in getting the job done. This is consistent with research by Kaplan-Thaler and Koval, who stated, "When confidence becomes muscle memory, panic is replaced by peak performance" (p. 12).

Be Flexible and Ask for Support in Goal Setting

All eight participants mentioned that long-term goals are accomplished through the ability to be flexible and ask for support in goal setting.

All the study participants described the importance of using long-term goals to accomplish extraordinary results and that being flexible and asking for support in setting these goals was critical to successful outcomes. One senior Navy female leader described long-term goals and how they are essential for the professional growth of both the leader and the team. All goals must be in alignment to facilitate team member support of one another. Participant 7 mentioned, “We conduct weekly training, and once a month, we work on visualizing our long-term personal goals. The mission is important, but knowing my team knows I care about their professional growth is also important.”

Recognizing the need for a support system to aid in the development of goals and in aiding overall leadership development is consistent with research by Clark (2016), which described a leader as a continual learner and one who provides learning for others. This is accomplished through an experienced leader’s capability to visualize long-term goals. Clark (2016) supported such strategies, stating that when the proper support is provided to organizational leaders who visualize long-term goals, the organization and the leader navigate challenges supporting more extraordinary achievement and success.

Although setting long-term goals is important, remaining flexible and open to feedback and assistance from others to achieve success is equally crucial. All participants reflected that handling every task personally removes the opportunity for someone on their team to engage in a learning leadership opportunity. Caza and Posner (2021) made this point, suggesting that those filling current leadership positions have a direct

responsibility to provide new leaders a competitive advantage by allowing them to participate in opportunities in which they will be able to lead. This is especially important in the military because sailors rotate every 3 to 5 years. Research by Luning et al. (2021) encouraged leadership development and making quick-thoughtful decisions in a high-tempo environment that applies to all military services to “encourage and develop grit at the organizational level” (p. 2).

As participants in this study determined, flexibility and support are essential to accomplish long-term goals. This finding is consistent with research by Duckworth et al. (2007), who further postulated that persistence, hard work, and adaptability are crucial in goal achievement. Additionally, Duckworth (2016) described these traits as grit and recognized their contribution to a leader’s ability to persevere past obstacles toward accomplishing extraordinary results. This links to another major finding in this study—using resilience to get the job done no matter what.

Unexpected Findings

In addition to five major findings discovered by this study, three unexpected findings surfaced. These findings were a surprise. As a retired member of the research population and with experience as a senior Navy female leader, it was unexpected to hear these previously unshared stories of hidden challenges among the research participants.

I am familiar with many of the challenges of being a senior Navy leader. There are heightened levels of stress related to the responsibilities of managing teams of sailors while ensuring the safety and security of vessels and conducting a mission designated by senior authority (Perryman, 2021). Though there are always critical decisions to make, it was surprising that the senior Navy female leaders who participated in this research felt

restricted from asking for help related to mental health and counseling to find balance amid the stress that comes with being a senior Navy leader. Another surprise in the research was that the participating senior Navy female leaders acknowledged not having time to start a family. Finally, data showed that the grit attribute excellence versus perfection was not highlighted as a major finding. However, consistent with research by Duckworth (2016), the narrative revealed understating among the participants of the unrealistic expectation of chasing perfection.

Breaking the Stigma: Courage to Seek Counseling

The first unexpected finding was that senior Navy female leaders often sought support during their leadership journey. This was defined as seeking personal counseling or support for mental health. Seeking personal counseling per se was not so astonishing; it was realizing that these female leaders still felt it was taboo and a personal weakness to do so.

The Navy maintains a robust campaign to normalize mental health (Navy Medicine Female Force Readiness Clinical Community, 2022). Does this unexpected finding suggest that for military members seeking mental health services, there is still a challenge, as suggested by Hourani and Yuan (1999)? Though the Navy encourages those who are struggling to seek support and there are resources to do so, the fear expressed by these study participants suggests continued concern that doing so may impact security clearances and jeopardize their leadership careers. There is also a perception that asking for help may be perceived as a weakness.

The stigma surrounding leaders seeking mental health support has been revealed by various scientific and humanistic researchers asking for more support on the neglect of

mental health in the workplace (Birnbaum et al., 2010; Kessler et al., 2001; Naylor et al., 2012). This neglect and avoidance are based on the lack of action. However, some studies support the need for senior leaders of various backgrounds and populations extending past the military (Hourani & Yuan, 1999). Additionally, though this study focuses on senior Navy female leaders, the unexpected findings show that senior Navy female leaders fear the perception of weakness, loss of accountability, or their security clearance due to seeking mental health support (McGraw et al., 2016). Further inquiry exists that this may also be the case with senior male military leaders as it is also a stigma for men in the civilian workplace (Goetzl et al., 2018; Kessler et al., 2001; Simon et al., 2001).

The study participants commented on doing difficult things daily and the courage required to lead through situations that would make civilians cower. However, each senior Navy female leader described their interactions with weapons, death, and amputations in a causal manner. This unexpected finding aligns with Benmelech and Frydman's (2015) research on challenges common among senior naval leaders (see earlier discussion in Chapter II). Several examples described senior Navy female leaders doing intense operational wartime commitments such as hunting al-Qaida and flying Apache helicopters in war-torn Syria. Though most military leaders are naturally gritty, women are highly misunderstood in their physical and mental needs, particularly in combat roles (Luning et al., 2021; McGraw et al., 2016). The expanded responsibilities and roles of senior Navy female leaders, specifically in operational combat, now demand a look at the lack of resources to support access to healthcare for women related to combat missions (McGraw et al., 2016).

All participants told stories of times when they were scared. However, they used resilience to get the job done. Nevertheless, some senior female leaders reached out for mental healthcare and regretted it; others never sought help because of perceptions in the field and fear of impact on careers. Unfortunately, this finding is consistent with current research by the Navy Medicine Female Force Readiness Clinical Community (2022).

Calle (2021) and Linehagan (2018), who researched females in military organizations, mentioned that senior female military leaders sometimes speak of death and tragic events causally as a result of desensitization of military training and experience. Linehagan (2018) also stated that senior military leaders might speak causally about death to maintain a professional demeanor in front of troops to limit emotional reactions. The DoD spends \$792.8 million annually on mental health support and treatments. This finding suggests that part of the spending should be focused on proper treatment methods for military leaders when they seek support via counseling or mental health treatment (Navy Medicine Female Force Readiness Clinical Community, 2022; Ziezulewicz, 2021).

Choosing a Career Over Having Children

The second unexpected finding was that six of the eight senior Navy female leaders interviewed had no children. Though not part of the interview process, when telling the stories related to grit attributes such as courage, all participants mentioned how taking care of their sailors was their primary focus. These study participants' concerns about personal relationships and starting a family were often viewed as something that would take place in the future.

In literature related to this study on the grit characteristic resilience, Kaplan-Thaler and Koval (2015) mentioned that though military leaders do whatever it takes to accomplish the mission, the aftermath of the cost of service is rarely acknowledged. Consistent with Kaplan-Thaler and Koval's research and that of Klenke (2004), which states that senior Navy female leaders put the mission above all aspects of their lives, this unexpected finding becomes better understood. Klenke (2004) further confirmed that though times are changing in support of military woman leaders, they must "prove themselves, overcome challenges men are never confronted with, and put the military mission ahead of all other aspects of their lives, particularly marriage, and motherhood" (p. 111).

Senior Navy female leaders committing themselves to their mission is similar among the civilian workforces. Thirty-three percent of female civilian leaders, such as executives, doctors, and senior academics, between 41-55, do not have children (Hewlett, 2002). Furthermore, corporate America's percentage jumps to 42% of childless senior women leaders. This comparison creates a commonality between senior female leaders of the military and civilian organizations. Like the study participants, most senior civilian female leaders desire to be mothers; however, due to the brutal demands of their career, it is difficult to have children until it becomes complicated to conceive (Hewlett, 2002).

One of the two study participants with children mentioned how she could finally retire after 30 years of service. However, now she is adjusting to a new routine with children she barely knew because she had minimal influence on their upbringing. Additionally, when explaining how she was so successful as a senior Navy leader, she mentioned that the Navy and her family were highly demanding of her. She recognizes

now that she chose to invest most of her energy in the Navy, which resulted in her becoming one of the most senior Navy enlisted women to date. However, this accomplishment occurred with some cost to her family life.

As mentioned in Chapter I, the Navy is making significant strides to encourage female reenlistment rates. Senior female leaders are meeting their retirement reenlistment at 58% in 2020 compared to 42% in 2018 (Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2011). Considerably a topic needing further research, the military explicitly states they want to increase senior female positions and long-term retention. If the Navy stands by the claim of retention for senior Navy female leaders, the culture needs to support their ability to have time for relationships and families (B. Webber & Forster, 2017; Ziezulewicz, 2021).

Limited Discussion of Excellence Versus Perfection

The third unexpected finding was that only four of the five grit attributes revealed major findings. All five grit categories produced key findings as reflected in recurring common themes. Major findings, however, only qualified when 100% of the participants discussed the same common theme. Comparing the participation and input of the participants revealed a major finding for all grit attributes except for excellence versus perfection, which was unexpected.

Being a senior Navy female leader brings complexities with global adversaries and daily personnel concerns. Senior leaders are responsible for themselves and young men and women new to the Navy and multi-million-dollar equipment (Hendon, 2020; Morgan, 2004). As revealed in Chapters I and II of this study, previous research on senior military female leaders showed they excel in their dealings with leadership stressors and

the ability to overcome gender barriers while mentoring and motivating sailors and soldiers in the profession of war (Klenke, 2004).

Exemplary senior Navy female leaders in this study spoke forthrightly about challenges and adversities in their jobs but also clearly distinguished between excellence and perfection, and 100% of the participants agreed that trying to reach perfection is a fallacy. Many study participants also offered examples of how they led their organization toward improvement and excellence. The participants were resolute in their understanding through their examples that they were excellent. For example, Participant 1 said, “When you’re a top performing leader, everyone perceives you do things perfectly. Nothing is farther from the truth. You do your best; no one has ever faulted me for that.” When asked about perfection, the participants in this study redirected how they gave all their effort and were confident that what they produced toward extraordinary results was the absolute best they could do. Still, compared to the other four grit attributes, limited discussion occurred regarding the concept of excellence versus perfection.

Excellence versus perfection is a mindset toward fulfilling one’s purpose and prioritizing improvement over a perception of an ideal that may or may not be attainable (Arias, 2017; Duckworth et al., 2007; Perlis, 2013). Perlis (2013) stated, “Gritty people do not seek perfection, but instead strive for excellence” (p. 4). Though the two terms seem similar, in alignment with grit, leadership perfection is an interpretation based on someone else’s perspective. A leader who strives for excellence is on a personal journey where in which the end game is personal fulfillment and purpose (Perlis, 2013). Gritty

leaders know that while striving toward excellence, they will encounter setbacks and disappointment but continually strive toward excellence (Polson, 2020).

The participants in this study mentioned several similar concepts, principles, generalizations, and examples when describing leadership experiences related to all of the attributes of grit presented in the theoretical framework for this study. Limited specific discussion, however, related to the concept of a mindset for accomplishing extraordinary results through prioritizing improvement over a perception of some ideal (which may or may not be attainable). One reason for this unexpected outcome may be a lack of understanding of the attribute as written or explained. Another reason for the lack of discussion about this attribute of grit may be that the study participants, as senior Navy female leaders, maintain a mindset aligned to the military and its operations with little time or experience self-reflecting on the concept of grit and leadership theory.

Conclusions

The major findings discussed highlight three primary conclusions drawn from this study. First, courage, as the most prevalently described attribute contributing to the highest input of data, appears fundamental to maintaining and sustaining gritty behaviors. Second, grit attributes of conscientiousness, setting long-term goals, and resilience, along with courage, all provide significant insight into grit as a complex phenomenon and its role in accomplishing extraordinary results. Third, the concept of excellence versus perfection, though understood somewhat among participants, appears not to be part of this study's exemplary leaders' mindset. The following is a final brief discussion of these conclusions.

Courage

Courage is an attribute that uniquely contributes to the phenomenon of grit in exemplary senior Navy female leaders who accomplish extraordinary results. Courage provides the foundation for two major findings in this study: exemplary leaders use courage to stay true to their morals and prioritize and care for their people.

