



**2015 CENTER FOR ARMY LEADERSHIP ANNUAL SURVEY OF ARMY  
LEADERSHIP (CASAL): MILITARY LEADER FINDINGS**

**TECHNICAL REPORT 2016-01**

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A separate report from the Center for Army Leadership, 2016-02, provides findings from this survey on Army civilian leaders.

**14. ABSTRACT** CASAL is the Army's annual survey to assess the quality of leadership and leader development. 2015 findings are based on responses from 25,943 Army leaders, consisting of 20,015 sergeants through colonels in the Regular Army, US Army Reserve, and Army National Guard, and 5,928 Army civilians. This eleventh year of the survey has additional coverage on methods of unit leader development, mentoring, and workload stress. Among uniformed leaders, assessments of leader attributes and leadership competencies surpassed a benchmark of 67% favorable by an additional 5-20%, except for *Developing Others*, on which 64% of the uniformed leaders are rated effective or very effective. Operational experience has the largest percentage of active component leaders rating it as an effective domain of leader development at 79%, followed by self-development at 73%, and institutional education at 61%. While professional military education quality is rated favorably by 75% of recent graduates, only about half believe their course was relevant to their job duties or improved their leadership capabilities. Less than 50% of leaders indicate awareness of formal leader development plans and guidance in their unit, despite units employing effective methods at least occasionally. Notable gaps in the occurrence and quality of performance counseling for junior leaders persist, and many of these leaders are not proactive themselves in seeking out feedback or mentorship. The climate in which leadership occurs has mixed indicators with high commitment to one's unit, effective collaboration among teams and working groups, but a decline in the proportion of leaders who report career satisfaction, and an increase in workload stress. The respondents reported that effective leaders mitigate workload stress by addressing it through management of task assignments, clear guidance, advocating for resources, and respecting subordinate contributions and work/life balance. Recommended steps are offered to address the results.

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# 2015 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Military Leader Findings

## Executive Summary

### Purpose

The Center for Army Leadership's (CAL) Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) captures assessments from the field about leadership and leader development. Since 2005, CASAL has been used to show trends in how the field perceives leadership and leader development. This contributes to leaders' ability to make informed decisions regarding these essential elements of current and future readiness.

### Method

CAL applies scientific methods in survey development, sampling, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting to obtain accurate and reliable information. The survey addresses leadership and leader development as covered by Army regulations, field manuals, and doctrine. Survey items are chosen based on what has been tracked in the past, new input from stakeholders, and CAL-identification of emerging issues. Sampling practices produce results with a margin of error of +/-2.5% or less for the nearly 600,000 Army leaders represented. Data were collected from October 28 through December 7, 2015. Survey respondents consisted of 20,015 globally dispersed, active component (AC) and reserve component (RC) Soldiers in the ranks of sergeant through colonel. RC respondents were approximately equally split between Army National Guard (ARNG) and US Army Reserve (USAR). Also 5,928 Army civilians responded. Data analysis includes assessment of percentages by cohort and ranks, analysis of trends, comparisons across experiences and demographics, coding of short-answer responses, correlations, and regressions. Findings from other surveys and data sources are consulted to check the reliability of CASAL responses. This report concentrates on uniformed leaders, and a second report presents findings from Army civilian leaders.

For most items, percentages are used to convey the relative frequency of respondents who assess leaders or leader development positively and to show trends across time. As an aid in interpretation, benchmarks have been set based on past CASAL and other surveys. All CASAL item results are compared against a benchmark set at 67%, a sum of the positive response choices (e.g., *effective* plus *very effective*). Negative response choices that sum to 20% or greater are flagged as potential problem areas. Deeper analyses are used in determining acceptable or problematic levels. Across 10 previous years of CASAL, several common patterns emerged that provide a backdrop to aid in understanding specific findings.

- Individuals with higher rank and length of service tend to perceive leadership and leader development more favorably.
- Ratings on items that have more direct, personal impact (e.g., agreement that your *immediate superior* is an effective leader) tend to be more favorable than ratings for more general statements (e.g., rating the effectiveness of your *superiors* as leaders).

- Results from active and reserve leaders tend to be similar, within 1% to 3% on many items. Results from ARNG and USAR leaders are also similar to each other. Meaningful differences are noted where applicable.

## Summary of Findings

### Leadership Competencies

The Army's expectations for leaders are established in Army leadership doctrine (ADRP 6-22) and are meant to be reinforced consistently across educational programs, multi-source assessment and feedback program, performance evaluation, and counseling. Leadership competencies consist of the observable activities that leaders are expected to do, and can be improved through development. Doctrinal leadership requirements are validated by CASAL results that show significant associations between how well leaders perform and what outcomes are achieved. Results from the 2015 CASAL also show that leadership expectations are generally met across the force.

*Getting Results* and *Preparing Oneself* continue as the two top rated competencies. *Preparing Oneself* is part of the *Develops* category in the Leadership Requirements Model. *Getting Results* primarily consists of actions involved in arranging and managing resources that lead to mission accomplishment. Notably, competencies from the *Leads* category are not among those most favorably rated. Those in the *Leads* category are central to the Army's definition of leadership and the essence of influence and providing purpose, motivation, and direction. *Leading Others* is the most critical category of competencies based on leaders' ratings of importance and frequency. However, only 36% of uniformed leaders are rated very effective, 37% effective, 15% neutral, and 13% ineffective or very ineffective at *Leading Others*. As in past years, *Develops Others* continues to be of concern across all leader cohorts. Subgroups of junior noncommissioned officers (Jr NCOs) and civilian leaders fall below the two-thirds benchmark in critical competencies and supporting behaviors, such as leading subordinates and managing people and time.

### Leader Attributes

Leader attributes are characteristics that shape a leader's capability to perform leadership actions. Eighty percent or more of leaders are rated as effectively demonstrating the attributes in all three categories: character, presence, and intellect. Eighty-seven percent of leaders are rated effective at demonstrating the *Army Values*, while 10% fewer leaders effectively demonstrate *Innovation* and *Interpersonal Tact*.

About 80% of leaders are rated effective in demonstrating *Mental Agility* and are rated favorably at actions that reflect critical thinking, such as developing a quick understanding of complex situations, dealing with unfamiliar situations, drawing inferences from available information or past experience, and keeping an open mind to multiple possibilities.

## Working Environments

Army leaders express mixed attitudes about the environments in which they operate. Ninety-four percent are committed to their team or immediate work group. Over 80% believe their assigned duties are important to the unit or organization and know what is expected of them in their positions. About 75% hold favorable attitudes about the ability of their unit to perform its mission and are proud to identify with their unit. Seventy-three percent of leaders agree that standards are upheld (e.g., professional bearing, adherence to regulations), however, 24% indicate there is a discipline problem in their unit (up from 18% in 2013). Among AC Jr NCOs, 35% indicate a discipline problem exists in their unit. From CASAL data collected in 2011, discipline problems are perceived to be due to relaxed enforcement of standards for military bearing, customs, courtesies, and disrespect for rank; lack of accountability when problem behavior is exhibited; and leaders feeling they are unable to appropriately enforce standards.

The state of the Army environment can also be tracked by engagement metrics. Engagement represents the level of personal commitment to the organization and the level of initiative individuals apply to their duties. Army leaders across ranks score favorably on a composite engagement measure that assesses perceived work conditions, attitudes toward assigned duties, and their development. Sixty-nine percent of military leaders have a positive level of engagement, ranging from 62% for AC Jr NCOs to 73% for AC field grade officers. Leaders who score high on the CASAL engagement metric tend to view their units and teams favorably, report satisfaction with the quality of unit leadership, and perceive high levels of trust among unit members.

Stress is another indicator of the conditions that leaders deal with. Stress from a high workload is a persistent problem that has gradually increased. In 2015, 25% of AC respondents report workload stress is a serious problem (compared to 18% to 23% over the past seven years). Respondents report common sources of workload stress include personnel shortages, poor guidance regarding work requirements, and lack of physical resources or materials to accomplish work. Two-thirds of respondents assess their immediate superior as effective in taking action to help subordinates manage excessive workload demands. Effective leaders mitigate workload stress through management of task assignments, issuing clear guidance, advocating for resources, acknowledging subordinate contributions, and respecting work-life balance.

Satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership provides a measure of the general impact leaders have on the unit/organizational climate. Levels of satisfaction have remained stable since first assessed in 2013. Factors within the working environment that most strongly contribute to uniformed leader satisfaction with military leadership in their unit include the level of trust among unit members, perceptions that senior leaders place trust in subordinates (collective felt trust), the effectiveness of leaders at lessening subordinate workload stress, and standards being upheld. Satisfaction with leadership quality largely depends on how attitudes are shaped by the care shown toward followers and others.

## Career Satisfaction, Morale, and Intentions to Remain in the Army

Career satisfaction represents an accumulation of attitudes across a leader's career. Seventy-three percent of leaders report they are satisfied with their Army career thus far. The ratings show a decline from 82% in 2009. About one-fourth of AC company grade officers and Jr NCOs report dissatisfaction with their Army careers. The factors most strongly associated with leaders' career satisfaction are the effectiveness of operational experiences for development, a sufficient mix of assignments in one's career to support development, the effectiveness of institutional courses/schools, and having sufficient input into the selection of one's assignments.

Morale is a current indication of the attitude of respondents. Morale levels have remained modest and steady since 2010. Fifty-three percent of AC leaders and 62% of RC leaders rate their current level of morale as high or very high, and 27% rate it neither high nor low.

CASAL monitors leaders' intent to stay or leave the Army to be able to project the adequacy of the number of available leaders in the future. Leader intentions to remain in the Army continue to be positive. Of leaders not currently eligible for retirement, 69% in the AC and 83% in the RC intend to stay in the Army until eligible for retirement or beyond 20 years. Fifty-five percent of AC captains intend to remain in the Army until they are retirement eligible or beyond, which is among the highest percentages observed by CASAL over the past 10 years (the lowest was 39% in 2007, a level similar to that recorded by the Army Training and Leader Panel (ATLDP) study in 2000; Fallesen et al., 2005). Captains' intentions to remain are stable despite a gradual decline from 2011 to 2014 in the selection opportunities for most basic branch AC captains to the rank of major, before selections returned to previous rates in 2015.

## Mission Command

Mission command is a philosophy that empowers leaders to take disciplined initiative within the commander's intent in order to guide, integrate, and synchronize Army forces (ADP 6-0). From 71% to 78% of leaders rate their immediate superior as effective at demonstrating the principles of the mission command philosophy. There are strong relationships between exercising mission command, levels of trust, and perceptions of leader effectiveness. Subordinates are enabled to determine the best ways to accomplish their duties (76%) and that they are allowed to learn from honest mistakes (75%), both positive signs of mission command principles. Exercising mission command is also positively related to favorable subordinate attitudes and unit outcomes. Awareness of the mission command philosophy has increased since 2013 (in terms of familiarity and usage of mission command doctrine, ADP 6-0), however, senior leader awareness of and engagement in the Army Mission Command Assessment Plan (AMCAP) is limited.

## Trust

Trust serves as a basis for effective relationships between leaders and followers. Eighty-three percent of AC leaders report a favorable level of trust among unit members. Ratings of trust in one's immediate superiors are strongly associated with perceptions that their superior is effective in *Creating a Positive Environment*, exercising *Sound Judgment*, displaying *Empathy*, *Leading by Example*, and *Developing Others*. Seventy-five percent of leaders are rated effective at trust-building behaviors, which in turn have positive effects on subordinate motivation, work quality, commitment, engagement, and morale. Trust-building is less pronounced among Jr NCOs, with 21% rated ineffective or very ineffective. Trust tends to be greater in units where standards are upheld, where unit members are empowered to make decisions pertaining to their duties, and where unit members are allowed to learn from honest mistakes. Collective felt trust, or perceptions that an organization's leaders place trust in its members, is more frequently reported by field grade officers and senior NCOs than lower level leaders, and is associated with operational climates supportive of disciplined initiative.

## Counterproductive Leadership

Leadership doctrine espouses principles of what leaders should do, and it acknowledges that the failure to take those actions either unintentionally or intentionally can be counterproductive to desired outcomes. Counterproductive or negative leadership behaviors in the Army remain low, consistent with levels first observed in 2010. Less than four percent of leaders scored 2 or less on a composite scale indicating that they displayed more counterproductive than productive behaviors. By analyzing several indicators simultaneously, CASAL results shows that most leaders who demonstrate counterproductive leadership behaviors are also assessed as ineffective at building trust and exercising mission command, and as having a negative impact on unit cohesion, discipline, and trust, and on subordinate motivation, work quality, engagement, and morale.

## Leader Development Domains

The Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS, 2013e) and Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development*, establish three leader development domains. More leaders rate the operational domain effective for preparing them to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility than do so for the institutional or self-development domains. Army leaders have consistently rated operational experience favorably, currently at 79%. Informal practices (opportunities to lead others, on-the-job training, learning from peers, and development from mentoring) are specific practices that are viewed as having the largest positive impact on the respondents' development as leaders. Personnel management practices are a conduit to the highly rated operational experience domain with 67% of AC leaders reporting that their mix of assignments and amount of time in key developmental assignments have been appropriate for their leader development, and only half agreeing they have had sufficient input or predictability in their series of assignments.

Army leaders (61% of AC and 69% of RC respondents) rate their experience with professional military education as effective for their development at levels similar to the previous three years. A majority indicate course cadre provide constructive feedback on leadership. However, the learning challenge presented by the course, the relevance of course content to graduates' next duties, and the effectiveness of the course for improving leadership are below the two-thirds benchmark. Courses are rated effective for improving leadership capabilities by only 52% of recent AC course graduates, and only CGSOC/ILE, SMC, and WLC meet or exceed the two-thirds benchmark.

Self-development effectiveness ratings have improved to 73% after a notable drop in past years (from 85% of leaders in 2010 to 69% in 2013). The drop had been greatest among NCOs whose levels in 2015 improved by 8% for AC leaders and 4% for RC leaders.

### Subordinate Development

*Develops Others* has consistently been the one competency for which less than two-thirds of respondents assess their immediate superior as effective. Related CASAL indicators support this finding. Less than two-thirds of the respondents indicate their immediate superior has developed them through remaining approachable to seek input and ask questions (61%); providing encouragement or praise (60%); involving the subordinate in a decision-making or planning process (56%); fostering a climate for development (52%); and sharing experiences, lessons learned, or advice (53%). These are relatively simple actions any leader can choose to take, and FM 6-22 provides guidance on how to plan and execute these leader activities.

The quality and frequency of performance counseling continue to show room for improvement. Twenty-one percent of leaders report formal and informal counseling never or almost never occurs. Twenty-five percent report it occurs at rating time, and 23% indicate it occurs monthly or more often. Half of leaders indicate they receive performance counseling at about the right frequency and 46% report it occurs too infrequently. When counseling is conducted, only half agree it is useful for setting performance goals, and only one-third agree the feedback covers how well they practice mission command. Separate from counseling, 40% to 50% of superiors frequently talk with subordinate leaders about their duty performance, how to improve duty performance, or how to prepare for future assignments.

More than half of leaders report they engage in mentoring, either as a mentor, mentee, or both. Most leaders who receive mentoring indicate the need is currently being met with regard to the frequency of desired interaction and its impact on development. Of the leaders dissatisfied with mentoring, they would like more frequent interaction, more in-depth discussions on current developmental needs and career path planning, and mentors who are highly knowledgeable and who hold a genuine interest in the mentee's development. While all Army leaders share in the responsibility for their own development, leaders who do not receive sufficient counseling also do not tend to seek out feedback from others or mentoring relationships.

## Unit Leader Development

CASAL places additional attention on the development that occurs while assigned to units, since it is rated more impactful than education or self-development. About half of AC respondents indicate their unit or organization places a high or very high priority on leader development, while 29% indicate the priority is neither high nor low. These findings are comparable to CASAL's previous assessment of this from 2008 to 2010. AC respondents indicate their unit or organization frequently or very frequently uses the following methods to develop leaders: self-development (56%); leader development programs such as OPD/NCOPD (49%); authorizing resident school/course attendance (46%); team-building activities or events (38%); stretch or developmental assignments (30%); and professional reading and/or writing programs (23%).

Despite the usage rate of these activities, only one-third of AC respondents (34%) are aware of a formal plan or published guidance for leader development held by their unit or higher headquarters. Recent inspections of Army leader development programs (IG, 2015) estimated that 64% of brigade or battalion teams had established leader development programs. The new Army-wide finding by CASAL that only one in three leaders are aware of unit plans or guidance differs from the IG estimate. Formal programs are planned and organized and require unit attention and effort to execute. However, it appears most units do not frequently conduct team-building activities or events, emphasize leader development in collective training, provide stretch or developmental assignments, or promote professional reading programs.

## Leader Development Programs

Leader development programs are formal systems that guide or support improvement of leaders. The Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF) program is designed to enhance leader adaptability and self-awareness and to identify strengths and developmental needs (AR 350-1). About 91% of field grade officers and 67% of company grade officers have participated as an assessed leader within the prescribed period of the previous 36 months, as well as 93% of AC warrant officers, 50% of AC Sr NCOs, and 20% of AC Jr NCOs. About half of leaders assessed by MSAF rate the program effective at making them more aware of their strengths (49%) and their developmental needs (47%). Smaller percentages rate the program effective for improving their leadership capabilities (41%) and improving their unit or organization (31%). The feedback is also useful when it confirms the leaders' existing understanding of their capabilities. These levels are consistent with those observed in 2014. Participants rate the impact of MSAF on their development similar to the impact of Army-provided distributed learning courses or developmental counseling. Considering what the Army spends financially and time-wise on various leader development programs, MSAF has a favorable return on investment compared to other programs.

## Combat Training Centers

Combat training center (CTC) environments are conducive for unit training and individual development. CTCs have extensive conditions and cues for practicing and improving leadership.

Fifty-two percent of AC respondents and 34% in the RC have participated as part of the training audience at a CTC at least once in their career; this is the lowest level observed in the past 10 years. About three fourths of those with recent CTC experience rate it effective for improving unit mission readiness and for improving their leadership skills.

## Conclusions

Army leaders continue to hold positive attitudes toward their assigned duties, their working environments, and those with whom they work and interact. Leaders' commitment to their teams and immediate work groups remains very strong. Levels of perceived workload stress, morale, trust, and career satisfaction, especially among junior-level leaders, could be more positive. Workload stress is perceived by one in four Army leaders as a serious problem and is not improving. Engagement, or the level of commitment leaders have for their organization and the level of initiative they apply to their duties, is at a positive level for most. Engagement is degraded because of access problems to resources required for duty performance and because of the low frequency at which informal performance feedback is provided.

Leaders continue to be assessed least favorably on the competency *Develops Others*, a trend spanning seven years of CASAL. Army leader development remains an area for focus and improvement. This conclusion is reflected across several CASAL indicators: one in five leaders do not receive performance counseling; about half receive formal or informal performance counseling too infrequently; most indicate counseling has only a small or moderate impact on improving their leadership skills; more than half receive informal performance feedback only occasionally or less often; and more than one-third do not have a mentor.

Nearly two-thirds of leaders are effective at developing their subordinates. Subordinate leaders most frequently report that their immediate superior develops them through relatively low-effort methods, such as remaining approachable for the subordinate to ask questions and by offering encouragement or praise. While more deliberate developmental actions that enhance learning and provide new opportunities for subordinates also occur (e.g., training, teaching, coaching, or skill development; mentoring to prepare for future roles; task delegation; new opportunities to lead; challenging job assignments), these high impact methods are less commonly used.

Professional military education (PME) courses are rated favorably for their quality of education, though ratings for the effectiveness of courses/schools at improving leadership capabilities are underwhelming and in general are not improving. Operational experience is a strong domain for leader development and significantly contributes to leaders' career satisfaction. PME and self-development also contribute to leader development but do not fill all of the gaps left by operational experience or how leaders choose to engage in the opportunities they have. Within units, the most frequently occurring leader development methods include calling attention to self-development, leader development programs (e.g., OPD, NCOPD), and authorizing resident school/course attendance. Meanwhile, team-building activities, collective training emphasizing individual leader development, and stretch or developmental assignments occur only

occasionally or rarely in most units. Participation in MSAF is a requirement, yet the developmental features of the tool remain largely under-utilized. While leaders are engaging in self-development, many appear to be doing so without superior guidance, without mentoring, and without the benefit of multi-source feedback and its associated learning resources.

CASAL results support the validity of the leadership competencies and attributes described in the Army's doctrinal Leadership Requirements Model (ADP 6-22). Assessment of the effectiveness of competencies and attributes explain high levels of variance in leadership outcomes such as perceived levels of trust, absence of counterproductive leadership behaviors, and overall effectiveness.

Leaders are assessed most favorably in *Preparing Oneself* and *Getting Results*. Seventy-two percent of AC leaders are rated effective at *Leading Others* and 77% are rated effective at exhibiting *Interpersonal Tact*. These levels have remained stable since 2009 and 2012, respectively. While the Army has given much attention to character and the profession, these areas are higher rated. *Character* is the highest rated characteristic among all attributes, competencies, and behaviors, and *Stewards the Profession* is the third highest rated competency.

By increasing the performance skills in the main activities of leadership, any concerns around character, the profession, and developing others should simultaneously be lessened. Performance can be addressed through a concerted Army emphasis on improving critical leadership skills, specifically those within the *Leads* category of competencies (*Leads Others, Builds Trust, Extends Influence Beyond the Chain of Command, Leads by Example, and Communicates*).

Leadership and developing others are skills that can be learned through study, observation, and practice. Some leaders fail to value fully the importance of influence, motivation, and direction, and the process of assessing leadership and providing feedback. These are the very skills that should set Army leaders apart from others. *Developing Others* is as an action; it should be more than allowing subordinates to participate in an event or training exercise, or attendance at a course. Mere participation in these activities does not ensure development or learning occur. Leaders must also strive to improve their motivation and ability to develop their subordinates. Subordinates who are proactive in seeking feedback and development opportunities will improve at a faster rate than those who wait to be counseled, coached, mentored, sent to a course, or told what to study. It is the individual who has the most to gain or lose through development, and the greatest say in choosing how active to be involved to be in development.

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# **2015 CENTER FOR ARMY LEADERSHIP ANNUAL SURVEY OF ARMY LEADERSHIP (CASAL): MILITARY LEADER FINDINGS**

## **Introduction**

The Center for Army Leadership's (CAL) Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) is a recurring, longitudinal study to capture assessments from the field about leadership and leader development. CASAL has been used to inform senior leaders about the level of leader quality and associated upward or downward trends since 2005. CASAL affords decision makers and stakeholders the option to make informed decisions, course adjustments, or to leverage prevailing strengths. Agencies and individuals submit data queries to CAL for further analysis of CASAL survey results. CASAL results inform groups such as the Army's Training and Leader Development Conference, Army Profession and Leader Development Forum, Human Capital Enterprise Board, Army Learning Coordination Council, as well as special studies and initiatives.

## **Survey Development, Administration, and Response Rates**

Each year, survey development begins with the identification of issues of importance in leadership and leader development. As one purpose of CASAL is to adequately track trends and identify patterns over time, many survey items from past years are used without change during each administration of the survey. Other items are dropped, added, or modified in order to balance coverage on leadership topics with survey size, time required to respond, and respondent fatigue. Stakeholders are contacted to provide recommendations for new topics. This is done to ensure that the survey assesses relevant issues in the Army that change from year to year. Data are collected from respondents through both quantitative (e.g., select a rating) and qualitative (e.g., type a brief answer) means. In an effort to minimize survey length and respondent fatigue, item skip patterns and branching are employed to tailor sections of the survey to specific ranks or to leaders with relevant experiences. Items are developed or selected to address the survey's Essential Elements of Analysis (EEAs), which is a list of targeted topics, issues, and survey items. A sampling of EEAs includes:

### **Quality of Leadership**

- What is the overall level of quality of Army leaders?
- How effectively do Army leaders demonstrate core leader competencies and attributes?
- How effective are Army leaders at demonstrating principles of mission command?
- How do climate and situational factors affect leadership?

- What level of trust exists within Army units and organizations?
- What is the impact of counterproductive leadership behavior in the Army?

#### Leader Development

- How effective are Army leader development practices?
- How effective are Army leaders at supporting the development of subordinate leaders?
- How effective is the mentoring that occurs between mentors and mentees?
- How effective are Army institutional courses/schools for preparing leaders?
- What is the contribution of combat training centers in developing quality leaders?

The 2015 CASAL was administered online to a representative sample of Regular Army, U.S. Army Reserve, and Army National Guard officers, warrant officers, and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) who were globally dispersed. In addition to uniformed leaders, Army civilians have participated in CASAL since 2009 (findings for Army civilians are presented in a separate technical report). During the last week of October 2015, the survey invitation was sent via e-mail to a random sample of 189,741 personnel within the uniformed and civilian cohorts, of whom 25,943 participated, for a response rate of 13%. Data collection ended the first week of December 2015.

The level of sampling precision met the desired standard for all five rank groups (field grade officers, company grade officers, warrant officers, Sr NCOs, and Jr NCOs) for the active component (AC) and reserve components (RC) (i.e., responses obtained resulted in a sampling error of +/-1.8% to +/-2.5%). The sampling error for the entire survey across components and cohorts is +/- 0.7%, meaning that 95 times out of 100 the observed percentage will be within 0.7% of the true value. This sampling error, together with the stratified random sampling method used, means that the CASAL respondents are representative of the Army population.

In addition to meeting stringent sampling error goals, the respondent sample closely approximated the population of the Army in distribution of component and gender (within 2%) as reported by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). The sample also included deployed Army leaders; 35% AC and 19% RC had deployment experience in the past 36 months. Further, 7% of AC and 6% of RC respondents were serving on a deployment at the time of the survey. The population, sample, response rate, and sampling error for each uniformed rank group are presented in Table 1. Sampling procedures invited equal numbers of respondents from the U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard for most rank groups.

**Table 1. Population, Sample, Response Rates, and Sampling Error by Rank Group and Component for Uniformed Personnel**

Population Strata	Population	Random Sample (Invitations)	Returned		Sampling Error
			N	Response Rate	
<b>Active Component (Regular Army)</b>					
Field Grade Officer (major - colonel)	30,160	7,704	1,776	23.1%	2.3
Company Grade Officer (second lieutenant - captain)	49,223	17,000	2,364	13.9%	2.0
Warrant Officer (warrant officer 1 - chief warrant 5)	14,837	8,282	1,497	18.1%	2.4
Senior NCO (sergeant first class - sergeant major)	51,300	11,400	2,369	20.8%	2.0
Junior NCO (sergeant and staff sergeant)	128,802	30,000	2,957	9.9%	1.8
Total Active	274,322	74,386	10,963	14.7%	0.9
<b>Reserve Components (US Army Reserve and Army National Guard)</b>					
Field Grade Officer	25,426	8,568	1,596	18.6%	2.4
Company Grade Officer	42,931	21,227	1,813	8.5%	2.3
Warrant Officer	11,797	7,356	1,341	18.2%	2.5
Senior NCO	53,642	11,760	2,049	17.4%	2.1
Junior NCO	154,125	40,000	2,253	5.6%	2.0
Total Reserve	287,921	88,911	9,052	10.2%	1.0
<b>Total Uniformed Personnel</b>	<b>562,243</b>	<b>163,297</b>	<b>20,015</b>	<b>12.3%</b>	<b>0.7</b>

### Longitudinal Sampling and Analysis

The 2015 CASAL is the fourth consecutive year to include longitudinal sampling as part of the data collection process. Since 2012, a subset of CASAL respondents has been invited to participate for each year of the survey.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of examining longitudinal responses is twofold. First, longitudinal ratings provide an indication of stability of attitudes and opinions of the same respondents across multiple points in time when controlling for respondent situational stability (i.e., remaining in the same unit or organization; reporting to the same immediate superior). Second, longitudinal data allow for examination of the levels of variance in item ratings between a longitudinal sample (within respondent variability) and a randomly drawn sample (between respondent variability) of respondents. The longitudinal analyses aim to determine the stability of CASAL results by comparing within respondent and between

<sup>1</sup> A series of steps are taken each year to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of all CASAL respondents. The identities of CASAL respondents (i.e., name, e-mail address) are disassociated with individual survey responses prior to conducting any data analyses.

respondent trends. When the variability from the two types of respondent sampling is similar, greater confidence can be placed in the accuracy of trends derived from different respondents sampled each year.

A total of 12,317 longitudinal respondents completed the 2015 CASAL. A longitudinal database was constructed to include respondents who provided CASAL data for two or more years since 2012. Longitudinal analyses examined ratings of respondents who provided a minimum of three consecutive years of data. A total of 4,319 respondents provided data for 2013, 2014, and 2015 (three consecutive points in time); a total of 1,484 respondents provided data for 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 (four consecutive points in time).

Longitudinal respondent data were examined through multiple methods of analysis to answer two key questions: 1) Are respondent attitudes stable across multiple points in time? 2) How does response variability (i.e., range in respondents' ratings) for longitudinal respondents compare to the response variability observed in the randomly drawn main sample (subsequently referred as the main sample)? A series of repeated measures analyses of variance (RM-ANOVAs) were conducted to examine the stability of longitudinal responses across three and four points in time. In other words, these analyses examined whether longitudinal ratings, on average, were the same or different for the past three or four CASAL administrations. To examine the second question, a series of analyses were performed<sup>2</sup> to compare the spread of ratings (frequency of unfavorable to favorable) provided by the longitudinal sample compared to the spread of ratings from the main sample across CASAL items.

Results of the RM-ANOVAs demonstrated that respondent attitudes remain stable over time when controlling for respondents' situational stability where appropriate. Specifically, longitudinal respondent attitudes toward characteristics of their unit/organization and their working environment show minimal fluctuation between 2012 and 2015. Similarly, respondents' assessment of their immediate superior in demonstrating numerous indices of effective leadership also show consistency across multiple years when controlling for situational stability of the respondent (i.e., reporting to the same immediate superior for all three years). Analyses examining the similarity of the range of ratings between the longitudinal sample and the main sample demonstrated minimal differences. These results indicate the spread of ratings on CASAL items is similar for both the longitudinal and main samples.

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<sup>2</sup> Levene's test was utilized to examine homogeneity of variance between the longitudinal sample and the main (regular) sample.

The longitudinal analyses of CASAL data confirmed the accuracy of findings observed with the main sample. Findings indicate that CASAL respondent attitudes are generally stable. In addition, the variance observed in CASAL item ratings is similar for both the main and longitudinal samples. The longitudinal results corroborate the trends observed across recent CASAL administrations.

### **Organization of Findings**

This report is presented in two parts:

- The first part, *Quality of Leadership*, discusses the current leader quality in the Army, leader effectiveness in meeting leadership requirements, and climate and situational factors affecting leadership.
- The second part, *Quality of Leader Development*, discusses the current quality of Army leader development practices, programs, and activities, including leader effectiveness in developing subordinate leaders, and the contribution of operational experience, self-development, and institutional education to leader development.

### **Results Interpretation**

Within each sub-section, key findings are summarized and presented in call-out boxes. Trends are identified and reported for items asked in previous years of survey administration. Where applicable, CASAL findings are supplemented with results from other Army and DoD surveys that have assessed similar topic areas. For accuracy and simplicity, percentages are emphasized for AC respondents. In many cases, findings are comparable between AC and RC rank groups, though exceptions are noted.

Most quantitative items ask participants to respond on a scale of 1 to 5, where '5' is the most favorable (e.g., very effective, strongly agree, very satisfied) and '1' is the least favorable (e.g., very ineffective, strongly disagree, very dissatisfied), with a neutral middle point '3'. To ease the interpretation of results, the five point response categories are collapsed into three point scales. For example, responses of '5' (strongly agree) and '4' (agree) are collapsed and reported as the percentage of participants who "agree or strongly agree." Thus, most charts in this report display the percentage of favorable, neutral, and unfavorable responses for an item or rank group.

A useful rule of thumb applied to CASAL's assessment of leadership is a two-thirds benchmark, whereby item results receiving two-thirds or more favorable responses (i.e., 67% agreement or

effectiveness) are considered a start point for minimal acceptable levels. Items where favorable responses fall below this threshold and/or receive 20% or more unfavorable responses are considered areas for improvement. Similarly, a 6% difference in results between years is a useful guideline for identifying meaningful change over time. While the 67% benchmark may be applied as a general guideline in data interpretation, each item warrants its own consideration. Several factors impact the interpretation of item favorability and change, including the sampling error for each sub-group, cohort, and component being examined, and in some cases, variation in the way items are worded between years.

This report contains substantial detail and enumeration of percentages to facilitate precise interpretation of results. Additional statistical analyses are performed to aid in the interpretation of the survey domains and to draw out higher-level meaning across items. Accumulated trends reported over the past 10 years increase the clarity of interpretation. Thus, a high degree of confidence can be placed in the findings.

## 1. Quality of Leadership

This section discusses several perspectives of leadership performance and quality. The 2015 CASAL examines multiple indicators of leadership quality, including respondents' assessments of others as leaders (i.e., their superiors, peers, and subordinates); overall satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership; specific, observable leadership attributes and behaviors described in Army doctrinal frameworks (ADRP 6-22); assessment of leader effectiveness in building trust (ADRs 1 and 6-22); and in demonstrating principles of the mission command philosophy (ADP 6-0).

The current status and trends in morale, career satisfaction, and intentions to remain in the Army are examined, as well as an indicator for military leader engagement. Trust is a characteristic of the working environment that affects leadership and impacts both organizational outcomes and subordinate attitudes. The prevalence and impact of counterproductive leadership behaviors are also discussed.

