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## The Association of Strategies and the Effects of Deployment on Organizational Operations

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## **The Association of Strategies and the Effects of Deployment on Organizational Operations**

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*This study surveyed the Louisiana Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve to determine the strategies associated with the effects of deployment on organizational output, customer satisfaction, and employee behavior. The results reveal that customer complaints and late deliveries are associated with rework, training, employee effort, and work schedule alterations. Team efforts were associated with employee satisfaction, rate in which customers were won or lost, number of customers won or lost, and the quality and quantity of output. The findings indicate that training, team participation, rework, increased employee effort, and work schedule alterations are associated with the effects of deployment. The U.S. relies heavily on military reserves to meet the demand for military personnel (Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 2007; Hartley & Sandler, 1995; Scott, 2001). Moreover, military sources maintain that the cooperation of civilian employers is essential to the missions on the war against terror (Daywalt & Herman, 2006; Scott, 2001).*

The deployment of reserve employees has increased in both duration and frequency, yet organizational capacity to respond to employee loss due to deployment of a reserve employee is restricted by law (Forte, 2007). Moreover, reservists hold positions that are critical to a civilian employer's operations (French & Wolfe, 2008; Palmer, 2005); as a result, when reservists are activated, the effect on the civilian employer is profound (Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 2007; Gotz, 2003; Kirby & Naftel, 2000; Scott, 2001).

Current literature does not adequately address the effects of deployment on organizational performance and the strategies used by employers to counter these effects (Allison-Aipa et al., 2005; Congressional Budget Office (CBO), 2005; Daywalt & Herman, 2006; D.O.D., 2004; Doyle, Gotz, Singer, & Tyson, 2004; Forte, 2007; French & Wolfe, 2002; General Accounting Office (GAO), 2002; Golding, 2007; Gotz, 2003; Hickman, 2006; Kondrasuk, 2004; Settle, 2006). Finally, recent research on deployment indicates a dysfunctional effect on civilian employer operations (Allison-Aipa, De La Rosa, Stetz, & Castro, 2005; Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 2007; Grissmer, Kirby, & Sze, 1992; Scott, 2001; Settle, 2006).

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to examine the association between strategies used to counter the effects of deployment and the effects of deployment on organizational operations. The organizational functions explored include the organization's output, customer satisfaction, and employee behavior. The strategies employed by the civilian employer to cope with the effects of deployment include team building, work schedule alterations, increased work effort, and training.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Deployment and the Cost of Human Capital**

Civilian employers of reservists are confronted with the loss of skills and knowledge, which cannot be replaced unless the employer incorporates strategies such as part-time workers and contract labor which increase the employer's costs (Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 2007; Doyle et al., 2004; Settle, 2006; Weitz, 2007). Moreover, Hitt et al. (2003) suggests that due to the proliferation of the global service economy, human capital has had an increased effect on an organization's value. This

is supported by Carmeli (2004) who found that human capital is correlated to organization financial performance ( $r = 0.40, p < 0.001, N = 98$ ).

Strategies that include training and development of contract employees or part-time employees may not provide the civilian employer with an adequate return on investment. This is due to the relatively short span of time that the civilian employer has to recoup its investment in training the contract employee. Moreover, the employer must also contend with a) lack of ample notice when reservists are deployed, b) paying a premium above the reservist's salary when hiring a temporary replacement through a contract labor agency, c) paying overtime, and d) an increase in labor costs when utilizing spot-labor or part-time labor (CBO, 2005; Doyle et al., 2004; GAO, 2002; Hearing on Employer and Family Support, 2007; Houseman, 2001; Settle, 2006). Thus, there is a need for a study on strategies to replace lost human capital as a result of deployment while simultaneously holding down costs to the employer (Golding, 2007).

## **Deployment and Human Resource Management**

Many organizations use strategic human resource policies to control fluctuations in their labor (Ferguson, Ferguson, Muedder, & Fitzgerald, 2001). However, while increasing in both significance and number, policies specific to reserve deployment are not common (Forte, 2007). In addition to the added costs placed on employers when employees are activated, there is the additional onus of having an employee leave the organization who is perceived as being more productive than those employees who remain and who lack military experience (Allison-Aipa et al., 2005; Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 2007; Daywalt & Herman, 2006; Weitz, 2007).