Grit: Courage, Conscientiousness, Use of Long-term Goals, and Resilience

Grit represents a complex phenomenon. The literature suggests that five specific attributes (or principles) contribute to exhibited behaviors associated with grit, including courage, conscientiousness, use of long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection. In this study, the first four attributes appear most prevalent in exemplary senior Navy female leaders accomplishing extraordinary results in their organizations.

The attributes of grit explored in this study represent fundamental personality traits and mental, physical, and moral dispositions that drive purpose and interest and enable an individual to sustain practice and hope. A passion for commitment and task completion and perseverance to work tirelessly toward a goal establish the mindset for sustained action and the ability to recover.

Excellence Versus Perfection: Absent from Senior Navy Female Leaders' Mindset

The participants in this study, exemplary senior Navy female leaders who accomplish extraordinary results for their organizations, all mentioned the concept of excellence versus perfection as an attribute of grit, and three related common themes surfaced. However, limited specific discussion related this attribute to the concept of a mindset for accomplishing extraordinary results through prioritizing improvement over a perception of some ideal (which may or may not be attainable). The study participants

appeared to understand each concept—excellence and perfection—clearly, but the mindset described (as mentioned previously) used the other four grit attributes to provide a foundation for their narrative journey.

Implications for Action

This qualitative phenomenological research study revealed rich narrative data as lived by eight senior Navy female leaders through one-on-one interviews. Interviews, artifacts, and my personal notes based on the observations of the Zoom interviews were combined to support how exemplary senior Navy female leaders use the five common principles associated with grit, courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection to create extraordinary results within their organization.

There is minimal research on grit leadership among senior Navy female leaders. Although research is minimal regarding the specific population of Navy female leaders' use of grit, other grit leadership studies are currently available that focus on other populations in diverse fields (Caza & Posner, 2018; Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth, 2016; Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014; Thaler & Koval, 2015). Additionally, research on grit leadership and the use of five grit attributes, including courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection, is growing (Aldana, 2023; Arias, 2017; Jaramillo, 2023; M. Moore, 2023; Perlis, 2013). As research grows along with the increased interest in grit leadership, more populations and specifications of various organizations will provide details on how grit leadership can be applied as a foundational leadership development tool for all populations and different organizations.

The focus of this study was to highlight the actions of senior Navy female leaders. Furthermore, through their actions with grit leadership as the foundation, these

participants created extraordinary results and illustrated how their example can be re-created for all military services and senior leaders in civilian, public, and private sectors.

This research suggests that through key and major findings, the following five implications for action to improve the leadership foundation for senior Navy female leaders, and they may be further implemented for all genders and organizations.

Develop a Course

Create a course for senior Navy female leaders that will capture the pros and cons of their operational duty. As revealed during the interviews, all participants spoke plainly regarding operation duty, including tragic events. This study's research revealed heightened stress levels related to the responsibilities of operational duty. When looking over the data again, I discovered unexpected findings that revealed senior Navy female leaders felt they needed counseling or mental health support but feared repercussions on their security clearance or occupational setbacks.

The course is essential because these senior Navy female leaders produce extraordinary results in high-tempo operational environments. Although the information is still recent, the senior Navy female leaders could convey their leadership tactics that worked and some that may not have worked to collect future methods for leadership development. More importantly, if the information can support methods to lead so that fewer lives and equipment are lost in operational environments, that adds to the importance of a relevant course in which the leadership abilities of women leaders in an operational tempo are documented.

Additionally, creating a course that harnesses this information could allow experts on site to create a safe space with confidentiality to support post-operational

counseling. This research revealed the need to talk with someone or receive counseling as an unexpected finding. A course structured in this manner could provide several opportunities. It could create future grit-related military-specific leadership development material that can later be used for other organizations. The most crucial possibility for this course is to provide counseling services for senior Navy female leaders who felt previously restricted from asking for help related to mental health and counseling.

Acknowledge Grit

Acknowledge grit outside of organizational responsibilities. Duckworth (2016) mentioned that though grit can be a learned characteristic, those who naturally have it use it in every facet of their lives. However, this and the most common relatable research on grit focuses on grit as it relates to organizations. Those who possess gritty attributes use them in every facet of their lives. Some are full-time caregivers, stay-at-home moms and dads, and church and community volunteers. To further expound this research, it can be implied that senior Navy female leaders who are gritty in the Navy organization are applying the five common grit characteristics in every aspect of their lives, whatever that may look like. It is recommended to further look at what additional stressors and resilience are needed to maintain a heightened level of grit from people, senior Navy female leaders specifically, who are continually operating at a higher than average level of accomplishment.

Embrace a Growth Mindset

Embrace a growth mindset for future leaders. Luning et al. (2021) studied military culture, revealing that the military organization is focused on growth. In the military, debriefing any inspection, goal accomplishment, and deployment or operation is always

conducted. That is when military leadership studies what went well and how they can improve. Embracing a growth mindset in a military organization means if a problem occurs each person is responsible for innovating and suggesting solutions. It is how problems are solved and leaders are developed (Redmond et al., 2015). Accountability for team members encourages a growth mindset because it does not allow the denial of known issues. It makes people accountable for the success of the organization.

Contribute to Several Venues of Research

Nine peer researchers have contributed to the growing foundation of literature that supports grit leadership and how it produces extraordinary results. Of the research being conducted, the population and organizational arenas vary from the military, African American entrepreneurs, elementary school principals, public school superintendents, directors of special education, women in senior executive roles, and other senior educational roles in leadership. Among these nine doctoral students from the UMass Global, there is a vast influx of contributing research on grit and the five common characteristics of courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection (as supported by Perlis, 2013). With all the recent contributions to grit leadership contributing to extraordinary results, now is the time to gather data and conclusions and distribute them to social media and public marketing venues to share recent findings. The most recent research can be distributed in academic journals focused on leadership development. Other options for distribution include speaking at conferences, sharing input and encouraging discussions on social media, and writing blogs. There is an opportunity to continue to work with other researchers to collaborate in

the related field of leadership development specifically associated with exemplary grit leader's use of grit resulting in extraordinary results within organizations.

Join or Create a Grit Mentorship Community

Join or create a grit mentorship community that builds grit in the form of courage, conscientiousness, use of long-term goals, resilience, and mindset for excellence over perfection. As a grit leadership contributor, continue pursuing education and research on how grit contributes to successful leaders. This will support continued personal growth and upcoming grit protégé interested in the topic or desire to develop grit leadership: "If you want to be grittier, find a gritty culture and join it" (Duckworth, 2016, p. 245). There are vast communities on social media sites such as Linked in and Facebook. The groups even get as specific as college alumni, church groups, local community groups, and groups based on occupation. Nevertheless, contributing to a grit mentorship community can support those who want to develop self-grit. In contrast, allowing those who are experts in the field of grit to belong to a community in which they feel they can contribute and foster a sense of community is an added benefit.

Recommendations for Further Research

This qualitative phenomenological study is one of nine conducted by a thematic research team at UMass Global, supported by faculty, to conduct studies with various populations on how five common grit attributes are used in leadership, contributing to extraordinary results. The specific research on senior Navy female leaders and the additional research contributed by the other thematic team members provide a sharp perception of various populations that contribute to grit leadership in various organizations. The findings of this study are particular to senior Navy female leaders and

how their exemplary grit leadership in the Navy contributed to extraordinary results.

Based on the findings of this study, I recommend the following for further research:

1. The thematic research team opted for a phenomenological, qualitative methodology to explore the five common grit characteristics courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection. However, it is suggested that a follow-up study be conducted using a quantitative or mixed methods approach. As an example, an exploratory sequential mixed methods design would be able to use this phenomenological study as the first step for qualitative analysis and then develop an instrument to quantify findings.
2. This research only applied to female senior Navy female leaders. Some research has suggested additional research related to grit leadership based on gender. To further examine the relationships between gender and the use of the five principles of grit and achievements in organizations, it is suggested that the study be replicated separately with male participants. This would enable a comparative analysis of any differences observed across genders.
3. Because a group of nine peer researchers conducted the thematic study, it is recommended that metaresearch be done to identify the commonalities and variety of the findings across all nine dissertations. This would be particularly insightful because all peer researchers selected study participants from various backgrounds, aligning the similarities and then cross-examining the differences could also bring a new perspective to the research.
4. This study engaged only eight exemplary senior Navy female leaders. Yet because there appears to be no shortage of willing participants, future research

may isolate the specific grit used by female leader minorities in the Navy. Being a minority brings obstacles, let alone being a senior female leader minority in the Navy. Additionally, gender studies including both male and female about grit leadership may also be conducted to compare grit leadership, grit leadership by gender, and grit leadership by minority group.

5. Because of the overwhelming support from retired Navy female leaders to participate in this study, one requirement for participation was that the senior female Navy leader had to have recently retired within the last 3 years of this study. Many women in the Navy conducted “firsts” of their time that could not participate because of the criteria. I recommend a future study open to all retired senior Navy female leaders to gain a deeper insight into grit-related narratives during a time in the Navy when there were far fewer women and they were breaking glass ceilings for the first time.
6. The study was structured around the five common grit characteristics, courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection, and how, when used in leadership contributes to extraordinary results in the organization. Because of Duckworth’s extensive research and her contributions as well as other educational and psychological experts in the field of leadership, it is recommended to expand the focus of grit and examine its relationship with such concepts as interest, practice, purpose, and hope. This may provide significant insight into the historic stigma or continuing belief by some that success is based primarily on talent.

7. All participants in this study were retired Navy senior female leaders with extensive leadership experience beyond 20 years. I recommend recreating this study in alignment with Duckworth et al.'s (2007) study, which suggests that those with high levels of grit maintain and continue to increase grit-related characteristics and use that as baseline to recreate this study. Use the same senior Navy female leader participants to compare how their levels of grit and leadership contribute to extraordinary results in their civilian organizations outside of naval service.
8. As revealed in the section on major findings in this study, grit includes communicating one's boundaries with both subordinate teams and senior military. Unfortunately, female leaders often must continue to deal with a stigma about how they communicate with male counterparts; for example, when communicating items for action, male peers may manipulate the conversation to make the remarks stated appear emotional rather than factual (see Major Findings). This is common among senior female leaders in the military and private sectors. There is a need for a study regarding female leaders' use of grit to manage and overcome stigma about how they communicate and assert themselves toward action.
9. Finally, research revealed in unexpected findings the stigma around senior Navy female leaders seeking mental health support from brutal operational duty and the consistent grind of maintaining ambitious careers. Additionally, research revealed similar stigmas for male counterparts in the military and both genders in civilian organizations. There is a need for an in-depth study to address the stigmas of

mental health support and reveal resources for senior leaders across diverse populations and organizations toward seeking help and support while being cognizant of maintaining discretion and ensuring discrimination is not the result of senior leaders seeking mental health support.

Researcher's Remarks and Reflections

Having the privilege and honor to research senior Navy female leaders was a valuable experience. As a prior senior Navy female leader with 20 years of experience, it was beautiful to hear about their experiences. I could relive the emotional narratives with them. It was a challenge not to provide comments or additional insight specifically as some struggled to relive those stories, especially those of loss. The findings revealed were overwhelming. Only a fraction of their stories were documented in this study. I hope to compose a narrative of their stories in the future as the topics outside of exemplary leadership and their use of grit led them to reveal many additional successes and struggles they endured to be exemplary and produce extraordinary results in the Navy. I felt so much pride for them and the Navy as they relived their many victories and contributions leading to extraordinary results in the Navy. Many of them still mentor and support sailors and work as civilians contributing to the Navy's mission, which is no surprise.

Grit leadership as it pertains to women was an honor to conduct because I wanted people to see and feel what these women have done, and in comparison to many, it seemed almost effortless, but at many times comes at a cost. The aftermath of the mental toll it takes to put the mission and others before oneself is always exhausting. Many I interviewed are still trying to figure out who they are after a life devoted to the Navy. I

commend their ability and unapologetic stories of going against the gender normality that women should be a certain way. These women lived up to their morals, fought for their beliefs, saved equipment and lives, and created new methods and procedures that impacted the Navy.