### 1.1 Perceptions of Leadership Quality

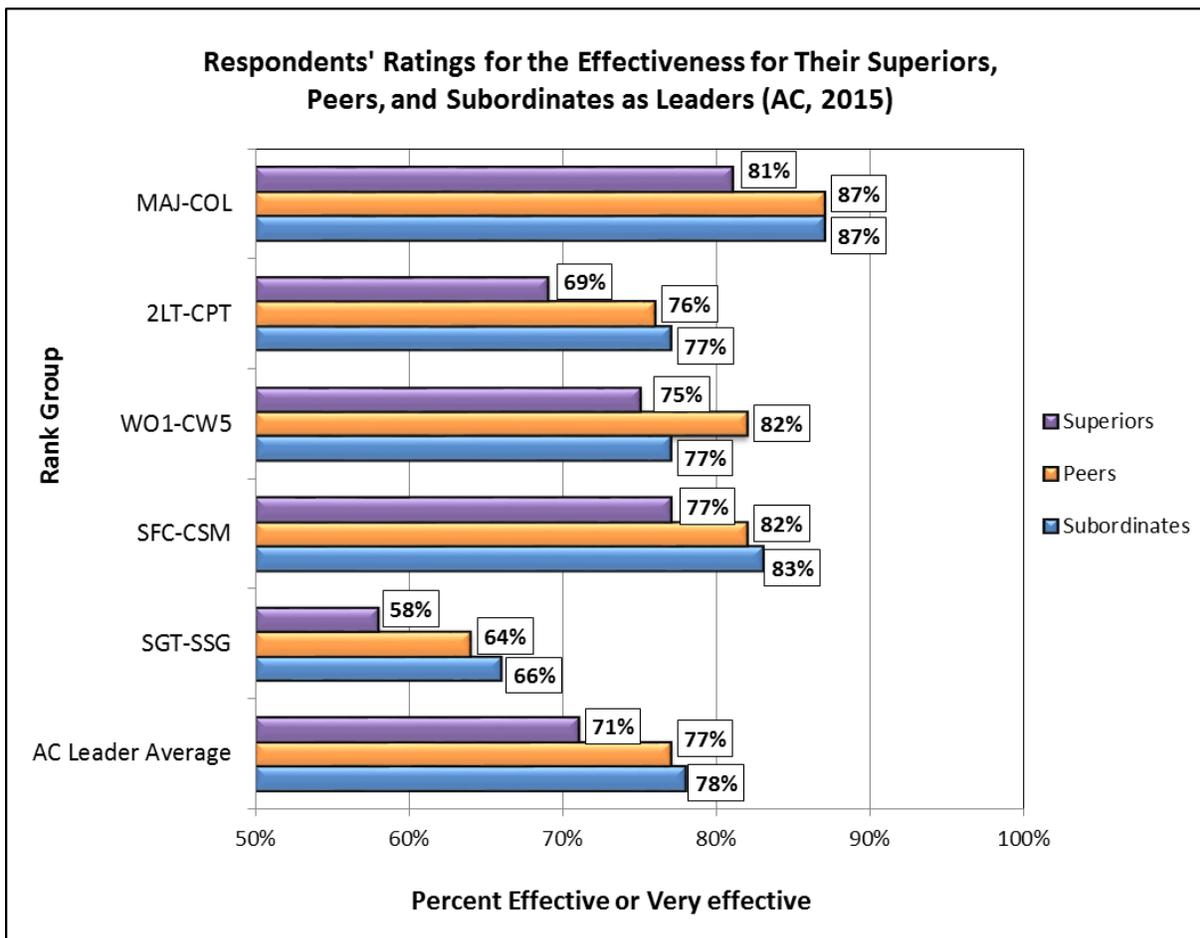
Leader attitudes toward the quality of leadership in the Army continue to be generally positive. In 2015, a majority of AC respondents view their superiors (71%) and peers (77%) as effective leaders. Additionally, a large percentage of respondents (78%) with supervisory responsibilities rate their subordinates as effective leaders. Small percentages of respondents rate their superiors (14%), peers (7%), and subordinates (6%) as ineffective leaders. The results by AC respondent rank group are presented in Figure 1. The relative percentages of effective ratings and the trend of slightly more critical upward assessments reflect patterns characteristic of these results across CASAL administrations. Since first assessed in 2005, no more than 9% of any respondent rank group has rated their peers as ineffective leaders, and no more than 8% have rated their subordinates as ineffective leaders.

The quality of leadership in the Army continues to be strong. A majority of respondents views their superiors, peers, and subordinates as effective leaders.

The results presented in Figure 1 serve as holistic and generalized assessments of the current quality of leadership in the Army. While one's direct-report subordinates are usually a well-defined cohort, the leaders who constitute one's peers and superiors are less well defined. Despite these limitations, these assessments are useful for gauging current attitudes about leadership quality in the Army. The consistent relative pattern of these results, with only subtle

change over the past 10 years, provides evidence that attitudes toward the quality of leadership across the Army are positive and stable.

**Figure 1. Effectiveness Ratings of Superiors, Peers, and Subordinates as Leaders, by Respondent Rank Group**



At a more specific level, a majority of Army leaders hold favorable perceptions of the effectiveness of their immediate superior or supervisor as a leader. Additional discussions on Army leader performance across the doctrinal competencies and attributes, and the effect these behaviors have on followers and mission accomplishment are presented in section 1.2 of this report.

Satisfaction With Military and Civilian Leadership

Since 2013, CASAL has assessed cross-cohort satisfaction with the quality of leadership in Army units and organizations (i.e., uniformed respondent satisfaction with Army civilian leadership and vice versa). In 2015, 63% of AC leaders are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of

military leadership in their current unit or organization, while 21% are dissatisfied. Army civilian leaders (i.e., managers and first line supervisors) report comparable levels of satisfaction with the military leadership in their unit or organization (64% satisfied; 18% dissatisfied). Smaller percentages of both AC leaders and civilian leaders are satisfied with the quality of civilian leadership in their current unit or organization. Dissatisfaction toward civilian leadership quality is found among one-fifth of AC leaders and nearly one-fourth of civilian leaders (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Satisfaction With the Quality of Military and Civilian Leadership in the Army**

<b>CASAL Respondents</b>	<b>Satisfaction with the Quality of Military Leadership in Current Unit/Organization</b>	<b>Satisfaction with the Quality of Civilian Leadership in Current Unit/Organization</b>
Active Component Leaders	63% Satisfied	57% Satisfied
	21% Dissatisfied	19% Dissatisfied
Army Civilian Leaders (Managers and First Line Supervisors)	64% Satisfied	59% Satisfied
	18% Dissatisfied	23% Dissatisfied

These results, which show stable trends since first assessed in 2013, reflect broad but useful indicators of leader attitudes toward the current quality of Army leadership.<sup>3</sup> A useful method for interpreting satisfaction with the quality of leadership is by identifying relevant factors with the strongest associations to ratings of satisfaction. A series of analyses was performed to further understand the factors that significantly contribute to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership in the Army.<sup>4</sup> Of particular interest is whether the same factors affect within-cohort ratings of satisfaction (e.g., civilian leader satisfaction with civilian leadership in their organization) compared to cross-cohort ratings (e.g., civilian leader satisfaction with military leadership in their organization). Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine respondent attitudes toward several characteristics of their working environment, including attitudes toward other members of their unit or organization. A set of

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<sup>3</sup> Levels of satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership were asked of all CASAL respondents regardless of assignment type. Respondents were instructed to select the response option “No basis to assess” as appropriate in instances where their unit/organization did not consist of military or civilian leaders.

<sup>4</sup> A stepwise multiple regression is an exploratory statistical approach to identify which variable provides the largest, singular contribution to the explanation of a dependent variable (i.e., ratings of effective leadership). After accounting for that variable, the process is repeated for the remaining variables to identify which variable explains unique variance in the dependent variable not explained by the first variable. This process is repeated until no remaining variables explain a statistically significant portion of the variance of the dependent variable. Stepwise regression results should be interpreted with caution because sample data guides the selection of variables; test results may be limited to the observed data and may not apply as a generalized prediction.

factors<sup>5</sup> was specifically chosen based on their potential theoretical contribution to ratings of satisfaction with the quality of leadership.

Results indicate that about half of the 12 factors examined explain a significant amount of variance in the ratings of satisfaction of leadership. The key factors were similar for explaining the satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership (see Figure 2). As was found in the 2013 and 2014 CASAL, the proportion of variance accounted for by the key factors was notably higher for within-cohort ratings (i.e., uniformed respondents' satisfaction with military leadership and civilian respondents' satisfaction with civilian leadership) compared to cross-cohort satisfaction (i.e., uniformed respondents' satisfaction with civilian leadership and civilian respondents' satisfaction with military leadership)<sup>6</sup>.

The level of trust among unit members strongly contributes to Soldier satisfaction with the quality of leadership in units. Civilian leader satisfaction with leadership is dependent upon perceptions of being trusted by senior leaders.

The overall level of trust among unit members emerged as the factor with the largest contribution to AC respondents' satisfaction with the quality of both military and civilian leadership in their unit or organization. In comparison, respondent agreement that senior leaders place trust in their subordinates emerged as the factor with the largest contribution to civilian leader respondents' satisfaction with the quality of both military leadership and civilian

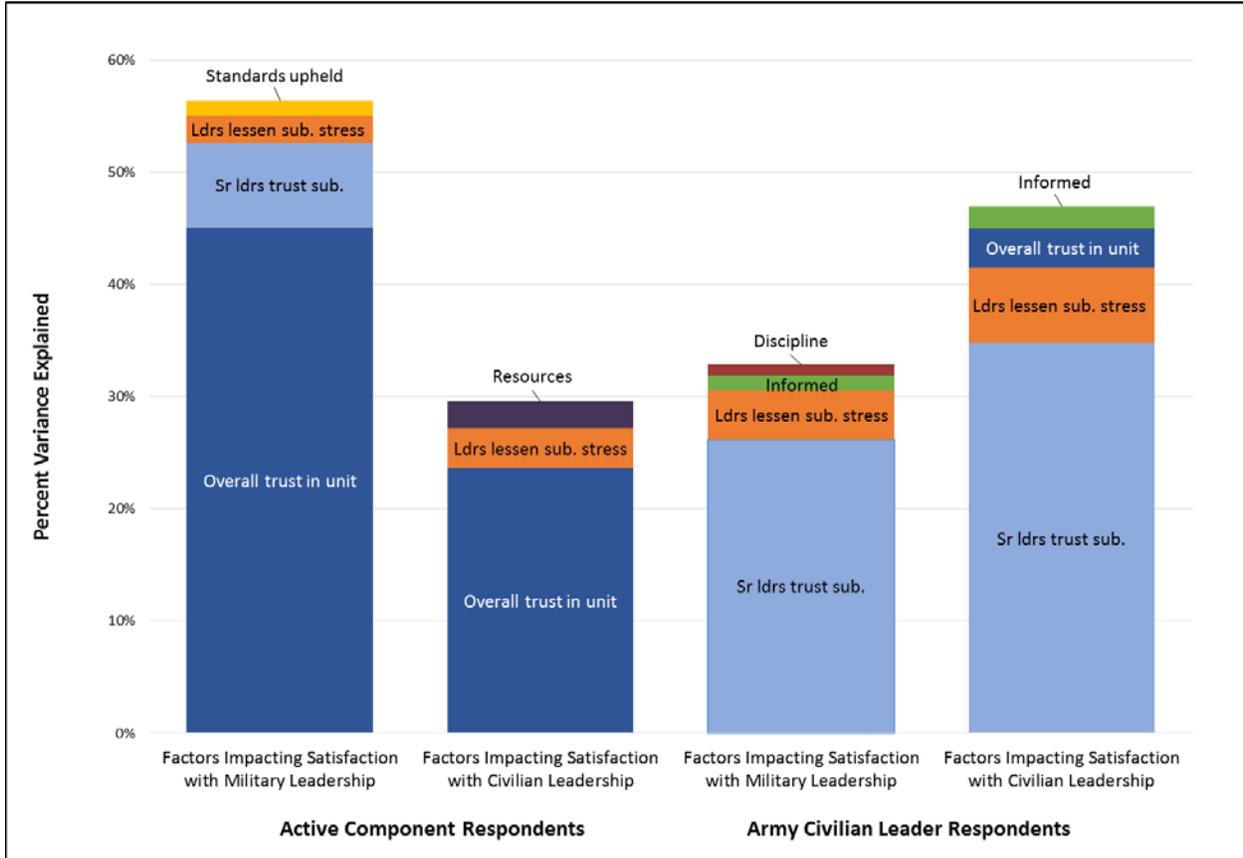
leadership in their unit or organization. Other factors that explain a significant amount of variance in these models include respondents' perceptions regarding senior leader effectiveness at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress; agreement that standards are upheld; having access to the right resources to accomplish duties to standard; feeling informed about decisions affecting work responsibilities; and a lack of discipline problems in units or organizations.

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<sup>5</sup> Multiple regression analyses were conducted using the stepwise method and examined the following variables to determine their impact on satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership: respondent satisfaction with the amount of freedom or latitude in the conduct of duties; respondent feels informed about decisions that affect work responsibilities; respondent feels encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things; agreement that respondent has access to the right resources to accomplish duties to standard; agreement that members of unit are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes; agreement that members of unit are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties; agreement that standards are upheld; disagreement that there is a discipline problem in the unit; agreement that senior leaders of unit place trust in their subordinates; agreement that senior leaders of unit encourage the expressions of different perspectives and points of view; overall level of trust among unit members; and the effectiveness of leaders of unit at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress.

<sup>6</sup> Proportions of variance accounted for by key factors together:  $R^2 = .56$  (AC satisfaction with military leadership),  $R^2 = .30$  (AC satisfaction with civilian leadership),  $R^2 = .33$  (civilian leader satisfaction with military leadership),  $R^2 = .47$  (civilian leader satisfaction with civilian leadership).

**Figure 2. Factors that Explain Significant Variance in Active Component and Army Civilian Leader Satisfaction With the Quality of Military and Civilian Leadership <sup>7</sup>**



Note. Factors explaining less than 1% additional variance are not listed.

As was found by the 2013 and 2014 CASAL, these key factors have a stronger relationship to within-cohort satisfaction (i.e., AC respondents' satisfaction with military leadership, and civilian respondents' satisfaction with civilian leadership) compared to cross-cohort satisfaction (i.e., AC respondents' satisfaction with civilian leadership, and civilian respondents' satisfaction with military leadership)<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Item key for Figure 2: *Overall trust in unit* – Overall, how would you describe the current level of trust among members of your unit or organization; *Sr ldrs trust sub.* – Senior leaders in my unit or organization place trust in their subordinates; *Ldrs lessen sub. stress* – How effective are leaders in your unit or organization at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates; *Standards upheld* – In my unit or organization, standards are upheld (e.g., professional bearing, adherence to regulations); *Resources* – I have access to the right resources (e.g., people, materials, budget) to accomplish my duties to standard.; *Informed* – I feel informed about decisions that affect my work responsibilities; *Discipline* – There is a discipline problem in my unit or organization (Reverse scored).

<sup>8</sup> Total proportions of variance accounted for by key factors:  $R^2 = .56$  (AC satisfaction with military leadership),  $R^2 = .30$  (AC satisfaction with civilian leadership),  $R^2 = .33$  (civilian respondents' satisfaction with military leadership),  $R^2 = .47$  (civilian respondents' satisfaction with civilian leadership).

The manner in which AC leader and civilian leader results differ in Figure 2 may reflect different mindsets for what drives perceptions of leadership quality in units and organizations. It is possible that uniformed leaders operate with a mindset geared toward camaraderie, trust, and reliance on their teams, and thus their perceived level of trust among unit members strongly influences their level of satisfaction with the overall leadership quality in the unit. In contrast, Army civilians, as technically competent professionals, perceive quality leadership when their superiors positively affect the climate of their working environments through giving trust, lessening workload stressors experienced by subordinates, and sharing information. Compared to AC leaders, Army civilians tend to remain in organizations longer as they are not subject to periodic reassignment. Therefore, it is not surprising that civilian followers attend to the qualities of superiors that positively affect their work environment.

## **1.2 Indicators of Leadership Performance**

The 2015 CASAL assessed indicators of Army leadership performance through the following areas:

- The Leadership Requirements Model
- The Impact of Leadership on Organizational Outcomes and Soldier Attitudes

This section addresses how effectively Army leaders are performing, primarily through demonstration of doctrinal core leader competencies and leader attributes as described in ADRP 6-22. In addition, CASAL assesses several additional characteristics of leader performance that are bulleted items in ADRP 6-22 tables. Examples include fostering innovation, demonstrating critical thinking, building effective teams, and emphasizing organizational improvement.

### **1.2.1 Leadership Requirements Model**

CASAL serves as *the* benchmark in the Army for assessing leader effectiveness in demonstrating the doctrinal core leadership competencies and leader attributes described in the Army Leadership Requirements Model (ADRP 6-22). Since 2009, CASAL has employed a consistent method of assessing a leader's performance, which enables trend comparisons across years<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> CASAL items ask respondents to assess their immediate superior, supervisor, or first line leader on a range of behaviors, attributes, and outcomes. This approach of capturing upward ratings of a single target leader is effective, as most Army leaders have an appropriate opportunity to observe and become familiar with the effectiveness of their immediate superior's leadership behavior, attributes, and outcomes. Analysis of 360° assessments finds that subordinates generally observe more behaviors than do peers or superiors. The assessments, confined to direct relationships between subordinate and superior, are more precise than a respondent's global assessment of all superiors, peers, or others, and avoids the bias inherent in self-ratings.

Findings have demonstrated that Army leaders reflect a relatively stable profile of strengths and developmental areas across the competencies and attributes. Army leaders are consistently rated more favorably in demonstrating the range of leader attributes compared to the competencies.

### Core Leader Competencies

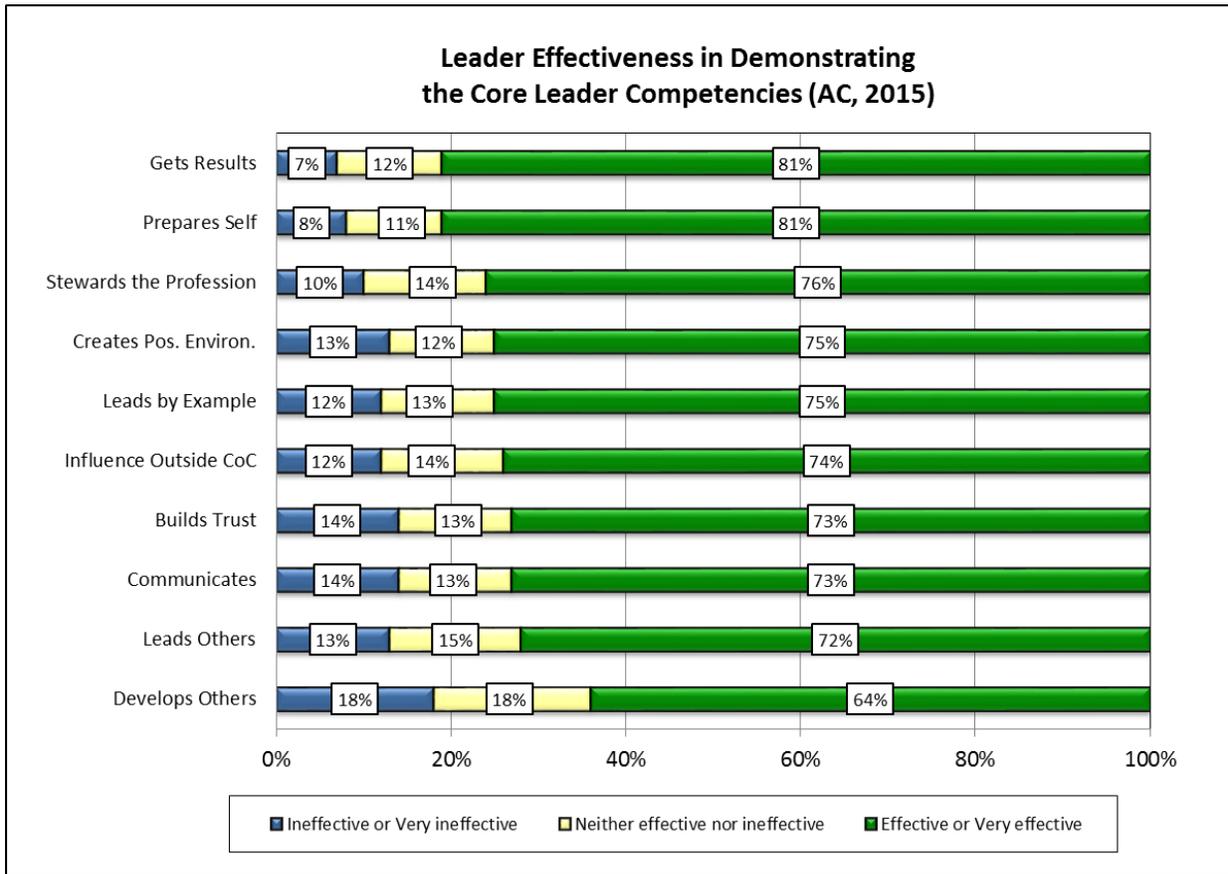
Competencies provide a clear and consistent way of conveying expectations for Army leaders, apply across all levels of leader positions, and can be developed through focus and effort. As leaders progress throughout their careers, they continuously refine and increase their proficiency to perform the core leader competencies and learn to apply them to increasingly complex situations (ADRP 6-22). Since 2009, results have demonstrated a three-tiered competency trend; an established pattern in the relative position of highest, lowest, and 'middle ground' competencies. The highest rated competencies are *Gets Results* and *Prepares Self*, as more than 80% of AC respondents rate their immediate superior effective or very effective, while less than 10% rate their superior ineffective (see Figure 3).

Seven competencies constitute the 'middle ground' across the set of 10 competencies, including *Stewards the Profession*, *Creates a Positive Environment*, *Leads by Example*, *Extends Influence Beyond the Chain of Command*, *Builds Trust*, *Communicates*, and *Leads Others*. Favorable ratings for these competencies include 72% to 76% of leaders, while 10% to 14% are rated ineffective.

The percentage of favorable ratings across the competencies are generally split between effective and very effective. However, 3% fewer leaders are rated at the very effective level than effective for *Leads Others* and *Communicates*, while there are about 5% more leaders rated at the very effective level than effective for *Creates a Positive Environment* and *Leads by Example*. There are 10% fewer leaders rated very effective than effective for *Develops Others*. *Develops Others* continues to be the core leader competency that has the most room for improved ratings. In 2015, 64% of AC leaders are rated effective in developing their subordinates. Since 2009, favorable ratings for leaders developing their subordinates have fluctuated from a low of 59% effective to the current high of 64% effective. Ineffectiveness ratings have been consistent over time, with about one in five leaders rated ineffective in developing subordinates.

*Gets Results* and *Prepares Self* are the most favorably rated competencies. *Develops Others* continues to show the most room for improvement.

**Figure 3. Active Component Leader Effectiveness in Demonstrating the Core Leader Competencies**

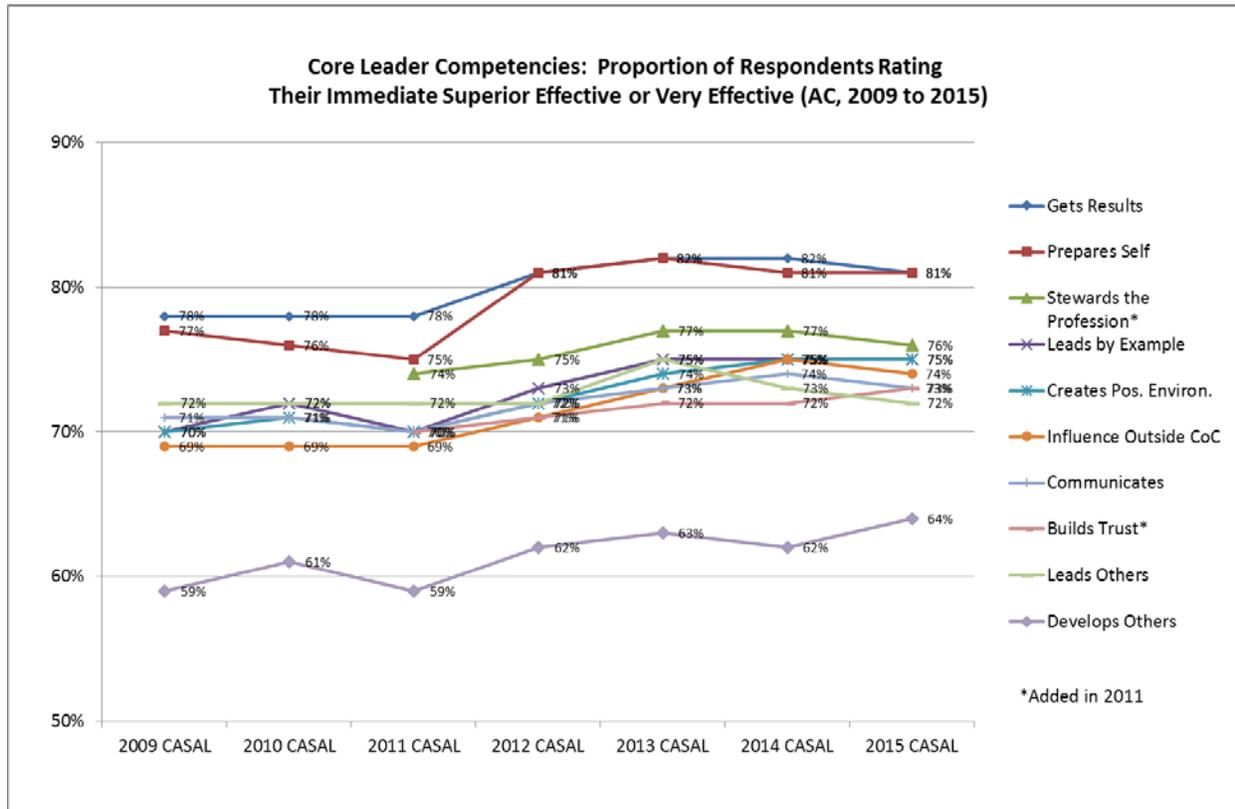


Overall, assessments of leader effectiveness in demonstrating the core leader competencies are fairly stable with a subtle trend of improvement since 2009 (see Figure 4). *Extends Influence Beyond the Chain of Command* is the competency that shows the largest increase over the past seven years (+5%). The competency *Leads Others* has varied only between 72% and 75%.

### Leader Attributes

The attributes represent the values and identity of Army leaders (character), how leaders are perceived by followers and others (presence), and the mental and social faculties that leaders apply when leading (intellect). CASAL results have consistently captured favorable assessments of Army leaders across the range of attributes, and overall, findings do not indicate there are widespread deficiencies. CASAL’s assessment of the leader attributes has evolved over the past several years to reflect changes to descriptions within the Leadership Requirements Model (ADRP 6-22), to better reflect the underlying attributes being assessed, and to limit perceived

**Figure 4. Comparison of AC Leader Effectiveness in Demonstrating the Core Leader Competencies from 2009 to 2015**

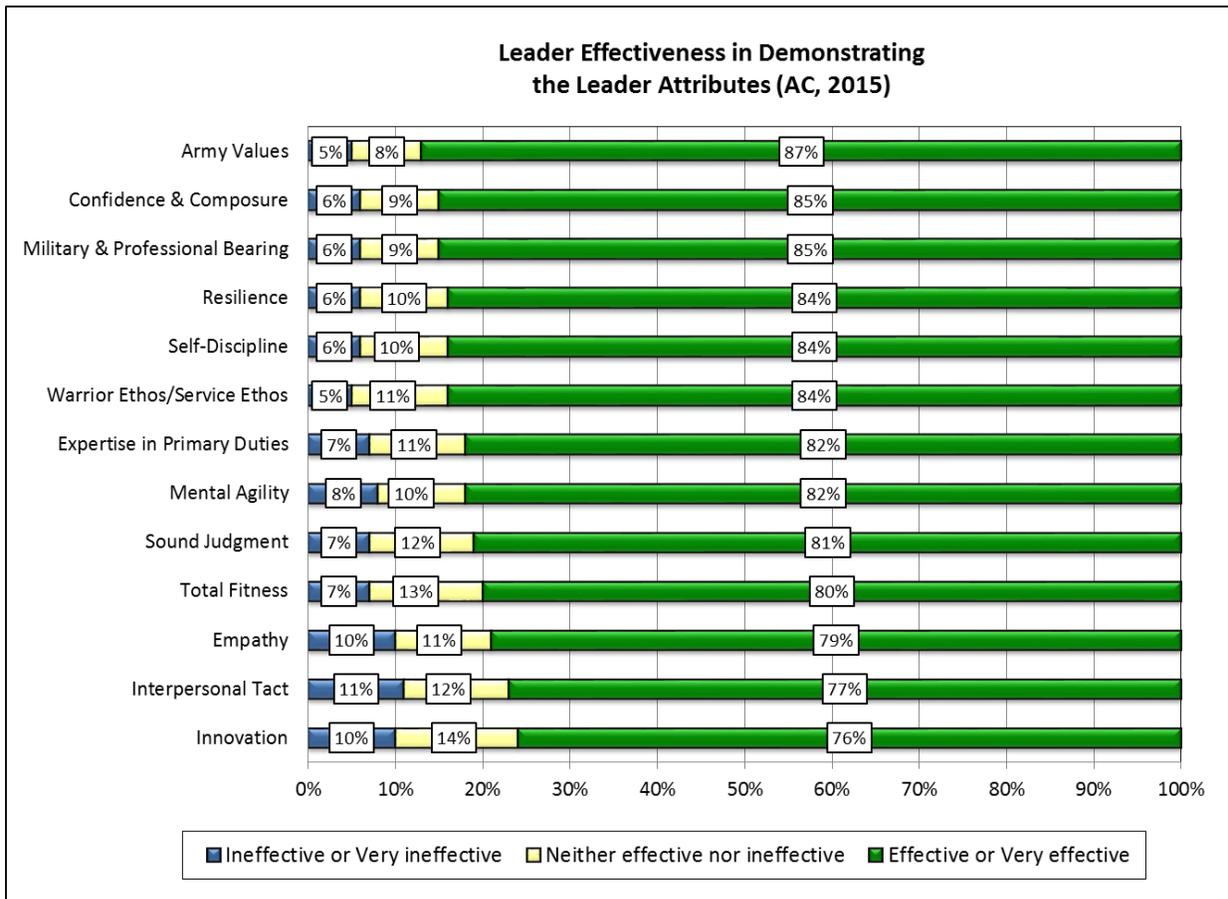


redundancy in survey items. The attributes assessed in 2015 have been included in CASAL since 2012, which provides a consistent means for examining trends.

The most favorably rated leader attributes include demonstrating the *Army Values, Confidence & Composure, and Military & Professional Bearing* (see Figure 5). The two attributes that are consistently ranked the least favorably are *Interpersonal Tact* and *Innovation*. Importantly, Army leaders are generally rated effective in demonstrating all of the leader attributes (76% to 87%). Between 5% and 11% of respondents rate their immediate superior ineffective in demonstrating any of the leader attributes. Prior to 2013, the level of assessments of leader attributes were trending up, and since 2013 the levels have remained high and very stable (+/- 2%) (see Figure 6).

Army leaders are assessed favorably across all of the leader attributes. *Army Values* is consistently the most favorable, while *Interpersonal Tact* and *Innovation* are the least favorable.

**Figure 5. Active Component Leader Effectiveness in Demonstrating the Leader Attributes**

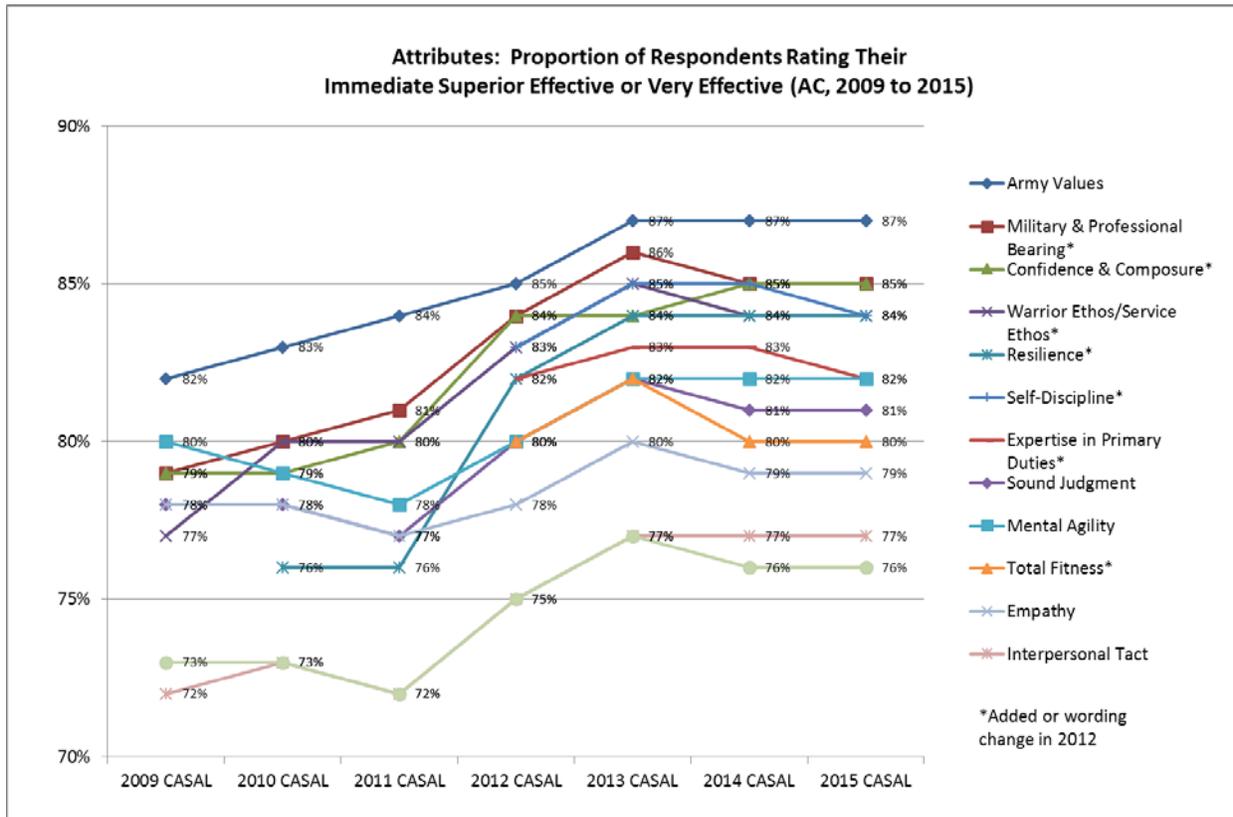


CASAL includes additional coverage on leader behaviors that support the core leader competencies and attributes that are included as sample behaviors in the competency and attributes summary tables in ADRP 6-22. The results for these behaviors are presented in Figure 7. Leader effectiveness in behaviors related to *Gets Results*, *Leads Others*, *Mental Agility*, and *Innovation* are discussed below, as well as a summary of additional leadership behaviors. Additionally, a closer examination of behaviors related to *Develops Others* is discussed in section 2.2 of this report.