Reservists are considered important assets; civilian employers often use military reserve experience as a screening device for hiring potential employees. According to Lakhani (1998), employers use military reserve experience to discern between potential employees who have the potential to be stellar performers as opposed to potential new-hires who most likely do not have the same potential (e.g., lack military experience). The rationale behind this strategy is that employees with military experience understand organizational dynamics, and are better team players than individuals who lack military experience (Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 2007; Lakhani, 1998).

Human resource strategies for replacing deployed workers are limited by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA). USERRA mandates that reserve and guard employees must be returned to the same positions they occupied prior to deployment or a similar one (Forte, 2007). Thus, USERRA affects the strategies employed by human resources to replace the reserve employee (Doyle, 2004).

Moreover, the strategic planning function of an organization can suffer if a deployed employee is employed at the executive or managerial level of the company (Daywalt & Herman, 2006; French & Wolfe, 2002; Kondrasuk, 2004). Consistent with these findings Hisey and Kotrlík (2010) found that 19.7% of reserve and guard employees are employed as professionals, managers, or related occupations.

## **Summary of the Review of Literature**

This review highlights the effects of losing a human resource on the organization and strategies employed to counter these effects. Burt (1992) and Hitt et al. (2003) maintain that the relationships between all of the organization's resources are inimitable and valuable. Further, scant research on the effects of deployment has lead many researchers to call for more studies on the effects of deployment on organizational performance (Golding, 2007; Gotz, 2003; Hutchinson et al., 1997; Staw, 1980).

The effects of governmental policy on civilian employers includes increased costs to not only find and train replacement employees, but also lost business opportunities (Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 2007; Settle, 2006; Weitz, 2007). Deployments occur with little or no advance notice to the employer. Thus, the duration, timing, and frequency of the deployments are unknown to the organization's management, which has an adverse effect on operations (Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 2007; Golding, 2007). Moreover, military sources indicate that the frequency and duration of deployments will increase (Davis & Shapiro, 2003; Hartley & Sandler, 1995).

Historically, replacing activated reservists with contract and part time labor does not restore the civilian employer to its pre-deployment level of operational efficiency (Doyle et al., 2004). This problem is exacerbated by the fact that many activated employees hold important positions in companies: such as business owner, executive, or manager; or have jobs important to the well-being of society: specifically, law enforcement, medical, and aviation personnel (Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 2007; French & Wolfe, 2002; Hartley & Sandler, 1995; Hickman, 2006; Palmer 2005; Scott, 2001). Yet, little is written about strategies to adapt to deployment and organizational performance (Golding 2007; Gotz, 2003).

Moreover, the few human resource strategies a civilian employer may employ include establishment of policies within the constraints of the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (Forte, 2007; Golding, 2007). Thus, human resource policies to manage deployment are constrained by law and are hampered by the unpredictable nature of deployment. Therefore, based on this review of literature, this study will explore the effects of deployment on civilian employer output, employee behavior, and customer satisfaction; and the associated strategies used to counter the effects of deployment on the civilian employer.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE ONE**

Research Objective One is to determine if there is an association between the perceived effects of deployment on customer satisfaction and strategies to counter the effects of deployment on customer satisfaction. The measures of customer satisfaction are customer complaints, changes in the size of the customer population served by the organization, rate at which the civilian employer gained and lost customers, and overall quality of the organization's output; the strategy measures are customer compensation for inferior service, number of times the same customer had to receive additional services or product replacements due to poor quality, and training in customer satisfaction, (Anderson et al., 2004; Lapre & Tsikriktsis, 2006; Mittal et al., 2005; Morrow & McElroy, 2007).

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE TWO**

Research Objective Two is to determine if there is an association between the perceived effects of deployment on employee behavior and strategies to counter the effects of deployment on employee behavior. The measures of employee behavior are overall employee behavior, number of employee resignations, number of employee absences, and employee satisfaction; the strategy measure is number of team efforts (Allison-Aipa et al., 2005).