To all my sisters who have served and are still serving, thank you for being an example for our future leaders. Your perseverance and courage are recognized and should always be celebrated. I am hopeful for our future Navy and other services, knowing we left behind a legacy and are not adequately relieved. Those sailors mentored by senior Navy female leaders now have the watch. What an adventure it will be. Our nation is in good hands.

REFERENCES

- Aldana, G. (2023) *Grit and leadership: How exemplary middle school principals use the principles of grit to accomplish extraordinary results* (Publication No. 495) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts Global]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- American Association of University Women. (n.d.) *Workplace and economic equity*. <https://www.aauw.org/issues/equity/>
- America's Navy. (n.d.-a). Our core attributes. <https://www.navy.mil/About/Our-Core-Attributes>
- America's Navy. (n.d.-b). Our core values. <https://www.navy.mil/About/Our-Core-Values>
- America's Navy. (n.d.-c). Women in the Navy. <https://www.navy.com/who-we-are/women-in-the-navy>
- Arias, A. E. (2017). *Grit attributes demonstrated by school superintendents in California urban school settings* (Publication No.10599929) [Doctoral dissertation, Pepperdine University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Baldor, L. C. (2021). *1st female sailor completes Navy special warfare training*. Military.com. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/07/15/1st-female-sailor-completes-navy-special-warfare-training.html>
- Bass, B. M. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8(1), 9–32. <https://doi.org/10.1.1.5690.945>

- Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications* (4th ed.). Free Press.
- Bel, R. (2010). Leadership and innovation: Learning from the best. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, 29(2), 47–60. <https://doi.org/10.1002/joe.20308>
- Benmelech, E., & Frydman, C. (2015). Military CEOs. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 117(1), 43–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfineco.2014.04.009>
- Bigelow, L., Lundmark, L., Parks, J. M., & Wuebker, R. (2014). Skirting the issues: Experimental evidence of gender bias in IPO prospectus evaluations. *Journal of Management*, 40(6), 1732–1759. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206312441624>
- Birnbaum, H. G., Kessler, R. C., Kelley, D., Ben-Hamadi, R., Joish, V. N., Greenberg, P. E. (2010). Employer burden of mild, moderate, and severe major depressive disorder: mental health services utilization and costs, and work performance, *Depression and Anxiety*, 27(1), 78-89. <https://doi.org/10.1002/da.20580>
- Blalock, D. V., Young, K. C., & Kleiman, E. M. (2015). Stability amidst turmoil: Grit buffers the effects of negative life events on suicidal ideation. *Psychiatry Research*, 228(3), 781–784. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2015.04.041>
- Boies, K., & Howell, J. M. (2009). Leading military teams to think and feel: Exploring the relations between leadership, soldiers' cognitive and affective processes, and team effectiveness. *Military Psychology*, 21(2), 216–232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08995600902768743>
- Book, E. W. (2000). *Why the best man for the job is a woman: The unique qualities of female leadership*. Harper Business.

- Bullough, A., Moore, F., & Kalafatoglu, T. (2017). Research on women in international business and management: Then, now, and next. *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management*, 24(2), 211–230. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCSM-02-2017-0011>
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Grove Atlantic.
- Calle, M. S. (2021). *Role congruity: The function of gender roll attitudes in evaluation of perceived grit in military personnel* (Publication No. 2480292020) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Hartford]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Campuzano, M. V. (2019). Force and inertia: A systematic review of women’s leadership in male-dominated organizational cultures in the United States. *Human Resource Development Review*, 18(4), 437–469.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484319861169>
- Carter, A. (2015, December 3). *Remarks on the women-in-service review* [Speech audio recording].
<https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/Article/632495/remarks-on-the-women-in-service-review/>
- Caza, A., & Posner, B. (2018). How and when does grit influence leaders behavior? *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal*, 40(1), 124–134.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-06-2018-0209>
- Caza A., & Posner, B. Z. (2021). Mixed associations between grit and transformational leadership behavior. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 15(4), 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21781>

- Cha, S. E., Hewlin, P. F., Roberts, L. M., Buckman, B. R., Leroy, H., Steckler, E. L., Ostermeier, & Cooper, D. (2019). Being your true self at work: Integrating the fragmented research on authenticity in organizations. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 13(2), 633–671. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2016.0108>
- Christensen, R., & Knezek, G. (2014). Comparative measures of grit, tenacity, and perseverance. *International Journal of Learning Teaching and Research*, 8(1), 16–30.
- Clark, R. S. (2016). *Grit within the context of career success: A mixed methods study* (Publication No. 10144935) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Correll, D. S. (2021, August 20). This Navy captain is now the first woman commanding a nuclear aircraft carrier. *Navy Times*. <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2021/08/20/this-navy-captain-is-now-the-first-woman-commanding-a-nuclear-aircraft-carrier/>
- Cote, O. R. (2019). Invisible nuclear-armed submarine or transparent oceans? Are ballistic missile submarines still the best deterrent for the United States? *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 75(1) 30-35.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2019.1555998>
- Crede, M., Tynan, M. C., & Harms, P. D. (2017). Much ado about grit: A meta-analytic synthesis of the grit literature. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 113(3), 492–511. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000102>
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed). Pearson.

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed). Sage.
- Crites, S. N., Dickson, K. E., & Lorenz, A. (2015). Nurturing gender stereotypes in the face of experience: A study of leader gender, leadership style, and satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications, and Conflict*, 19(1), 1–23.
- Dannatt, R. (2011). *Leading from the front: The autobiography*. Corgi Books.
- Dawson, S. T. (2019). Women and the second world war. *International Journal of Military History and Historiography*, 2(39) 171–180.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/24683302-03902002>
- Del Toro, C. (2022, July 12). *SECNAV delivers remarks at the joint women's leadership symposium* [Speech audio recording]. <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/Speeches/display-speeches/Article/3090517/secnav-delivers-remarks-at-the-joint-womens-leadership-symposium/>
- DeSimone, D. (2022, June 7). Over 200 years of service: The history of women in the U.S. military. <https://www.uso.org/stories/3005-over-200-years-of-service-the-history-of-women-in-the-us-military>
- Desing, M. T. (2020) *How veteran teachers perceive the influence of personal grit: A case study* (Publication No. 28148223) [Doctoral dissertation, Grand Canyon University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- DoD Office of the Actuary. (2018, July). *Statistical report on the military retirement system: Fiscal year 2017*.
https://actuary.defense.gov/Portals/15/Documents/MRS_StatRpt_2017%20v4.pdf?ver=EyLi_moEtY6jlgX9GeLMxw%3D%3D

- Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance*. Scribner.
- Duckworth, A. L., & Gross, J. J. (2014). Self-control and grit: Related but separate determinants of success. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *23*(5), 319–325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721414541462>
- Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *92*(6), 1087–1101. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.6.1087>
- Duckworth, A. L., & Quinn, P. D. (2009). Development and validation of the short grit scale (Grit-S). *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *91*(2), 166–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223890802634290>
- Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.
- Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2003). The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *14*(6), 807–834. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.09.004>
- Eskreis-Winkler, L., Shulman, E. P., Beal, S. A., & Duckworth, A. L. (2014). The grit effect: Predicting retention in the military, the workplace, school, and marriage. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *5*(36), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00036>
- Finch, M. (1994). Women in combat: One commissioner report. *Minerva*, *12*(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.2227.86303>
- Fraser, P. A. (2016). *Damn the torpedoes! Applying the Navy's leadership principles to business*. Naval Institute Press.

- Fuentes, M. D. (2022). *Destructive-constructive leadership and active-duty service members' commitment to military service* (Publication No. 29995499) [Doctoral dissertation, Grand Canyon University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Galton, F. (1869). *Hereditary genius an inquiry into its laws and consequences*. Macmillan and Company. <https://galton.org/books/hereditary-genius/text/pdf/galton-1869-genius-v5.pdf>
- Gandolfi, F., & Stone, S. (2018). Leadership, leadership styles, and servant leadership. *Journal of Management Research, 18*(4), 261–272. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Franco-andolfi/publication/340940468_Leadership_Leadership_Styles_and_Servant_Leadership.pdf
- Gavin, L. (2020) *American Women in World War I*. University Press of Colorado.
- Gildea, R. (2015). *Fighters in the shadows: A new history of the French Resistance*. Harvard University Press.
- Gipson, A. N., Pfaff, D. L., Mendelsohn, D. B., Catenacci, L. T., & Burke, W. W. (2017). Women and leadership: Selection, development, leadership style, and performance. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 53*(1), 32–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886316687247>

Goetzl, R. Z., Roemer, E. C., Holingue, C., Fallin, M. D., McCleary, K.,K, Eaton W, Agnew J, Azocar F, Ballard D, Bartlett J, Braga M, Conway H, Crighton KA, Frank R, Jinnett K, Keller-Greene D, Rauch SM, Safeer R, Saporito D, Schill A, Shern D, Strecher V, Wald P, Wang P, Mattingly CR. Mental Health in the Workplace: A Call to Action Proceedings From the Mental Health in the Workplace-Public Health Summit. *J Occup Environ Med.* 2018 Apr;60(4):322-330. doi: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000001271. PMID: 29280775; PMCID: PMC5891372.

Goldsmith, C. (2019). *Women in the military: From drill sergeants to fighter pilots.* Lerner Publishing.

Grafton, E., Gillespie, B., & Henderson, S. (2010). Resilience: The power within. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 37(6), 698–705. <https://doi.org/10.1188/10.onf.698-705>

Graham, J. W. (1991). Servant-leadership in organizations: Inspirational and moral. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 2(2), 105–119. [https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843\(91\)90025-W](https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(91)90025-W)

Grant Thornton. (2020). *Women in business 2020: Putting the blueprint into action.* https://www.grantthornton.global/globalassets/1.-member-firms/global/insights/women-in-business/2020/women-in-business-2020_report.pdf

- Gray, J. (2021, October 7). *A glimpse back at the important role of the U.S. Navy shore enterprise through history*. Military News.
https://www.militarynews.com/news/a-glimpse-back-at-the-important-role-of-the-u-s-navy-shore-enterprise-through/article_f315db28-253f-11ec-aab6-b7dc02776611.html
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). *The servant as leader*. Center for Applied Studies.
- Groselj, M., Cerne, J., Penger, S., & Grah, B. (2021). Authentic and transformational leadership and innovative work behavior: The moderating role of psychological empowerment. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 24(3), 677–706.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/ejim-10-2019-0924>.
- Guion, L. A (2002). *Triangulation: Establishing the validity of qualitative studies*. University of Florida Extension. <https://sites.duke.edu/niou/files/2014/07/W13-Guion-2002-Triangulation-Establishing-the-Validity-of-Qualitative-Research.pdf>
- Hacker, B. C., & Vining, M. (Eds.). (2012). *A companion to women's military history*. Brill.
- Halliday, L., Walker, A., Vig, S., Hines, J., & Brecknell, J. (2016). Grit and burnout in UK doctors: A cross-sectional study across specialties and stages of training. *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 93, 389–394.
<https://doi.org/10.1136/postgradmedj-2015-133919>
- Harkins, G., & Losey, S. (2021 March 11). *Tucker Carlson couldn't be more wrong: Troops fire back at Fox News host's claims of a feminized military*.
<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/03/11/tucker-carlson-couldnt-be-more-wrong-troops-fire-back-fox-news-hosts-claims-of-feminized-military.html>

- Harms, P. D., Krasikova, D. V., Vanhove, A. J., Herian, M. N., & Lester, P. B. (2013). *Stress and emotional well-being in military organizations*. Emerald Group Publishing.
- Harry, B., Sturges, K. M., & Klingner, J. K. (2005). Mapping the process: An exemplar of process and challenge in grounded theory analysis. *Educational Researcher*, 34(2), 3–13. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X034002003>
- Hendon, J. S. (2020). *Bridging the female promotion gap: A case study on senior enlisted women leaders in the U.S. Navy* (Publication No. 27834057) [Doctoral dissertation, Ashford University]. ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global.
- Hewlett, S. A. (2002). *Executive women and the myth of having it all*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2002/04/executive-women-and-the-myth-of-having-it-all>
- Hollis, E. T. (2014). *Leadership styles: A phenomenological study of transformational, transactional, and situational leadership styles employed by CIOs at military combatant commands* (Publication No. 3620687) [Doctoral dissertation, Capella University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Hougaard, R., & Carter, J. (2018). *The mind of the leader: How to lead yourself, your people, and your organization for extraordinary results*. Harvard Business Press.
- Hourani, L. L. & Yuan, H. (1999). The mental health status of women in the Navy and Marine Corps: Preliminary findings from the perceptions of wellness and readiness assessment. *Military Medicine*, 164(3), 174–181. <https://doi.org/10.1093/milmed/164.3.174>