Gets Results

The core leader competency *Gets Results* encompasses the leadership behaviors and actions required to get the job done on time and to standard. Specific behaviors that are relevant to getting results include, but are not limited to: providing direction, guidance, and clear priorities; guiding teams in what needs to be done and how; monitoring performance and providing feedback; removing work barriers; managing time and resources; and adapting to changing circumstances to achieve the mission.

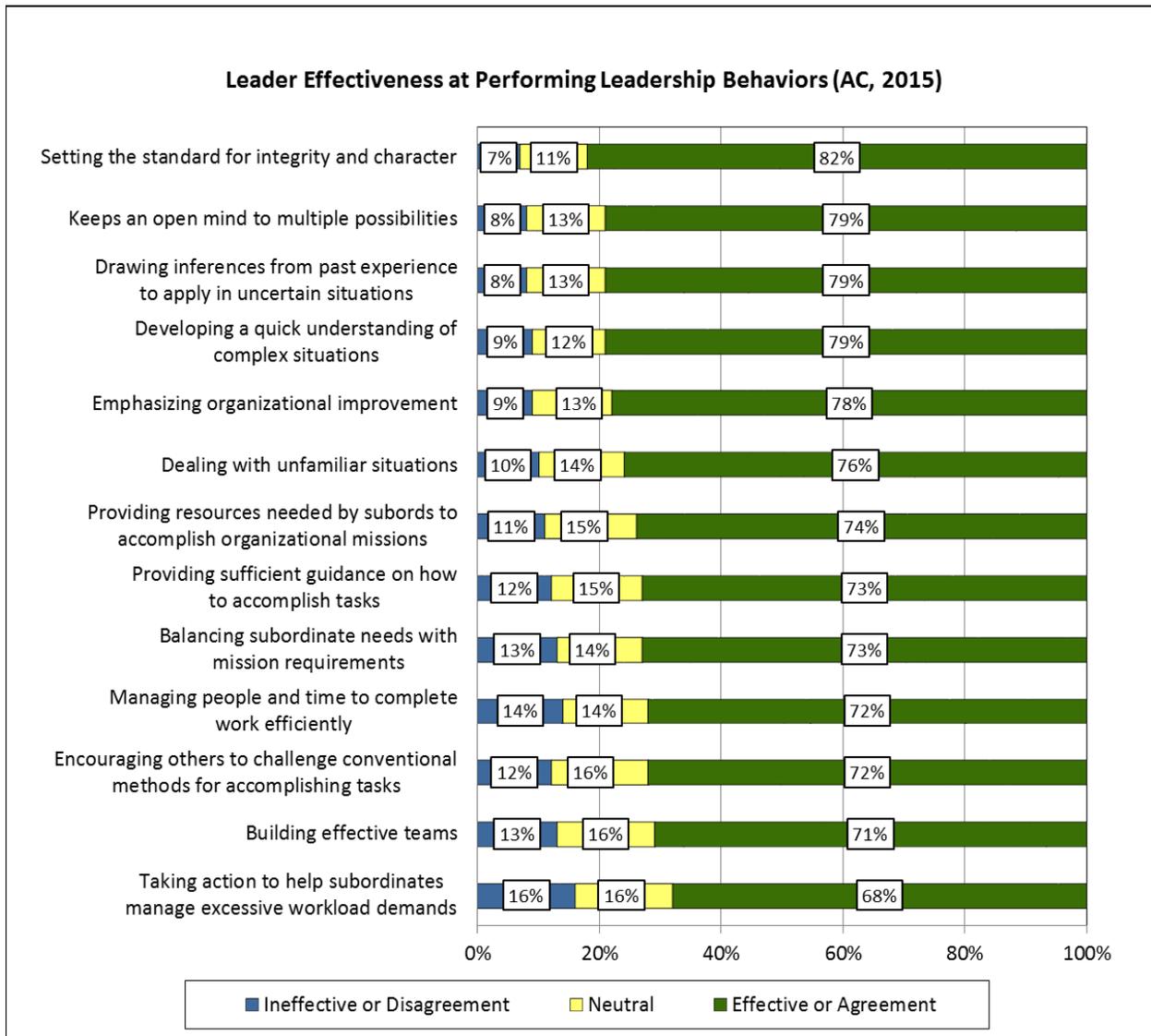
**Figure 6. Comparison of Leader Effectiveness in Demonstrating the Leader Attributes from 2009 to 2015**



Note. The axis for Figure 6 has a range of 20% (70% to 90% effective or very effective) compared to Figure 4, which has a less magnified range of 40% (50% to 90% effective or very effective). Smaller differences in percentages across years appear larger in Figure 6.

Across CASAL administrations, assessments for leader effectiveness in *Getting Results* consistently place it among the two most favorable competencies. In 2015, 81% of AC respondents rate their immediate superior effective or very effective at getting results to accomplish the mission successfully (7% rate them ineffective). Regarding specific behaviors or actions of *Gets Results*, smaller percentages of leaders rate their immediate superior effective in providing sufficient guidance on how to accomplish tasks (73%), in managing people and time to complete work efficiently (72%), and in providing resources needed by subordinates to accomplish organizational missions (74%). About one in ten respondents rate their superior ineffective in these behaviors (12%, 14%, and 11%, respectively). While each of these behaviors are positively related to *Gets Results* ( $r$ 's = .72 to .73,  $p < .001$ ), fewer leaders are rated effective on the behavioral indicators (72% to 74%) than on the competency category under which they fit (81%). Fewer leaders are effective in the supporting behaviors, so more leaders could develop or improve around these actions.

**Figure 7. Leader Effectiveness at Performing Leadership Behaviors**



The general pattern of decreased effectiveness for *Gets Results* at the behavioral level suggests that assessments at the competency level tend to reference the end result (e.g., the accomplishment of goals and objectives) rather than the behaviors necessary to effectively reach a favorable end result (e.g., providing guidance and resources, managing people). However, these differences do not detract from the validity of the individual results, meaning that large percentages of leaders view their immediate superior effective in achieving goals or results while greater variance exists in the perceptions about superiors' effectiveness in demonstrating specific behaviors contributing to the achievement of those goals or results.

## Leads Others

Effective leaders motivate, inspire, and influence others to take initiative, work toward a common purpose, accomplish critical tasks, and achieve organizational objectives. Influence, an essential element of leadership, refers to how people create and relay their messages, behaviors, and attitudes to affect the intentions, beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of another person or group of people (ADRP 6-22). All of the core leader competencies, especially *Leads Others*, involve influence. Specific behaviors within the *Leads Others* competency include the use of appropriate methods of influence to energize others; providing purpose, motivation, and inspiration; enforcing standards; and balancing the mission and welfare of followers.

In 2015, 72% of AC respondents rate their immediate superior effective or very effective at leading and influencing others (13% rate them ineffective). Regarding specific behaviors that relate to *Leads Others*, 74% of respondents rate their superior effective at balancing subordinate needs with mission requirements, and 85% agree or strongly agree their immediate superior upholds ethical standards. Each of these behaviors positively relates to the competency *Leads Others* ( $r$ 's = .76 and .62,  $p < .001$ ).

Leadership is critical to mission accomplishment, though four all of the competencies in the *Leads* category are not among the most favorably rated in CASAL.

Notably, *Leads Others* is not among the set of most favorably rated competencies, nor are any of the four other competencies from the *Leads* category (*Builds Trust*, *Extends Influence Beyond the Chain of Command*, *Leads by Example*, and *Communicates*). The competencies within the *Leads* category are central to the meaning of leadership and represent the essence of influence and providing purpose, motivation, and direction. Therefore the competencies within the *Leads* category warrant focus and attention to prepare leaders to perform these skills effectively.

## Mental Agility

Leaders demonstrate *Mental Agility* through flexibility of mind and when anticipating or adapting to uncertain or changing situations (ADPR 6-22). Assessments for leader effectiveness in *Mental Agility* have been consistently favorable (78% to 82% effective since 2009). In 2015, 82% of AC respondents rate their immediate superior effective or very effective at demonstrating mental agility (thinking through consequences, breaking out of mental blocks) while 8% rate them ineffective. Additionally, more than three-fourths of AC leaders rate their immediate superior effective at developing a quick understanding of complex situations (79%)

and dealing with unfamiliar situations (76%), two behaviors that show consistent trends in recent years.

Critical thinking is a thought process that aims to find facts, to think through issues, and to solve problems. Critical thinking enables leaders to understand changing situations, arrive at justifiable conclusions, make sound judgments, and learn from their experiences (ADRP 6-22). Seventy-nine percent of AC leaders rate their immediate superior effective at drawing inferences from past experience to apply in uncertain situations, and an equal percentage

Leaders effective at demonstrating *Mental Agility* draw inferences from past experiences and keep an open mind to multiple possibilities.

(79%) agree their superior keeps an open mind to multiple possibilities. Each of the above-mentioned behaviors positively relates to *Mental Agility* ( $r$ 's = .69 to .79,  $p < .001$ ). Encouragingly, no more than 10% of respondents rate their immediate superior ineffective at demonstrating any of these individual behaviors supportive of *Mental Agility*.

### Innovation

*Innovation* is marked by the ability to introduce something new when it is needed or when opportunities present themselves. Army leadership doctrine (ADRP 6-22) describes innovative leaders as inquisitive and adept problem solvers who seize opportunities to think creatively and find new ways of doing things, often adapting to changing circumstances. *Innovation* should not be considered as an individual phenomenon, but rather stemming from the exchange of input between leaders and others. *Innovation* allows the Army to achieve its missions more efficiently through continuous improvement of processes and procedures.

Seventy-six percent of respondents rate their immediate superior effective at demonstrating *Innovation* (new ideas, creative thinking, and forward thinking) while 10% rate them ineffective. At a more specific behavior level, 72% of leaders rate their immediate superior effective at

76% of leaders effectively demonstrate *Innovation*; 72% effectively infuse or foster the innovative process through communications with subordinates and others.

encouraging others to challenge conventional methods for accomplishing tasks (12% rate them ineffective).

Demonstrating innovation and encouraging others to challenge conventional methods are positively related ( $r = .77$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Leadership doctrine describes the need to prevent complacency by finding new ways to challenge subordinates with forward-looking approaches and ideas,

and to reinforce team building by making everybody responsible for, and stakeholders in, the innovation process.

## Additional Leadership Behaviors

Similar to current findings associated with *Gets Results*, individual behaviors can be less favorable than a generalized competency. In order to provide complete and accurate assessments of leadership quality, additional behaviors were added to CASAL in 2014 and 2015.

A consistently positive finding is that 82% of AC leaders rate their immediate superior effective at setting the standard for integrity and character, while only 7% rate them ineffective. Leaders who are viewed as the standard bearers for integrity and character are also viewed as effective at *Leading by Example* ( $r = .79, p < .001$ ).

82% of AC leaders are rated effective at setting the standard for integrity and character.

More than three-fourths of leaders (79%) rate their immediate superior effective at emphasizing organizational improvement, which is part of the Army's definition of leadership. Improving one's organization significantly relates to *Gets Results* ( $r = .72, p < .001$ ) and *Stewards the Profession* ( $r = .77, p < .001$ ). Seventy-one percent of leaders rate their immediate superior effective at building effective teams, while 13% rate them ineffective. Team building is a leadership behavior that has shown a positive trend in recent years (from 64% effective in 2007 and 2008, to 65-67% between 2009 and 2011, to 70% in 2012 and 2013, and 71-72% in 2014 and 2015). Building effective teams is a component of the *Develops Others* competency. Assessments of building effective teams are positively and strongly related to *Developing Others* ( $r = .80, p < .001$ ) as well as the competencies *Leading Others*, *Building Trust*, and *Creating a Positive Environment* ( $r$ 's = .80 to .82,  $p < .001$ ).

Two-thirds of leaders (68%) are rated effective at taking action to help subordinates manage excessive workload demands, while 16% are rated ineffective. This leader behavior holds increasing importance to Army organizations, as the percentage of AC leaders reporting stress from a high workload as 'a serious problem' has shown a steady increase in recent years (from a range of 18% to 21% between 2009 and 2013, to 25% in 2015). CASAL results on workload stress are discussed in section 1.3.3 of this report titled Workload Stress.

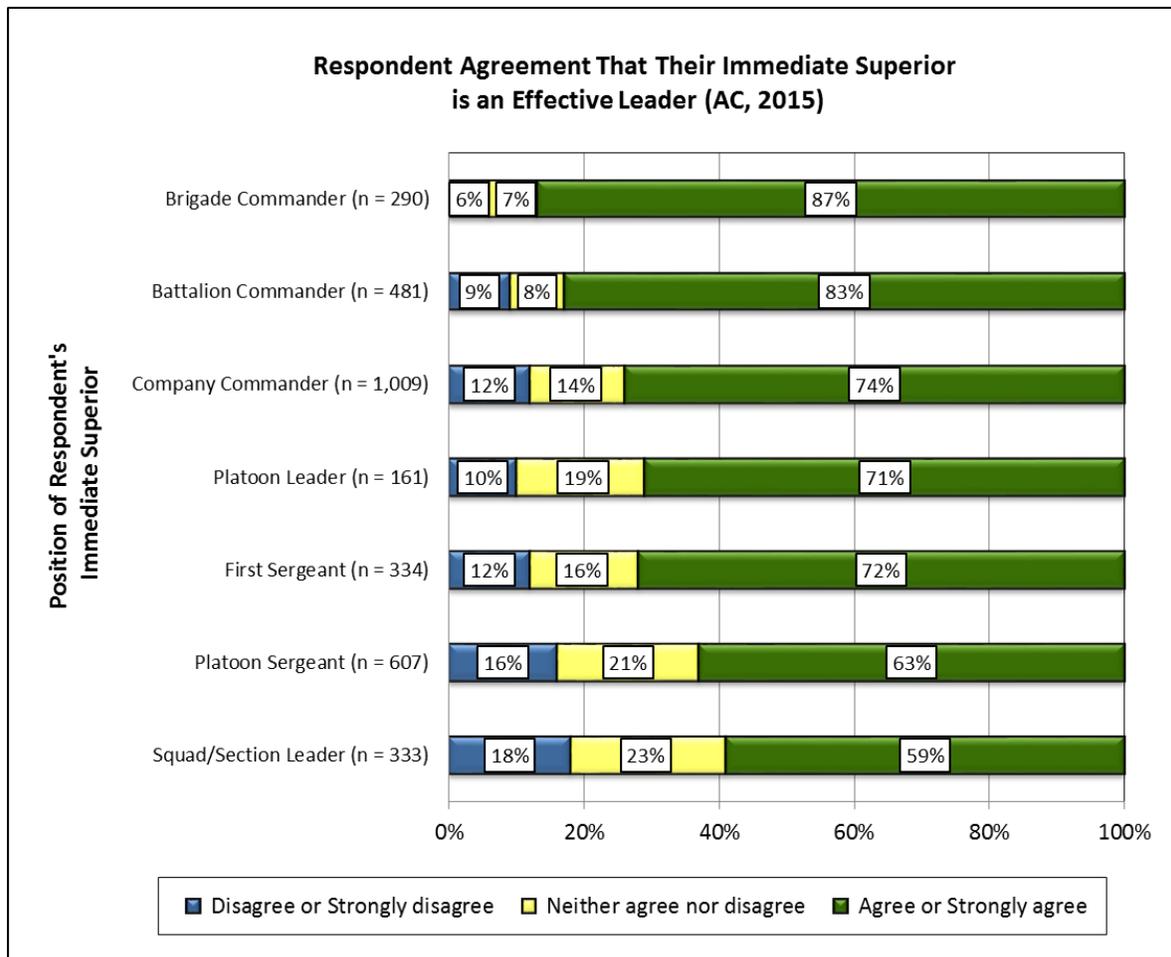
AC respondents also assessed their immediate superiors as effective in demonstrating three specific leadership functions. Results for RC respondents are comparable. Nearly three fourths of leaders are rated effective or very effective in each of the following areas:

- Conducting the mission command operations process – 76% (7% ineffective)
- Conducting preparation, execution, and assessment of tactical operations – 75% (8% ineffective)
- Conducting the Army design methodology – 72% (8% ineffective)

## Relationship between the Leadership Requirements Model and Leader Effectiveness

CASAL includes two single-item assessments of respondents' immediate superiors' effectiveness as leaders. First, three-fourths of AC respondents (75%) agree or strongly agree with the statement 'my immediate superior is an effective leader.' Fourteen percent neither agree nor disagree, while 11% disagree or strongly disagree (overall ratings by RC respondents reflect these same percentages). Figure 8 displays the results of AC ratings by the unit position<sup>10</sup> of the immediate superior assessed. Favorable ratings tend to increase with the level of leadership at which the immediate superior (officer or NCO) serves. Compared to ratings for AC

**Figure 8. Ratings for Effective Leadership by Position**



<sup>10</sup> The level of agreement for each unit position represents ratings by subordinates who assessed their current immediate superior in that position. Assessments were made by CASAL's sample of SGT through COL. Thus, the squad/section leader position includes assessments by subordinate Jr NCOs (SGT and SSG) but not assessments by junior enlisted Soldiers (E-1 to E-4) who represent the primary cohort of subordinates for this position.

leaders, RC respondent assessments of the NCO positions, platoon leaders, and company commanders are 4-9% more favorable, while assessments of brigade and battalion commanders are 2-3% less favorable.

Additionally, respondents provided a single judgment on the relative ranking of their immediate superior's leadership abilities compared to other leaders at the same rank or in a similar position. The results of the characterizations of one's immediate superior are generally favorable:

- 'Best or among the best' – 28%
- 'A high performer' – 37%
- "Middle of the road" – 22%
- 'A marginal performer' – 8%
- 'Worst or among the worst' – 4%

The above pattern, which applies to both AC and RC leaders, runs parallel with the results of items assessing the effectiveness of superiors and satisfaction with the quality of military leadership. Implicit leadership theory (Eden & Leviatan, 1975; Yukl, 2002) indicates followers' perceptions of leaders can be impacted by follower's own idea of what effective leadership is and how closely their leader's behaviors and characteristics align to this image. Thus, these findings are positive for the Army, as large percentages of leaders indicate their immediate superior or supervisor is performing at a high level, while small percentages report their superior demonstrates ineffective leadership. The levels of favorable ratings for both of these indicators are very stable when comparing results across the past five years.

The 10 competencies and 13 attributes assessed by CASAL were examined using a stepwise multiple regression to identify which of the competencies and attributes best explain ratings of effective leadership. Two competencies and one attribute significantly explain 75% of the variance ( $R^2 = .75, p < .001$ ) in effectiveness ratings for one's immediate superior: *Leading Others*, demonstrating *Sound Judgment*, and *Building Trust* are most strongly associated with agreement that one's superior is an effective leader. This means that these three factors together differentiate levels of effective leadership. Ratings for the other competencies and attributes, while favorable, explain considerably less unique variance in ratings after accounting for the impact of *Leading Others*, *Sound Judgment*, and *Building Trust*.

*Leading Others*, demonstrating *Sound Judgment*, and *Building Trust* are most strongly associated with agreement that one's immediate superior is an effective leader.

Army leadership research by Horey et al. (2007) observed that in comparison to leader behaviors, leader traits have less impact on leadership outcomes. Other research has estimated that genetics account for 25-30% of whether or not people serve in a leadership role and the rest is due to environmental factors or is developed (Arvey, Rotundo, Johnson, Zhang, & McGue, 2004; Arvey, Zhang, Avolio, & Krueger, 2007; De Neve, Mikhaylov, Dawes, Christakis, & Fowler, 2013). This relationship has been supported by recent CASAL findings. Since 2012, multiple regression analyses utilizing composite scale scores<sup>11</sup> for leader effectiveness have examined the impact of the competencies and attributes on indices of effective leadership. Results continue to indicate that the core leader competencies have a stronger impact<sup>12</sup> on ratings of effective leadership (nearly 3-to-1) compared to the impact of the leader attributes (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Results of Multiple Regression Examining the Impact of Leader Competencies and Attributes on Indices of Effective Leadership**

	<b>Agreement Immediate Superior is an Effective Leader</b>	<b>How do you rate the leadership abilities of your Immediate Superior relative to other leaders at the same rank/position</b>
Core Leader Competency Composite Score	$\beta = .66$	$\beta = .63$
Leader Attribute Composite Score	$\beta = .23$	$\beta = .22$
<b>Model Summary</b>	$R^2 = .76$	$R^2 = .69$

Note. Standardized beta weight ( $\beta$ ) and  $R^2$  significant at  $p < .001$ .

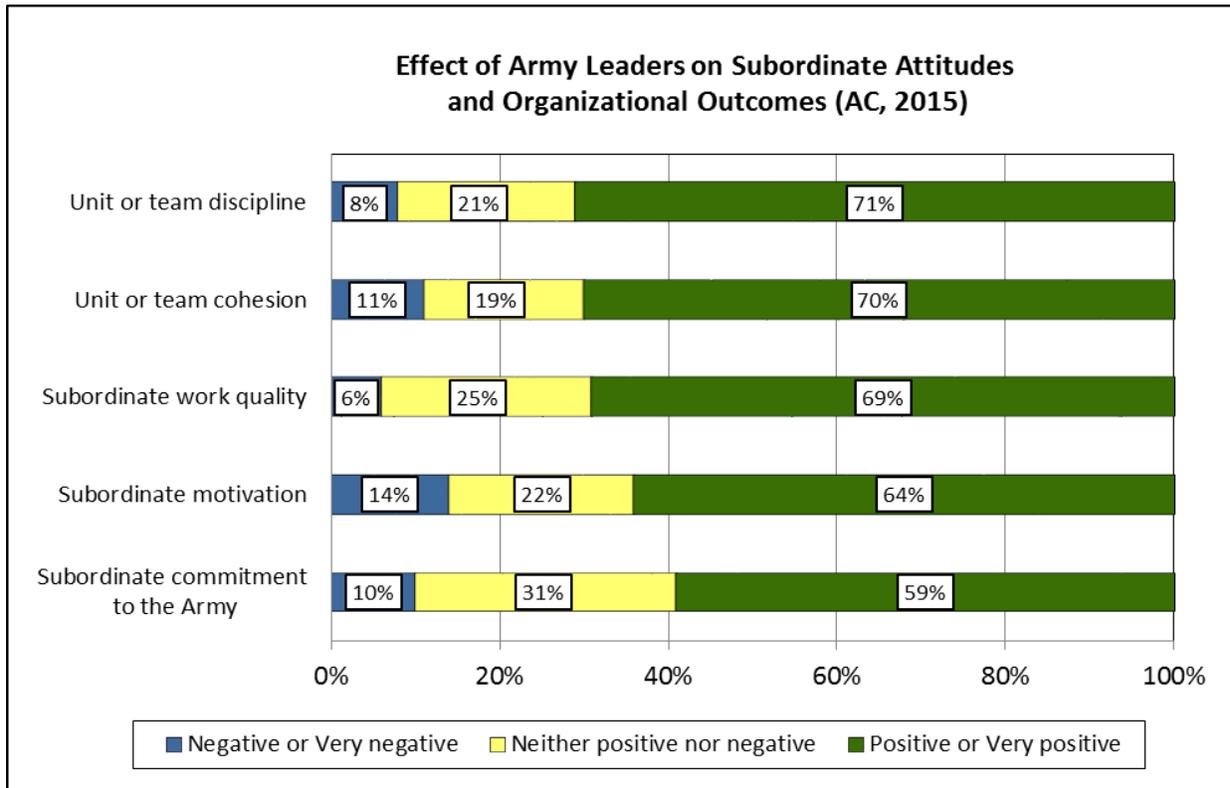
### 1.2.2 Impact of Leadership on Subordinate Attitudes and Unit Outcomes

A majority of Army leaders are viewed as having a positive or very positive impact on their organizations and their subordinates (see Figure 9). More than two-thirds of AC leaders are rated as having a positive impact on discipline and cohesion in their units or teams. Additionally, slightly smaller percentages of leaders are viewed as positively affecting subordinate work quality, subordinate motivation, and subordinate commitment to the Army.

<sup>11</sup> The 10 items that reflect behaviors associated with immediate superior effectiveness in demonstrating the core leader competencies were combined into a single scale composite variable. Values across the 10 items were summed and then divided by 10 to produce a single scale score with a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5. Scale scores of '5' indicate a respondent's average rating across all 10 items equals 5 (i.e., immediate superior demonstrates all of the competencies effectively). This same process was used to develop a single scale composite variable for the 13 items that assess the leader attributes.

<sup>12</sup> A statistic called a standardized beta weight represents the specific impact each factor within the model has on the outcome measure, accounting for the contribution of other factors within the model. Standardized beta weights are similar to correlation coefficients in that they range from -1.0 to +1.0, with the size of the weight indicating the extent of impact and the direction (+ or -) of the relationship. The larger the standardized beta weight, the larger the impact that scores for that variable have on the dependent variable.

**Figure 9. Effect of Army Leaders on Subordinate Attitudes and Organizational Outcomes**



The results for these indicators of leadership outcomes show stable trends over the past five years. A positive finding is that no more than one in seven leaders (14%) is rated as having a negative or very negative impact on any of these unit outcomes or subordinate attitudes.

Effective demonstration of the core leader competencies and leader attributes is significantly and positively related to organizational and Soldier outcomes that impact mission accomplishment. The strength of the relationship between the competencies and attributes and these outcomes continues to be uniformly high (see Tables 4 and 5). Leaders who effectively demonstrate the competencies and attributes are viewed as positively impacting the cohesion and discipline in their units. Similarly, there are positive effects on subordinate motivation, work quality, and commitment to the Army. Similarly, there are positive relationships between a leaders' effective demonstration of the competencies and attributes and subordinates' level of trust in that superior, engagement, and morale. Results for current levels of leader morale, engagement, and trust are described in greater detail in sections 1.3.1, 1.3.4, and 1.3.6 (respectively) of this report.

**Table 4. Correlations Between Effective Demonstration of the Leadership Competencies and Attributes and Unit Outcomes**

<b>Correlations of Leader Demonstration of Leadership Competencies &amp; Attributes on Unit Outcomes (AC, n = 4,906)</b>	<b>Core Leader Competencies</b>	<b>Leader Attributes</b>
Effect on unit or team cohesion	.81	.77
Effect on unit or team discipline	.80	.77

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .001$  (2-tailed).

**Table 5. Correlations Between Effective Demonstration of the Leadership Competencies and Attributes and Soldier Attitudes**

<b>Correlations of Leader Demonstration of Leadership Competencies &amp; Attributes on Subordinate Attitudes (AC, n = 7,738)</b>	<b>Core Leader Competencies</b>	<b>Leader Attributes</b>
Effect on subordinate motivation	.80	.75
Effect on subordinate work quality	.77	.73
Effect on subordinate commitment to the Army	.74	.70
Subordinate level of trust in immediate superior	.73	.69
Subordinate engagement composite score	.67	.63
Subordinate current level of morale	.52	.49

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .001$  (2-tailed).

### 1.3 Climate and Situational Factors

Leadership quality is influenced by numerous climate and situational factors. CASAL assesses and tracks trends on factors such as morale, career satisfaction, and intentions to remain in the Army, and examines the relationships among these factors. Leader attitudes and perceptions about characteristics of the current working environment provide context for factors that affect leadership, duty performance, and mission outcomes.

In recent years, CASAL has assessed and tracked trends for three situational factors that relate to leadership and unit climate. These factors include leader actions and operational environments supportive of the mission command philosophy, trust within Army units and organizations, and examination of the prevalence and impact of counterproductive (or toxic) leadership behaviors.

### 1.3.1 Morale, Career Satisfaction, and Career Intentions

#### Morale

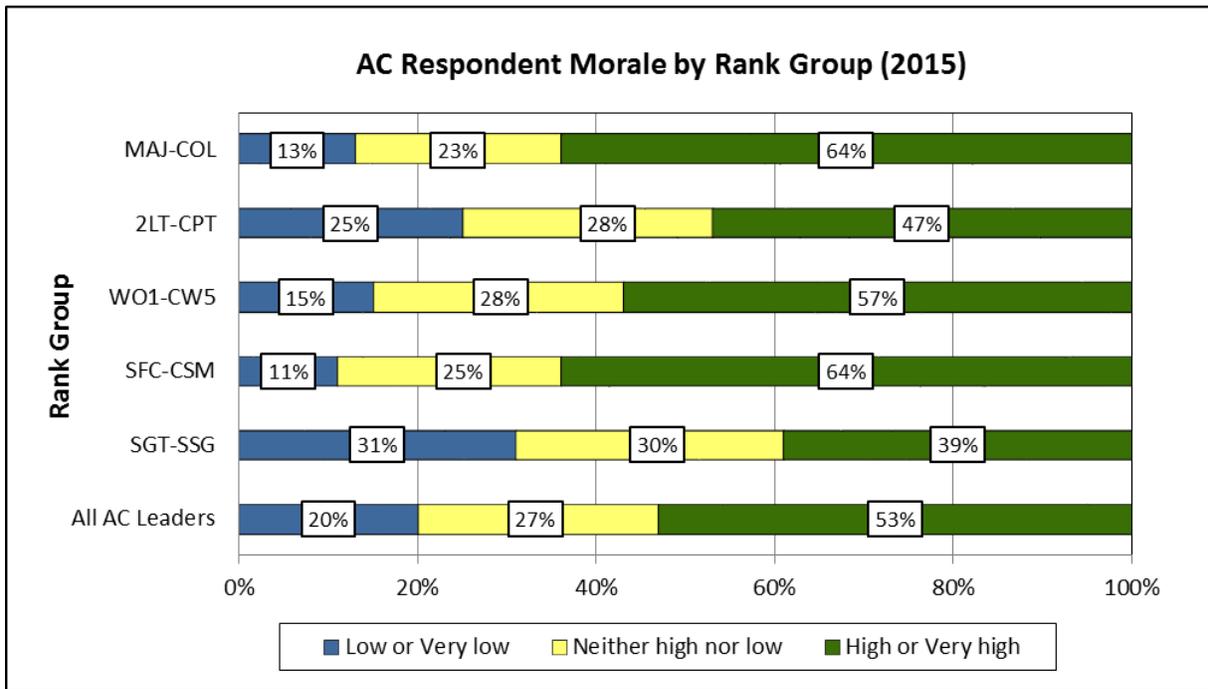
Results of the 2015 CASAL show that 53% of AC leaders and 62% in the RC report high or very high morale (20% and 14% report low or very low morale, respectively). Levels of morale reported by CASAL respondents have remained generally stable since 2010. A consistent trend in CASAL results is that larger percentages of RC leaders report high or very high morale compared to AC leaders. Variation in the percentages of high or very high morale by rank group has also been consistent across the past several years. Levels of morale tend to increase with rank and length of service. A consistent trend in CASAL data is that AC company grade officers and Jr NCOs report the largest percentages of low or very low morale (25% and 31%, respectively) (see Figures 10 and 11).

Morale levels reported by CASAL have remained generally stable since first assessed in 2010. Larger percentages of RC leaders report high or very high morale compared to AC leaders.

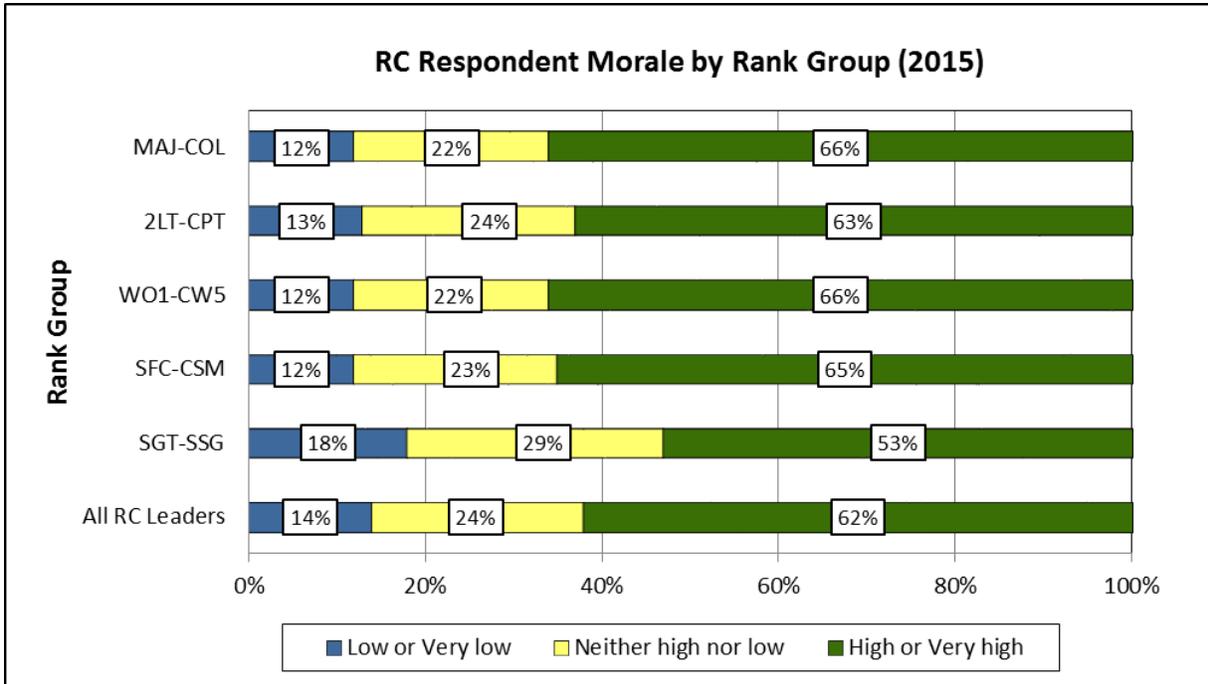
The following results reflect levels of morale by various demographic variables:

- At CONUS locations, 54% of AC leaders and 62% of RC leaders report high or very high morale, while 20% and 13% (respectively) report low or very low morale. This is consistent with the levels of high or very high morale reported by CASAL since 2010 (54% to 57% for AC leaders; 61% to 63% for RC leaders).
- Current levels of morale at OCONUS locations vary. Korea has the largest percentage of respondents reporting high or very high morale (54%), while the smallest percentages of high morale are reported in Kuwait (47%). At these locations, low morale is reported by 16% and 22% of respondents, respectively.
- Larger percentages of respondents in allied/multinational assignments (66%), joint assignments (62%), TDA assignments (57%), and those currently assigned to a school or course as a student (70%) report high or very high morale, compared to respondents in TOE assignments (49%).