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE THREE**

Research Objective Three is to determine if there is an association between the perceived effects of deployment on product or service output and strategies to counter the effects of deployment on product or service output. The measures of product or service output are output volume, and the number of late product or service deliveries; the strategy measures are level of employee effort, number of work schedule

changes, and amount of training on process efficiency (Allison-Aipa et al., 2005; Bhavani & Tendulkar, 2001; Doyle et al., 2004; Morrow & McElroy, 2007).

## **INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT**

The questions on the instrument were derived from the researcher's experience, the review of literature, the research objectives, and the pilot study. A five point Likert-type scale that ranged from "substantial decrease" to "substantial increase" was used to measure the change in operations and the strategies employed. Finally, the researcher created the survey instrument for this study after a thorough search of the literature revealed that existing instruments would not be valid for this study.

A panel of content experts was contacted in person, by phone, email, and/or mail to establish the content validity of the instrument. Content validity was determined using the Rubio, Berg-Weger, Tebb, Lee and Rauch (2003) content validity index (CVI) calculation. In addition to the CVI, the researcher measured the factorial validity index (FVI) (Rubio et al., 2003). An FVI value of greater than 0.7 and a CVI value of greater than 0.80 was established *á priori* as the criteria for determining if the instrument was valid for this study (Robinson, Shaver, Wrightsman, 1991).

The instrument scored a CVI of .81 and an FVI of .91. The CVI indicated that there was an 81% agreement amongst the content experts on the content validity of the instrument. The FVI indicated that 91% of the content experts agreed that the objectives of the study and the questions on the instrument were correlated.

## **PILOT STUDY**

The pilot study was conducted using a random sample drawn from the ESGR database chosen to prevent contamination of the sample used for the study. The reliability of the scales in the instrument was measured using Cronbach's *alpha*. A Cronbach's *alpha* of greater than 0.7 was used as the criteria for determining if the instrument was a reliable measure for this study (Robinson et al., 1991).

Data collected from the pilot study indicated that the instrument appeared to be reliable for this study, based on a Cronbach alpha of .733, which is in the range of acceptance, established *á priori*. Based on the results of the pilot study, the instrument remained unchanged for data collection, thus the responses for the pilot study were incorporated into the data collected for the study.

## **SAMPLE**

This exploratory study utilized survey methodology to determine if there are associations between the effects of deployment on organizational operations and the strategies employed by organizations to counter those effects. The target and accessible population for this study was derived from 1109 employers in Louisiana who are members of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), which represents 19.2 % of the estimated employers of reservists in the state of Louisiana. Sample size calculations were derived from Cochran's Sample size formula, Cochran (1977).

## **DATA COLLECTION**

The survey was conducted between March and May of 2009. Prior to mailing the questionnaire; the researcher contacted potential respondents by telephone, email, or by written correspondence to increase the probability that the questionnaire would be answered by an individual familiar with the effects of deployment on an organization's operations and the strategies employed to counter these effects. These individuals included supervisors, human resource managers, or line managers aware of the effects that deployment has on the organization and its operations.

The data gathered during the pilot study as well as the survey comprised a total of 534 contacts attempted, which led to 206 agreements to participate in the survey, providing 125 responses; of which 117 of the responses were usable, yielding a response rate of 56.8 %. Of the 117 usable responses 25 (21.4%) were collected during the telephone follow-up phase of data gathering. An independent samples *t* test indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between the responses of the early and late respondents.

## FINDINGS

### Principal Component Analysis

Due to its superiority in producing a simplified model and its popularity varimax was chosen as the rotation method for all principal component analyses (PCA) (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006; Norusis, 2005). Moreover, oblique rotational methods were not considered given the exploratory nature of the research. Finally, the researcher felt that the varimax method would provide the simplest model with the best explanatory power.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) was a .681 after removal of all measures with a sampling adequacy value below .500. Eighteen variables using a Likert-type scale were analyzed with 117 usable responses providing over six cases per variable.