- Holden, K. E., & Raffo, D. M. (2014). A potential generation gap: Perspectives on female leadership. *Gender in Management, 29*, 419–443. <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-11-2013-0132>
- Hough, L. M. (1992). The big five personality variables construct confusion: Description versus prediction. *Human Performance, 5*(1), 139–155. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327043hup0501&2_8
- Hunt, V., Yee, L., Prince, S., & Dixon-Fyle, S. (2018). *Delivering through diversity*. McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/delivering-through-diversity>
- Ibarra, H. (2015, January 1). The authenticity paradox. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2015/01/the-authenticity-paradox>
- Iskra, D. M. (2007). *Women in the united states armed forces: A reference handbook*. Praeger.
- Jachimowicz, J. M., Wihler, A., Bailey, E. R., & Galinsky, A. D. (2018). Why grit requires perseverance and passion to positively predict performance. *Psychological and Cognitive Sciences, 115*(40), 9980–9985. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1803561115>
- Jackson, J. J., Wood, D., Bogg, T., Walton, K. E., Harms, P. D., & Roberts, B. W. (2010). What do conscientious people do? Development and validation of the behavioral indicators of conscientiousness (BIC). *Journal of Research in Personality, 44*(4), 501–511. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2010.06.005>

- Jaramillo, D. (2023) *Exploring grit in exemplary school superintendents* (Publication No. 485) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts Global]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Johns, H. E., & Moser, R. H. (2001). From trait to transformation: The evolution of leadership theories. *Education, 110*(1) 115-122.
- Johnson, S. (2022, April 8) *What you should know about the U.S. Naval submarine force*. United Service Organization. <https://www.uso.org/stories/3060-what-you-should-know-about-the-u-s-naval-submarine-force>
- Kamenetz, A. (2016, May 25). *MacArthur 'genius' Angela Duckworth responds to a new critique of grit*. nprED. <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/05/25/479172868/angela-duckworth-responds-to-a-new-critique-of-grit>
- Kannangara, C. S., Allen, R. E., Waugh, G., Nahar, N., Khan, S. Z., Rogerson, S., & Carson, J. (2018). All that glitters is not grit: Three studies of grit in university students. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01539>
- Kaplan-Thaler, L., & Koval, R. (2015). *Grit to great: How perseverance, passion, and pluck take you from ordinary to extraordinary*. Blackstone Publishing.
- Kessler, R. C., Berglund, P. A., Bruce, M. L., Koch, J. R., Laska, E. M., Leaf, P. J., Manderscheid, R. W., Rosenheck, R. A., Walters, E. E., Wang, P. S. (2001) The prevalence and correlates of untreated serious mental illness. *Health Services Research, 36*(6), 987-1007. <https://doi.org/10.11775672>

- Kim, H. (2014). Transformational leadership, organizational clan culture, organizational affective commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior: a case of South Korea's public sector. *Public Organization Review*, 14(3) 397–417.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-013-0225>
- Klenke, K. (2004). *Women and leadership. A contextual perspective*. Springer Publishing.
- Kolko, J., & Miller, C. C. (2018, December 14). As labor market tightens, women are moving into male-dominated jobs. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/14/upshot/as-labor-market-tightens-women-are-moving-into-male-dominated-jobs.html>
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2016). *Learning leadership: The five fundamentals of becoming an exemplary leader*. Wiley.
- Kristensen, H. M., & Norris, R. S. (2016). United States nuclear forces. *2017 Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 73(1), 48–57.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2016.1264213>
- Lacap, J. G. (2020). Reducing employees' intention to quit: The effects of transformational leadership, employee engagement, and grit. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 41(3), 665–670. <https://doi.org/10.34044/j.kjss.2020.41.3.33>
- Lauer, D. J. (2021). *Grit: A comparison of military versus toward military students at a private Christian university* (Publication No. 2605641186) [Doctoral dissertation, Charleston Southern University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Leahy, J. F. (2004). *Ask the Chief: Backbone of the Navy*. Naval Institute Press.
- Lee, G., & Elliott-Lee, D. (2006). *Courage: The backbone of leadership*. Jossey-Bass.

- Lendon, B., Essig, B., & Jozuka, E. (2022, May 17). *First woman to command US aircraft carrier didn't even know she could get the job*. CNN.
<https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/16/asia/us-navy-woman-aircraft-carrier-commander-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>
- Linehagen, F. (2018). Confronting one's conduct to unwritten rules experiences of female military personnel in a male-dominated organization. *Res Militaris*, 8(1), 1–25.
<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:fhs:diva-8198>
- Lucas, G. M., Gratch, J., Cheng L., & Marsella, S. (2015). When the going gets tough: Grit predicts costly perseverance. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 59(4), 15–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2015.08.004>
- Luning, C. R., Attoh, P. A., Gong, T., & Fox, J. T. (2021). A culture of organizational grit from the perspective of U.S. military officer: A qualitative inquiry. *Armed Forces & Society*, 48(3), 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X20985197>
- Martin, S. (2019, September 27). *Why you should strive for excellence not perfection*. Psych Central. <https://psychcentral.com/blog/imperfect/2019/09/why-you-should-strive-for-excellence-not-perfection#The-difference-between-excellence-and-perfection>
- McGraw, K., Koehlmoos, P. T., & Ritchie, E. C. (2016). Women in combat: Framing the issues of health and health research for Americas servicewomen. *Military Medicine*, 181(1), 7–11. <https://doi.org/10.7205/MILMED-D-15-00223>
- McMillan J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry* (7th ed). Pearson.

- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Exemplary. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved January 8, 2023, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/exemplary>
- Military Leadership Diversity Commission. (2011, March 15). *From representation to inclusion: Diversity leadership for the 21st-century military report*. https://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Special%20Feature/MLDC_Final_Report.pdf
- Miller, C. A. (2017). *Getting grit: The evidence-based approach to cultivating passion, perseverance, and purpose*. Sounds True Publishing.
- Moore, E. (2020, March 31). *Women in combat: Five-year status update*. Center for a New American Security. <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/women-in-combat-five-year-status-update>
- Moore, M. L. (2023) *How exemplary directors of special education use the five principles associated with grit to accomplish extraordinary results: A phenomenological study* (Publication No. 483) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts Global]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Morgan, M. J. (2004). Women in a man's world: Gender differences in leadership at the military academy. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 34*(12), 2482–2502. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2004.tb01988>
- Moyar, M. (2017). *Oppose any foe: The rise of Americas special operations forces*. Basic Books.
- Mueller, B. A., Wolfe, M. T., & Syed, I. (2017). Passion and grit: An exploration of the pathways leading to venture success. *Journal of Business Venturing, 32*(3), 260-279. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2017.02.00>

- My Navy Human Resources. (n.d.-a). Navy personnel command.
<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Navy-Personnel-Command/>
- My Navy Human Resources. (n.d.-b). Officer retirements branch-PERS-835: Enlisted retirements/ fleet reserve-PERS-836. <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Mangement/Retirement/>
- Naval History and Heritage Command. (2017, November 29). *Answering the call: Civil War to World War II*. <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/diversity/women-in-the-navy/civil-war-to-wwii.html>
- Naval History and Heritage Command. (2019, September 13). *Naval aviation: 2000-2010 dawn of the twenty-first century*. <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/communities/naval-aviation0/2000-2010.html>
- Naval History and Heritage Command. (2021a, August 26a). *April D. Beldo*. <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/browse-by-topic/people/trailblazers/april-beldo.html>
- Naval History and Heritage Command. (2021b, April 27b). *Twenty-five years of women onboard combatant vessels*. <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/browse-by-topic/diversity/women-in-the-navy/women-in-combat.html>
- Naval Justice School. (2022, August). *USN/USMC commander's quick reference legal handbook (QUICKMAN)*. <https://www.jag.navy.mil/documents/NJS/Quickman.pdf>

Navy Medicine Female Force Readiness Clinical Community. (2022, February).

Normalizing military mental health care: Myth versus fact.

https://www.med.navy.mil/Portals/62/Documents/NMFA/NMCPHC/root/Health%20Promotion%20and%20Wellness/Women's%20Health/Documents/Mental_Health/Normalizing_Mental_Healthcare_Myth_vs_Fact_vF.pdf

Navy Site. (n.d.). *Meaning of the letters painted on the ship's bridge wings.*

<https://www.navysite.de/what/bridgewing.htm>

Naylor, C., Parsonage, M., McDaid, D., Knapp, M., Fossey, M., Galea, A. (2012) Long-

Term conditions and mental health: The cost of co-morbidities. *The King's Fund.*

https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/field_publication_file/long-term-conditions-mental-health-cost-comorbidities-naylor-feb12.pdf

Norkeliunas, D. (2015). *Impact glass: How do grit and growth mindset impact career*

advancement for female heads of independent schools? (Publication No.

10594732) [Doctoral dissertation, Lynn University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Nuciari, M (2006). Women in the military. *Sociology of the Military*, 30(2), 279–297.

https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-34576-0_16

O'Conner, C. M. (2018). Women of vision: Understanding the ways women lead change.

Christian Higher Education, 17(4), 198–214.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2018.1462741>

Oppel, R. A. (2019, February 8). Her title: Cryptologic technician. Her occupation:

Warrior. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/08/us/shannon-kent-military-spy.html>

- O'Reilly, C. A., & Pfeffer, J. (2000). *How great companies achieve extraordinary results with ordinary people* [Video]. YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x302_fDLJnk
- Oyler, J. D., Pryor, M. G., & Haden, S. S. P. (2011). The good ol' boy system: Alive and well at Laocoön Aeronautics Corporation. *Journal of the International Academy for Case Studies*, 17(5) 61–72. <https://doi.org/287246417>
- Parris, D. L., & Peachey, J. W. (2013). A systematic literature review of servant leadership theory in organizational contexts. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 113(3), 377–393. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1322-6>
- Patten, M. L., & Newhart, M. (2018). *Understanding research methods: An overview of essentials* (10th ed). Routledge.
- Pattinson, J. (2007). *Behind enemy lines: Gender, passing and the special operations executive in the Second World War*. Manchester University Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.) Sage.
- Perlis, M. (2013). Five characteristics of grit: How many do you have? *Forbes Magazine*.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/margaretperlis/2013/10/29/5-characteristics-of-grit-what-it-is-why-you-need-it-and-do-you-have-it/>
- Perryman, R. L. (2021) *Exemplary leadership during turbulent times: A study of wartime Navy submarine commanders from 2001 to 2009* (Publication No. 28769434)
[Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts Global]. ProQuest
Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. American Psychological Association.