**Figure 10. Current Levels of Morale Reported by Active Component Respondents**



**Figure 11. Current Levels of Morale Reported by Reserve Component Respondents**



## Career Satisfaction

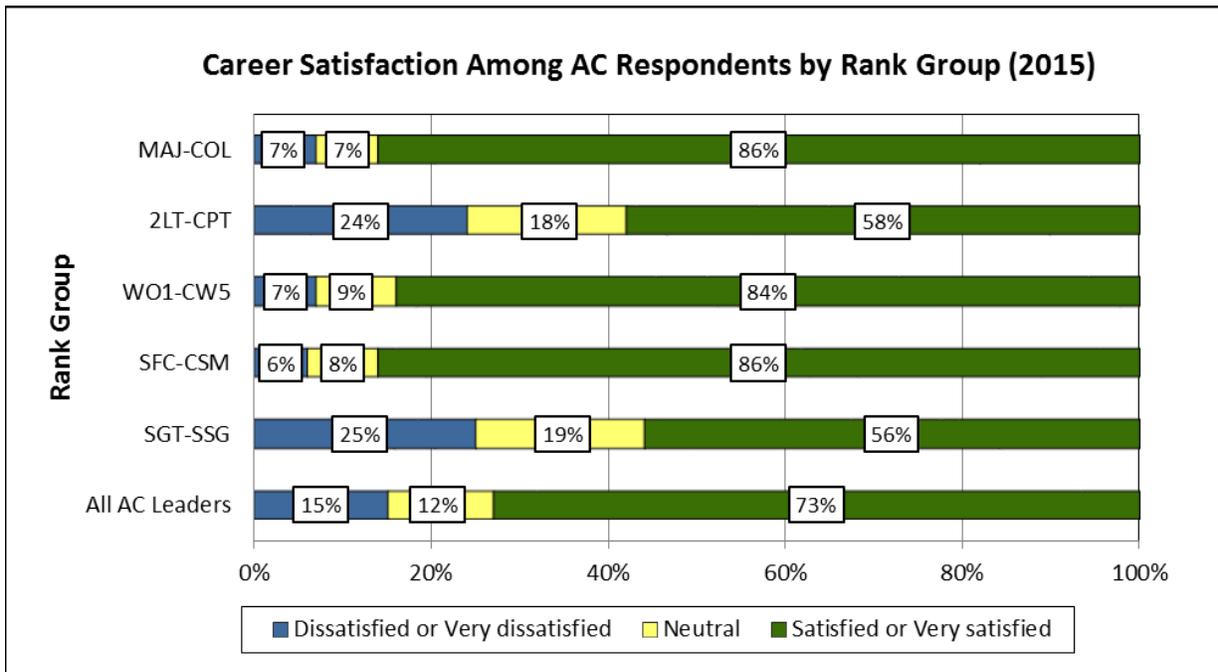
Morale and career satisfaction are positively related ( $r = .63, p < .001$ ), though these two constructs differ. Morale represents leaders' current affective reaction to the environment or job in which they operate. In contrast, career satisfaction represents an accumulation of attitudes regarding characteristics spanning a leader's career (Locke, 1976; Pinder, 1998). Levels of career satisfaction among Army leaders continue to be favorable overall. However, as expected, leaders with longer length of service (i.e., field grade officers, warrant officers, Sr NCOs) tend to indicate higher levels of career satisfaction than do junior-level leaders (see Figure 12). Fifty-eight percent of AC company grade officers and 56% of Jr NCOs are satisfied with their Army careers thus far, while one-fourth of these leaders (24% and 25%, respectively) are dissatisfied. In comparison, about two-thirds of RC leaders in all rank groups report satisfaction with their Army careers, including 71% of company grade officers and 65% of Jr NCOs (see Figure 13).

Levels of career satisfaction have gradually declined since 2009, but are still at a favorable level.

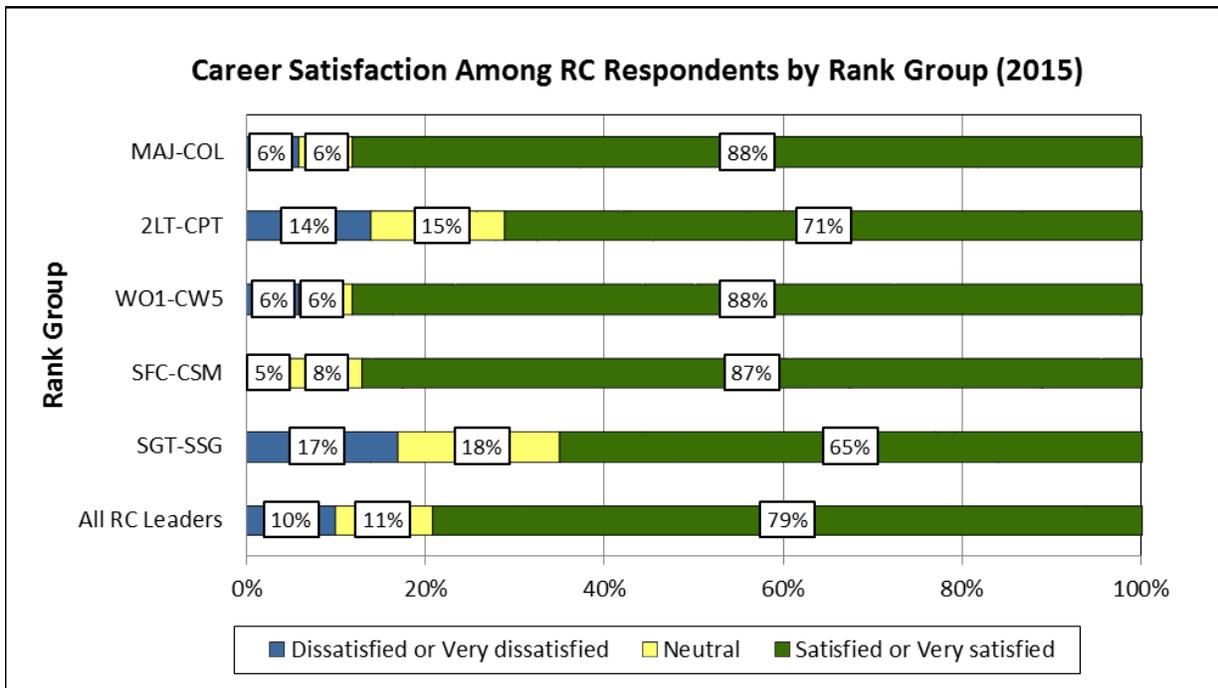
The percentage of leaders indicating satisfaction with their Army careers has gradually declined in recent years, a trend that continued in 2015. In 2009, 82% of AC leaders and 84% of RC leaders were satisfied or very satisfied with their Army careers up to that point; current results now reflect an overall decline in satisfaction by 9% for AC leaders and 5% for RC leaders. CASAL did not ask respondents to specifically identify reasons for their career satisfaction or dissatisfaction. However, there is a moderately strong relationship between respondent engagement and career satisfaction ( $r = .53, p < .001$ ). CASAL results on engagement are presented in more detail in section 1.3.4 of this report. Additionally, respondent attitudes toward their assignment histories and the effectiveness of the leader development domains for preparing them for new levels of leadership or responsibility provide insight into factors that explain variance in respondents' ratings for career satisfaction (see section 2.5 of this report).

Research with military populations (Thie & Brown, 1994) has suggested that four key factors influence career satisfaction assessments and commitment decisions: professional satisfaction (e.g., advancement opportunities), job satisfaction (e.g., challenge, autonomy), economic considerations (e.g., compensation, retirement benefits), and family considerations (e.g., spousal support, separation from family). The ARI Sample Survey of Military Personnel (SSMP) tracks multiple factors related to quality of life that are not assessed by CASAL. From 2009 to 2012, the factor showing the largest decrease in satisfaction was job security, even while attitudes toward pay and benefits increased (U.S. Army Research Institute, 2012).

**Figure 12. Current Levels of Career Satisfaction Reported by Active Component Respondents**



**Figure 13. Current Levels of Career Satisfaction Reported by Reserve Component Respondents**



## Career Intentions

Career intentions of leaders is an important factor in leadership readiness as it indicates interest of the pool of leaders who will be available to promote and for continued service. Since 2005, CASAL has reported on the career intentions of Army leaders. Overall, leader intentions to remain in the Army are fairly stable. One indicator of commitment to service is that 35% of AC leaders and 40% in the RC are currently eligible for retirement but choose to remain in service to the Army. In the AC, this includes 62% of field grade officers, 58% of Sr NCOs, and 46% of warrant officers. In the RC, this includes 65% of field grade officers, 59% of Sr NCOs, and 58% of warrant officers. Of leaders in these cohorts who are not currently eligible to retire, 89% or more indicate they plan to stay until retirement eligible or beyond 20 years.

Intentions to remain in the Army are also strong among junior leaders:

- Forty-one percent of AC company grade officers plan to stay in the Army until retirement or beyond, while nearly an equal percentage are undecided (40%).
- In comparison, more than two-thirds of RC company grade officers (71%) plan to stay until retirement, while one in five is undecided (21%).
- Two-thirds of AC Jr NCOs (68%) plan to stay while 19% are undecided. Most RC Jr NCOs (83%) intend to remain in the Army until retirement eligible or beyond 20 years.

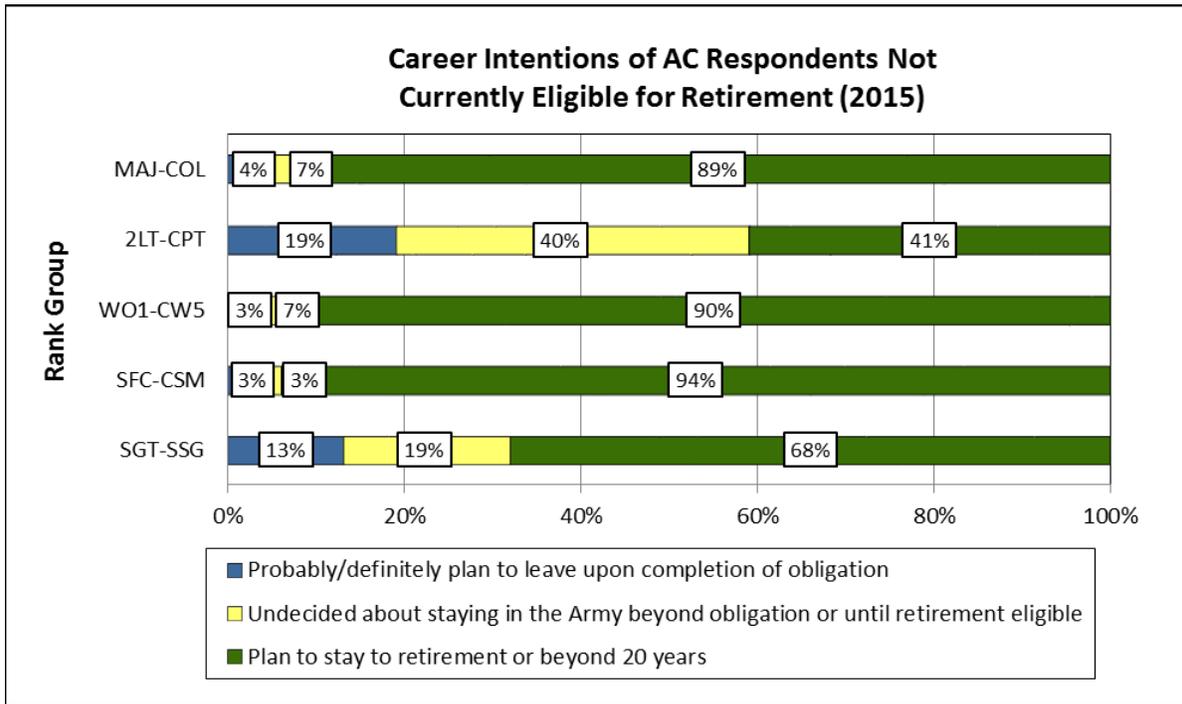
These findings are consistent with levels reported in past CASAL studies. Current leader career intentions by component and rank group are presented in Figures 14 and 15.

The results of the 2014 Status of Forces Surveys (SOFS) also reflect favorable intentions of leaders to remain in the Army (Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program, 2015; 2016). As reported in the results of these surveys:

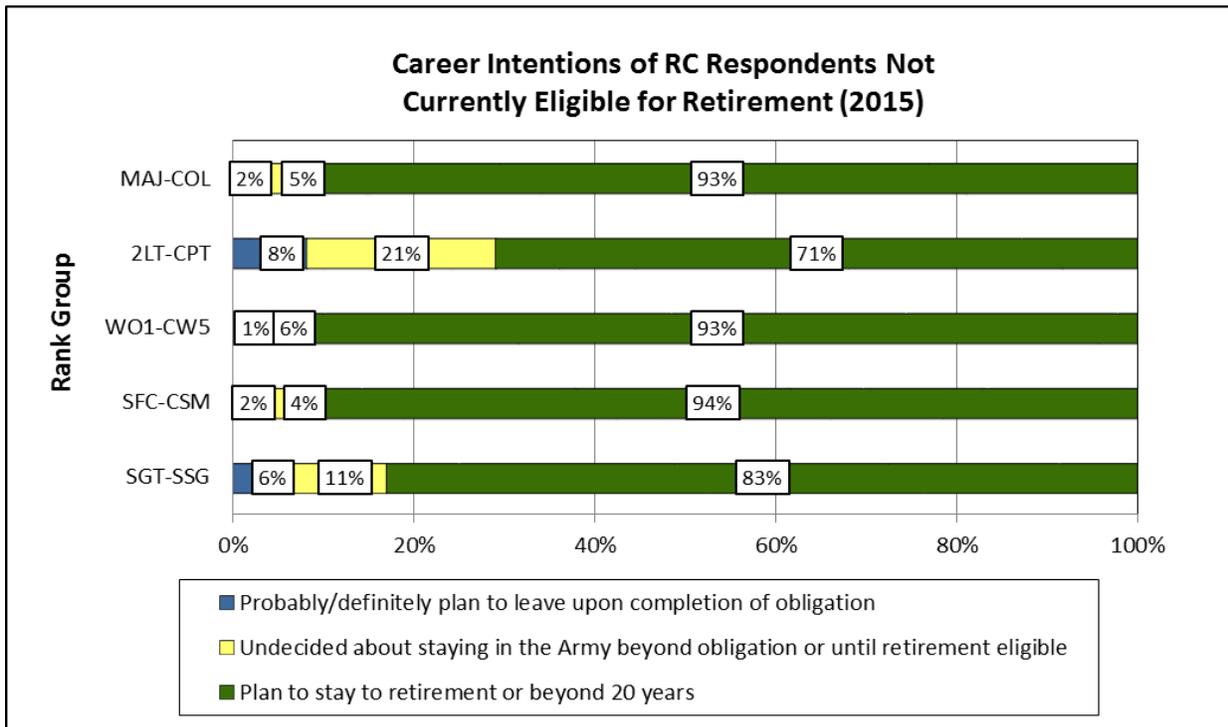
- 78% of active duty field grade officers, 63% of company grade officers, and 73% of noncommissioned officers indicated they likely or very likely would choose to stay on active duty (13%, 24%, and 18%, respectively, were unlikely or very unlikely to stay).
- 82% of officers and 69% of enlisted members in the reserve components indicated they are likely to stay in the National Guard or Army Reserve (10% and 19%, respectively, were unlikely to stay).

The career intentions of AC captains have been of particular interest, as this cohort historically reports the highest degree of uncertainty or indecision about their intentions to remain in the Army. The average length of service for AC captains assessed by the 2015 CASAL is 9.8 years. Results indicate that 55% of AC captains who are not currently eligible to retire intend to remain in the Army until retirement eligible or beyond 20 years. This is an increase of 5% compared to the 2012 CASAL, an increase of 10% since 2011, and is among the highest

**Figure 14. Career Intentions of Active Component Leaders Not Currently Eligible for Retirement**



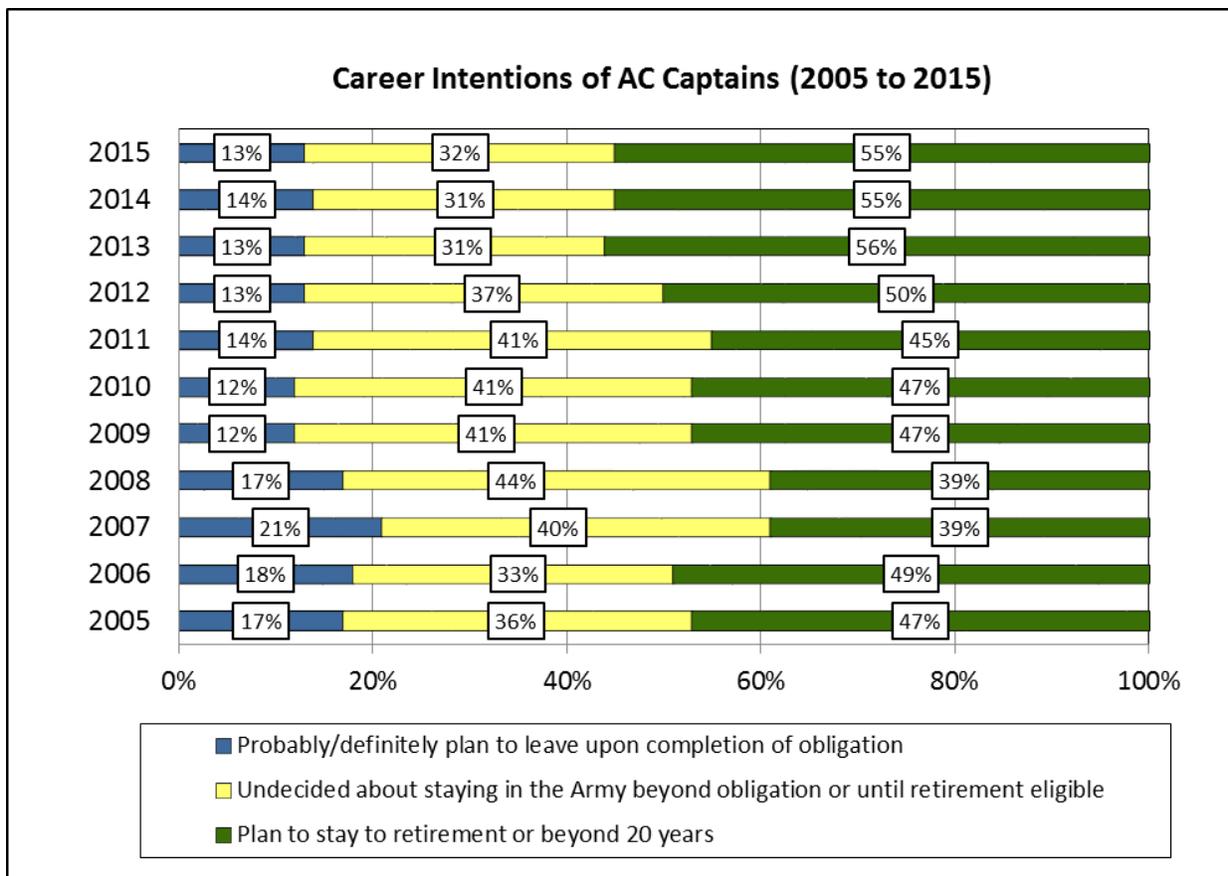
**Figure 15. Career Intentions of Reserve Component Leaders Not Currently Eligible for Retirement**



percentages observed in CASAL studies for this rank (see Figure 16). In 2000, the officer phase of the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) found that 39% of AC captains planned to stay in the Army until retirement eligible, while 42% were undecided and 19% planned to leave (Fallesen et al., 2005). Compared to this 2015 finding of 55% of captains planning to stay, 84% of majors and 33% of first lieutenants intend to remain in the Army until retirement or beyond 20 years.

Intention to remain in the Army until retirement continues to be strong. Since 2012, more than half of AC captains have indicated they plan to stay until retirement eligible or beyond 20 years.

**Figure 16. Trend Results for Active Component Captain Career Intentions**



In FY15, promotion rates for most basic-branch AC captains to the rank of major showed improvement. The primary zone of consideration included selection rates of 70.4% for operations officers, 69% for operations support, and 69.7% for force sustainment, with an average of nearly 70% (exceeding the 2014 average of 65%). The Army strives for 80% selection opportunities from captain to major during normal times when a build-up or drawdown in end strength are not occurring, such as prior to September 11, 2001 (Tice, 2015). In 2012, the Army

announced preparation to return to selection opportunity levels that were in place prior to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to correctly size and shape year groups (Joyner, 2012). The gradual decline in the calculated selection opportunities for captains occurred in recent years, from 108% from 2001 to 2011, to 99% in 2012, to 94% in 2013, to 70% in 2014, before returning to nearly 80% in 2015. Regardless of the reduction in selection rates, captains' intentions to remain in the Army are stable and at a positive level.

### 1.3.2 Characteristics of the Working Environment

Leader perceptions of the current operational environment provide context for understanding the quality of leadership in the Army and its impact on subordinate and organizational outcomes. Findings from the 2015 CASAL provide several indications that leaders hold favorable perceptions about their assigned duties and the characteristics of the working environment (e.g., the people they work with, the degree to which standards are enforced). Stress from a high workload continues to be an issue for some leaders.

#### Attitudes toward Assigned Duties

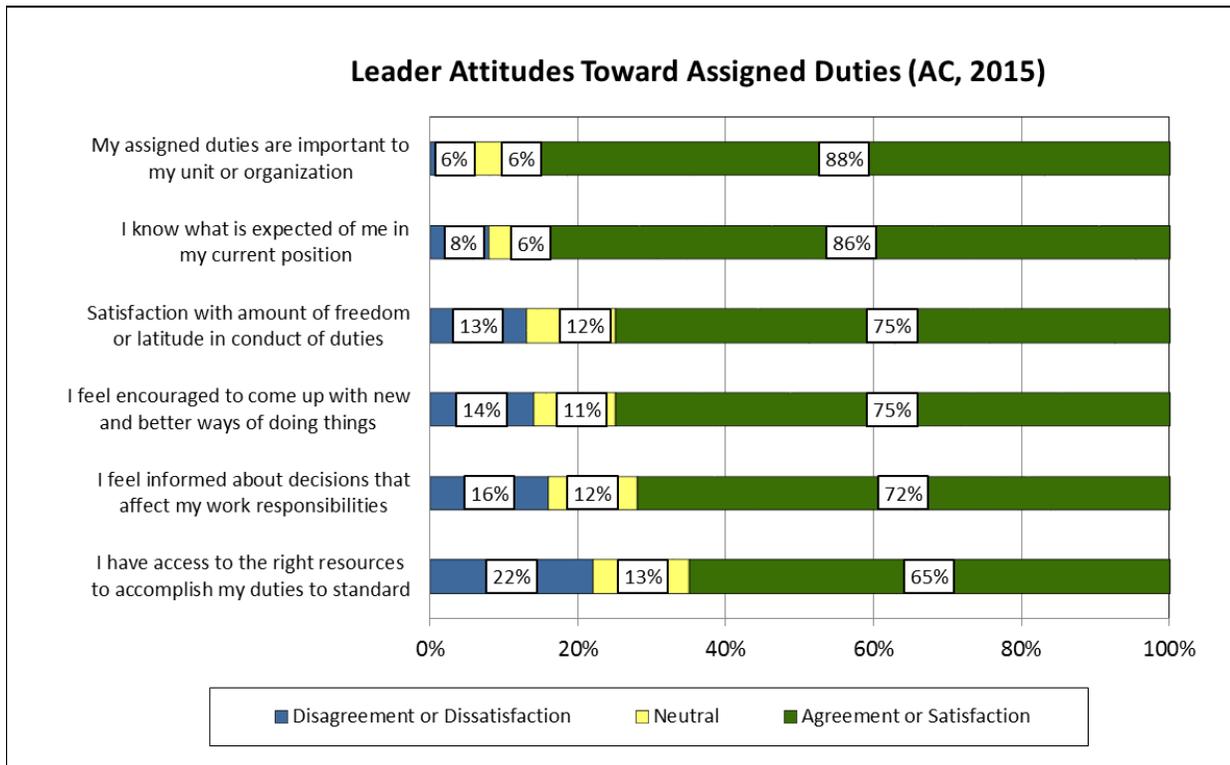
Periodic assessment of leader attitudes toward their assigned duties is important for several reasons. Research has demonstrated that attitudes about one's job positively relate to motivation, job performance, job satisfaction, and turnover (Campion & Berger, 1990; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Muchinsky, 2003). Both AC and RC leaders continue to hold favorable attitudes toward the performance of their current duties (see Figure 17). The most favorable attitudes (exceeding three-fourths favorability) include perceptions that one's assigned duties are important to the organization and knowing what is expected in one's position. Also favorable is that three-fourths of AC respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the

Leader attitudes toward their assigned duties are favorable, though only 65% agree they have access to the right resources to accomplish their duties to standard.

freedom or latitude they have in the conduct of their duties. Three-fourths of AC respondents agree they feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things, which reflects positive working conditions that foster innovative thought and action.

About three-fourths of AC respondents agree they feel informed of decisions that affect their work responsibilities, attitudes that have shown steady improvement over the past seven years (from a low of 51% agreement in 2011). However, only about two-thirds of AC respondents agree they have access to the right resources (e.g., people, materials, budget) to accomplish their duties to standard, while nearly one-fourth indicate disagreement. The 2015 CASAL did not specifically assess what resources to which respondents did not have sufficient access. As

**Figure 17. Active Component Leader Attitudes Toward Assigned Duties**



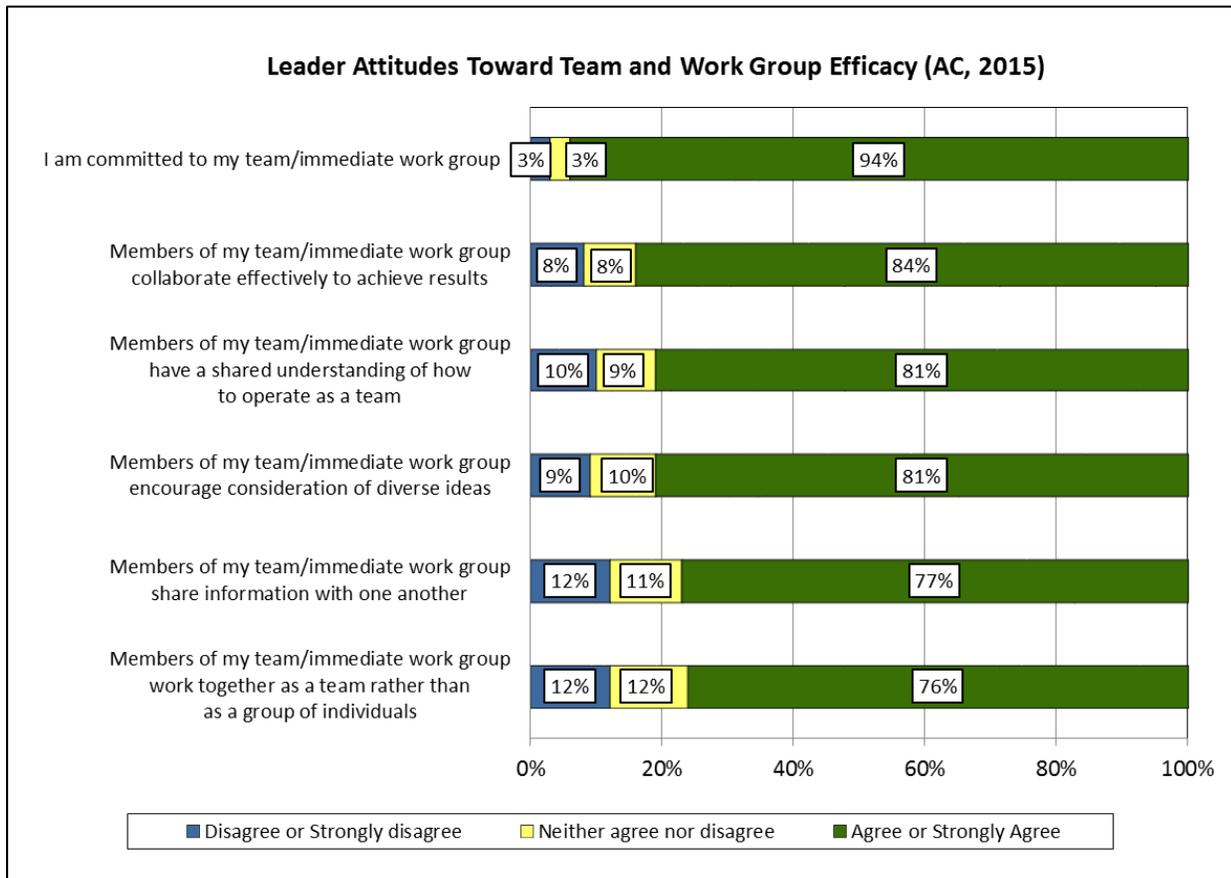
with results from previous years, favorable attitudes toward characteristics of assigned duties and working environments increase with rank and length of service. Results for RC respondents are slightly more favorable than those of AC respondents (+2% to +5%); the one exception is the level of agreement regarding having access to the right resources (-2%).

Attitudes Toward Teams and Working Groups

Leaders in both components overwhelmingly agree they are committed to their teams or immediate work groups, a consistent trend across years and one of the most favorable items assessed by CASAL. Effective teams are ones that collaborate effectively, hold a shared understanding of how to operate as a team, encourage consideration of diverse ideas, share information with one another, and work together as a team rather than as a group of individuals. More than three-fourths of AC leaders rate their team or immediate work group favorably across these considerations (see Figure 18). Further, the results for RC leaders are about 3% more favorable than the AC for each item. As expected,

There is strong commitment between leaders and their teams or working groups, and this is consistently among the most favorable indicators assessed by CASAL.

**Figure 18. Active Component Leader Attitudes Toward Their Teams and Work Groups**



respondents' level of commitment to their team or immediate work group is positively and significantly related to each of these considerations ( $r$ 's = .37 to .40,  $p < .001$ ). While favorable ratings increase with rank and length of service, ratings for each rank group meet or exceed a two-thirds favorability threshold. These findings offer favorable indications that across the Army, there are strong teams, positive working relationships, and leaders with high levels of commitment to those with whom they work.

Results of the 2014 Status of Forces Surveys (SOFS) (Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program, 2015) serve as additional indicators for the current attitudes toward team dynamics and performance in the Army. Results of this survey found that for active duty respondents:

- 82% of officers and 67% of NCOs agreed unit members pull together to get the job done (disagreement by 5% and 12%, respectively).
- 75% of officers and 56% of NCOs agreed unit members work well as a team (disagreement by 8% and 16%, respectively).
- 70% of officers and 49% of NCOs agreed unit members really care about each other (disagreement by 11% and 22%, respectively).

## Characteristics of Units and Organizations

AC respondents report favorable attitudes regarding several characteristics of the units and organizations in which they work (see Figure 19). A majority of respondents in both components report confidence in the ability of their unit or organization to perform its mission and pride in telling others that they are a member of their unit organization. Additionally, CASAL assessed two unit characteristics that reflect climates conducive to learning and the mission command philosophy. Three-fourths of AC respondents agree that members of their unit/organization are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes, and agree that members of their unit/organization are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties. The levels of agreement for each of these characteristics of learning climates show subtle change but remain positive since 2013. Notably, the results for RC respondents are more favorable than AC respondents for each of these indicators (+5% to +9%).

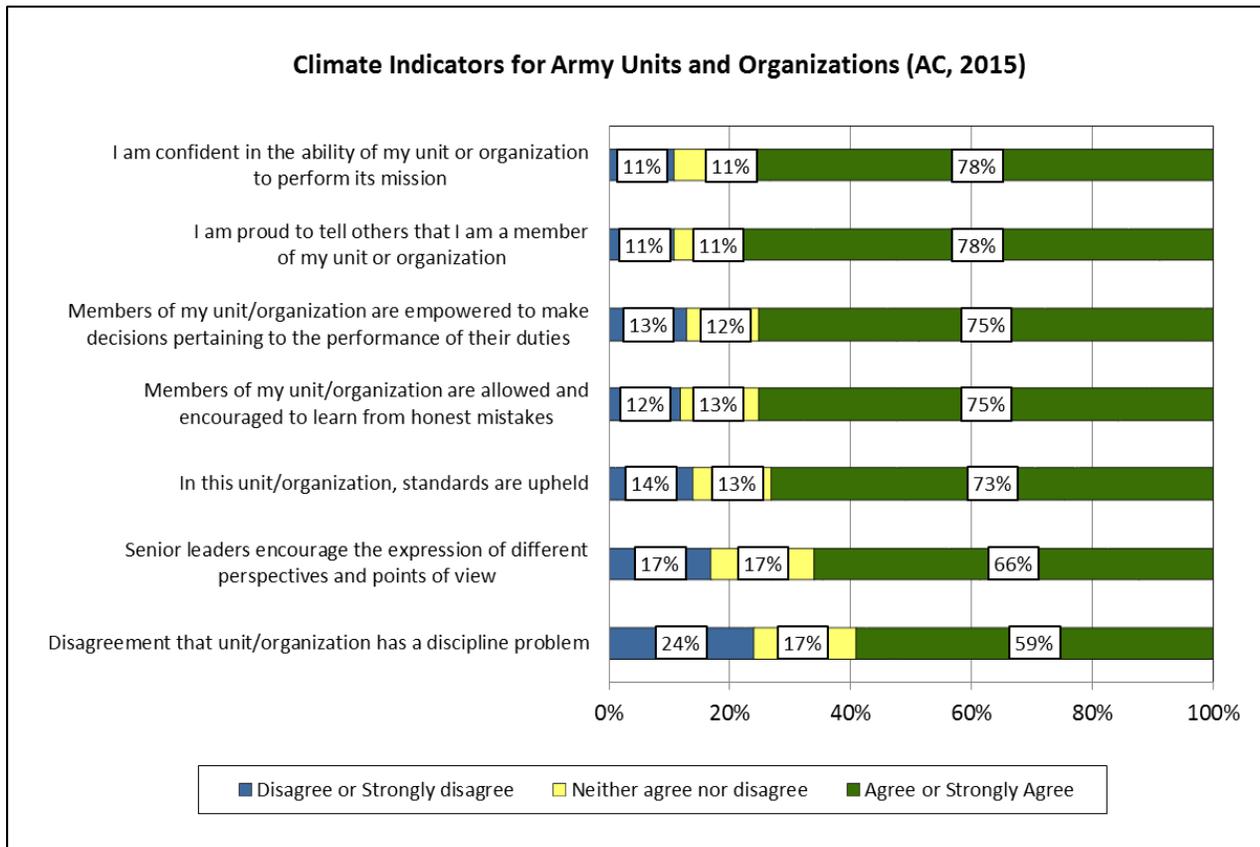
78% of leaders are confident in the ability of their unit to perform its mission, and 78% are proud to tell others they are a member of their unit.