In addition, five of the 13 remaining variables had extraction values greater than 0.5, four of the values ranged between 0.4 and 0.5, and the remaining four ranged from 0.185 to 0.281. Finally, there were 51 (65 %) non-redundant residuals with absolute values greater than 0.05. This may be a result of the multi-dimensionality of the instrument. PCA extracted two components from the data with loadings greater than 0.423. Critical statistics from the PCA are included in Table 1.

**TABLE 1. CRITICAL STATISTICS FROM THE PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS (PCA)**

Component	Number of Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Eigen Values	% Variance Explained	Cumulative Variance Explained
1. Performance / Satisfaction	7	.78	3.25	25.00	25.00
2. Behavior / Satisfaction	6	.70	2.45	18.86	43.84
3.	N/A	N/A	1.62	12.49	56.33
4.	N/A	N/A	1.10	8.50	64.83
5.	N/A	N/A	0.95	7.31	72.14

### Component One (Performance / Satisfaction)

Table 2 indicates that the organizational output strategies increased work effort, work schedule alterations, and training along with the customer satisfaction strategies rework and training are associated with the organizational output measure late deliveries and the customer satisfaction measure customer complaints. Comparing the individual means to the grand mean level of effort and work schedule alterations are increasing while customer complaints, rework, and late deliveries are decreasing. Level of training remained relatively unchanged. In this component organizational performance is associated with customer satisfaction.

**TABLE 2. MEASURES INCLUDED IN COMPONENT ONE FROM PCA (PERFORMANCE / SATISFACTION)**

Customer Satisfaction	Mean	Loading
How much did the level of client/customer complaints change?	3.10	.66
How much did the level of rework change due to mistakes?	3.14	.65
How much did the amount of time spent training employees on client/customer satisfaction issues change?	3.27	.74
Organizational Output		
How much did the level of effort to produce the organizations output change?	3.38	.63
How much did the number of work schedule alterations change?	3.48	.68
How much did the number of late deliveries of products or services change?	3.11	.42
How much did the amount of time spent training on performance change?	3.31	.73
Grand Mean Performance / Satisfaction component	3.26	

**Component Two (Behavior / Satisfaction)**

Table 3 indicates that the employee behavior strategy team effort is associated with the employee behavior measure employee satisfaction; the customer satisfaction measures quality of output, change in the number of customers served, and the rate at which customers were gained or lost; and the organizational output measure level of output. Comparing the individual means to the grand mean team efforts are increasing while quality and quantity of the organizations output is decreasing. All other measures are relatively unchanged. In this component organizational behavior is associated with customer satisfaction.

**TABLE 3. MEASURES INCLUDED IN COMPONENT TWO FROM PCA (BEHAVIOR / SATISFACTION)**

Employee Behavior	Mean	Loading
How much did the number of employees satisfied with their work change?	2.95	.50
How much did the number of team efforts change?	3.12	.50
Customer Satisfaction		
How much did the number of customers served by your organization change?	3.00	.75
How much did the rate at which your organization gained or lost clients/customers change?	3.02	.46
How much did the overall quality of the organization's output change?	2.81	.74
Organizational Output		
How much did the level of output change?	2.90	.75
Grand Mean Behavior / Satisfaction Component	2.97	

**CONCLUSION ONE**

The customer satisfaction measure level of customer complaints was associated with the customer satisfaction strategies level of rework and time spent training on customer service. In addition, the customer satisfaction measure level of customer complaints was associated with the organizational output strategies level of effort to produce the organizations output, work schedule alterations, and time spent training on employee performance.



Moreover, the customer satisfaction measures change in number of clients served, rate at which the organization gained or lost customers, and change in the quality of the organizations output was associated with the employee behavior strategy number of team efforts. These findings regarding the association of training and team work on organizational performance are consistent with the literature.

Reed et al. (2006) underscored a study by Schein (1990) asserting that social networks such as teams, tends to create a climate for learning and adaptation (e.g. training) that enables organizations to take advantage of opportunities and also avoid threats. Finally, training creates knowledge-based capital (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). Thus, the findings from this study suggest that training in addition to team formation are strategies which are associated with the effects of deployment on customer satisfaction.