- Pfaff, A. C. (2022). Professionalizing special operations forces. *Parameters U.S. Army War College*, 52(3), 111–125.
- Polson, S. H. (2020). *The grit factor: Courage, resilience & leadership in the most male-dominated organization in the world*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Ponnock, A., Muenks, K., Morell, M., Yang, J., Gladstone, J. R., Wigfield, A. (2020). Grit and conscientiousness: Another jangle fallacy. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 89(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2020.104021>
- Price, R. S. (2015, December 10). CNO identified 4 core attributes to guide Navy leaders. *Military News*. https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/news/quarterdeck/cno-identifies-4-core-attributes-to-guide-navy-leaders/article_28a074de-9cb5-5431-9b80-621552c46794.html
- Protection of Human Subjects, 45 C.F.R. § 46 (2009). <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/ohrp/policy/ohrpreulations.pdf>
- Raikes, S. (2021). *Transformational leadership and grit as predictors of school counselor burnout* (Publication No. 28866853) [Doctoral dissertation, Capella University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Redmond, S. A., Wilcox, S. L., Campbell, S., Kim, A., Finney, K., Barr, K., & Hassan, A. M. (2015). A brief introduction to the military workplace culture. *IOS Press*, 50(1), 9–20. <https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-141987>
- Reed, J., Pritchet, B. L., & Cutton, D. M. (2012). Grit, conscientiousness, and the transtheoretical model of change for exercise behavior. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 18, 612–619. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105312451866>

- Rego, A., Cavazotte, F., Cunha, M. P., Valverde, C., Meyer, M. & Giustiniano L. (2021). Gritty leaders promoting employees thriving at work. *Journal of Management*, 47(5), 1155–1184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206320904765>
- Rice, V., & Liu, B. (2016). Personal resilience and coping part II: Identifying resilience and coping among U.S. military service members and veterans with implications for work. *IOS Press*, 54(2), 325–333. <https://doi.org/10.3222/WOR-162301>
- Richard, E. M. (2020) Developing employee resilience: The role of leader-facilitated emotion management. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 22(4), 387–403. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422320949143>
- Richardson, J. (2020, August 17) *Navy force structure in the next national defense strategy*. Center for New American Security. <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/navy-force-structure-in-the-next-national-defense-strategy>
- Ritchie, E. C., & Naclerio, A. L. (Eds.). (2015). *Women at war*. Oxford University Press.
- Roberts, C., & Hyatt, L. (2019). *The dissertation journey* (2nd ed.). Corwin.
- Robinson, L., & O’Hanlon, M. E. (2020). *Women warriors: The ongoing story of integrating and diversifying the American armed forces*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/women-warriors-the-ongoing-story-of-integrating-and-diversifying-the-armed-forces/>
- Schilpzand, P., Hekman, D. R., & Mitchell, T. R. (2015). An inductively generated typology and process model of workplace courage. *Organizational Science*, 26(1), 52–77. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2014.0928>

- Schimschal, S. E., & Lomas, T. (2019). Gritty leaders: The impact of grit on positive leadership capacity. *Psychological Reports, 122*(4), 1449-1470.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294118785547>
- Seck, H. H. (2021, June 23). *Active ships in the US Navy*. Military.com.
<https://www.military.com/navy/us-navy-ships.html>
- Service Women's Action Network. (2019). *Women in the military: Where they stand*.
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fd0dd21f269f120630260ee/t/6010286a2e34011cb74e907f/1611671658865/SWAN-Where-we-stand-2019-0416revised.pdf>
- Sheldon, K. M., Jose, P. E., Kashdan, T. B., & Jarden, A. (2015). Personality, effective goal-striving, and enhanced well-being: Comparing 10 candidate personality strengths. *Personality and Personal Psychology, 41*(4), 575–585.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167215573211>
- Simon, G. E., Barber, C., Birnbaum, H. G., Frank, R. G., Greenberg, P. E., Rose, R. M., Wang, P. S., Kessler, R. C. (2001) Depression and work productivity: The comparative costs of treatment versus nontreatment. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 43*(1), 2-9. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00043764-200101000-00002>
- Singh, K., & Jha, S. D. (2008). Positive and negative affect and grit as predictors of happiness and life satisfaction. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology, 34*(1), 40–45.
- Skovlund, M. (2019, May 13). *The legend of senior chief Shannon Kent*. Station HYPO: Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future of Navy Cryptology.
<https://stationhypo.com/2021/05/11/the-legend-of-chief-shannon-kent/>

- Small, S. C. (1998). Women in American military history 1776-1918. *Military Review*, 78(2), 101–105.
- Smith, R. (2022). Department of the Navy: The master chief petty officer of the Navy. https://media.defense.gov/2022/Jun/08/2003013493/-1/-1/1/2022%20CPO%20INITIATION%20LETTER_FINAL.PDF
- Southwick, D. A., Chia-Jung, T., & Duckworth, A. L. (2020). Grit at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 39(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2020.100126>
- Spall, B. (n.d.). The core values of the Navy. <https://benjaminspall.com/core-values-navy/>
- Sriram, R., Glanzer, P. L., & Allen, C. C. (2018). What contributes to self-control and grit: The key factors in college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 59(3), 259–273. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2018.0026>
- Statista. (n.d.). Total military personnel of the U.S. Navy from the FY 2021 to FY 2023, by rank. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/239345/history-of-military-personnel>
- Stogdill, R. M. (1948). Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature. *Journal of Psychology*, 25(1), 35–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1948.9917362>
- Stoltz, P. G. (2015). Leadership grit: What new research reveals. *Leader to Leader*, 2015(78), 49–55. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ltl.20205>
- Stoner, C. (2021, June 25). *Women in submarines: 10 years later*. U.S. Navy Office of Information. <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2671640/women-in-submarines-10-years-later/>

- Stutterheim, S. E., & Ratcliffe, S.E. (2021). Understanding and addressing stigma through qualitative research: Four reasons why we need qualitative studies. *Stigma and Health*, 6(1), 8–19. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sah0000283>
- Tharion, W. J., Friedl, K. E., Lavoie, E. M., Walker, L. A., McGraw, S. M., & McClung, H. L. (2022). Psychological and sociological profile of women who have completed elite military combat training. *Armed Forces & Society*, 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X221076555>
- Thomas, J. J. (2009). *Leader development in the U.S. Department of Defense: A brief historical review and assessment for the future*. The Admiral James. B. Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership. https://www.usna.edu/Ethics/_files/documents/Leader%20Development%20History%20Thomas.pdf
- Thompson, L. (2019). *In brief: The logic of aircraft carrier strike groups*. Lexington Institute. <https://www.lexingtoninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Brief-The-Logic-of-Aircraft-Carrier-Strike-Groups2.pdf>
- Today. (2019, January 2). *How one army veteran is building a community of female leaders* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJrkqyZ_54w&t=130s
- Ullah, S., Khan, N., & Baloch, M. (2021) Examining the role of grit in the relationship between servant leadership and work performance: An empirical study of higher education sector of Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 190–201. [https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2021\(2-III\)18](https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2021(2-III)18)

- U.S. Department of Defense. (2012, April 20). *Department of Defense diversity and inclusion strategic plan 2012-2017*.
https://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/DoD_Diversity_Strategic_Plan_%20final_as%20of%2019%20Apr%2012%5B1%5D.pdf
- U.S. Department of Defense. (2020a). *2020 demographics profile: Navy active duty members*. <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Infographic/2020-demographics-active-duty-navy-members.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Defense. (2020b). *2020 demographics: Profile of the military community*. <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2020-demographics-report.pdf>
- U.S. Department of the Army. (2020). *Special forces detachment mission planning guide*.
https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/gta31_01_003.pdf
- U.S. Department of the Navy. (n.d.). *Department of the Navy core values charter*.
<https://www.secnav.navy.mil/ethics/pages/corevaluescharter.aspx>
- U.S. Navy. (2021). *Celebrating Navy women: Perseverance and achievements*. U.S. Navy Publishing. https://media.defense.gov/2021/Mar/16/2002601542/-1/-1/1/2021_WIN%20EBOOK.PDF
- Vasconcelos, A. F. (2018). Gender and leadership stereotypes theory: Is it reaching the boundaries? *Management Research Review*, *41*, 1336–1348.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-04-2017-0131>

- Von Culin, K. R., Tsukayama, E., & Duckworth, A. L. (2014). Unpacking grit: Motivational correlates of perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 9*(4), 306–312.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2014.898320>
- Wamsley, H. C. (2022, August 31). *First woman ‘chief of the boat’ reports to Louisiana (gold)*. <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3145786/first-woman-chief-of-the-boat-reports-to-louisiana-gold/>
- Weatherford, D. (2009) *American women during World War II: An encyclopedia*. Routledge.
- Webber, B., & Forster, J. (2017). Next generation leadership. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 156*, 43–52. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20250>
- Webber, T. B. (2002). *Navy core values: Curriculum for transformation* (Publication No. 20020710 021) [Master’s thesis, Candler School of Theology]. Defense Technical Information Center. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA403712.pdf>
- Witt, L., Bellafaire, J., Binkler, M., & Granrud, B. (2005). *A defense weapon known to be of value: Servicewomen of the Korean War era*. University Press of New England.
- Wyatt-Thermil, C. R. (2021). *Leadership, grit, and emotional intelligence: Perceptions of Black female university presidents* (Publication No. 28415897) [Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Ziezulewicz, G. (2021, May 19). SECNAV: *Navy seeking more mental health funding in upcoming budget*. Navy Times. <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2021/05/19/secnav-navy-seeking-more-mental-health-funding-in-upcoming-budget/>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Synthesis Matrix

Works Cited	Theoretical Foundations					Military Specific				Theoretical Framework						Background				
	Exemplary Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Women Leaders	Military	Female Military Leaders	Navy	Navy Leadership	Grit	Military Grit	Courage	Conscientiousness	Resilience	Long-term Goals	Excellence vs. Perfection	Women in Military History	Leadership History	Navy History	Study Methods
American Association of University Women. (n.d.) Workplace and economic equity. https://www.aauw.org/issues/equity/					X															
America's Navy. (n.d.-a). Our core attributes. https://www.navy.mil/About/Our-Core-Attributes	X					X		X	X										X	
America's Navy. (n.d.-b). Our core values. https://www.navy.mil/About/Our-Core-Values	X					X		X	X										X	
America's Navy. (n.d.-c). Women in the Navy. https://www.navy.com/who-we-are/women-in-the-navy					X	X	X		X	X	X						X	X	X	
Arias, A. E. (2017). Grit attributes demonstrated by school superintendents in California urban school settings (Publication No.10599929) [Doctoral dissertation, Pepperdine University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.	X									X		X	X	X	X	X				
Bass, B. M. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership. <i>European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology</i> , 8(1), 9–32. https://doi.org/10.1.1.5690.945	X	X	X	X														X		
Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2008). <i>The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications</i> (4th ed.). Free Press.	X	X	X	X														X		
Baldor, L. C. (2021). 1st female sailor completes Navy special warfare training. <i>Military.com</i> . https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/07/15/1st-female-sailor-completes-navy-special-warfare-training.html	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		X	
Benmelech, E., & Frydman, C. (2015). Military CEOs. <i>Journal of Financial Economics</i> , 117(1), 43–59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfineco.2014.04.009	X	X				X		X	X	X								X		
Bigelow, L., Lundmark, L., Parks, J. M., & Wuebker, R. (2014). Skirting the issues: Experimental evidence of gender bias in IPO prospectus evaluations. <i>Journal of Management</i> , 40(6), 1732–1759. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206312441624					X		X		X	X								X		
Blalock, D. V., Young, K. C., & Kleiman, E. M. (2015). Stability amidst turmoil: Grit buffers the effects of negative life events on suicidal ideation. <i>Psychiatry Research</i> , 228(3), 781–784. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2015.04.041	X	X		X	X					X		X								

<i>Works Cited</i>	<i>Theoretical Foundations</i>				<i>Military Specific</i>				<i>Theoretical Framework</i>						<i>Background</i>					
	Exemplary Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Women Leaders	Military	Female Military Leaders	Navy	Navy Leadership	Grit	Military Grit	Courage	Conscientiousness	Resilience	Long-term Goals	Excellence vs. Perfection	Women in Military History	Leadership History	Navy History	Study Methods
Christensen, R., & Knezek, G. (2014). Comparative measures of grit, tenacity and perseverance, <i>International Journal of Learning Teaching and Research</i> 8(1), 16-30.									X		X		X				X			
Clark, R. S. (2016). Grit within the context of career success: A mixed-methods study (Publication No.10144935) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.	X								X									X		
Correll, D. S. (2021, August 20). This Navy Captain is now the first woman commanding a nuclear aircraft carrier. <i>Navy Times</i> . https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2021/08/20/this-navy-captain-is-now-the-first-woman-commanding-a-nuclear-aircraft-carrier/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X						X	X	X	
Cote, O. R. (2019) Invisible nuclear-armed submarine, or transparent oceans? Are ballistic missile submarines still the best deterrent for the United States? <i>Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists</i> , 75(1) 30-35. https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2019.1555998						X		X	X								X	X	X	
Crede, M., Tynan, M. C., & Harms, P.D. (2017). Much ado about grit: A meta-analytic synthesis of the grit literature. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 113(3), 492-511. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000102									X	X	X							X		
Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). <i>Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches</i> . (5th ed). Sage.																				X
Crites, S. N., Dickson, K. E., & Lorenz, A. (2015). Nurturing gender stereotypes in the face of experience: A study of leader gender, leadership style, and satisfaction. <i>Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications, and Conflict</i> , 19(1), 1-23.	X	X			X													X		
Dannatt, R. (2011). <i>Leading from the front: The autobiography</i> . Corgi Books.	X	X			X	X	X	X	X								X	X	X	
Dawson, S. T. (2019). Women and the Second World War. <i>International Journal of Military History and Historiography</i> , 2(39) 171-180. https://doi.org/10.1163/24683302-03902002	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	X	X	
Del Toro, C. (2022, July 12). SECNAV delivers remarks at the joint women's leadership symposium [Speech audio recording]. https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/Speeches/display-speeches/Article/3090517/secnav-delivers-remarks-at-the-joint-womens-leadership-symposium/					X	X	X	X	X								X	X	X	
Department of the Navy Core Values Character. (n.d.) Department of the Navy. https://www.secnav.navy.mil/ethics/pages/corevaluescharter.aspx							X	X	X								X	X	X	