Overall, about two-thirds of AC respondents agree that senior leaders in their unit or organization encourage the expression of different perspectives and points of view. However, only about half of Jr NCOs (51%) agree that differing perspectives and points of view are encouraged by senior leaders (27% disagree).

Nearly three-fourths of AC respondents (73%) agree that standards are upheld in their unit or organization (e.g., professional bearing, adherence to regulations). These findings are consistent with those observed in 2013 and 2014, and are more favorable than results from 2012 (+4%) and 2011 (+9%). CASAL has consistently found that smaller percentages of Jr NCOs (60% AC) agree standards are upheld in their unit or organization, though the level of agreement for this rank group has also trended more favorably since 2011 (+11%). As expected, there is a positive relationship between upholding standards and an absence of discipline problems in units and organizations ( $r = .38, p < .001$ ). This statistical relationship is important, as it shows enforcement of standards is positively related to favorable perceptions about the absence of discipline problems in units and organizations.

Fifty-nine percent of AC respondents disagree that a discipline problem exists in their unit or organization, while 24% agree a problem exists. Results for RC respondents are slightly more favorable, as 65% disagree their unit or organization has a discipline problem and 20% agree. Jr NCOs in both components (35% AC; 27% RC) report the highest levels of agreement that

**Figure 19. Climate Indicators for Army Units and Organizations**



discipline problems exist, likely given their proximity and responsibility over junior enlisted personnel. At an overall level, the percentage of leaders that indicate unit discipline problems exist remains consistent with 2014 and comparable to levels reported in 2011 and 2012 (+/- 1%, AC and RC); the observed level of agreement was slightly lower and more favorable in 2013 (18% agree).

CASAL responses collected in 2013 identified the types of discipline problems that exist in Army units and organizations. Similar problems are expected to still occur. The most frequently cited

24% of leaders agree there is a unit discipline problem, a level up from 18% in 2013, a level steady since 2011. Poor application and enforcement of standards and ineffective leadership are associated with unit climate problems.

issues regarding poor discipline were poor application and enforcement of existing standards (e.g., relaxed environments, lack of accountability, inconsistent enforcement); ineffective leadership (e.g., leaders setting a poor example, self-focused, poor communication); unfavorable unit climate characteristics (e.g., low morale, lack of cohesion, lack of respect for others); and perceived hindrances

to leader action (e.g., unable to appropriately correct conditions, lack of support from

organization). Specific problem areas included a lack of adherence to customs, courtesies, and professional bearing; infractions (e.g., drugs and alcohol, fighting, crime); laziness or a poor work ethic; Soldiers failing to meet physical fitness standards; and policy violations.

### 1.3.3 Workload Stress

High levels of work stress can negatively impact morale and effectiveness. Stress from overwork is an important factor in why employees decide to leave an organization (Branham, 2005; Partnership for Public Service [Partnership], 2010). Army leaders are expected to mitigate workload stress by contributing to an environment where subordinates can focus on accomplishing critical tasks (ADRP 6-22). Leaders assess the capabilities of their organization and set priorities or seek relief when demands exceed capacity. Effective leaders balance mission accomplishment with the welfare of followers. Ineffective leaders are likely to contribute to problems by poor scheduling of work, unmet workload, not addressing role and interpersonal conflicts, and overlooking the effects of stress on subordinates (Committee on the Department of Homeland Security Workforce Resilience [Committee], 2013).

#### Incidence of Workload Stress

One-fourth of AC leaders (25%) rate stress from a high workload as a serious problem, while 59% rate stress as a moderate problem and 16% rate it as not a problem at all. Since 2009, the percentage of AC leaders reporting workload stress as a serious problem

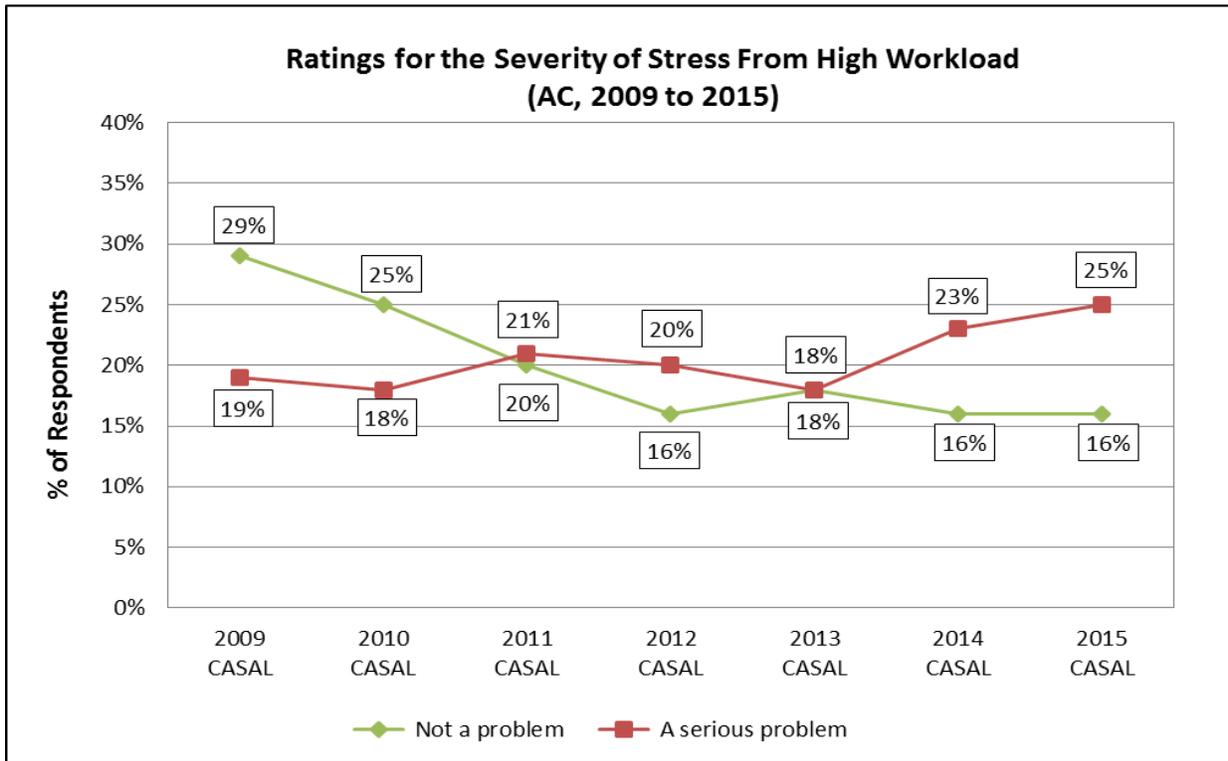
25% of AC respondents rate stress from high workload as a serious problem. Levels have ranged between 18% and 23% since 2009.

has increased from 18% to 23% over the previous seven years to the current high of 25% (see Figure 20).<sup>13</sup> This unfavorable shift is also evident in the declining percentage of AC leaders rating stress from a high workload as 'not a problem' (from 29% in 2009, to 16% in 2015). Workload stress is less frequently reported as a serious problem by RC leaders (between 13% and 18% since 2009), though the percentage of RC leaders reporting that stress from a high workload is not a problem at all has declined during this time (see Figure 21). The problem is not isolated to the military, as about one-third of Army civilian managers and first line supervisors report workload stress as a serious problem (Riley, Cavanaugh, Silverman, Fallesen, & Jones, 2016).

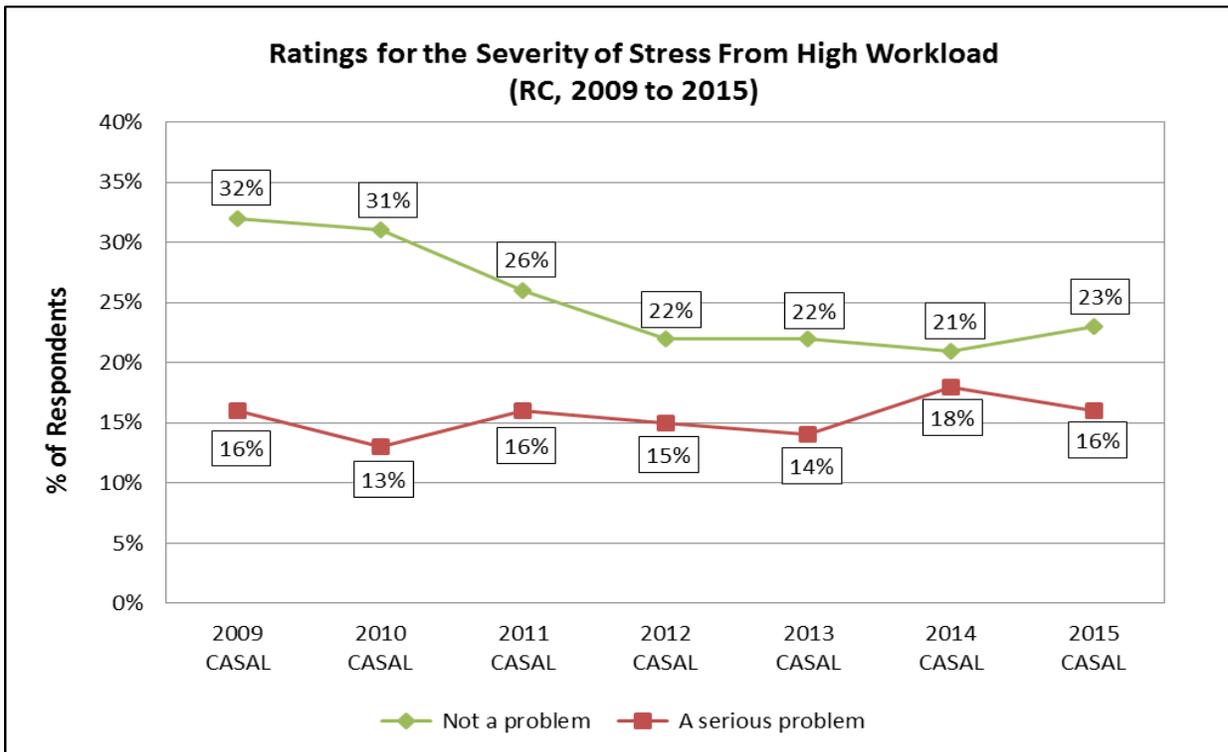
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<sup>13</sup> Respondents rated their current workload stress in their unit or organization on a 7 point scale where 1 is 'Not a problem at all' and 7 is 'A serious problem.' In the results presented here, ratings of 6 and 7 are interpreted as a serious problem; ratings of 3, 4, and 5 are interpreted as a moderate problem; and ratings of 1 and 2 are interpreted as not a problem. Figures 20 and 21 present AC and RC results for the least favorable (i.e., a serious problem) and most favorable (i.e., not a problem at all) ends of the scale for this item.

**Figure 20. Active Component Ratings for Stress From High Workload (2009 to 2015)**



**Figure 21. Reserve Component Ratings for Stress From High Workload (2009 to 2015)**



Previous CASAL results have demonstrated that of those leaders who perceive stress from a high workload as a moderate to serious problem, about half also indicate the stress has had a moderate to great negative impact on their well-being, while slightly smaller percentages report the stress has affected their work quality (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman, Fallesen, & Gunther, 2014).

Results of the 2014 Status of Forces Surveys (SOFS) (Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program, 2015; 2016) serve as additional indicators for the current stress levels experienced by active duty and reserve component personnel. Findings from these surveys include:

- A majority of field grade officers (64%), company grade officers (61%), and noncommissioned officers (55%) reported having worked longer than their normal duty day (i.e., overtime) on more than 60 occurrences in the past 12 months.
- For these active duty respondents, the average number of overtime days per year was 135 days for field grade officers, 129 days for company grade officers, and 118 days for noncommissioned officers.
- 39% of active duty field grade officers, 46% of company grade officers, and 47% of noncommissioned officers reported they were experiencing more stress than usual in their work life (20%, 14%, and 14%, respectively, reported less stress than usual).
- Similarly, 29% of officers and 28% of enlisted members in the reserve components reported they were experiencing more stress than usual in their work life (16% and 27%, respectively, reported less stress than usual).

Results of the 2015 CASAL show that the experience of workload stress is negatively related to several indicators of effective leadership in units and organizations. Specifically, AC respondents who report stress from a high workload as a serious problem tend to report dissatisfaction with the quality of military leadership in their unit ( $r = .27, p < .001$ ), view unit leaders as ineffective at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates ( $r = .44, p < .001$ ), rate their immediate superior ineffective at taking action to help subordinates manage excessive workload demands ( $r = .29, p < .001$ ), and rate their superiors as ineffective leaders ( $r = .25, p < .001$ ).

Leaders who report stress from a high workload are less likely to be satisfied with unit leadership and more likely to rate their superiors as ineffective.

### Sources of Workload Stress

2015 CASAL respondents who rated their current stress from a high workload as a moderate to serious problem were asked to indicate what factors contribute to the stress. Results show that more than half of respondents reported that insufficient personnel (well-trained personnel or

personnel in general) contributes to workload stress in their unit or organization (see Table 6). Other factors that contribute to stress include time constraints, poor guidance from senior leaders, lack of physical resources or materials, and poor organizational climates. Smaller percentages of AC and RC leaders indicate leaders do not account for peoples' psychological fitness, that there is poor organization of work among team members, and that conflict exists among team members. Results for Army civilian leaders are also included in Table 6 to show that contributors to workload problems are similar among uniformed and civilian cohorts.

Respondents commented on additional factors that contribute to workload stress, and frequently cited organizational factors such as a high OPTEMPO; funding or budget issues; challenges with communication or information flow; last minute planning or changes; and additional taskings on top of mission requirements. The comments also cited leadership factors such as leaders holding unrealistic expectations; ineffective, inexperienced, and unqualified leaders; toxic leaders; micromanagement; and leaders overcommitting to new taskings pushed down from higher levels. The comments indicate that many leaders are not executing their leadership responsibilities to adapt to changing demands and to lessen the negative impacts on subordinates (ADRP 6-22).

**Table 6. Reported Factors That Contribute to Workload Stress by Component.**

<b>Factors That Contribute to Workload Stress (Rank Ordered by Frequency of AC Respondents)</b>			
	<b>AC Leaders (n = 6,767)</b>	<b>RC Leaders (n = 4,847)</b>	<b>Army Civilian Leaders (n = 3,076)</b>
Not enough personnel	61%	53%	71%
Not enough well-trained personnel	50%	45%	46%
Lack of time available	47%	44%	42%
Poor guidance from senior leaders in higher HQ or CoC	37%	33%	34%
Lack of physical resources or materials to accomplish the work	31%	34%	24%
Poor organizational climate	30%	23%	27%
Leaders/managers who do not account for peoples psychological fitness	25%	19%	19%
Poor organization of work among team members	24%	18%	15%
Conflict among team members	14%	13%	17%

## Leadership Response to Stress From High Workload

Unit leaders can respond to stress associated with high workloads by fostering a climate in which seeking help for stress-related issues is accepted and encouraged. Findings from the 2014 CASAL indicated that less than two-thirds of uniformed leaders (62% AC; 63% RC) agreed that seeking help for stress-related problems was accepted and encouraged in their unit or organization (13% and 11% disagree, respectively), a level that was stable in recent years, but more favorable than levels observed between 2009 and 2011 (range of 55% to 59% agreement). Unit leaders can also respond to high workloads by taking action to mitigate or alleviate demands associated with subordinate stress. In 2015, about two-thirds of respondents rate their immediate superior effective at taking action to help subordinates manage excessive workload demands (16% rate them ineffective).

As is evident in Table 7, AC junior-level leaders (company grade officers and Jr NCOs) report the least favorable attitudes regarding their experience with workload stress. In comparison, field grade officers, warrant officers, and Sr NCOs report slightly lower incidence of stress as a serious problem (21% to 22%), and provide more favorable assessments of actions by their immediate superiors to manage workload demands (71% to 77% effective). However, less than half of respondents in these rank groups provide a favorable holistic assessment of leaders in their unit or organization when it comes to lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates. Notably, Army civilian leaders report workload stress as a problem similar to the pattern of Jr NCOs (e.g., 33% of first line supervisors and 40% of managers report a serious problem; 25% rate organizational leaders as ineffective at lessening or limiting effects of stress).

**Table 7. Indicators of Stress From High Workload in Units and Organizations.**

Indicators of Workload Stress in Units and Organizations	Active Component Leaders				
	SGT- SSG	SFC- CSM	WO1- CW5	2LT- CPT	MAJ- COL
Stress from high workload assessed as a <b>'serious problem'</b> (6 or 7 on a 7-pt scale)	30%	22%	21%	26%	22%
Stress from high workload assessed as <b>'moderate problem'</b> (3, 4, or 5 on a 7-pt scale)	55%	58%	62%	60%	62%
Stress from high workload assessed as <b>'not a problem'</b> (1 or 2 on a 7-pt scale)	15%	20%	17%	14%	16%
Effectiveness of leaders in unit/organization at lessening or limiting effects of workload stress in subordinates*	29% (29%)	47% (14%)	39% (16%)	36% (24%)	46% (15%)
Effectiveness of immediate superior at taking action to help subordinates manage excessive workload demands*	61% (13%)	77% (20%)	71% (13%)	63% (9%)	71% (22%)

*Note.* The percentage of respondents rating items ineffective/very ineffective are given in parentheses.

As discussed previously in this report, 84% of leaders are rated effective in demonstrating the leader attribute *Resilience* (recovery from setbacks, adversity, and stress), and 85% effectively demonstrate *Confidence & Composure*. Leaders should be able help mitigate the effects of workload stress both for themselves and for their subordinates. Resilient and composed leaders must also be empathetic and care about how stress can effect Soldiers, and intervene when necessary and to the extent possible. The 2015 CASAL captured respondent comments regarding ways that leaders effectively lessen or limit the effects of workload stress in subordinates, as well as reasons why other leaders fail to do so. Below is a summary of the major themes that were identified in the comments.

**Effective Mitigation of Workload Stress.** The themes for the positive actions that leaders take to lessen workload stress fall within two broad categories, and include problem-focused solutions to accomplish the mission, and methods to motivate subordinates and sustain morale and well-being. Within the first category of themes (problem-focused solutions), the most frequently cited work-related action for addressing workload stress was to simply spread the workload to evenly distribute the tasks or requirements. Another prominent theme was the use of effective communication and cross-talk within units and organizations, and included information sharing, two-way communication between leaders and unit members, and open-door policies where unit members could initiate dialogue with leaders. Comments also frequently reflected actions by leaders to effectively plan and prioritize missions and taskings, and to anticipate high workloads so that the impact on unit members can be mitigated.

Leaders mitigate workload stress in subordinates by enacting problem-focused solutions to accomplish tasks, and attending to subordinate morale and well-being.

Other comments indicated effective leaders address subordinate stress by remaining engaged with subordinates by holding periodic team or group meetings to discuss and assess the current workload and listen to concerns. Depending on the type of work, these meetings, group huddles, or round table discussions could occur at a set time each week, or be pulled together as needed.

Stress is also mitigated in organizations where senior leaders set realistic workloads and reasonable timelines for task completion, and remain flexible and adjust course as needed. Other comments noted that units and teams benefit when leaders personally get involved and assist subordinates in completing work during periods of high OPTEMPO. Comments also indicated that workload stress is mitigated when subordinates are empowered to act in their duties, including making decisions, setting their own schedules, and owning the tasks they perform. These situations are the opposite of micromanagement, and demonstrate trust in the subordinate to complete the work. Additionally, workload stress is mitigated in settings where effective teamwork or group collaboration and cooperation occur.

Less frequently mentioned themes indicated that effective leaders shield or protect

Ineffective and disengaged leadership, personnel and resource shortages, and poor organizational communication are perceived to exacerbate stress from a high workload.

subordinates from excessive taskings or workload demands; recognize and acknowledge workload stress and are willing to address it; delegate tasks appropriately (to the right personnel); fight for and provide the appropriate work resources; develop subordinates through coaching, mentoring, and job cross-training; ensure proper staffing levels and manage personnel effectively; foster a positive work environment that tolerates honest mistakes; and hold all unit members accountable for contributing to work.

The second category of themes related to ways leaders motivate subordinates and sustain morale and well-being. The most frequently cited theme in this category related to leader encouragement or respect for subordinates' time away from work, including their use of personal leave, days off, family time, and work-life balance. Similarly, a prominent theme reflected respect for subordinates' time, whereby leaders allow for flex or comp time; allow early release when the work is done; enforce standard workday hours (e.g., everyone leaves at 1700); limit overtime hours and work on weekends; and enact days of no scheduled activities (DONSA). Additional themes within this category included morale-building activities or events (e.g., picnics, parties, FRG events, MWR activities); team-building activities or events; support for wellness, resilience, and mental health (e.g., chaplain support, stress classes); engaging in physical activities, sports, and competitions; and recognition, awards, and incentives to motivate subordinates.

**Ineffective Mitigation of Workload Stress.** The themes for the reasons leaders are ineffective at taking action to lessen workload stress also fall within two broad categories, and include leadership behaviors and unit or organizational issues. Respondents most frequently cited negative leadership behaviors and attributes, including leaders being overly focused on results with no regard for subordinate well-being, selfish leadership, micromanagement (e.g., lack of empowering or trusting subordinates), toxic leadership (i.e., a range of dysfunctional behaviors), and use of threats and intimidation. Comments also frequently cited ineffective leadership in general, and cited behaviors such as poor planning, poor guidance, failure to lead by example, indecisiveness, and incompetence. Less frequently cited leadership themes included work not being equally distributed by leaders, leaders creating stress (by adding to the workload), and leaders saying 'yes' to additional requests when subordinates are already overtasked.

Respondents also commented on assumptions they hold about their leaders, including leaders not caring about workload stress in subordinates (i.e., they are aware of stress, but are

unconcerned about it); leaders not being aware of workload stress in subordinates (i.e., they are not aware of the stress nor its impact on subordinates); leaders being negligent and complacent about workload stress (i.e., they do not acknowledge the stress, and may or may not be aware of it), and leaders being passive and complacent about workload stress (i.e., leaders acknowledge the stress, but are unable or unwilling to address it).

The most prominent themes that aligned with unit or organizational issues included personnel shortages, resource shortages, and poor organizational communication in general. Comments on personnel shortages noted that demands and workload continue to increase while the number of personnel remains the same or decreases. Other comments noted that leaders hold the same high expectations and aggressive timelines for units that are no longer fully staffed. Some respondents noted that leaders are unable or unwilling to hire new employees and that the hiring process takes too long to alleviate personnel shortage issues. Comments on resource shortages frequently mentioned that limited funding, physical, and/or technical resources cause difficulties in completing tasks in a timely and satisfactory manner. Additionally, comments frequently indicated that leaders respond to personnel and physical resource shortages by attempting to foster a climate of “do more with less.”

Examples of poor organizational communication include challenges with two-way communication in general between leaders and subordinates, leaders not clearly communicating guidance or instructions, and leaders not soliciting feedback from personnel or not using the feedback they do receive to address workload problems. Comments less frequently addressed other challenges in their units including inconsistent standards and objectives, unit training issues (e.g., ineffective training, insufficient support for training, failure to manage training schedule), bureaucracy preventing leaders from addressing workload stress, and unit members feeling discouraged from speaking up about workload stress problems.

#### **1.3.4 Leader Engagement**

Engagement is the individual involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm for work, stemming from day-to-day experiences of job involvement, organizational commitment, and intrinsic motivation (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). More simply, engagement represents the level of commitment one has for their organization and the level of initiative they apply to their duties. When measured, items assessing engagement reflect employees’ effort directed to their work and organization (Macey & Schneider, 2008), feelings of responsibility and commitment to job performance (Britt & Adler, 1999), and their physical, cognitive, and emotional experiences during work (Kahn, 1990).

Research has shown that engagement is associated with a range of important positive outcomes that effective organizations work to improve, such as reduced turnover, increased safety, increased overall satisfaction (Harter et al., 2002), less sick leave used, fewer EEO complaints, less time lost due to work-related illness or injury (U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board; MSPB, 2012), increased performance (Harter et al., 2002; Schneider, Macey, Barbera, & Martin, 2009), and reduced burnout (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Thus, a force with high levels of engagement can save the Army valuable resources and ensure mission accomplishment.

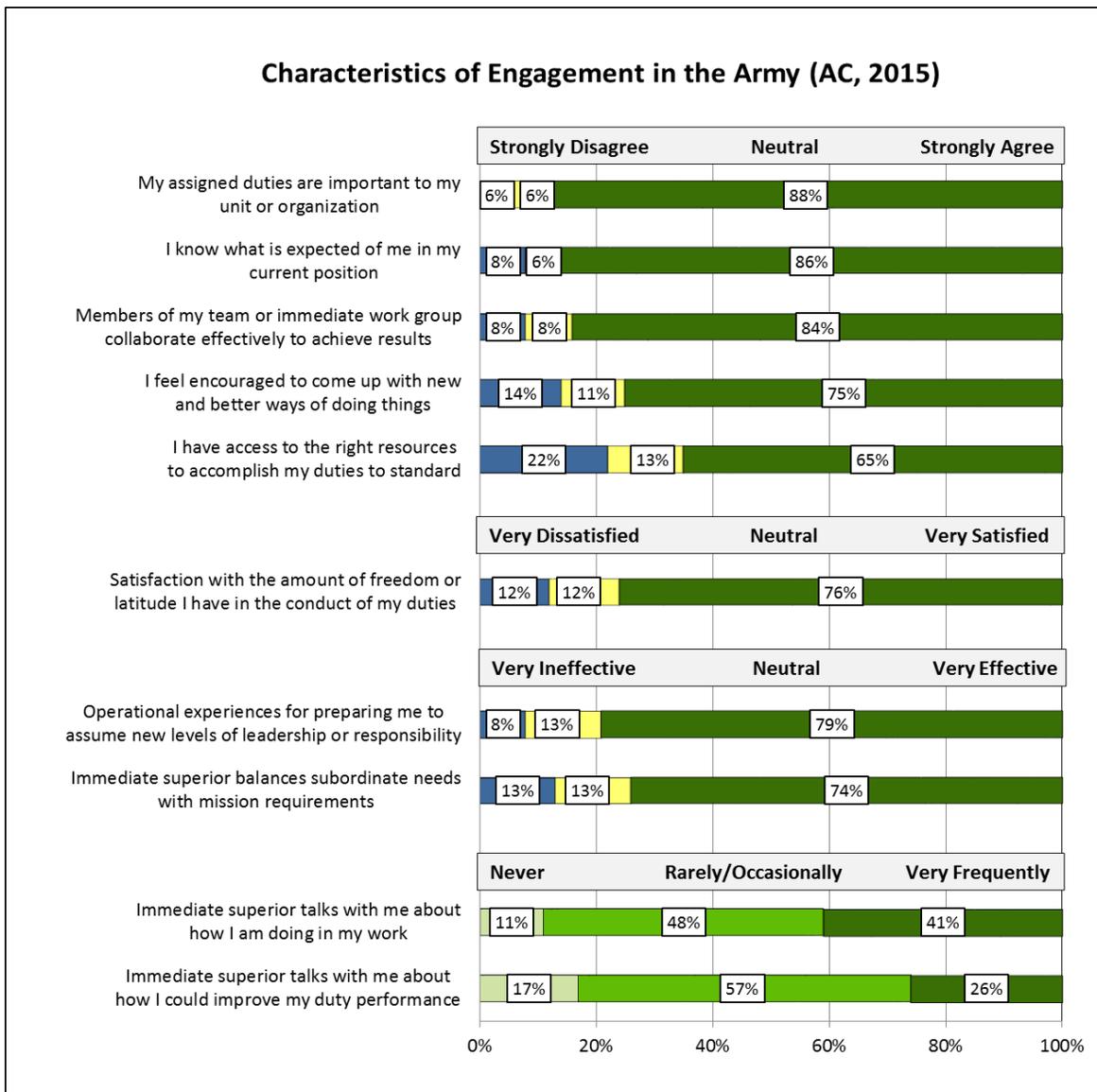
The 2015 CASAL assessed engagement through 10 items that were chosen based on their relevance to engagement constructs in the research literature and their similarity to items on previously developed and validated engagement measures (Harter et al., 2002; Schaufeli et al., 2006). The 10 engagement items and their respective facets (i.e., categories) are presented in Table 8. Results for these individual items are also discussed in more detail in their respective sections of this report.

**Table 8. Facets of Engagement and Associated CASAL Items**

<i>Engagement Facet</i>	<i>CASAL Item</i>
<i>Perceived work conditions</i>	I know what is expected of me in my current position.
	I have access to the right resources (e.g., people, materials, budget) to accomplish my duties to standard.
	Members of my team or immediate work group collaborate effectively to achieve results
	How effective is your immediate superior at balancing subordinate needs with mission requirements?
<i>Attitudes towards assigned duties</i>	I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.
	How satisfied are you with the amount of freedom or latitude you have in the conduct of your duties?
	My assigned duties are important to my unit or organization.
<i>Leader development</i>	How often does your immediate superior take the time to talk with you about how you could improve your duty performance?
	How often does your immediate superior take the time to talk with you about how you are doing in your work?
	How effective has your operational experience (work experience) been in preparing you to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility?

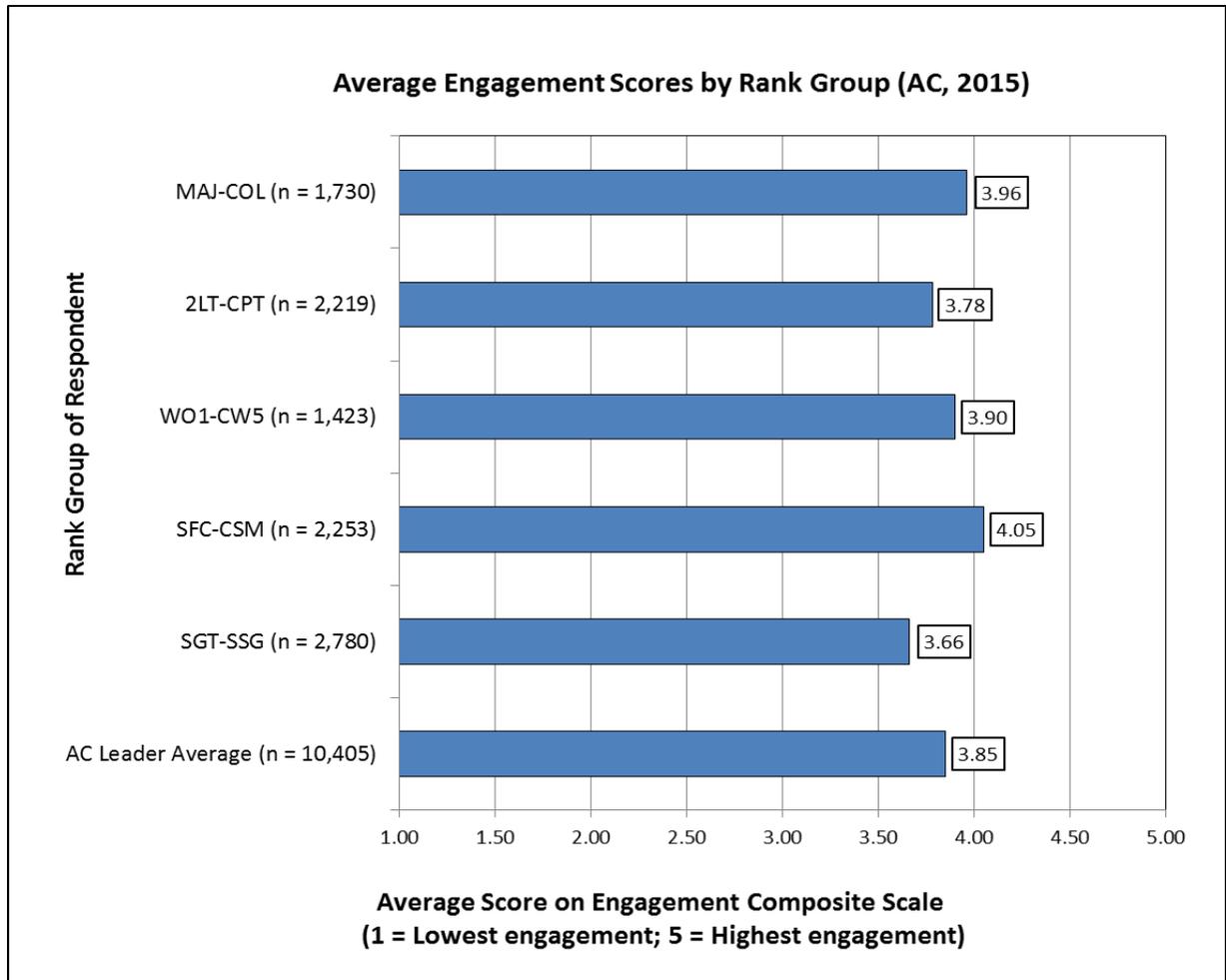
AC respondent results for these 10 indicators of engagement are presented in Figure 22. CASAL uses varying response option scales to assess engagement items, as noted for each set of items. The least favorable indicator is agreement that respondents have access to the right resources (e.g., people, materials, budget) to accomplish their duties to standard. In comparison, indicators with the largest percentages of favorable responses include agreement that respondents' assigned duties are important to the unit or organization, respondent agreement that they know what is expected of them in their current positions, and agreement that members of respondents' teams or immediate work groups collaborate effectively to achieve results.

**Figure 22. Active Component Results for Engagement Items**



Across rank groups, the means based on a composite scale score of engagement<sup>14</sup> are favorable (see Figure 23). The engagement scores for AC respondents demonstrate stability across ranks, where Jr NCOs rank the lowest ( $M = 3.66$ ) and Sr NCOs rank the highest ( $M = 4.05$ ). Overall, the engagement mean score for RC respondents is significantly higher than for AC respondents (AC  $M = 3.85$ , RC  $M = 3.89$ ;  $t = 4.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.06$ ), but the magnitude of this difference is quite small.