## **CONCLUSION TWO**

The employee behavior measure number of employees satisfied with their work was associated with the employee behavior strategy team efforts. Evans (2006) maintained that employee behavior, specifically commitment to the organization, is in part related to the socialization of employees. Steers and Rhodes (1978) stated that human resource strategies, which incorporate cohesive work teams and employee identification with organizational goals and objectives, had a favorable affect on employee satisfaction. Thus, associating team formation with the effects of reserve deployment on employee satisfaction is consistent with previous research.

## **CONCLUSION THREE**

The organizational output measure number of late deliveries was associated with the customer satisfaction strategies level of rework and time spent training on customer satisfaction. In addition, the organizational output measure number of late deliveries was associated with the organizational output strategies increased work effort, work schedule alterations, and time spent training on employee performance.

Finally, respondents indicated that the organizational output measure change in the level of output was associated with the employee behavior strategy team efforts. Thus, respondents indicated that the strategies rework, work effort, rescheduling, and training were associated with late deliveries and the strategy team effort was associated with the level of the organizations output. Table 4 below provides a graphical representation of the measures affected by deployment and the associated strategies.

## **COMPARISON OF THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION TO THE RESULTS**

The results of this study reveal that customer complaints and late deliveries are associated with the strategies rework, training, level of effort, and work schedule alterations. Further, the strategy number of team efforts is associated with employee satisfaction, change in the number of customers, rate at which customers were gained or lost, and the quality and quantity of the organizations output.

The findings in this study are consistent with the resource based view of the organization in that relationships among assets do affect organizational effectiveness. Specifically, respondents indicated that training, which requires a relationship, is associated with customer complaints, which indicates that deployment of reserve employees causes the civilian employer to associate the loss of the employee with an intervention, in this case training (Allison-Aipa et al., 2005; Barney, 1991; Penrose 1959).

This paper also explores the effects of deployment on organizational performance, specifically the effect of losing a human resource on the organization. Burt (1992) and Hitt et al. (2003) maintained that the relationships between all of the organization's resources are inimitable and valuable. To that end, the

results from this study indicate that team work is associated with organizational output and the quality of the organizations output.

**TABLE 4. VARIOUS MEASURES AFFECTED BY DEPLOYMENT AND ASSOCIATED STRATEGIES.**

Customer Satisfaction	
Customer Satisfaction Strategies	Customer Satisfaction Measure
Rework	Customer Complaints
Training on Customer Service	
Organizational Output Strategies	Customer Satisfaction Measure
Effort to Produce Output	
Work Schedule Alterations	Customer Complaints
Training on Employee Performance	
Employee Behavior Strategy	Customer Satisfaction Measures
	Number of Clients Served
Team Efforts	Rate at which Customers were Lost or Gained
	Quality of Output
Employee Behavior	
Employee Behavior Strategy	Employee Behavior Measure
Team Efforts	Employee Satisfaction
Organizational Output	
Customer Satisfaction Strategies	Organizational Output Measure
Rework	Late Deliveries
Training on Customer Satisfaction	
Organizational Output Strategies	Organizational Output Measure
Work Effort	
Work Schedule Alterations	Late Deliveries
Training on Employee Performance	
Employee Behavior Strategy	Organizational Output Measure
Team Efforts	Volume of Output

Employers associate strategies such as training and team building with the effect of losing a resource. This supports the interaction of resources effect on organizational performance (Burt, 1992; Hitt et al., 2003; Penrose, 1959). In other words, management associates a resource interaction strategy designed to offset the potential negative effects that resource loss can have on organizational performance with the loss of the deployed employee. Thus, when resources are scarce and can not be readily replaced, as in the case of reserve deployment, the efficient use of a resource interaction strategy such as training or team

formation is recognized by management as an effective means to offset the effect that the loss of the resource has on organizational performance.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study civilian employers should establish procedures to augment team formation including the use of consultants to train supervisors on team dynamics. In addition, employers should institute training programs to cross-train employees to take over the reservist's job when they are absent.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies should determine if there is a correlation between the effects of deployment and specific organizational strategies. Finally, if correlations do exist then practitioners should identify which strategies can be employed to counter the effects of deployment on employer operations.

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