Works Cited	Theoretical Foundations					Military Specific				Theoretical Framework					Background				
	Exemplary Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Women Leaders	Military	Female Military Leaders	Navy	Navy Leadership	Grit	Military Grit	Courage	Conscientiousness	Resilience	Long-term Goals	Excellence vs. Perfection	Women in Military History	Leadership History	Navy History
Desing, M. T. (2020) How veteran teachers perceive the influence of personal grit: A case study (Publication No. 28148223) [Doctoral Dissertation, Grand Canyon University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.	X									X	X	X		X			X		
DoD Office of the Actuary. (2018, July). Statistical report on the military retirement system: Fiscal year 2017. https://actuary.defense.gov/Portals/15/Documents/MRS_StatRpt_2017%20v4.pdf?ver=EyLi_m0EtY6jgX9GeLMxw%3D%3D					X	X	X	X	X								X	X	
Duckworth, A. (2016) Grit: The power of passion and perseverance. Scribner.	X	X			X				X	X							X		
Duckworth, A. L., & Gross, J. J. (2014). Self-control and grit: Related but separate determinants of success. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 23(5), 319–325. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721414541462									X		X		X				X		
Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 92(6), 1087–1101. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.6.1087	X				X				X		X		X				X		
Duckworth, A. L., & Quinn, P. D., (2009). Development and validation of the Short Grit Scale (Grit-S). <i>Journal of Personality Assessment</i> , 91(2), 166–174. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223890802634290									X										X
Dweck, C. (2006) <i>Mindset: The new psychology of success</i> . Random House.	X	X	X	X													X		
Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2003). The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence. <i>The Leadership Quarterly</i> , 14(6), 807–834. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.09.004	X				X		X	X	X								X	X	
Eskreis-Winkler, L., Shulman, E. P., Beal, S. A., & Duckworth, A. L. (2014). The grit effect: Predicting retention in the military, the workplace, school, and marriage. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i> , 5(36), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00036	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X						X		
Finch, M. (1994). <i>Women in combat: One commissioner report</i> . Minerva Inc, XII (1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.2227.86303	X					X	X	X	X		X					X	X	X	
Fraser, P. A. (2016). <i>Damn the torpedoes! Applying the Navy's leadership principles to business</i> . Naval Institute Press.	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X							X	X	

<i>Works Cited</i>	<i>Theoretical Foundations</i>				<i>Military Specific</i>				<i>Theoretical Framework</i>						<i>Background</i>					
	Exemplary Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Women Leaders	Military	Female Military Leaders	Navy	Navy Leadership	Grit	Military Grit	Courage	Conscientiousness	Resilience	Long-term Goals	Excellence vs. Perfection	Women in Military History	Leadership History	Navy History	Study Methods
Gandolfi, F., & Stone, S. (2018). Leadership, leadership styles, and servant leadership. <i>Journal of Management Research</i> , 18(4), 261–272. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Franco-andolfi/publication/340940468_Leadership_Leadership_Styles_and_Servant_Leadership.pdf	X			X	X													X		
Gavin, L. (2020) <i>American Women in World War I</i> . University Press of Colorado.	X				X	X	X	X	X		X						X	X	X	
Gilday, L. (2021) <i>Celebrating Navy women: Perseverance and achievements</i> . U.S. Navy Publishing. https://media.defense.gov/2021/Mar/16/2002601542/-1/-1/1/2021_WIN%20EBOOK.PDF					X	X	X	X	X	X							X	X	X	
Gildea, R. (2015). <i>Fighters in the shadows: A new history of the French Resistance</i> . Harvard University Press.	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		X	
Gipson, A. N., Pfaff, D. L., Mendelsohn, D. B., Catenacci, L. T., & Burke, W. W. (2017). Women and leadership: Selection, development, leadership style, and performance. <i>The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science</i> , 53(1), 32-65. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886316687247	X	X			X					X								X		
Goldsmith, C. (2019). <i>Women in the military: From drill sergeants to fighter pilots</i> . Lerner Publishing.	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	X	X	
Grafton, E., Gillespie, B., & Henderson, S. (2010). <i>Resilience: The power within</i> . <i>Oncology Nursing Forum</i> , 37(6), 698–705. https://doi.org/10.1188/10.onf.698-705										X			X							
Grant Thornton. (2020). <i>Women in business 2020: Putting the blueprint into action</i> . https://www.grantthornton.global/globalassets/1.-member-firms/global/insights/women-in-business/2020/women-in-business-2020_report.pdf	X				X												X	X		
Gray, J. (2021, October 7). <i>A glimpse back at the important role of the U.S. Navy shore enterprise through history</i> . <i>Military News</i> . https://www.militarynews.com/news/a-glimpse-back-at-the-important-role-of-the-u-s-navy-shore-enterprise-through/article_f315db28-253f-11ec-aab6b7dc02776611.html						X		X											X	
Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). <i>The servant as leader</i> . Center for Applied Studies.	X			X														X		
Groselj, M., Cerne, J., Penger, S., & Grah, B. (2021). Authentic and transformational leadership and innovative work behavior: The moderating role of psychological empowerment. <i>European Journal of Innovation Management</i> , 24(3), 677-706. https://doi.org/10.1108/ejim-10-2019-0924 .	X	X	X															X		

<i>Works Cited</i>	<i>Theoretical Foundations</i>					<i>Military Specific</i>				<i>Theoretical Framework</i>					<i>Background</i>					
	Exemplary Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Women Leaders	Military	Female Military Leaders	Navy	Navy Leadership	Grit	Military Grit	Courage	Conscientiousness	Resilience	Long-term Goals	Excellence vs. Perfection	Women in Military History	Leadership History	Navy History	Study Methods
Guion, L. A. (2002). Triangulation: Establishing the validity of qualitative studies. University of Florida Extension. https://sites.duke.edu/niou/files/2014/07/W13-Guion-2002-Triangulation-Establishing-the-Validity-of-Qualitative-Research.pdf																				X
Hacker, B. C., & Vining, M. (Eds.). (2012). A companion to women's military history. Brill.	X				X	X	X	X	X		X						X	X	X	
Halliday, L., Walker, A., Vig, S., Hines, J., & Brecknell, J. (2016). Grit and burnout in UK doctors: A cross-sectional study across specialties and stages of training. <i>Postgraduate Medical Journal</i> , 93, 389-394. https://doi.org/10.1136/postgradmedj-2015-133919	X								X		X	X	X							
Harry, B., Sturges, K. M., & Klingner, J. K. (2005). Mapping the process: An exemplar of process and challenge in grounded theory analysis. <i>Educational Researcher</i> , 34(2), 3-13. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X034002003																				X
Hollis, E. T. (2014). Leadership styles: A phenomenological study of transformational, transactional, and situational leadership styles employed by CIOs at military combatant commands (Publication No. 3620687) [Doctoral dissertation, Capella University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.	X	X		X		X		X										X		
Hougaard, R., & Carter, J. (2018). The mind of the leader: How to lead yourself, your people, and your organization for extraordinary results. Harvard Business Press.	X	X																X		
Hough, L. M. (1992). The big five personality variables construct confusion: Description versus prediction. <i>Human Performance</i> , 5(1), 139-155. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327043hup0501&2_8	X	X									X	X						X		
Hunt, V., Yee, L., Prince, S., & Dixon-Fyle, S. (2018). Delivering through diversity. McKinsey & Company. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/delivering-through-diversity	X				X															
Iskra, D. M. (2010). Women in the united states armed forces: A reference handbook. Library of Congress Publication.					X	X	X	X	X		X						X	X	X	
Jachimowicz, J. M., Wihler, A., Bailey, E. R., & Galinsky, A. D. (2018). Why grit requires perseverance and passion to positively predict performance. <i>Psychological and Cognitive Sciences</i> , 115(40), 9980-9985. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1803561115	X								X				X					X		

<i>Works Cited</i>	<i>Theoretical Foundations</i>					<i>Military Specific</i>				<i>Theoretical Framework</i>						<i>Background</i>				
	Exemplary Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Women Leaders	Military	Female Military Leaders	Navy	Navy Leadership	Grit	Military Grit	Courage	Conscientiousness	Resilience	Long-term Goals	Excellence vs. Perfection	Women in Military History	Leadership History	Navy History	Study Methods
Lacap, J. G. (2020) Reducing employees' intention to quit: The effects of transformational leadership, employee engagement, and grit. <i>Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences</i> , 41(3) 665-670. https://doi.org/10.34044/j.kjss.2020.41.3.33	X	X		X					X			X								
Lauer, D. J. (2021) Grit: A comparison of military versus non-military students at a private Christian university (Publication No. 2605641186) [Doctoral dissertation, Charleston Southern University]. <i>ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global</i> .	X				X	X		X	X		X							X	X	
Leahy, J. F. (2004). <i>Ask the Chief: Backbone of the Navy</i> . Naval Institute Press.	X				X	X	X	X	X	X							X	X	X	
Lee, G., & Elliott-Lee, D. (2006). <i>Courage: The backbone of leadership</i> . Jossey-Bass.	X								X		X									
Lendon, B., Essig, B., & Jozuka, E. (2022, May 17). First woman to command US aircraft carrier didn't even know she could get the job. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/16/asia/us-navy-woman-aircraft-carrier-commander-intl-hnk-ml/index.html	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X						X	X	X	
Lucas, G. M., Gratch, J., Cheng L., & Marsella, S. (2015). When the going gets tough: Grit predicts costly perseverance. <i>Journal of Research in Personality</i> , 59(4), 15-22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2015.08.004									X		X		X							
Luning, C. R., Attoh, P. A., Gong, T., & Fox, J. T. (2021). A culture of organizational grit from the perspective of U.S. military officer: A qualitative inquiry. <i>Armed Forces & Society</i> , 48(3), 542-570. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X20985197	X					X		X	X	X	X							X	X	
Martin, S. (2019 September 27). Why you should strive for excellence not perfection. Psych Central. https://psychcentral.com/blog/imperfect/2019/09/why-you-should-strive-for-excellence-not-perfection#The-difference-between-excellence-and-perfection									X						X					
McMillan J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). <i>Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry</i> (7th ed). Pearson.																				X
Military Leadership Diversity Commission. (2011, March 15). <i>From representation to inclusion: Diversity leadership for the 21st-century military report</i> . https://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Special%20Feature/MLDC_Final_Report.pdf	X				X		X	X	X								X	X		
Miller, C. A. (2017). <i>Getting grit: The evidence-based approach to cultivating passion, perseverance, and purpose</i> . Sounds True Publishing.	X								X		X							X		
Miller, R. R. (2014). A study of leadership differences between U.S. Navy Master Chiefs in carrier-based aviation squadrons (Publication No. 3644835) [Doctoral dissertation, Capella University]. <i>ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global</i> .	X	X			X	X	X	X	X									X	X	