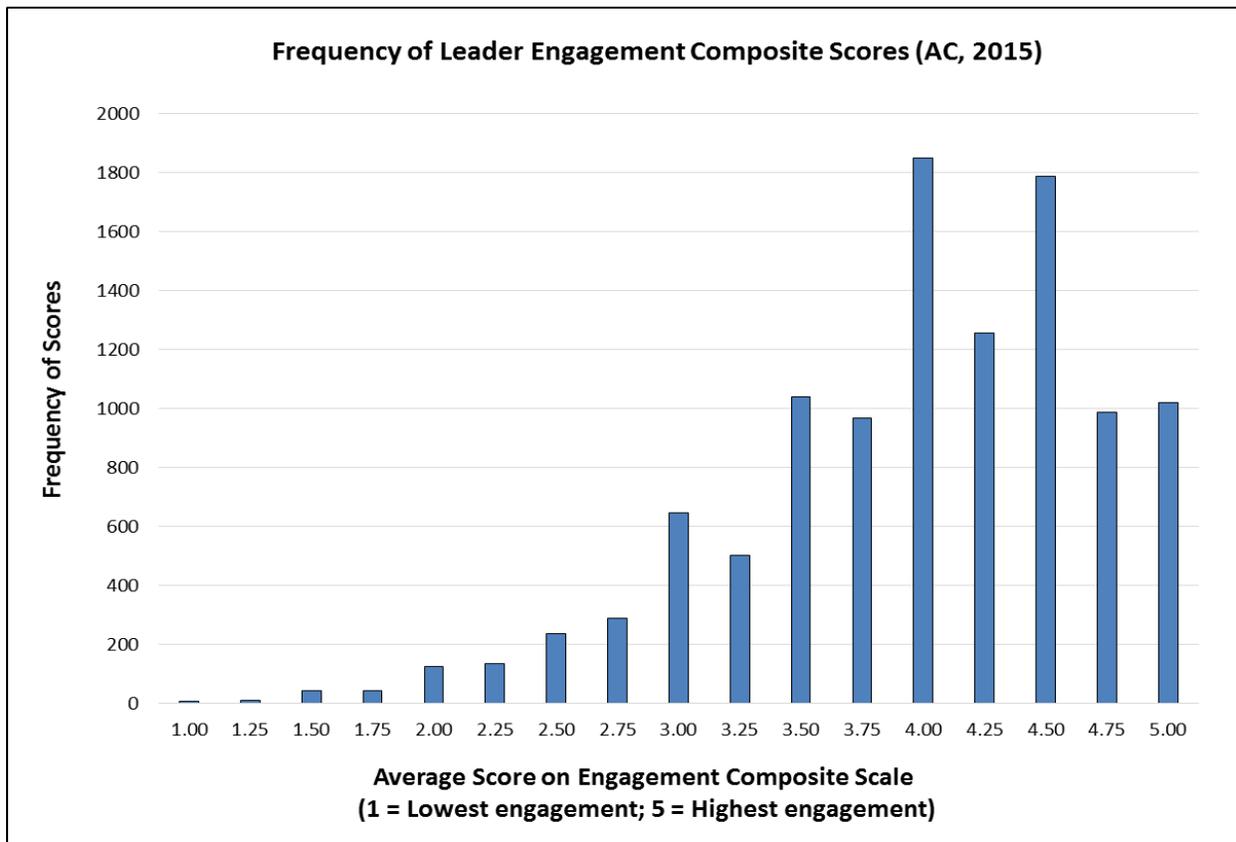
**Figure 23. Active Component Respondent Ratings for Engagement Composite by Rank Group**



<sup>14</sup> Ten items that reflect engagement were combined into a single scale composite variable. The composite variable included the items presented in Figure 22. Values across these 10 items were averaged to produce a single score with a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5. Scale scores of '5' indicate that a respondent's average rating across all 10 items equals 5 (i.e., highest engagement). A reliability analysis showed that this set of items demonstrates strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = .85$ ). Reliability indices above .80 are generally considered acceptable for a measurement scale while values greater than .90 are considered very strong (Guion, 1998).

Figure 24 displays the distribution of scores on the composite scale where most AC leaders score across the continuum of values. These results show that small percentages of AC leaders report low engagement as measured by the composite scale score. The high frequency of scores around 4.00 and higher is very encouraging, as it indicates a large proportion of AC leaders report high levels of engagement. Again, on average, a majority of AC leaders rate the engagement items favorably ( $M = 3.85$ ).

**Figure 24. Frequency of Leader Engagement Composite Scores for Active Component Respondents**



CASAL results confirm that Army leader engagement is positively and significantly related to

Subordinate engagement is associated with effective leadership, mission command, trust-building behavior, leader development, and positive unit climate.

important outcomes such as an individual’s morale ( $r = .66$ ) and career satisfaction ( $r = .53$ ), but also to a range of other relevant factors. As expected, engagement is strongly related to leader attitudes toward their assigned duties and conditions within their units/organizations (e.g., feeling informed about decisions affecting work, confidence in

unit, satisfaction with the quality of leadership, trust among unit members, and standards being upheld). Importantly, engagement is also strongly related to a respondent’s assessment of

his/her immediate superior’s demonstration of leadership (e.g., core leader competencies, leader attributes, mission command, trust-building behavior, and lack of counterproductive or ‘toxic’ leadership) and other attitudes toward his/her superior (e.g., level of trust). Tables 9 and 10 display the strength of these positive relationships and thus the importance for the Army to foster and sustain an engaged force of leaders.

**Table 9. Correlations of Engagement Composite With Assessment of Immediate Superior**

<b>Relationships between Respondent Engagement and Assessment of Immediate Superior as a Leader</b>		
	AC (n = 7,768)	RC (n = 7,138)
Immediate superior demonstrates mission command philosophy	.68	.66
Immediate superior demonstrates core leader competencies	.67	.64
Immediate superior exhibits trust-building behavior	.67	.65
Effectiveness of immediate superior at developing subordinates	.65	.63
Immediate superior demonstrates leader attributes	.63	.61
Current level of trust in immediate superior	.62	.61
Agreement immediate superior is an effective leader	.61	.61
Immediate superior does not exhibit counterproductive leadership	.56	.55

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .01$ , 2-tailed.

**Table 10. Correlations of Engagement Composite With Attitudes toward Job and Unit**

<b>Relationships between Respondent Engagement and Attitudes toward Job and Unit Characteristics</b>		
	AC (n = 8,391)	RC (n = 7,614)
Feel informed about decisions that affect work responsibilities	.74	.73
Confident in the ability of unit or organization to perform its mission	.67	.64
Senior leaders in unit or organization encourage the expression of different perspectives and points of view	.64	.61
Satisfaction with the quality of military leadership in unit/organization	.65	.60
Current level of trust among members of unit or organization	.63	.59
Senior leaders in unit or organization place trust in their subordinates	.62	.59
Standards are upheld in unit or organization	.58	.56
Effectiveness of leaders in unit or organization at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates	.58	.53

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .01$ , 2-tailed.

### 1.3.5 Mission Command

Mission command is a central tenet underpinning how the Army currently operates. It represents a philosophical shift that emphasizes the centrality of the commander and the decentralization of capability and authority in increasingly complex operational environments. Mission command promotes disciplined initiative and empowers leaders to adjust operations within their commander’s intent (Perkins, 2012). Army doctrine on mission command (ADP 6-0) describes the mission command philosophy as “the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations.”

Since 2013, CASAL has assessed Army leader effectiveness in demonstrating principles of the mission command philosophy and the extent current operational climates support mission command in practice. A goal has been to capture insights to support the Army’s understanding and movement toward *Strategic End 1*: All Army leaders understand and practice the mission command philosophy (Department of the Army, 2013f). The six principles of the mission command philosophy, as outlined in ADP 6-0, are presented in Table 11, along with related CASAL items.

**Table 11. Principles of the Mission Command Philosophy and Associated CASAL Items**

<b>Mission Command Principles ADP 6-0</b>	<b>CASAL Item “How effective is your immediate superior at...”</b>
<i>Build Cohesive Teams through Mutual Trust</i>	Building effective teams
<i>Create Shared Understanding</i>	Creating a shared understanding
<i>Provide a Clear Commander’s Intent</i>	Determining a clear, concise purpose and desired end state
<i>Exercise Disciplined Initiative</i>	Enables subordinates to determine how best to accomplish their work or tasks ( <i>Agreement item</i> )
<i>Use Mission Orders</i>	Communicating results to be attained rather than how results are to be achieved
<i>Accept Prudent Risk</i>	Accepting prudent risk to capitalize on opportunities

#### Mission Command Doctrine

One indication of Army leader awareness and understanding of the mission command philosophy is the level of familiarity leaders have with ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*. Of specific

interest are changes in the reported levels of familiarity with this doctrine among Army leaders over the past three years. In 2015, three-fourths of AC leaders (75%) report they are somewhat familiar or very familiar with ADP 6-0, while one-fourth (25%) report they are not familiar with the doctrine or are not familiar but have heard of the doctrine. Overall, the level of AC leader familiarity with ADP 6-0 has increased 16% since 2013. The AC rank groups that reflect the largest increases in reported familiarity with ADP 6-0 are warrant officers (+22%), company grade officers (+17%), and Jr NCOs (+19%) (see Table 12).

In 2015, 75% of AC respondents report they are somewhat or very familiar with ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, compared to 71% in 2014 and 59% in 2013.

The overall level of RC leader familiarity with ADP 6-0 increased by 9% between 2013 and 2015. However, compared to AC leaders, consistently smaller percentages of RC leaders have reported they are somewhat familiar or very familiar with ADP 6-0 over these three years. The RC rank groups that reflect the largest increases in reported familiarity with ADP 6-0 are company grade officers (+18%) and warrant officers (+13%) (see Table 13).

**Table 12. Active Component Leader Familiarity With Mission Command Doctrine, ADP 6-0**

AC Leaders (% Somewhat familiar or Very familiar with ADP 6-0)	2013 CASAL	2014 CASAL	2015 CASAL
<b>MAJ-COL</b>	77%	81%	83%
<b>2LT-CPT</b>	56%	70%	73%
<b>WO1-CW5</b>	53%	72%	75%
<b>SFC-CSM</b>	72%	82%	84%
<b>SGT-SSG</b>	43%	56%	62%
<b>Total</b>	59%	71%	75%

**Table 13. Reserve Component Leader Familiarity With Mission Command Doctrine, ADP 6-0**

RC Leaders (% Somewhat familiar or Very familiar with ADP 6-0)	2013 CASAL	2014 CASAL	2015 CASAL
<b>MAJ-COL</b>	73%	81%	81%
<b>2LT-CPT</b>	47%	62%	65%
<b>WO1-CW5</b>	43%	54%	56%
<b>SFC-CSM</b>	57%	63%	65%
<b>SGT-SSG</b>	35%	36%	37%
<b>Total</b>	51%	58%	60%

## Army Mission Command Assessment Plan

The U.S. Army Mission Command Assessment Plan (AMCAP, 2015b) is an extension of the U.S. Army Mission Command Strategy (AMCS, 2013f). Mission Command Center of Excellence (MCCoE) asked to have CASAL determine awareness of the AMCAP and how it is being utilized in units and organizations. The AMCS strategic end state is Army-wide understanding and effective practice of the mission command philosophy executed through the mission command

34% of AC senior organizational-level leaders indicate their unit has published a plan or guidance on how to implement the MOEs

warfighting function (WfF) leading to successful unified land operations in support of the joint force. The AMCAP establishes measures of effectiveness (MOEs) with standards, identifies assessment indicators, and assigns roles and responsibilities to

assess the Army's progress in achieving the AMCS strategic ends and objectives. People, rather than technology, systems, or processes, remain the center of mission command. The AMCAP designates professional leader development (training, education, and experience) as the main effort in implementing mission command.

The 2015 CASAL asked AC leaders (in the ranks of COL, LTC, MAJ, CW5, CW4, SGM/CSM, and MSG/1SG) about their familiarity with and their unit's usage of the AMCAP. Results show that 38% of these leaders report they are somewhat or very familiar with the AMCAP, while 30% have heard of it but are not very familiar with it, and 32% are not familiar with it. Of the leaders who are somewhat or very familiar with the AMCAP:

- 34% indicate their unit has published a plan or guidance on how to implement the MOEs established by the AMCAP (35% indicated no, while 31% were unsure).
- 30% indicated the results of the AMCAP for their unit are integrated into their unit's Army Unit Status Reporting and Force Registration (per AR 220-1) (25% indicated no, while 45% were unsure).

## Mission Command Within Army Units and Organizations

Several indications of the current practice of the mission command philosophy in the Army are demonstrated through respondent attitudes about unit and organizational climate factors. Results show that a majority of AC leaders rate the following characteristics of climate favorably (results for RC leaders in parentheses):

- 83% indicate the level of trust among members of their unit or organization is moderate, high, or very high (87% RC).<sup>15</sup>
- 75% are satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of freedom or latitude they have in the conduct of their duties (80% RC).
- 75% agree that members of their unit or organization are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes (81% RC).
- 75% agree members of their unit or organization are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties (80% RC).
- 75% feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things (78% RC).

Favorable attitudes about unit and organizational climate factors tend to increase with rank and length of service (see Table 14). The results for most of these indicators are consistent with those observed in 2013 and 2014. Respondent agreement that unit members are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes (75%) has shown an inconsistent pattern since 2013, from a low of 71% (2013) to a high of 79% (2014).

**Table 14. Indicators of Mission Command in Units and Organizations**

Indicators of Mission Command in Units and Organizations (% Favorable)	Active Component Leaders				
	SGT-SSG	SFC-CSM	WO1-CW5	2LT-CPT	MAJ-COL
Moderate, high, or very high trust among members of unit/organization	71%	89%	88%	85%	91%
Satisfaction with amount of freedom/latitude in the conduct of duties	62%	82%	83%	70%	85%
Agreement that members of unit/organization are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes	63%	82%	78%	74%	85%
Agreement that members of unit/organization are empowered to make decisions pertaining to their duties	62%	82%	79%	74%	83%
Agreement respondent feels encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things	66%	82%	81%	71%	81%

<sup>15</sup> CASAL uses a trust scale with a midpoint of 'moderate trust', which is included in the percentage of favorable ratings (i.e., moderate, high, or very high trust). Results of a 2012 CASAL follow-up survey indicated that ratings of moderate trust levels can be interpreted positively. The survey results indicated leaders who agreed or strongly agreed that unit members trust one another also frequently reported the level of trust among unit members to be moderate, high, or very high.

More Jr NCOs than other rank groups assign less-than favorable ratings to several of these unit condition indicators. Ratings are below a two-thirds favorability threshold for Jr NCO satisfaction with the freedom/latitude to conduct their duties (62% satisfied), empowerment to make decisions pertaining to their duties (62% agreement), and unit members are allowed to learn from honest mistakes (63% agreement). These measures of empowerment and the fostering of learning environments in units are rated unfavorably by about one in five Jr NCOs (20% for each).

Company grade officer ratings for these indicators exceed a two-thirds favorability threshold, which is a positive finding. Results of a study by the Chief of Staff of the Army Leader Development Task Force (Department of the Army, 2013a) reported that junior officers did not believe that their higher headquarters allowed them to exercise disciplined initiative or take prudent risks to the same extent expressed by senior officers. The study noted that these differences are potentially due to junior officers having limited knowledge and experience operating in a mission command environment, or operating in environments not guided by these two principles of mission command.

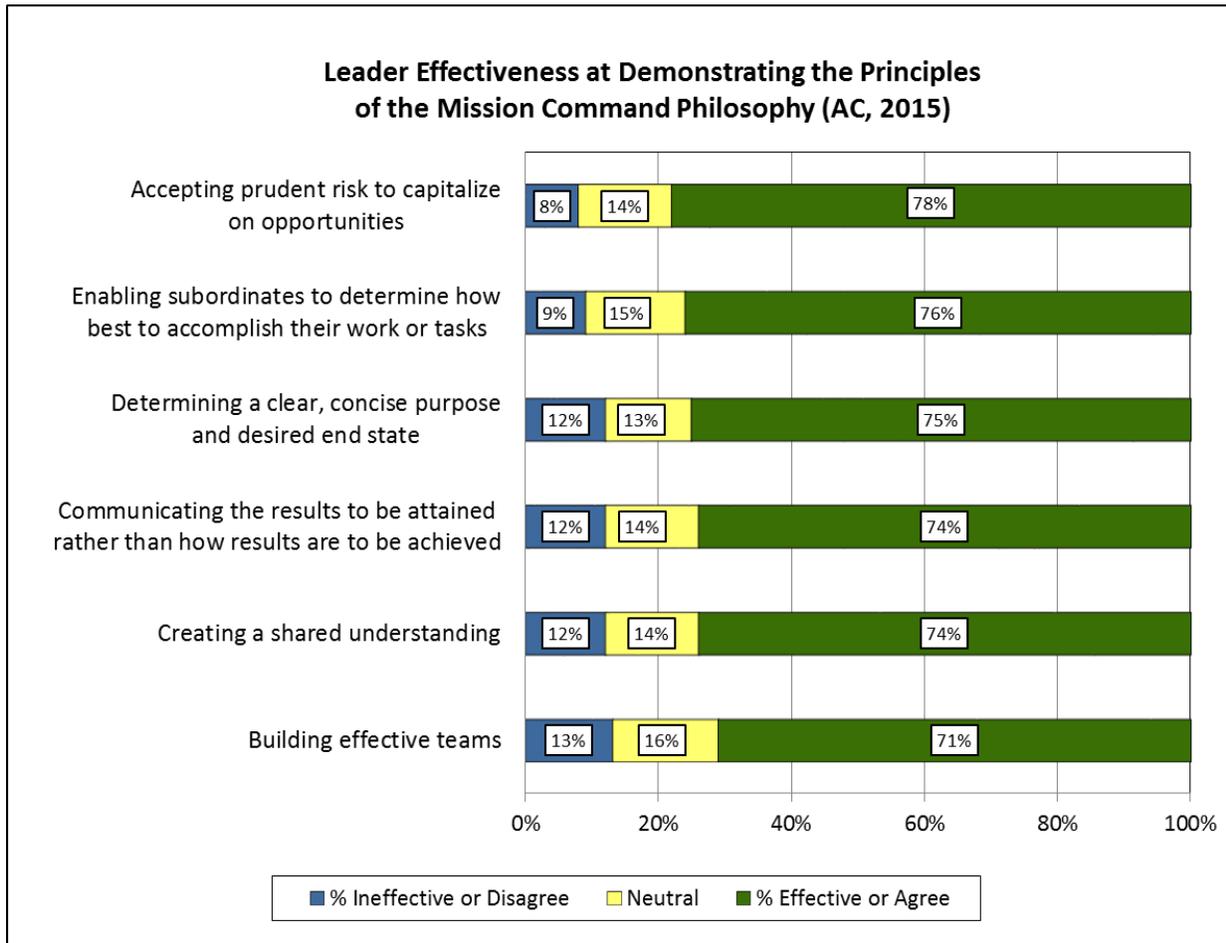
#### Leader Demonstration of the Mission Command Philosophy

CASAL assesses leader behaviors that reflect the six principles of the mission command philosophy. A majority of AC leaders (71% to 78%) rate their immediate superior favorably across the six mission command behaviors (see Figure 25). At an overall level, these results are

A majority of leaders are rated effective at demonstrating the six principles of the mission command philosophy.

positive as ratings for each behavior exceed a two-thirds favorability threshold, and relatively small percentages of leaders (8% to 13%) are rated ineffective on any individual behavior. These levels of effectiveness show no notable changes in comparison to results from 2013 and 2014.

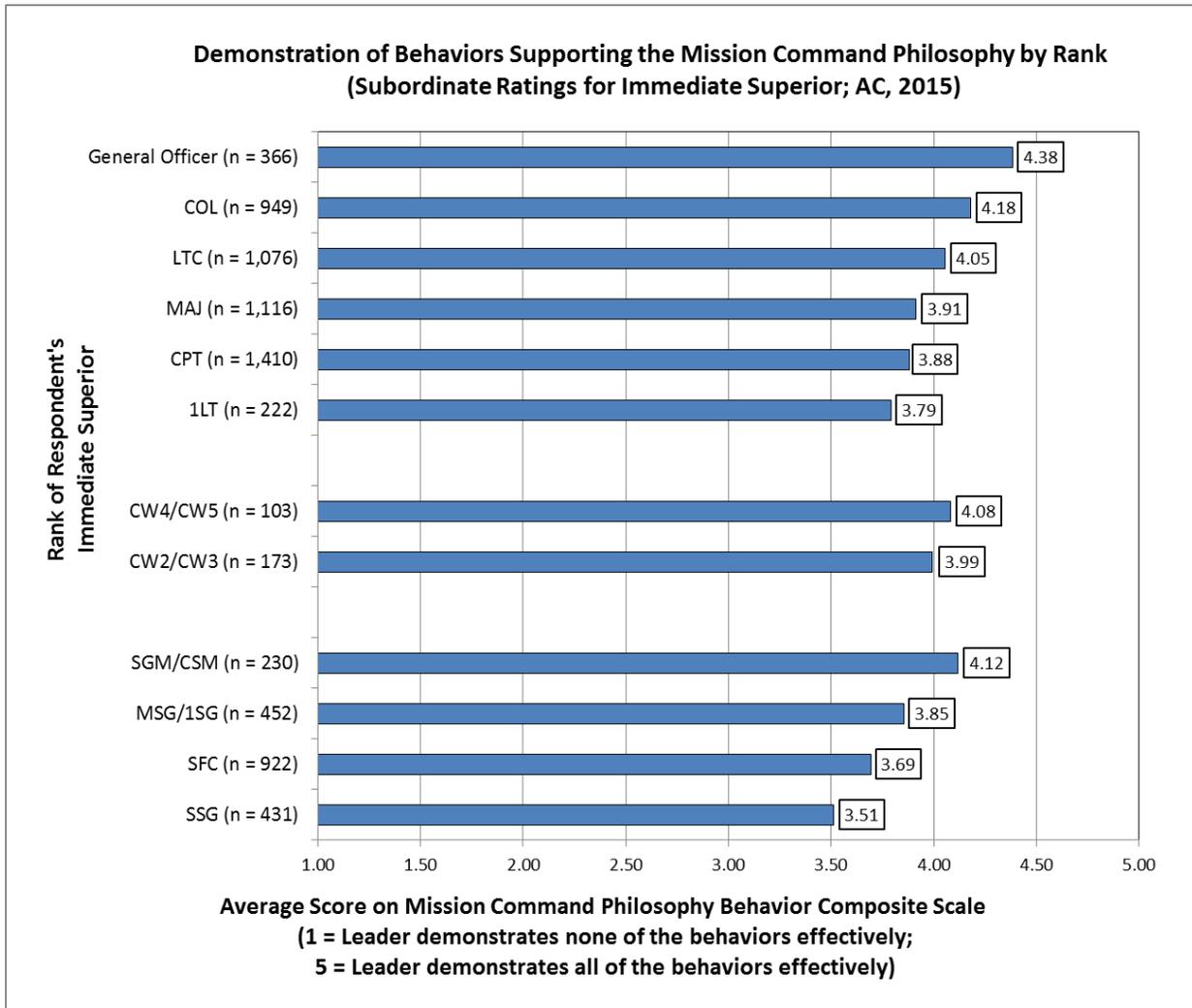
**Figure 25. Leader Effectiveness at Demonstrating the Principles of the Mission Command Philosophy**



A majority of leaders at all ranks are rated favorably in demonstrating six behaviors that comprise a composite scale score<sup>16</sup> of mission command effectiveness (see Figure 26). Results of this analysis were previously reported for the 2013 and 2014 CASAL. The 2015 results are presented here and demonstrate the consistency in ratings spanning the three points in time. Perceptions of leader effectiveness in demonstrating the mission command philosophy (as rated by subordinates) increase with rank and length of service, a consistent pattern observed across leader effectiveness ratings in CASAL results.

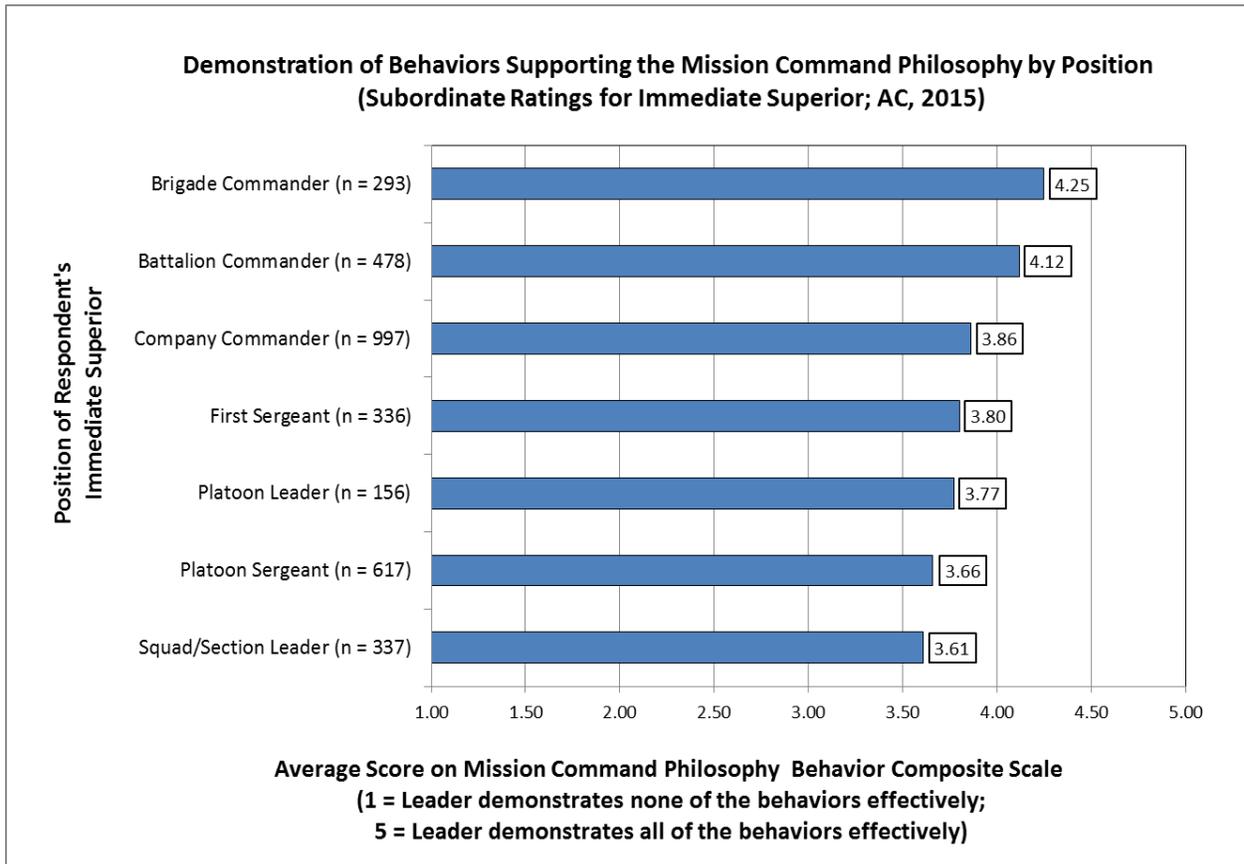
<sup>16</sup> Six items that reflect behaviors associated with immediate superior effectiveness in demonstrating the mission command philosophy were combined into a single scale composite variable. The composite variable included the items presented in Figure 25. Values across these six items were averaged to produce a single score with a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5. Scale scores of '5' indicate that a respondent's average rating across all six items equals 5 (i.e., immediate superior demonstrates all mission command behaviors effectively). This set of items demonstrates very strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = .95$ ). Reliability indices above .80 are generally considered acceptable for a measurement scale while values greater than .90 are considered very strong (Guion, 1998).

**Figure 26. Perceptions of Leader Effectiveness in Demonstrating the Mission Command Philosophy by Rank.**



Similarly, the results of leader effectiveness in demonstrating mission command behaviors by rank are also observed with regard to key leadership positions (see Figure 27). Commanders at brigade and battalion levels are viewed as effective at demonstrating all principles of the mission command philosophy, and mean score ratings for these commanders exceed the overall equivalent scores for colonels and lieutenant colonels. Ratings for leadership positions at the company level and below show less favorability than commanders and command sergeants major at battalion and brigade levels.

**Figure 27. Perceptions of Leader Effectiveness in Demonstrating the Mission Command Philosophy by Position**



Positive demonstration of the mission command philosophy is strongly related to effective leadership. Leaders who rate their immediate superior favorably across the six behaviors reflecting the mission command philosophy also tend to rate their immediate superior effective in demonstrating the core leader competencies ( $r = .91, p < .001$ ) and leader attributes ( $r = .88, p < .001$ ), and agree their immediate superior is an effective leader ( $r = .86, p < .001$ ). Respondents who rate their immediate superior favorably in demonstrating mission command also rate their superior favorably across a combination of trust building behaviors ( $r = .86, p < .001$ ) and on the favorable end of a composite score for counterproductive leadership behavior (indicating low/no prevalence of negative behaviors) ( $r = .76, p < .001$ ).

Ratings for each individual core leader competency and attribute were examined to determine the strongest contributors<sup>17</sup> to effective demonstration of mission command. Results indicate two competencies and two attributes explained 84% of the variance in ratings for effective

Effectiveness in *Leading Others*, demonstrating *Sound Judgment, Building Trust*, and *Innovation* significantly contribute to perceptions of effective mission command.

mission command ( $R^2 = .84, p < .001$ ). Specifically, leader effectiveness in *Leading Others*, demonstrating *Sound Judgment, Building Trust*, and demonstrating *Innovation* significantly contribute to perceptions that one's immediate superior is effective in demonstrating the principles of mission command.

The demonstration of the mission command philosophy is also positively associated with favorable organizational outcomes and subordinate attitudes that impact mission accomplishment (see Tables 15 and 16). There are strong positive relationships between respondent assessments of their immediate superior exhibiting the mission command philosophy and their superior's impact on unit cohesion, unit discipline, effectiveness in getting results, and the level of trust among unit members. There are also positive relationships

**Table 15. Correlations of Leader Demonstration of Mission Command and Organizational Outcomes**

<b>Relationships Between Immediate Superior Demonstrating Principles of the Mission Command Philosophy and Unit or Organizational Outcomes</b>		
	AC ( <i>n</i> = 7,511)	RC ( <i>n</i> = 6,942)
Effect on unit or team cohesion	.82	.82
Effect on unit or team discipline	.80	.80
Immediate superior effectiveness in getting results to accomplish the mission successfully	.79	.81
Perceived level of trust among members of unit/organization	.53	.53
Members of unit are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties	.50	.47
Members of unit are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes	.47	.45

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

<sup>17</sup> A stepwise multiple regression was conducted to determine which combination of individual competencies and attributes best explain scores on the mission command composite score. Stepwise regression is an exploratory technique to identify the variables or factors that have the strongest impact on a dependent variable (i.e., mission command composite score). Results from stepwise regression indicate only significant variables; nonsignificant variables are not included in the final model.

**Table 16. Correlations of Leader Demonstration of Mission Command and Subordinate Attitudes**

<b>Relationships Between Immediate Superior Demonstrating Principles of the Mission Command Philosophy and Subordinate Attitudes</b>		
	AC (n = 7,559)	RC (n = 6,986)
Effect on subordinate motivation	.81	.80
Effect on subordinate work quality	.77	.77
Effect on subordinate commitment to the Army	.75	.75
Subordinate level of trust in immediate superior	.71	.69
Subordinate engagement composite score	.68	.66
Subordinate level of morale	.53	.55
Subordinate feels informed of decisions affecting work responsibilities	.46	.43
Subordinate feels encouraged to come up with new/better ways of doing things	.44	.41
Subordinate satisfaction with freedom or latitude in conduct of duties	.48	.46

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

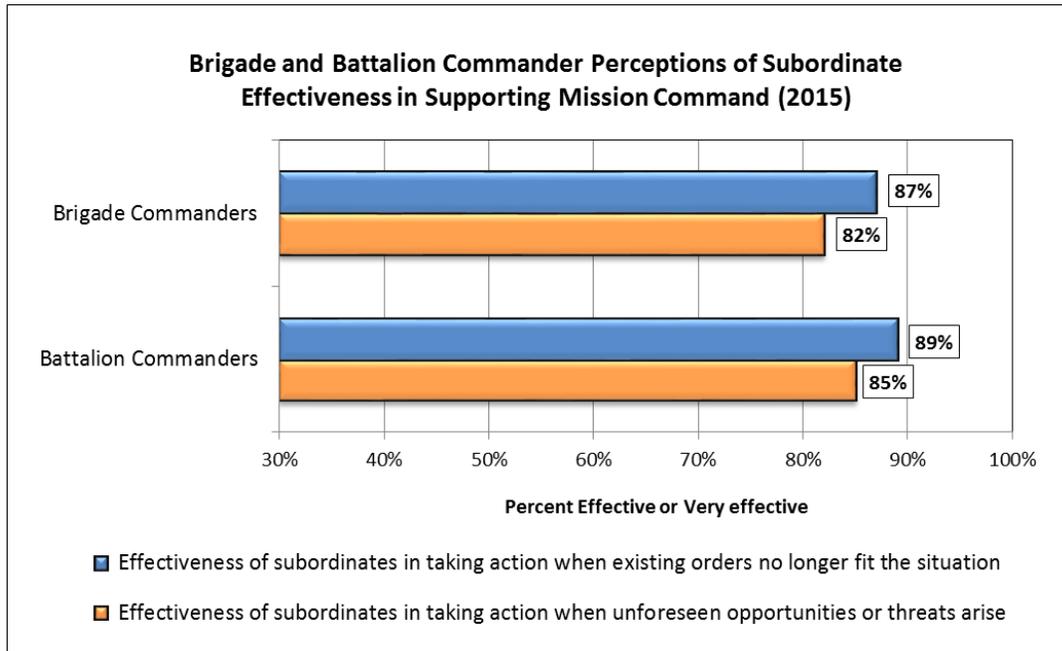
between leader behavior and intended mission command outcomes including agreement that unit members are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties and allowed to learn from honest mistakes; trust in one’s immediate superior; satisfaction with the amount of freedom or latitude to perform duties; and subordinates feeling informed about decisions affecting their work responsibilities.

Notably, there are stronger correlations between a superior’s demonstration of the mission command philosophy and effects on subordinates’ states and processes (e.g., cohesion and discipline, engagement, motivation, and trust in that leader) than on subordinate attitudes about broader characteristics of the unit (e.g., the level of trust among all unit members).

#### Commander Perceptions of Subordinate Effectiveness in Supporting Mission Command

Commanders at brigade and battalion level continue to hold very favorable views toward the effectiveness of their subordinates to exercise disciplined initiative. A majority of AC brigade and battalion commanders rate their subordinates effective at taking action in the absence of orders, either when existing orders no longer fit a situation or when unforeseen opportunities or threats arise (see Figure 28). Ratings for subordinate effectiveness by RC commanders at these levels are equally favorable, and results for both components are consistent with those reported in 2013 and 2014.

**Figure 28. Brigade and Battalion Commander Perceptions of Subordinate Effectiveness in Supporting Mission Command**



### **Summary of Findings on Mission Command**

A majority of Army leaders effectively demonstrate a combination of behaviors supportive of the mission command philosophy. As prior year CASAL findings indicate, assessments of leader demonstration of the mission command philosophy is strongly associated with effective leadership, specifically the core leader competencies and attributes, and trust building behavior. At the competency and attribute level, *Leads Others*, *Sound Judgment*, *Building Trust*, and *Innovation* have the strongest associations with effective mission command. Exercising mission command is positively related to favorable unit outcomes and subordinate attitudes that affect mission accomplishment.

Brigade and battalion commanders are rated very favorably in demonstrating the principles of mission command; in turn, these commanders view their subordinates as effective in exercising disciplined initiative. Larger percentages of senior leaders view their unit climates and conditions as supportive of mission command outcomes than do Jr NCOs, particularly with regard to job latitude and empowerment, and learning from honest mistakes. Attitudes regarding unit climates and the practice of mission command have remained fairly steady since 2013. Overall awareness of the mission command philosophy has increased since 2013 (at least in terms of familiarity and usage of mission command doctrine, ADP 6-0). Organizational-level leader awareness and usage of the AMCAP is limited.

### 1.3.6 Trust

All Army leaders are responsible for building a culture of trust where superiors trust subordinates, subordinates trust superiors, and team members trust each other (ADRP 1). Trust enables mission command and influence. The prevailing level of trust is important to each leader as he or she determines the level of rapport with others and the types of influence techniques that are most suitable (ADRP 6-22). Results of the 2015 CASAL support the Army's understanding of trust within units and organizations, perceptions of leader effectiveness in building trust, and related outcomes.

The following points summarize the key findings related to trust in the Army:

- Eighty-three percent of AC leaders indicate a favorable level of trust currently exists among members of their unit or organization (47% report high or very high trust, 37% report moderate trust); 17% indicate trust among unit members is low or very low. Results show no notable change since first assessed by CASAL in 2013.
- Sixty-nine percent of AC respondents agree that senior leaders in their unit/organization place trust in their subordinates (17% disagree). These attitudes are positively associated with working environments where unit members are afforded job latitude and where leaders encourage the expression of different perspectives and points of view.
- At an individual level, two-thirds of AC leaders report having high or very high trust in their immediate superior, peers, and subordinates (overall, no more than 12% of leaders report having low or very low trust in these cohorts). Smaller percentages of leaders (58%) report having high or very high trust in their superior two levels up (18% report low or very low trust).
- High levels of perceived trust among unit members is positively associated with teams that encourage consideration of diverse ideas, share information with one another, have a shared understanding of how to operate as a team, and collaborate effectively to achieve results.
- Seventy-three percent of leaders rate their immediate superior effective or very effective at building trust while 14% rate them ineffective. A majority of leaders (71% to 83%) are also viewed favorably in demonstrating trust-related behaviors including showing trust in others' abilities, following through on commitments, looking out for others' welfare, and correcting conditions in units that hinder trust.
- Subordinates hold high levels of trust in superiors who they have rated effective at *Creating a Positive Environment*, *demonstrating Sound Judgment*, *demonstrating Empathy*, *Leading by Example*, and *Developing Others*. In addition to the *Builds Trust* competency, these competencies and attributes explain a significant amount of variance

in ratings of superiors' trustworthiness. Leaders who effectively build trust are viewed as positively impacting subordinate work quality, motivation, and commitment, as well as unit or team cohesion and discipline.

### Leader Effectiveness in Building Trust

Army leaders build trust to facilitate relationships and to encourage commitment among followers. This starts with respect among people and grows from both common experiences and shared understanding. Trust establishes conditions for effective influence and for creating a

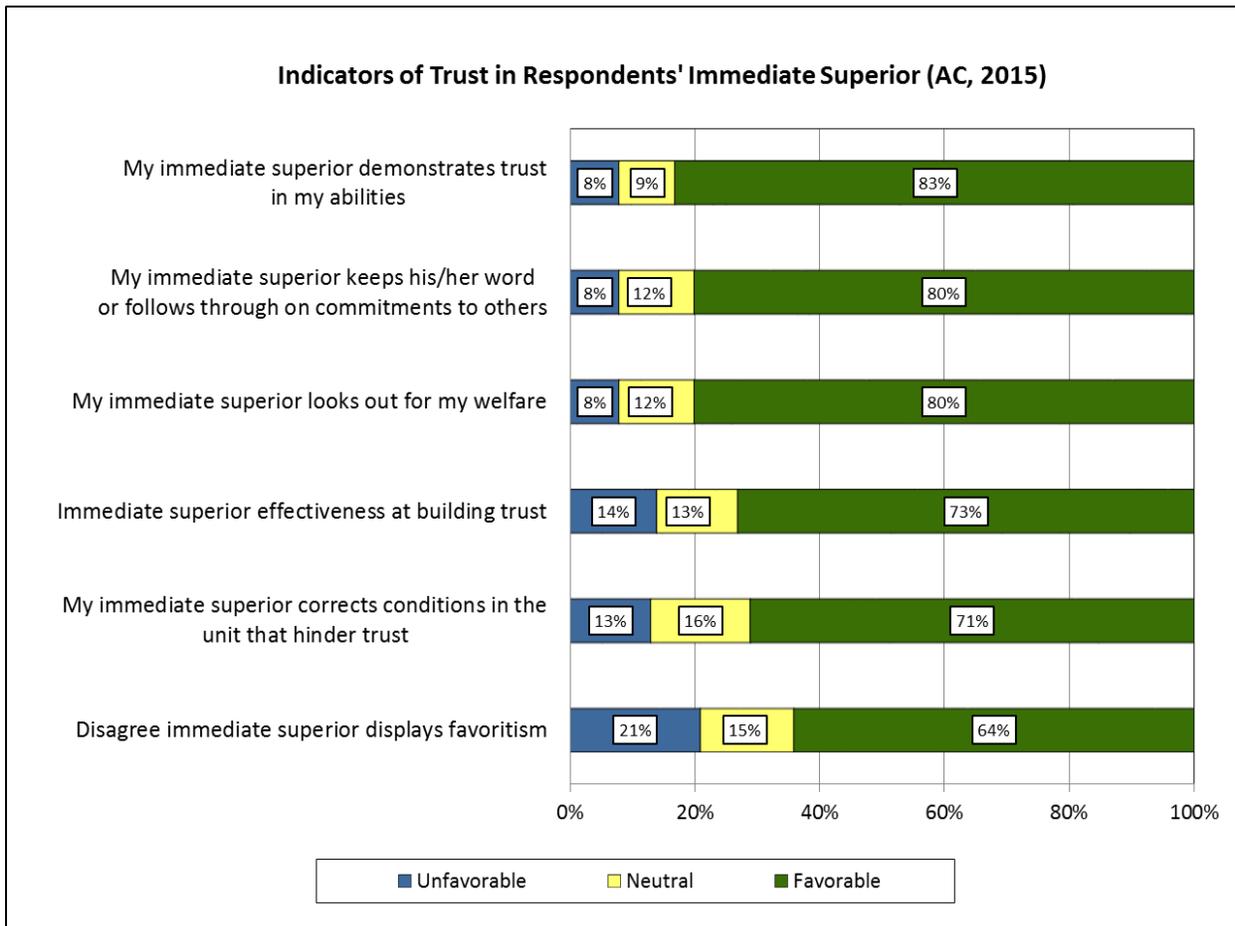
Army leaders are rated effective across a range of trust-building behaviors by 71% to 83% of subordinates.

positive environment (ADP 6-22). In 2015, 73% of AC leaders (74% RC) rate their immediate superior effective or very effective at the competency *Builds Trust*. This is consistent with results for this competency observed over the past five years (70% to 73% effective). Also consistent is that larger

percentages of senior-level leaders (i.e., field grade officers and Sr NCOs) rate their immediate superiors effective at building trust than do junior-level leaders (i.e., company grade officers and Jr NCOs). At a more specific level, the results for behaviors that comprise leader effectiveness in building and sustaining trust among others are presented in Figure 29. These indices include levels of agreement that one's immediate superior demonstrates reciprocal trust; honors commitments to others; positively corrects unit conditions that hinder trust; looks out for subordinate welfare; and refrains from displaying favoritism. The results for each of these behaviors are consistent with results observed in 2013 and 2014 (within 2%).

Two leader behaviors assessed by CASAL have consistently drawn relatively lower favorable ratings and warrant further consideration. First, 71% of AC leaders agree their immediate superior corrects conditions in the unit that hinder trust (13% disagree), and results show no change since 2013. Leaders build and sustain climates of trust by assessing factors or conditions that promote or hinder trust, and by correcting team members who undermine trust with their attitudes or actions (ADRP 6-22). Results of the 2012 CASAL identified poor communication (or a lack of communication), discipline problems, and favoritism (e.g., inconsistent standards) as conditions that commonly exist in units where trust is low. These results also indicated that leaders who demonstrate effective leadership (i.e., character, leading by example, empathy and care for others) and uphold standards, enforce discipline, and hold others accountable effectively promote trust in environments where negative conditions may threaten it.

**Figure 29. Indicators of Trust in Immediate Superiors by Active Component Respondents**



Second, displaying favoritism is a behavior assessed by CASAL that continues to draw less than two-thirds favorable response. One in five leaders (21%) agrees that their immediate superior demonstrates favoritism (64% disagree), and results show no change since first assessed by CASAL in 2013. Favoritism, preferential treatment, and inconsistent enforcement of standards are types of behaviors that can hinder trust by creating climates of perceived inequality. As expected, the display of favoritism is negatively related to effective demonstration of the competency *Creates a Positive Environment* ( $r = -.41, p < .001$ ). Company grade officers (25%) and Jr NCOs (27%) report the highest levels of agreement that their immediate superior displays favoritism. Results of the 2012 CASAL found that leaders often refer to favoritism as reflecting ‘good old boy’ attitudes or cliques within units and organizations. Examples of unit issues included promoting friends or ‘favorites’ in lieu of the most qualified personnel, unequal enforcement of standards and discipline, and use of discretion in workplace justice (Riley, Hatfield, Paddock, & Fallesen, 2013). Displaying favoritism can degrade a leader’s perceived trustworthiness.

CASAL uses a composite scale score<sup>18</sup> to examine the relationships between trust-building behavior, effective leadership, and relevant outcomes. A positive finding is that a majority of Army leaders continue to be rated favorably in demonstrating a combination of behaviors associated with building trust. Respondents who rate their immediate superior favorably across the six behaviors on the trust composite scale also rate their superior effective in demonstrating the core leader competencies ( $r = .87, p < .001$ ) and the leader attributes ( $r = .84, p < .001$ ), and indicate agreement that their immediate superior is an effective leader ( $r = .84, p < .001$ ).

Other evidence of the positive association between trust building and effective leadership is

Leaders effective at *Building Trust* are perceived as positively impacting subordinate work quality, motivation, commitment, engagement, and morale.

that leaders who effectively build trust are also viewed as positively impacting their subordinates and their organizations. There are strong positive relationships between leader demonstration of trust-building behavior, positive effects on unit cohesion and unit discipline, getting results to accomplish the mission

successfully, and overall assessments of the level of trust within units and organizations (see Table 17). Similarly, favorable assessments of one’s immediate superior in building trust are positively related to the perceived impact of that superior on subordinate work quality, motivation, commitment, engagement, and morale (see Table 18).

**Table 17. Correlations of Leader Trust With Organizational Outcomes**

<b>Relationships Between Immediate Superior Demonstrating Trust and Unit or Organizational Outcomes</b>		
	AC ( <i>n</i> = 7,519)	RC ( <i>n</i> = 6,952)
Effect on unit or team cohesion	.80	.81
Effect on unit or team discipline	.78	.78
Immediate superior effectiveness in getting results to accomplish the mission successfully	.72	.73
Current level of trust among members of unit/organization	.54	.55

*Note.* All correlations significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

<sup>18</sup> Six items that reflect behaviors associated with immediate superior effectiveness in demonstrating trust were combined into a single scale composite score. The composite variable included the items presented in Figure 29. Values across these six items were averaged to produce a single score with a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5. Scale scores of ‘5’ indicate that a respondent’s average rating across all six items equals 5 (i.e., agreement that immediate superior demonstrates all trust-building behaviors). A reliability analysis showed that this set of items demonstrates very strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = .91$ ). Reliability indices above .80 are generally considered acceptable for a measurement scale while values greater than .90 are considered very strong (Guion, 1998).

**Table 18. Correlations of Leader Trust With Subordinate Attitudes**

Relationships Between Immediate Superior Demonstrating Trust and Subordinate Attitudes		
	AC (n = 7,519)	RC (n = 6,952)
Effect on subordinate motivation	.80	.80
Effect on subordinate work quality	.75	.75
Effect on subordinate commitment to the Army	.74	.73
Subordinate engagement composite score	.67	.65
Subordinate level of morale	.54	.56

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

These findings are consistent with past CASAL results and continue to reflect the importance of vertical trust relationships in the Army. Leaders who are effective at building trust are also perceived as having a positive impact on their followers and on mission accomplishment.

### Trust in Leaders

Overall, 68% of AC leaders (70% RC) report having high or very high trust in their immediate superior, while 12% rate trust as low or very low (10% RC). Subordinate ratings of trust in their immediate superior (by the superiors' rank) are presented in Figure 30. A pattern observed in these results (similar to ratings of leadership effectiveness) is that favorable percentages increase with rank and length of service. The highest percentages of low or very low trust are for immediate superiors in the ranks of SFC (18%) and SSG (24%).<sup>19</sup>

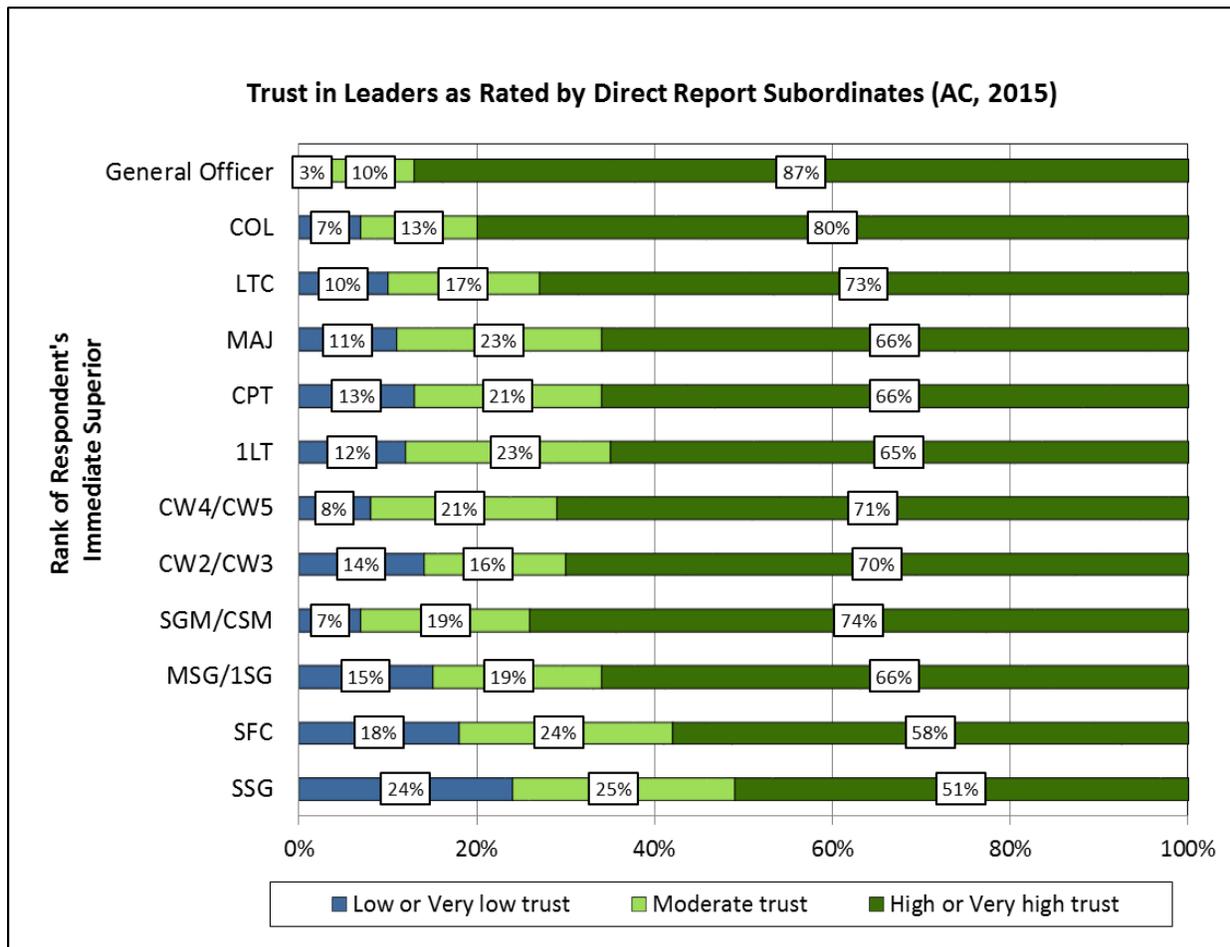
Two-thirds of AC leaders report having a high level of trust in their immediate superior. In comparison, 58% report high trust in their superior two levels up.

CASAL data are useful in helping to understand what leaders do or demonstrate that positively relates to followers having high levels of trust in those leaders. Trust in one's immediate superior is significantly related to the extent the superior exhibits three leadership competencies and two attributes.<sup>20</sup> Specifically, a leader's effectiveness in *Creating a Positive*

<sup>19</sup> The levels of vertical trust for each superior rank represent ratings by subordinates who assessed their current immediate superior. Assessments were made by CASAL's sample of SGT through COL respondents. Results for the ranks of SSG and SFC as immediate superiors include assessments by subordinate Jr NCOs (SGT and SSG) but do not include assessments by junior enlisted Soldiers (E-1 to E-4) who traditionally represent the primary cohort of subordinates for these ranks.

<sup>20</sup> A stepwise multiple regression was conducted to identify the core leader competencies (excluding the competency *Builds Trust*) and leader attributes that account for the largest percentage of variance in respondent ratings of trust in their immediate superior. The competency *Builds Trust* is significantly related to the trust composite scale ( $r = .88, p < .001$ ) and is included as an item that comprises the composite scale. *Builds Trust* is excluded from the stepwise multiple regression for this reason.

**Figure 30. Trust in Leaders as Rated by Direct Report Subordinates**



*Environment, demonstrating Sound Judgment, demonstrating Empathy, Leading by Example, and Developing Others* explains a significant amount of variance in the level of trust subordinates have in that leader ( $R^2 = .77, p < .001$ ). Common among four of these five characteristics is the element of caring about Soldiers and taking action accordingly. The fifth characteristic, *Sound judgment*, represents that leaders demonstrate good decision making that will not subject Soldiers to unwarranted risks. These five characteristics have consistently been found by CASAL to exemplify a leader's trustworthiness (from subordinates' standpoint), in addition to the leader's effectiveness in *Building Trust*.

CASAL results have also consistently demonstrated that vertical trust is less often high or very high between leaders and their superior two levels up. Overall, 58% of AC leaders report having

high trust in their superior two levels up; 24% report moderate trust, and 18% report low trust. For officers and NCOs in traditional work settings, this relationship can be assumed to be one of a leader and his/her senior rater.<sup>21</sup> The 2013 CASAL reported that the most common reasons why respondents (about one in five) held low or very low trust in their superior two levels higher related to perceptions of several factors, including: self-interest or self-serving behaviors; character or integrity issues; lack of concern for subordinate welfare and development; poor communication; disconnected, absentee, or apathetic leadership; and favoritism and partiality. Overall, these results further support the premise that leaders hold low levels of trust in superiors they perceive to demonstrate ineffective leadership (Riley et al., 2014).

### Trust in Army Units and Organizations

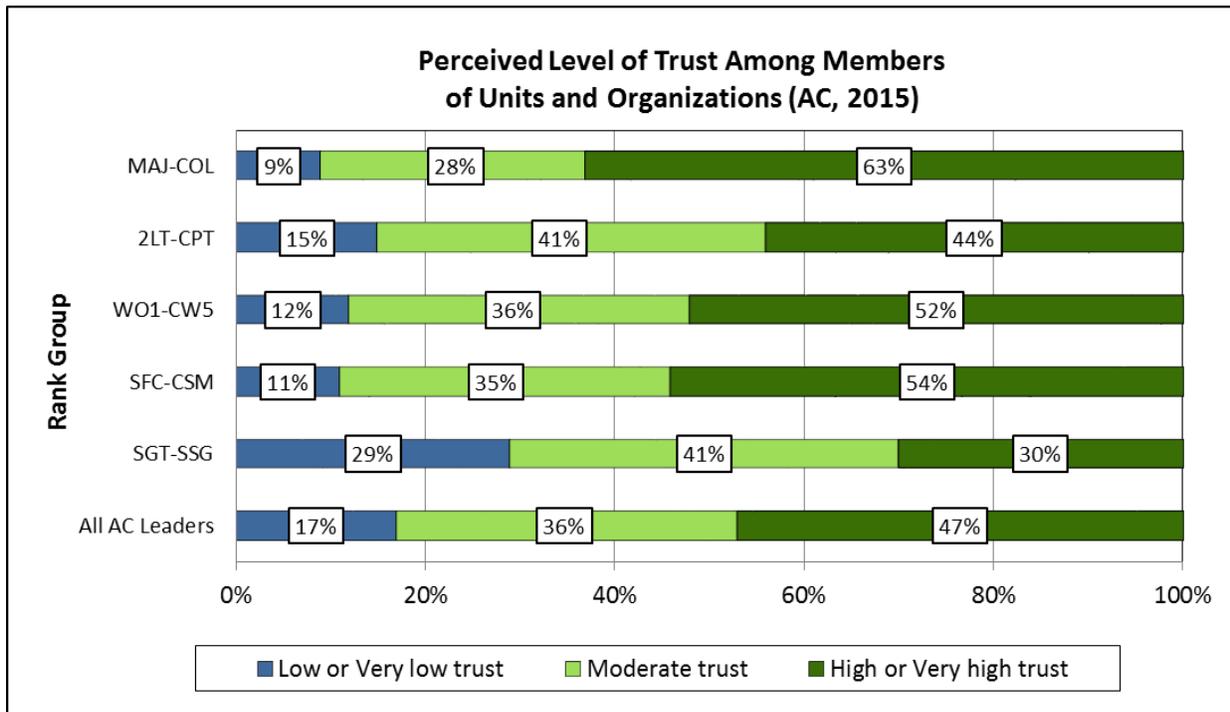
In units and organizations, favorable levels of trust are associated with the upholding of standards, effective communication, confidence in unit capabilities, and cohesion. Perceptions of trust at the unit or organization level continue to be moderately favorable, as demonstrated by several positive indicators. As a broad measure of trust-related attitudes, 47% of AC leaders rate the trust among members of their unit or organization (inclusive of everyone) as high or very high, 36% rate it moderate, and 17% rate it low.<sup>22</sup> In the RC, 54% of leaders report high trust, 34% moderate trust, and 13% low trust. Overall, assessments of unit trust are very stable over the past three years. Since first assessed by CASAL in 2013, smaller percentages of RC respondents (13% to 14%) have consistently reported low or very low unit trust compared to AC respondents (17%). The 2015 results by AC rank group are presented in Figure 31.

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<sup>21</sup> CASAL does not collect information identifying respondents' superior two levels up (e.g., rank, position).

<sup>22</sup> CASAL uses a trust scale with a midpoint of 'moderate trust', which is included in the percentage of favorable ratings (i.e., moderate, high, or very high trust). Results of a 2012 CASAL follow-up survey indicated that ratings of moderate trust levels can be interpreted positively. The survey results indicated leaders who agreed or strongly agreed that unit members trust one another also frequently reported the level of trust among unit members to be moderate, high, or very high.

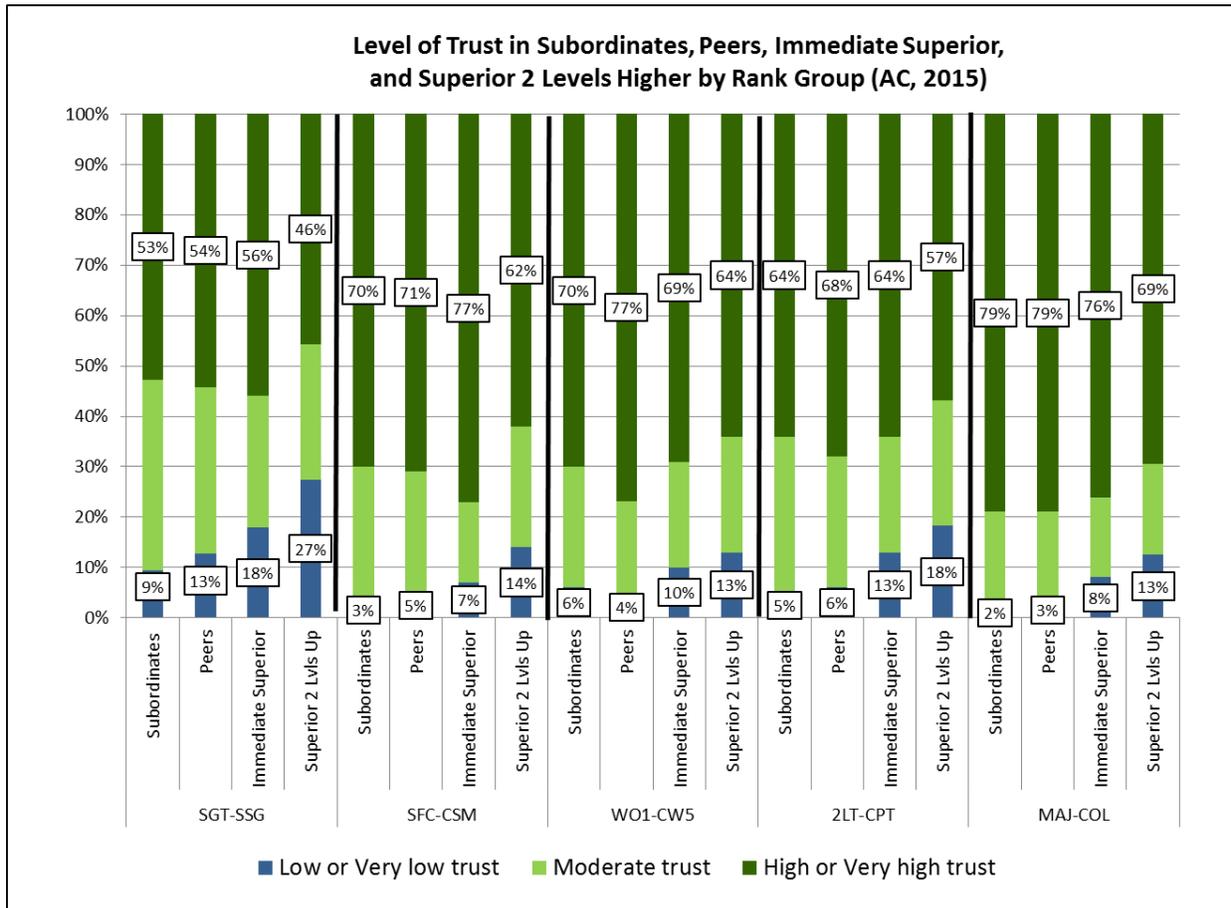
**Figure 31. Perceived Level of Trust Among Members of Units and Organizations**



Two-thirds of AC leaders report having high or very high trust in their peers (68%) and their subordinates (66%). Between 2% and 13% of AC rank groups report having low or very low trust in their peers and subordinates. These results show little change over the past three years (within 2%). Figure 32 displays results for the reported levels of trust AC leaders have in others.

The 2013 CASAL examined various conditions that promote trust within units and organizations (Riley et al., 2014). Specifically, factors positively associated with trust included unit members helping to protect others from physical and psychological harm, treating one another with respect, doing their share of the work, and delivering on what they say they will do. These results showed that a favorable range of AC leaders (70% to 88%) agreed or strongly agreed that these conditions existed in their current unit/organization. The highest levels of respondent disagreement were for unit members doing their share of the work (12%) and delivering on what they say they will do (12%), which are low levels that still reflect positive findings for the Army.

**Figure 32. Active Component Leader Ratings of Trust in Subordinates, Peers, Immediate Superior, and Superiors Two Levels Higher**



As would be expected, there are positive associations between the level of trust among unit members, command climate, and other characteristics of the working environment (see Table 19). Specific characteristics that have strong positive relationships with high levels of trust in units relate to leader empowerment and a climate for learning:

- Trust is high in units where members are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties. This measure of job latitude reflects the intent of mission orders, whereby subordinates are provided with maximum freedom of action to determine how best to accomplish missions.
- Similarly, trust is also high in units where honest mistakes and failure are underwritten as part of the learning process. In this way, units capitalize on the leader development and learning that occurs in the operational domain.
- High levels of trust among unit members is positively related to high morale, esprit de corps (i.e., pride in identifying with one's unit), and confidence in the unit's ability to perform its mission. Units with low trust lack these characteristics.

**Table 19. Correlations of Perceived Organizational Trust With Various Outcomes**

Relationships between Characteristics of Army Working Environments and the Perceived Level of Trust Among Members of Units and Organizations		
Characteristics of Army Working Environments	Perceived Level of Trust	
	AC (n = 8,156)	RC (n = 7,370)
Members of my unit/organization are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties.	.63	.59
Respondent current level of morale	.62	.59
In my unit or organization, standards are upheld (e.g., professional bearing, adherence to regulations)	.61	.60
Members of my unit/organization are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes.	.59	.57
I am proud to tell others I am a member of my unit or organization.	.56	.46
I am confident in the ability of my unit/organization to perform its mission	.56	.48
I feel informed about decisions that affect my work responsibilities	.52	.46
Respondent satisfaction with amount of freedom or latitude in the conduct of duties	.58	.52
I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things	.49	.44
There is a discipline problem in my unit or organization	-.38	-.39

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

High levels of perceived trust among unit members are also positively associated with characteristics of effective teams and working groups. Specifically, respondents who rate trust among members of their unit or organization favorably also indicate agreement that members of their team or immediate work group work together as a team rather than as a group of individuals, encourage consideration of diverse ideas, share information with one another, have a shared understanding of how to operate as a team, and collaborate effectively to achieve results ( $r$ 's = .50 to .52,  $p < .001$ ).

### Collective Felt Trust

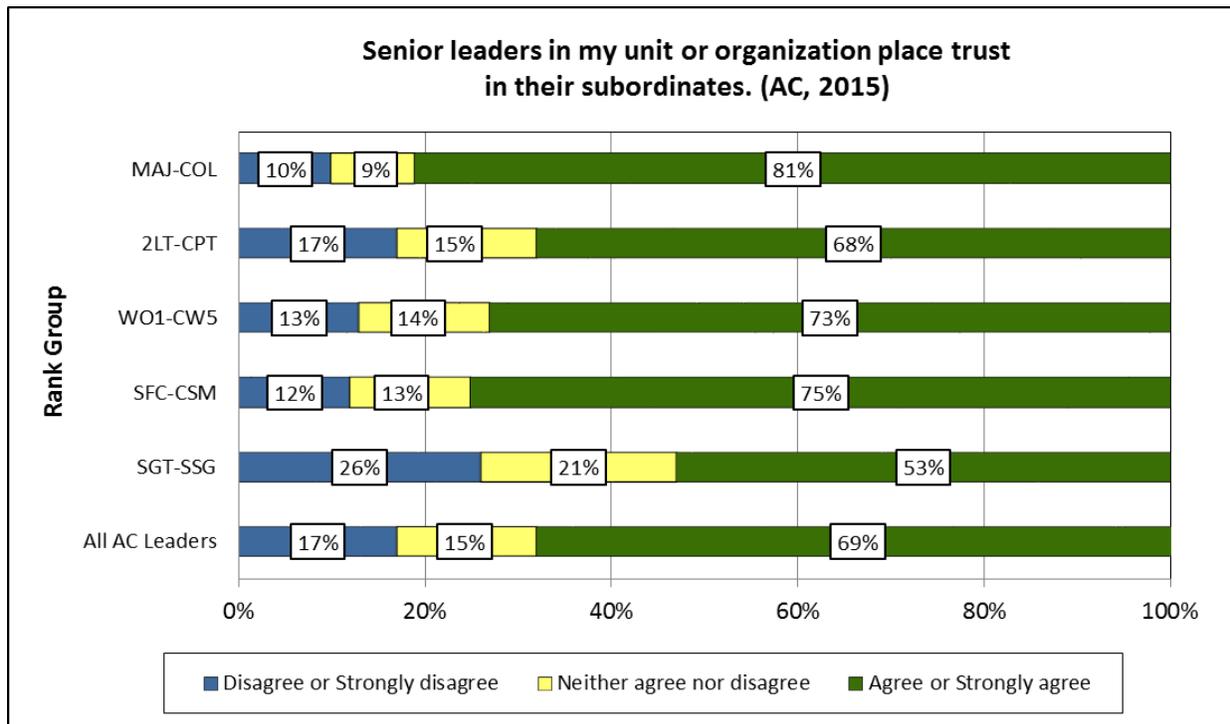
Collective felt trust refers to shared feelings by unit members who work together and who come to agree on the extent to which they feel they are trusted by senior leaders. The collective perception is likely to be prompted by procedures or systems implemented in the organization as well as by leadership behavior (Deutsch Salamon & Robinson, 2008). Collective felt trust addresses unit members' global perception regarding the extent that the organization trusts them (i.e., *they trust us*) as opposed to more proximal perceptions of trust (i.e., *my*

*immediate superior trusts me*) or broader, generalized perceptions of trust in units (i.e., *we all trust each other*).

Overall results show that about two-thirds of AC respondents (69%) agree that senior leaders in their unit or organization place trust in their subordinates (17% disagree). Results for RC respondents are slightly more favorable (74% agree, 13% disagree). There are however stark differences in agreement by rank groups. Larger percentages of AC senior-level leaders (i.e., field grade officers and Sr NCOs) indicate agreement than do junior-level leaders (i.e., company grade officers and Jr NCOs) (see Figure 33).