<i>Works Cited</i>	<i>Theoretical Foundations</i>					<i>Military Specific</i>				<i>Theoretical Framework</i>					<i>Background</i>					
	Exemplary Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Women Leaders	Military	Female Military Leaders	Navy	Navy Leadership	Grit	Military Grit	Courage	Conscientiousness	Resilience	Long-term Goals	Excellence vs. Perfection	Women in Military History	Leadership History	Navy History	Study Methods
Norkeliunas, D. (2015). Impact glass: How do grit and growth mindset impact career advancement for female heads of independent schools? (Publication No. 10594732) [Doctoral dissertation, Lynn University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.	X			X	X				X											
Nuciari, M (2006). Women in the military. <i>Sociology of the Military</i> , 30(2), 279–297. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-34576-0_16					X	X	X		X							X				
O’Conner, C. M. (2018). Women of vision: Understanding the ways women lead change. <i>Christian Higher Education</i> , 17(4), 198–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2018.1462741	X	X			X				X		X					X				
Oppel, R. A. (2019, February 8) Her title: Cryptologic technician. Her occupation: Warrior. <i>New York Times</i> . https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/08/us/shannon-kent-military-spy.html	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X		X		
O’Reilly, C. A., & Pfeffer, J. (2000). How great companies achieve extraordinary results with ordinary people [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x302_fDLJnk	X	X			X				X											
Oyler, J. D., Pryor, M. G., & Haden, S. S. P. (2011). The good ol’ boy system: Alive and well at Laocoön Aeronautics Corporation. <i>Journal of the International Academy for Case Studies</i> , 17(5) 61–72. https://doi.org/287246417						X		X	X											
Parris, D. L., & Peachey, J. W. (2013). A systematic literature review of servant leadership theory in organizational contexts. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 113(3), 377-393. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1322-6	X			X	X				X								X			
Patten, M. L., & Newhart, M. (2018). <i>Understanding research methods: An overview of essentials</i> (10th ed). Routledge.																				X
Pattinson, J. (2007) <i>Behind enemy lines: Gender, passing and the special operations executive in the Second World War</i> . Manchester University Press.	X				X	X	X	X	X							X	X	X		
Patton, M. Q. (2015). <i>Qualitative research & evaluation methods</i> (4th ed.) Sage.																				X
Perlis, M. (2013). Five characteristics of grit: How many do you have? <i>Forbes Magazine</i> . Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/margaretperlis/2013/10/29/5-characteristics-of-grit-what-it-is-why-you-need-it-and-do-you-have-it/	X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. P. (2004). <i>Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification</i> . American Psychological Association.	X								X		X	X	X							
Pfaff, A. C. (2022). Professionalizing special operations forces. <i>Parameters U.S. Army War College</i> , 52(3) 111-125.	X				X	X			X		X						X	X		

<i>Works Cited</i>	<i>Theoretical Foundations</i>					<i>Military Specific</i>				<i>Theoretical Framework</i>					<i>Background</i>				
	Exemplary Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Women Leaders	Military	Female Military Leaders	Navy	Navy Leadership	Grit	Military Grit	Courage	Conscientiousness	Resilience	Long-term Goals	Excellence vs. Perfection	Women in Military History	Leadership History	Navy History
Robinson, L., & O' Hanlon, M. E. (2020). Women warriors: The ongoing story of integrating and diversifying the American armed forces. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/essay/women-warriors-the-ongoing-story-of-integrating-and-diversifying-the-armed-forces/	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	
Schilpzand, P., Hekman, D. R., & Mitchell, T. R. (2015). An inductively generated typology and process model of workplace courage. <i>Organizational Science</i> , 26(1), 52–77. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2014.0928	X	X							X		X								
Schimschal, S. E., & Lomas, T. (2019). Gritty leaders: The impact of grit on positive leadership capacity. <i>Psychological Reports</i> , 122(4), 1449-1470. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294118785547	X	X		X	X	X			X		X						X		
Seck, H. H. (2021, June 23). Active ships in the US Navy. Military.com https://www.military.com/navy/us-navy-ships.html						X	X										X	X	
Service Women's Action Network. (2019). Women in the military: Where they stand. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fd0dd21f269f120630260ee/t/6010286a2e34011cb74e907f1611671658865/SWAN-Where-we-stand-2019-0416revised.pdf					X	X	X	X	X								X	X	X
Sheldon, K. M., Jose, P. E., Kashdan, T. B., & Jarden, A. (2015). Personality, effective goal-striving, and enhanced well-being: Comparing 10 candidate personality strengths. <i>Personality and Personal Psychology</i> , 41(4), 575-585. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167215573211	X								X					X	X				
Singh, K. & Jha, S. D. (2008). Positive and negative affect, and grit as predictors of happiness and life satisfaction. <i>Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology</i> , 34 (1), 40-45.	X								X		X	X	X	X	X				
Skovlund, M. (2019, May 13). The legend of senior chief Shannon Kent. Station HYPO: Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future of Navy Cryptology. https://stationhypo.com/2021/05/11/the-legend-of-chief-shannon-kent/	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	
Small, S. C. (1998). Women in American military history 1776-1918. <i>Military Review</i> , 78(2), 101-105. https://search.ebscohost.com.umassglobal.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mth&AN=1085100&site=ehost-live&scope=site .	X				X	X	X	X	X		X					X	X	X	
Spall, B. (n.d.) The core values of the Navy. https://benjaminspall.com/core-values-navy/							X	X			X							X	
Sriram, R., Glanzer, P. L., & Allen, C. C. (2018). What contributes to self-control and grit: The key factors in college students. <i>Journal of College Student Development</i> , 59(3), 259–273. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2018.0026	X	X		X					X		X	X							

<i>Works Cited</i>	<i>Theoretical Foundations</i>					<i>Military Specific</i>			<i>Theoretical Framework</i>					<i>Background</i>						
	Exemplary Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Servant Leadership	Women Leaders	Military	Female Military Leaders	Navy	Navy Leadership	Grit	Military Grit	Courage	Conscientiousness	Resilience	Long-term Goals	Excellence vs. Perfection	Women in Military History	Leadership History	Navy History	Study Methods
Wamsley, H. C. (2022, August 31). First woman 'Chief of the Boat' reports to Louisiana (gold). https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3145786/first-woman-chief-of-the-boat-reports-to-louisiana-gold/					X		X	X	X	X		X					X		X	
Weatherford, D. (2009) American women during World War II: An Encyclopedia. Routledge.	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		X	
Webber, T. B. (2002) Navy core values: Curriculum for transformation (Publication No. 20020710 021) [Master's thesis, Candler School of Theology]. Defense Technical Information Center. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA403712.pdf	X	X						X	X											
Witt, L., Bellafaire, J., Binkler, M., & Granrud, B. (2005). A defense weapon known to be of value: Servicewomen of the Korean War Era. University Press of New England.	X					X	X	X	X	X		X					X	X	X	
Wyatt-Thermil, C. R. (2021). Leadership, grit, and emotional intelligence: Perceptions of black female university presidents (Publication No. 28415897) [Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.	X	X			X				X		X						X	X		

APPENDIX B

Interview Script

I want to thank you for sharing your valuable experiences with me. I know your time is precious, and I appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview. Making this personal connection with you will significantly benefit my research, and I genuinely appreciate your contribution to this study.

My name is Cache' Hapner. I am a retired Navy Chief Petty Officer. I am a doctoral candidate at UMass Global (formerly Brandman University) in the area of Organizational Leadership. I am a part of a team researching how exemplary leaders utilize five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence vs. perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Our team is conducting approximately 72 interviews with leaders like yourself. Our hope is that the information we gather will provide a clearer picture of what grit is, and how exemplary leaders use principles of grit to lead their organizations to extraordinary accomplishments. Our work also will add to the body of research currently available.

Informed Consent (START RECORDING to obtain verbal consent)

Prior to this interview, you received information concerning the purpose of the research, a copy of the interview questions, UMass Global's Participant's Bill of Rights, and the Informed Consent form. After reviewing the protocols, you were offered an opportunity to ask questions concerning the research and the consent process. At that time, you provided verbal consent to be a participant in the interview. For purposes of verifying your consent, would you again provide a verbal yes as to your consent that will be included in the recording of this interview? Thank you.

I will now begin the interview. When our interview is complete, I will stop the recording and conclude our interview session. After your interview is transcribed, you will receive a copy of the complete transcripts to ensure I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas. Following your review and approval of the transcription, the data will be analyzed along with the data I have collected from the other respondents.

I would like to remind you that any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. I will be looking for themes that are present across all the interviews. In reporting out the data, I will refer to respondents by pseudonyms and not by name, work location, or employer. The digital recording will be erased three years after the publication of the dissertation in accordance with the strict guidelines set forth by the UMass Global Institutional Review Board (IRB) whose major function is to protect respondents.

Please remember that at any time during this process you have the right to stop the interview. If you do not understand the questions being asked, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. Is there anything I can clarify before we begin?

Okay, let us get started, and again, thanks so much for your time.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

Before we begin our interview questions, I want to review the purpose of this study and the five research questions that will be the focus of our interview today.

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify and describe how exemplary leaders (superintendents, principals, city managers, police chiefs, corporate or nonprofit leaders, military leaders, etc.) utilize five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence vs. perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions:

1. How do exemplary leaders use courage to accomplish extraordinary results?
2. How do exemplary leaders use conscientiousness to accomplish extraordinary results?
3. How do exemplary leaders use long-term goals to accomplish extraordinary results?
4. How do exemplary leaders use resilience to accomplish extraordinary results?
5. How do exemplary leaders use excellence vs. perfection to accomplish extraordinary results?

The interview questions will be preceded by a definition of the grit principle that is connected respectively to each of these five research questions.

Note: The phrase *extraordinary results* used in the Purpose Statement and Research Questions is defined as accomplishments where the outcomes are remarkable, surprising, and exceptional; going beyond the standard expectation, not something usual (Hougaard & Carter, 2018; O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000).

Interview Questions

The first principle related to grit that I would like to talk about, and which is found in research question one, is **Courage**.

Definition: Courage is the mental, physical, and moral strength to pursue and accomplish a worthy goal despite the presence of danger or fear (Lee & Elliot-Lee, 2006; Schilpzand, Hekman, and Mitchell, 2008).

Interview Questions #1 and #2

#1. Describe a situation in your organization that required courage in the face of danger or fear to achieve an extraordinary result.

Probing question: Part of being courageous is pushing past fear, how have you personally managed to push past fear to create necessary action?

#2. Leaders often have to choose which challenges to pursue. What causes you, as a leader, to take courageous actions, and what makes you decide not to take action?

Probing question: Was there a time when you regretted not taking action?

We now move to our second principle from research question two, **Conscientiousness**.

Definition: Conscientiousness is a fundamental personality trait that drives the desire and ability to be diligent, organized, achievement-oriented, self-disciplined, and reliable (Perlis, 2013; Jackson et al., 2010).

Interview Questions #3 and #4

#3. All of us are confronted by a variety of competing demands in our jobs. When faced with competing demands, how do you stay organized?

Probing question: How do you minimize distractions during the workday?

#4. There are times when we must make sure the job gets done. Please tell me how you stay self-disciplined to ensure you meet your deadlines.

Probing question: Can you give an example of when being self-disciplined helped you to achieve extraordinary results?

Our third principle from research question three is **Use of Long-Term Goals**.

Definition: Use of Long-term goals reflects utilizing a top-level future outcome that serves as a compass for sustained action, inspiring passion, and consistent focus over long stretches of time (Duckworth et al., 2007 & Jachimowicz, et al., 2018).

Interview Questions #5 and #6

#5. How have you used long-term goal setting to achieve extraordinary results in your organization?

Probing question: How do you know when you need to adjust your established goals?

#6. Can you share an example of when you faced challenges while working toward a long-term goal?

Probing question: What did you do to stay focused?

Our fourth principle found in research question four is **Resilience**.

Definition: Resilience is an individual's ability to adapt and recover from stress and adversity while maintaining or returning to a positive mental state of wellbeing despite hardship (Grafton et al., 2010; Rice & Liu, 2016).

Interview Questions #7 and #8

#7. Can you share a story of a time when you had to overcome a stressful work situation; how were you able to return to a positive mental state of wellbeing?

Probing question: What did you learn from this situation?

#8. How do you continue to cultivate resiliency in your professional journey?

Probing question: What are some strategies that you use to boost your physical and/or mental wellbeing?

Our fifth principle in research question five is **Excellence vs. Perfection**.

Definition: Excellence vs. Perfection is a mindset toward fulfilling one's purpose and prioritizing improvement over a lofty ideal that may not be attainable (Duckworth et al., 2007; Perlis, 2013; Arias, 2017).

Interview Questions #9 and #10

#9. Can you share an example of a time when you prioritized improvement over a lofty ideal?

Probing question: What shaped your mindset towards improvement compared to achieving perfection?

#10. What steps or strategies do you take that help to prioritize continuous improvement?

Probing question: How do you overcome barriers to your work when pursuing improvement or growth?

This concludes the interview questions. I would like to again thank you very much for your time. If you would like, when the results of our research are known, we will send you a copy of our findings.

General Probes

The following additional probes may be used during the interview when you want to get more information and/or expand the conversation with participants. These are not questions you share with the interviewee. It is best to be familiar with them and use conversationally when appropriate to extend their answers.

1. “What did you mean by.....?”
2. “Do you have more to add.....?”
3. “Would you expand upon that a bit....?”
4. “Why do you think that was the case?”
5. “Could you please tell me more about.....?”
6. “Can you give me an example of.....?”
7. “How did you feel about that?”

APPENDIX C

Field Test Interview Reflection Questions

Field Test Observer Reflection Questions

Conducting interviews is a learned skill set/experience. Gaining valuable insight into your interview skills and their effect on the interview will support your data gathering when interviewing the actual participants. As the researcher, you should reflect on the questions below after completing the interview. *After completing the interview field test, you should discuss the following reflection questions with your 'observer.*

The questions are written from your perspective as the interviewer. Before the field-test interview, provide your observer with a copy of these reflective questions. Then you can verbalize your thoughts with the observer, and they can add valuable insight from their observation. After completing this process, you may have edits or changes to recommend for the interview protocol before finalizing.

NOTE: Red font is for your eyes and support info only. The field-test observer only receives or is asked questions 1-9.

1. How long did the interview take? Did the time seem to be appropriate?
2. Were the questions clear, or were there places when the interviewee was unclear?
3. Were there any words or terms used during the interview that were unclear or confusing?
4. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer regarding the preceding descriptors?
5. Did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer regarding the preceding descriptors?
6. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly, and why do you think that was the case?
7. Are there parts of the interview that seemed awkward, and why do you think that was the case?
8. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would it be, and how would you change it?
9. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

APPENDIX D

Field-Test Interview Feedback Questions

Field-Test Interviewee Feedback Questions

While conducting the interview, you should take notes of their clarification request or comments about not being clear about the question. After you complete the interview, ask your field-test interviewee the following clarifying questions. Try not to make it another interview; have a friendly conversation. Either script or record their feedback so you can compare it with the other two team members to develop your feedback report on how to improve the interview questions.

Before the brief post-interview discussion, give the interviewee a copy of the interview protocol as you review the following feedback questions. If their answers imply that improvement is necessary, seek clarification.

1. How did you feel about the interview? Do you think you had ample opportunities to describe what you do as a leader when working with your team or staff?
2. Did you feel the amount of time for the interview was ok?
3. Were the questions clear, or were there places where you were uncertain about what was being asked? If the interviewee indicates some uncertainty, find out where and seek clarification for correction.
4. Can you recall any words or terms being asked about during the interview that were confusing?
5. Furthermore, did I appear comfortable during the interview?

Remember, use standard, conversational language, and a user-friendly approach.

NOTE: Red font is for your eyes and support info only. Field-test participant only receives or is asked questions 1-5.

APPENDIX E

UMIRB Approval

From: **Institutional Review Board** <my@umassglobal.edu>
Date: Fri, Jan 20, 2023 at 11:07 AM
Subject: IRB Application Approved As Submitted: Cache Hapner
To: <chapner@mail.umassglobal.edu>
Cc: <deborah.schreib@umassglobal.edu>, <irb@umassglobal.edu>

Dear Cache Hapner,

Congratulations, your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the UMass Global Institutional Review Board. This approval grants permission for you to proceed with data collection for your research. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix. If any issues should arise that are pertinent to your IRB approval, please contact the IRB immediately at IRB@umassglobal.edu. If you need to modify your IRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research.

The Modification form can be found at the following link:

<https://irb.umassglobal.edu/Applications/Modification.pdf>.

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank you,

Doug DeVore, Ed.D.

Professor

Organizational Leadership

IRB Chair

ddevore@umassglobal.edu

www.umassglobal.edu

APPENDIX F
CITI Certificate



Completion Date 21-May-2021
Expiration Date N/A
Record ID 42635025

This is to certify that:

cache hapner


Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Human Subjects Research
(Curriculum Group)
Social-Behavioral-Educational Researchers
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

University of Massachusetts Global

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.



Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w84eb35bb-25c1-440a-b2bc-69d0cd312752-42635025

APPENDIX G

Invitation to Participate

Dear Veteran,

I am a doctoral candidate in UMASS Global Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program in the School of Education. I am conducting a qualitative phenomenological research study to describe how senior Navy female leaders utilize the five common grit leadership attributes: courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection to accomplish extraordinary results in the Navy organization.

I am asking for your assistance in the study by participating in an interview which will take approximately 60 minutes and will be set up at a time convenient for you through a virtual setting. If you agree to participate in the interview, you can be assured that it will be completely confidential. No names will be attached to any notes or records from the interview. All information will remain in locked files, accessible only to the researchers. No employer will have access to the interview information. You will be free to stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any time. You are also encouraged to ask any questions that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. Further, you may be assured that the researchers are not in any way affiliated with your respective organizations.

The research investigator, Cache' Hapner is available at chapner@mail.umassglobal.edu or by phone at (850) 503-7644 to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Cache' Hapner, Doctoral Candidate, Ed.D.

APPENDIX H

Acknowledgment of Participation

Thank you for responding to my request for volunteers to participate in my research on my doctoral journey. I wanted to clarify this process moving forward and provide some more background information on the study, including outlining definitions on the base of the study.

First, thank you for sharing your valuable experiences with me. I know your time is precious, and I appreciate your willingness to participate in our upcoming interview. Making this personal connection with you will significantly benefit my research, and I genuinely appreciate your contribution to this study.

My name is Cache' Hapner, and I am a retired Navy Chief Petty Officer passionate about understanding and recreating extraordinary results within professional organizations. I am a doctoral candidate at UMass Global (formerly Brandman University) studying Organizational Leadership. I am a part of a team researching how exemplary leaders utilize the five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence vs. perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

My specific research focuses on how senior Navy female leaders in the Navy organization use the five principles associated with grit leadership principles (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence vs. perfection). By understanding how senior Navy female leaders use grit leadership to produce extraordinary results, the actions used by these extraordinary leaders can be recreated for future use. By conducting these interviews and the detailed stories you provide based on your experience, the objective is to create commonalities that can be created for future research on how to create and learn from extraordinary leaders' use of grit characteristics and how it can be used to create extraordinary results in organizations.

Our team is conducting approximately 72 interviews with leaders like yourself. We hope that the information we gather will provide a clearer picture of what grit is and how exemplary leaders use principles of grit to lead their organizations to extraordinary accomplishments. Our work also will add to the body of research currently available.

This research is based on exemplary leaders' ability to have extraordinary results in the Navy organization using five common grit characteristics. Please see the following outlined in more detail below. Additionally, the term extraordinary results have also been defined in this study. I am also available for any additional questions regarding the research before our scheduled interview.

This study's five common grit characteristics are courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence versus perfection.

Courage is the mental, physical, and moral strength to pursue and accomplish a worthy goal despite the presence of danger or fear (Lee, & Elliot-Lee, 2006; Schilpzand, Hekman, and Mitchell, 2008).

Conscientiousness is a fundamental personality trait that drives the desire and ability to be diligent, organized, achievement-oriented, self-disciplined, and reliable (Perlis, 2013; Jackson et al., 2010).

Use of Long-term goals reflects utilizing a top-level future outcome that serves as a compass for sustained action, inspiring passion, and consistent focus over long stretches of time (Duckworth et al., 2007 & Jachimowicz, et. al., 2018).

Resilience is an individual's ability to adapt and recover from stress and adversity while maintaining or returning to a positive mental state of well-being despite hardship (Grafton et al., 2010; Rice & Liu, 2016).

Excellence vs. Perfection is a mindset towards fulfilling one's purpose and prioritizing improvement over a perception of an ideal that may or may not be attainable (Duckworth et al., 2007; Perlis, 2013; Arias, 2017).

Exemplary leadership. A leader who demonstrates consistent commendable behavior based on the demonstration of honorable actions of the right way to be (Fuentes, 2022; Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Exemplary leaders are passionate about what they do and the people they inspire; they use personal purpose, values, and enthusiasm to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations (Kouzes & Posner, 2016).

Extraordinary Results: used in the Purpose Statement and Research Questions is defined as accomplishments where the outcomes are remarkable, surprising, and exceptional, going beyond the standard expectation, not something usual (Hougaard & Carter, 2018; O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000).

Purpose Statement of the Study:

This phenomenological study aimed to identify and describe how exemplary female navy leaders utilize the five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence vs. perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

During our interview I will ask you ten research questions based around the below five research questions. The ten research questions are attached in this email in case additional inquiry is needed before we conduct our interview.

Research Questions:

1. How do exemplary leaders use courage to accomplish extraordinary results?
2. How do exemplary leaders use conscientiousness to accomplish extraordinary results?

3. How do exemplary leaders use long-term goals to accomplish extraordinary results?
4. How do exemplary leaders use resilience to accomplish extraordinary results?
5. How do exemplary leaders use excellence vs. perfection to accomplish extraordinary results?

Once again, thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I know your time is valuable, and I look forward to our scheduled interview. I am available for any questions. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Cache' Hapner at chapner@mail.umassgloba.edu or by phone at 850.503.7644; or my research chair Dr. Deborah Schreiber at deborah.schreib@umassglobal.edu

APPENDIX I

Informed Consent Form



INFORMATION ABOUT: Exemplary Senior Navy Female Leadership: A Study of How Navy Female Leaders Use the Grit Characteristics Courage, Conscientiousness, Long-Term Goals, Resilience, and Excellence Versus Perfection to Create Extraordinary Results Within Their Organizations

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Cache' J. Hapner

PURPOSE OF STUDY: Based on your experience as a senior Navy female leader, you are being asked to participate in a thematic research study conducted by Cache' J. Hapner, a doctoral candidate from UMASS Global, a nonprofit affiliate of the University of Massachusetts. This Informed Consent document provides important information regarding the purpose of the study, risks to study participants, participant confidentiality, participant consent, benefits to the participant, and important study contact information. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to identify and describe how exemplary senior Navy female leaders utilize five principles associated with grit (courage, conscientiousness, long-term goals, resilience, and excellence vs. perfection) to accomplish extraordinary results in the Navy organization. There is a noticeable absence of, and need for, research focusing on how exemplary leaders use these principles associated with grit to deliver results within their organization. The research conducted through this study will offer insight into how successful senior Navy female leaders utilize the characteristics associated with grit to achieve results while honoring their service to the Navy. Findings from this study will be of benefit to current and future exemplary female leaders nationwide as they work to develop their own skills as leaders so that they may have a greater impact in organizations and the communities they serve.

By participating in this study, I agree to participate in an individual interview. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will be conducted electronically using Zoom. In addition to the interview, the researcher may request or review with your permission, publicly available documents associated with your exemplary service while serving in the Navy. Examples of the documents that may be reviewed include newsletters, award citations, articles or other documents and correspondence deemed supportive of this research.

I understand that:

- a. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the researcher will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer, or password protected electronic data file that is available only to the researcher.
- b. The interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and to a professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted, and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study, all recordings will be destroyed. All other data and consents will be securely stored for three years after completion of the data collection and confidentially shredded or fully deleted.
- c. There are no major benefits to my participating in the study. However, a potential benefit may be that I will have an opportunity to identify strategies associated with grit and apply them when working within my organization. The information for this study is intended to inform researchers and leaders about the strategies used by exemplary leaders to accomplish extraordinary results.
- d. If I have any questions or concerns about the research, I am free to contact Cache' J Hapner at chapner@mail.umassglobal.edu or by telephone at (850) 503-7644; or Dr. Deborah Schreiber (Dissertation Chair) at deborah.schreib@umassglobal.edu.

- e. My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study, and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.
- f. No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed, and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMASS GLOBAL, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the “Research Participant’s Bill of Rights.” I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

Signature of Participant

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX J

Research Participants Bill of Rights



UMASS GLOBAL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD Research

Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the UMASS GLOBAL Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The UMass Global Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMASS GLOBAL, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.