69% of AC leaders favorably perceive collective felt trust, the shared feelings among unit members that they are trusted by senior leaders.

**Figure 33. Perceptions of Collective Felt Trust in Units and Organizations by Rank Group**



Perceptions of collective felt trust are positively related to several characteristics of effective working environments (see Table 20). Specifically, when trust from senior leaders is perceived, respondents also indicate agreement that senior leaders encourage the expression of different perspectives and points of view; that unit members are empowered to make decisions pertaining to their duties; that unit members are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes; that standards are upheld; and that there is not a discipline problem. Collective felt

trust is also related to individual job characteristics conducive to disciplined initiative, including satisfaction with the freedom or latitude to perform one’s duties and feeling encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things, as well as unit pride and confidence in one’s unit.

**Table 20. Correlations of Collective Felt Trust With Various Organizational Outcomes**

<b>Relationships Between Characteristics of Army Working Environments and the Perceptions of Collective Felt Trust in Units and Organizations</b>		
	<b>Perceptions That Senior Leaders in Unit/Org Place Trust in Their Subordinates</b>	
<b>Characteristics of Army Working Environments</b>	<b>AC (n = 9,703)</b>	<b>RC (n = 8,174)</b>
Senior leaders in my unit/organization encourage the expression of different perspectives and points of view.	.82	.80
Members of my unit/organization are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties.	.71	.66
Overall level of trust among members of unit/organization.	.67	.64
Members of my unit/organization are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes.	.66	.63
In my unit or organization, standards are upheld (e.g., professional bearing, adherence to regulations).	.61	.60
Respondent satisfaction with amount of freedom or latitude in the conduct of duties.	.59	.50
I am proud to tell others I am a member of my unit or organization.	.56	.47
I am confident in the ability of my unit/organization to perform its mission.	.56	.48
I feel informed about decisions that affect my work responsibilities.	.53	.48
I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.	.53	.49
There is a discipline problem in my unit or organization.	-.26	-.25

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

**Summary of Findings on Trust in the Army**

Findings confirm numerous linkages between high levels of trust, effective leadership, positive organizational outcomes, and subordinate attitudes. A majority of leaders rate their immediate superior effective in trust-related behaviors such as showing trust in other’s abilities, following through on commitments, looking out for others’ welfare, and correcting conditions in units

that hinder trust. Subordinates trust superiors who demonstrate that they care about them by effectively *Creating a Positive Environment*, demonstrating *Sound Judgment*, demonstrating *Empathy*, *Leading by Example*, and *Developing Others*. Leaders who build trust are perceived as positively impacting subordinate work quality, motivation, commitment, and morale.

CASAL's assessment of the perceived levels of trust among members of Army units and organizations show no notable change since first assessed in 2013. There are positive relationships between the perceived level of trust among members of units and organizations and favorable attitudes that teams and immediate work groups work together as a team (rather than as a group of individuals), encourage consideration of diverse ideas, share information with one another, have a shared understanding of how to operate as a team, and collaborate effectively to achieve results. The level of collective felt trust in the Army meets a two-thirds favorability threshold, though favorable perceptions of trust vary by rank group. Leader perceptions regarding collective felt trust are positively associated with working environments where unit members are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties and where leaders encourage the expression of different perspectives and points of view.

### **1.3.7 Counterproductive Leadership**

The presence of counterproductive or negative leadership in the Army and its effects on Soldier and mission outcomes continues to be an important area of study and needed improvement. CASAL assesses counterproductive leadership through behaviors that reflect leadership outcomes (instead of intent). The term counterproductive conveys that a given behavior or absence of a behavior will be counter to productive results, processes, and attitudes.

At the most detrimental level in the Army, counterproductive behaviors are manifested as toxic leadership, which is a combination of self-centered attitudes, motivations, and behaviors that have adverse effects on subordinates, the organization, and mission performance. Toxic leaders hold an inflated sense of self-worth and a lack of concern for others and the climate of the organization. Toxic leaders tend to use compliance-driven techniques that sometimes involve coercion, demeaning or threatening messages, and where followers respond to the positional power of the leader to avoid negative consequences for themselves. Toxic leaders can attain results in the short-term using these techniques, but other important productive competencies are ignored or diminished. Effective leadership is characterized by encouragement and inspiration, while coercive techniques run counter to the Army's leadership principles (ADRP 6-22).

## Prevalence of Counterproductive Leadership Behaviors in the Army

Since 2010, CASAL has assessed and tracked trends in the prevalence of counterproductive leadership behaviors. Assessments are based on subordinate ratings of their immediate superior in demonstrating counterproductive behaviors that are associated with toxic leadership. While the term ‘toxic leadership’ has been popularized in the media in recent years, past CASAL studies have found that this term is not consistently interpreted in the Army. Therefore, the term ‘toxic leadership’ does not appear anywhere in the survey as presented to respondents. Rather, assessments focus on observable behaviors that have been found in past surveys to be associated with counterproductive leadership under the heading of leadership dynamics. This method inhibits respondents from making holistic assessments about their immediate superior that associate negative intentions with the observable behaviors.

The prevalence of counterproductive leadership behaviors has been stable since first assessed by CASAL in

The presence of counterproductive leadership behaviors in the Army remains limited. The reported occurrence of several negative behaviors shows no change from 2010 to 2015.

Perceptions of counterproductive behaviors have consistently been more prevalent among junior-level leaders and are less pronounced at higher levels. The proportion of leaders who

indicate their immediate superior demonstrates any specific counterproductive behavior is one-fifth or less (see Table 21). Assessments have remained within this threshold for the past six years. Importantly, these behaviors individually do not constitute toxic leadership or a counterproductive leader. The most commonly displayed counterproductive leadership behaviors reported are setting misplaced priorities that interfere with accomplishing goals, and doing little to help teams be more cohesive.

**Table 21. Ratings of Immediate Superior Demonstration of Counterproductive Leadership Behaviors**

AC Leader Perceptions of Their Immediate Superior’s Exhibition of Counterproductive Leadership Behaviors	% Agree/Strongly Agree			
	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>My immediate superior...</b>				
Sets misplaced priorities that interfere with accomplishing goals	19%	20%	19%	20%
Does little to help his/her team be more cohesive	18%	19%	18%	20%
Blames other people to save himself/herself embarrassment	16%	16%	16%	17%
Berates subordinates for small mistakes	16%	15%	14%	16%

The prevalence of positive leadership behavior continues to be a strong indication that the occurrence of counterproductive leadership is limited. A majority of leaders engage in positive

leadership behaviors related to ethical conduct, selfless service, and communication that fosters teamwork:

- 85% of AC leaders agree their immediate superior upholds ethical standards (5% disagree).
- 80% of AC leaders agree their immediate superior puts the needs of the unit/organization and mission ahead of self (8% disagree).
- 74% of AC leaders agree their immediate superior promotes good communication among team members (11% disagree).
- As a broad assessment, 75% of AC leaders agree their immediate superior is an effective leader (11% disagree).

Results for each of these behaviors also show steady trends over the past six years.

CASAL examines counterproductive leadership using a composite scale score<sup>23</sup> that includes assessments on a combination of leadership behaviors. Figure 34 displays the distribution of scores on the composite scale where most leaders fall across the continuum of values. Results show that small percentages of AC leaders rate their immediate superior as demonstrating most of the counterproductive leadership behaviors in the composite. The high frequency of scores at 5.00 is encouraging, as it indicates strong disagreement that superiors demonstrate counterproductive leadership behaviors. The average score of 3.00 serves as the neutral mid-point, indicating subordinates neither agree nor disagree that their superior demonstrates the behaviors, or are balanced between demonstrating some negative and some positive behaviors. A score of 2.00 or less for any leader on the composite score indicates that the counterproductive behaviors are more pronounced than productive behaviors. The median score was 4.13 with an interquartile range of 1.50.<sup>24</sup> Less than four percent of the assessed leaders had a score of 2.00 or less. This rate holds for groups of company, battalion, and brigade commanders, as well as first sergeants, battalion CSMs, and brigade CSMs. Again, these results show consistency with past year findings.

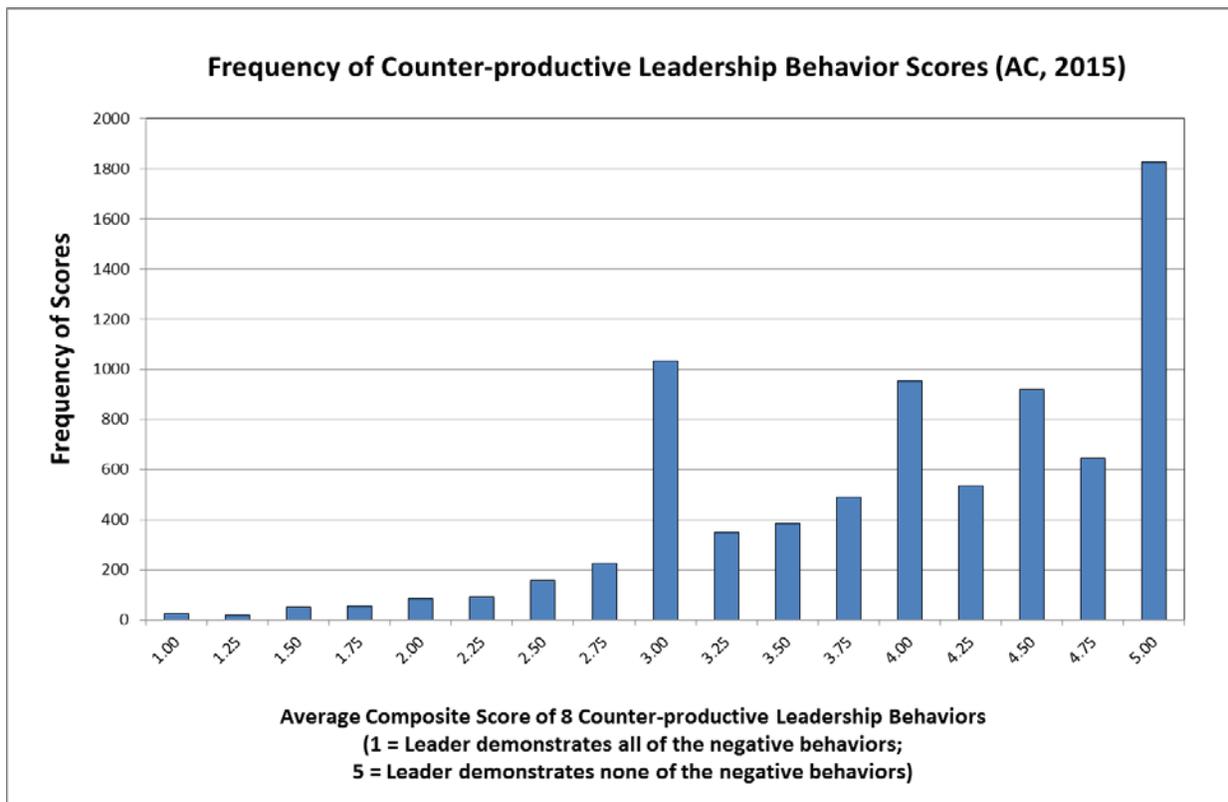
Less than four percent of assessed leaders demonstrate counterproductive

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<sup>23</sup> The eight items that reflect behaviors associated with counterproductive leadership were combined into a single scale composite variable. The four negative behavior items (i.e., presented in Table 21) were reverse coded so all eight items were scored in the same direction. Positive behaviors are represented by higher response values. After recoding responses, values for these eight items were averaged to produce a single score with a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5. This created a single scale composite score with a minimum value of 1 representing counterproductive leadership behaviors and a maximum value of 5 representing positive, productive leadership behaviors. A reliability analysis was conducted on the eight items and had strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = .91$ ). Reliability indices above .80 are generally considered acceptable for a measurement scale while values greater than .90 are considered very strong (Guion, 1998).

<sup>24</sup> An interquartile range is the middle 50% of scores in a distribution. It is expressed as a value that is the distance between the 25<sup>th</sup> to 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. The median is the middle score which is also the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

**Figure 34. Frequency of Counterproductive Leadership Behavior Scores**



Ratings for each individual core leader competency and attribute were examined to identify the strongest contributors<sup>25</sup> to leaders’ demonstration of positive leadership behaviors regarded as not counterproductive. Results indicated one competency and two attributes accounted for 59% of the variance in ratings of the absence of counterproductive leadership behaviors ( $R^2 = .59, p < .001$ ). Specifically, the effectiveness of one’s immediate superior in *Building Trust*, living the *Army Values* and demonstrating *Sound Judgment* significantly contributed to perceptions that the superior does not demonstrate counterproductive leadership behaviors. These results support CASAL findings for this analysis since 2012. The competency *Builds Trust* has consistently been the key factor explaining variance in ratings for the absence of counterproductive leadership behavior. The *Army Values* and *Sound Judgment* have also consistently been significant factors in the results since 2012.

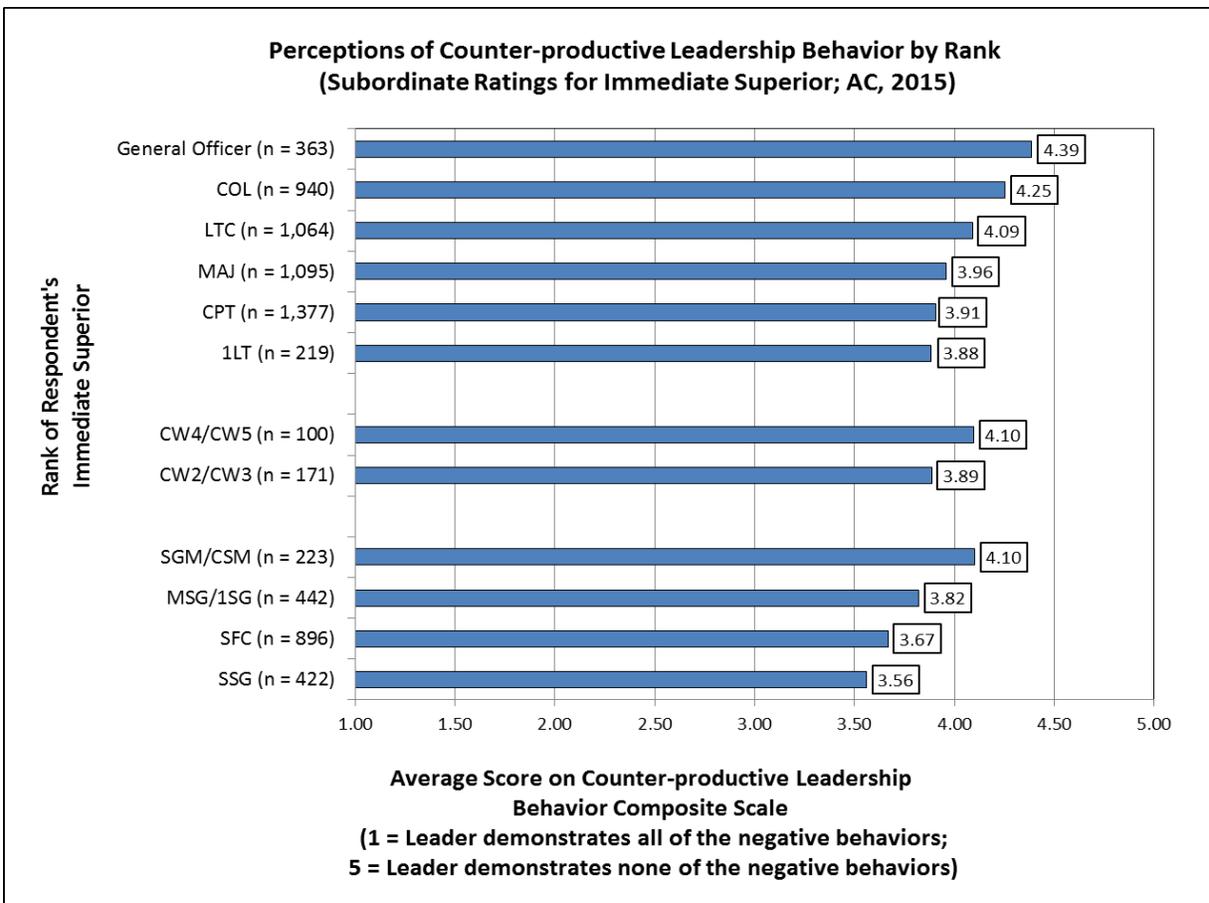
Counterproductive Leadership by Rank and Position

<sup>25</sup> A stepwise multiple regression was conducted to identify the core leader competencies and leader attributes that account for the largest percentage of variance in respondent ratings of non-counterproductive (toxic) leadership behaviors in their immediate superior.

The observed pattern reflecting the prevalence of counterproductive leadership behaviors by rank remains consistent with past results. Average scores for senior-level officers (LTC, COL, GO) and sergeants major (SGM, CSM) indicate subordinates less often view these leaders as exhibiting a combination of behaviors associated with counterproductive leadership (see Figure 35). The lowest and least favorable average composite scores continue to be found among ratings for NCOs, particularly sergeants first class and staff sergeants.<sup>26</sup> Again, the pattern of less favorable assessments of superiors at lower ranks is a consistent pattern observed across CASAL results.

Leaders who effectively *Build Trust*, live the *Army Values*, and demonstrate *Sound Judgment* are least often perceived to demonstrate counterproductive leadership.

**Figure 35. Perceptions of Counterproductive Leadership by Rank**

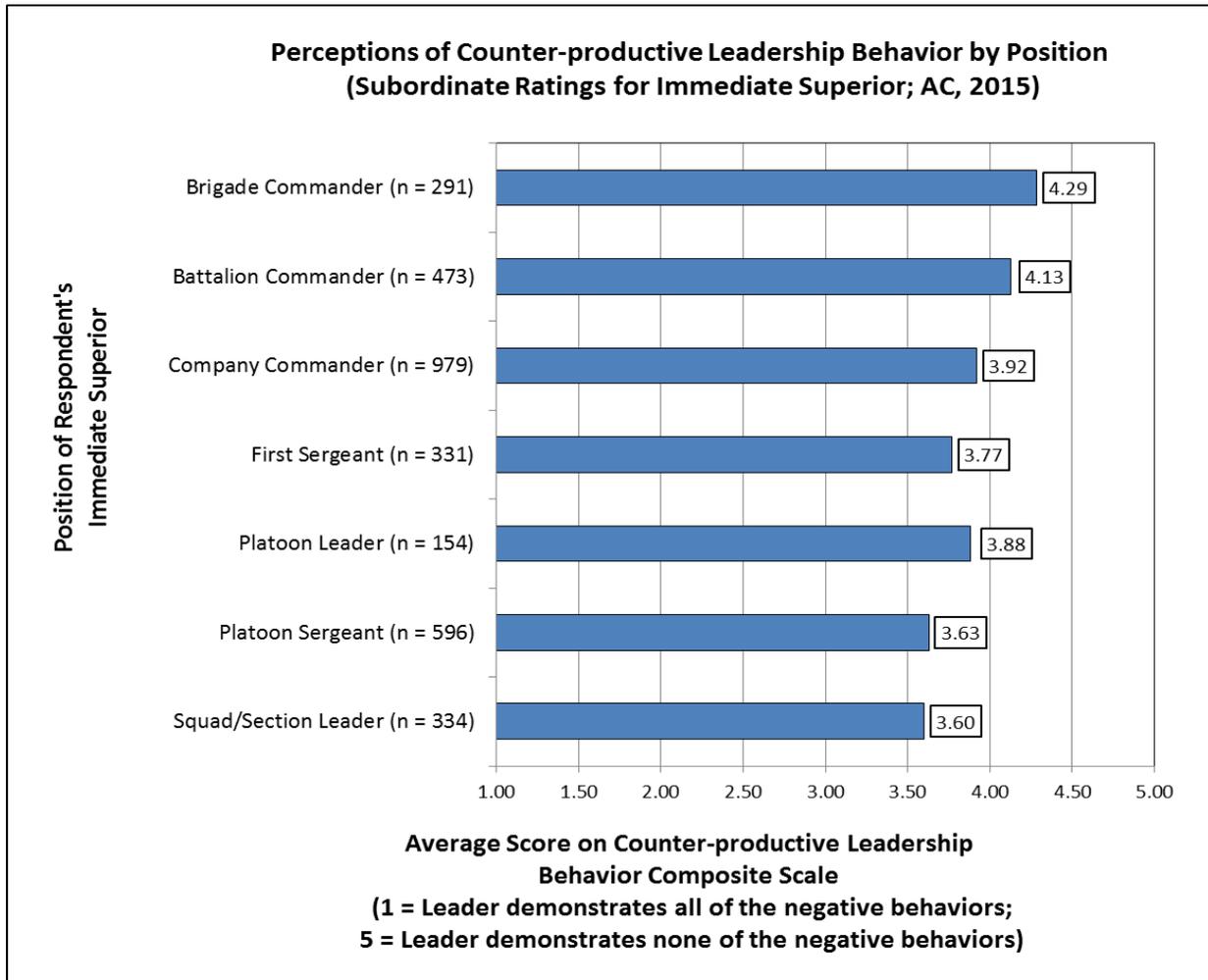


Results for counterproductive leadership behavior at key leadership positions run parallel with the previously mentioned findings on rank (see Figure 36). Brigade and battalion commanders

<sup>26</sup> Composite score means for each unit position represent ratings by subordinates who assessed their current immediate superior in that position. Assessments were made by CASAL's sample of SGT through COL. This is notable, as the results for the superior rank of SSG and the position of squad/section leader include assessments by subordinate Jr NCOs (SGT and SSG) but do not include assessments by junior enlisted Soldiers (E-1 to E-4) who represent the primary cohort of subordinates for this rank and position.

are generally viewed as demonstrating negative leadership behaviors infrequently. The lowest scores are reflected in ratings for NCOs in the positions of platoon sergeant and squad/section leader.

**Figure 36. Perceptions of Counterproductive Leadership by Position**



Impact of Counterproductive Leadership

CASAL results have consistently demonstrated that counterproductive leadership is associated with unfavorable subordinate attitudes and organizational outcomes. There are strong positive relationships between a leader’s assessment of their immediate superior exhibiting positive leadership behavior (i.e., the favorable end of the composite score) and their assessment of their immediate superior’s effect on organizational outcomes such as those presented in Table 22 below. The presence of a combination of counterproductive leadership behaviors is

associated with adverse effects on unit cohesion, unit discipline, and trust among members of units and organizations.

**Table 22. Correlations of Counterproductive Leadership Behaviors With Organizational Outcomes**

<b>Relationships Between the Extent of Immediate Superior Not Demonstrating Counterproductive Leadership Behaviors and Unit or Organizational Outcomes</b>		
	AC ( <i>n</i> = 5,786)	RC ( <i>n</i> = 5,795)
Effect on unit or team cohesion	.71	.72
Effect on unit or team discipline	.69	.70
Current level of trust among members of unit/organization	.47	.48

*Note.* All correlations significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

Similarly, the presence of counterproductive leadership behaviors is associated with unfavorable subordinate attitudes (see Table 23), in that subordinates tend to indicate their superior has an adverse effect on their work quality, motivation, and commitment to the Army. Subordinates also report lower levels of engagement and morale, and are more likely to report low levels of trust in their superior. Further, the absence of counterproductive leadership behavior is positively associated with multiple indices of trust-building behavior ( $r$ 's = .66 to .73), meaning leaders who demonstrate productive leadership are viewed favorably on behaviors such as building trust, looking out for subordinate welfare, correcting unit conditions that hinder trust, keeping his/her word, and following through on commitments to others.

**Table 23. Correlations of Counterproductive Leadership Behaviors With Subordinate Attitudes**

<b>Relationships Between the Extent of Immediate Superior Not Demonstrating Counterproductive Leadership Behaviors and Subordinate Attitudes</b>		
	AC ( <i>n</i> = 7,501)	RC ( <i>n</i> = 6,938)
Effect on subordinate motivation	.69	.70
Effect on subordinate work quality	.65	.65
Effect on subordinate commitment to the Army	.62	.63
Subordinate level of trust in immediate superior	.66	.65
Subordinate engagement composite score	.56	.55
Subordinate level of morale	.46	.48

*Note.* All correlations significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

Results indicate only small to moderately strong associations between the presence of counterproductive leadership behaviors and subordinate career satisfaction ( $r = .33$ ) and intentions to remain in the Army ( $r = .22$ ). This is not unexpected, as career satisfaction and

career intentions represent attitudes regarding characteristics spanning a leader's whole career as opposed to the leader's current affective reaction to the environment in which they operate (Locke, 1976; Pinder, 1998). For this reason, counterproductive leadership is expected to have stronger associations with subordinates' morale and attitudes toward current assigned duties and the operating climate.

### ***Summary of Findings on Counterproductive Leadership***

The frequency of counterproductive leadership behaviors in the Army remains relatively unchanged since first assessed by CASAL in 2010. Smaller percentages of leaders (one-fifth or less) are viewed as demonstrating specific behaviors associated with counterproductive leadership. The percentage of leaders demonstrating a combination of behaviors to the extent they would be considered 'toxic' continues to be below four percent. Leaders who effectively *Build Trust*, live the *Army Values*, and demonstrate *Sound Judgment* are least often perceived to demonstrate counterproductive leadership behaviors. Results reinforce that leaders who engage in a combination of counterproductive behaviors are also perceived as having adverse effects on the motivation, commitment, work quality, engagement, and morale of their subordinates, as well as on unit cohesion and discipline. Subordinates report low levels of trust in leaders who they perceive to demonstrate counterproductive leadership.

## **2. Quality of Leader Development**

CASAL assesses and tracks trends in the quality of leader development in the Army. Essential findings on leader development are organized by the following topic areas:

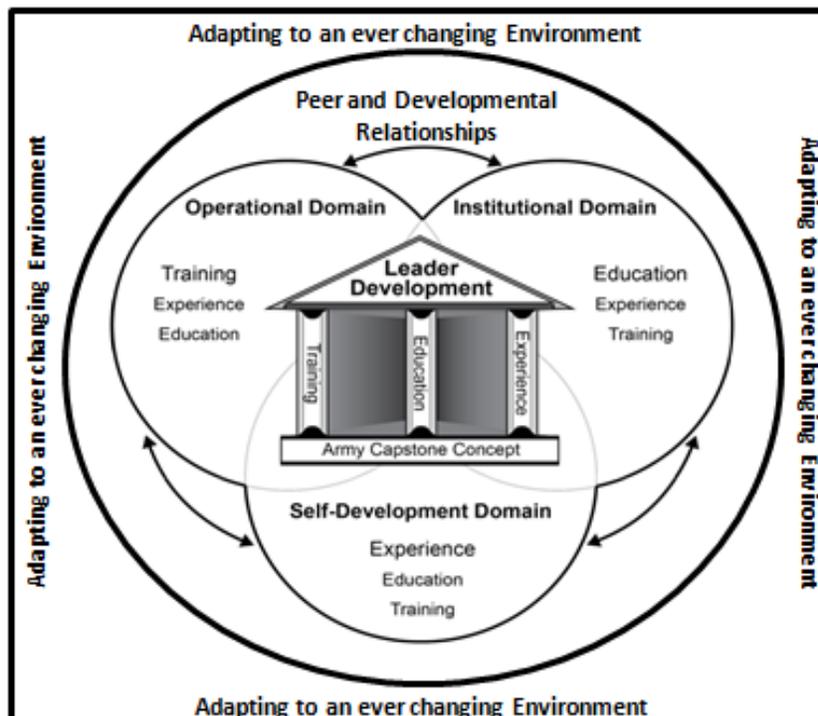
- The Army Leader Development Model
- Subordinate Development
- Leader Development Practices and Programs
- Unit Leader Development
- Personnel Management System
- Institutional Education
- Unit-based Training

Key findings for each topic area provide an assessment of the current quality, contribution, effectiveness, and level of support for leader development in the Army.

## 2.1 Army Leader Development Model

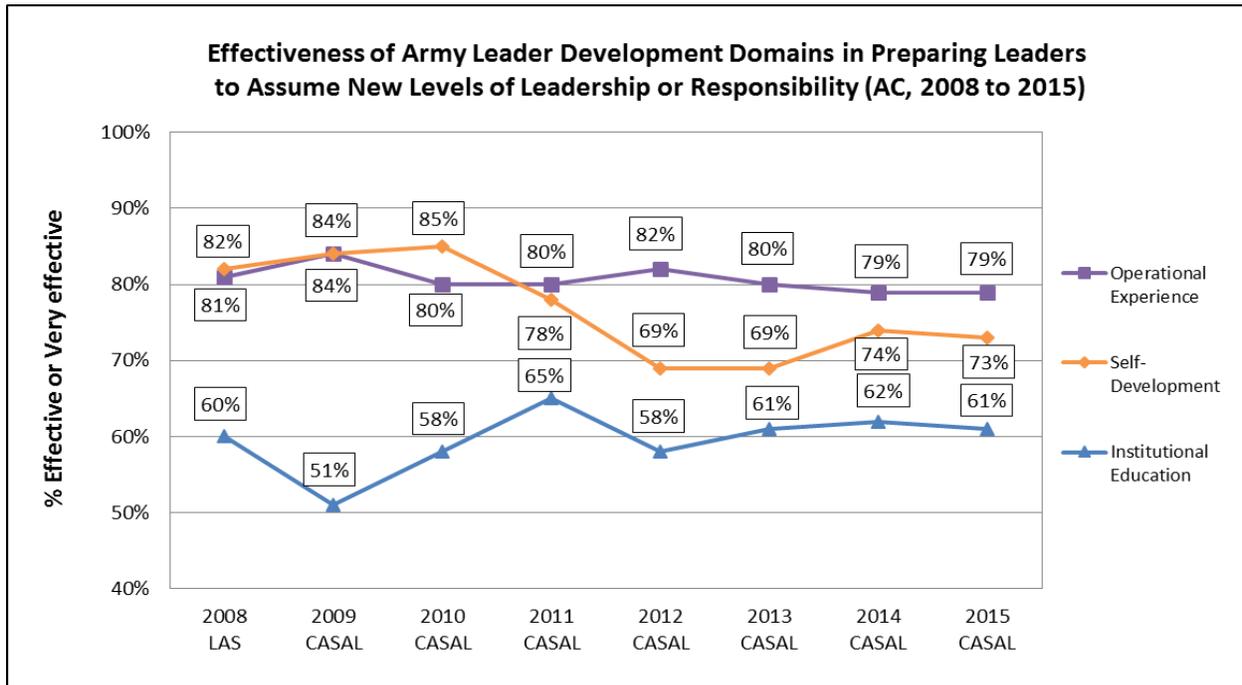
Leader development is a continuous and progressive process, and spans a leader's entire career. The Army's leader development model comprises training, education, and experience gained through three mutually supporting domains: operational, self-development, and institutional (see Figure 37). By design, a majority of leader development occurs in operational assignments and through self-development, as limited time is allotted for schoolhouse learning (ADRP 7-0, 2012f).

**Figure 37. The Army Leader Development Model (ADRP 7-0)**

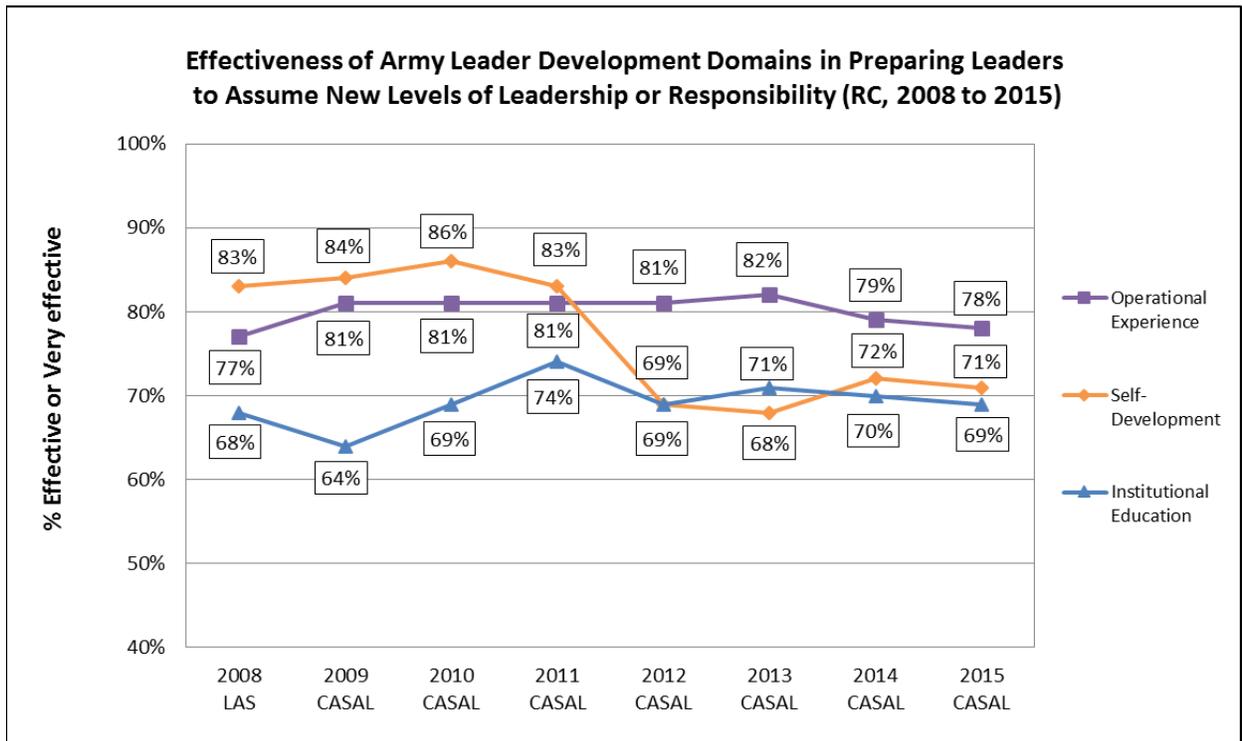


Since 2008, CASAL has assessed leader attitudes on the effectiveness and relative positive impact of the three leader development domains. Findings have consistently shown that leaders' independent ratings favor the operational and self-development domains over the institutional education domain based on how much each domain contributes to their development. CASAL results on the effectiveness of self-development were on a downward trend in 2011 for AC leaders and in 2012 for RC leaders (see Figures 38 and 39). Results of the 2014 and 2015 CASAL indicate ratings for self-development are now trending more favorably. Closer examination shows that these changes at the component level are driven heavily by NCO ratings for self-development effectiveness.

**Figure 38. Active Component Leader Ratings for the Army Leader Development Domains (2008 to 2015)**



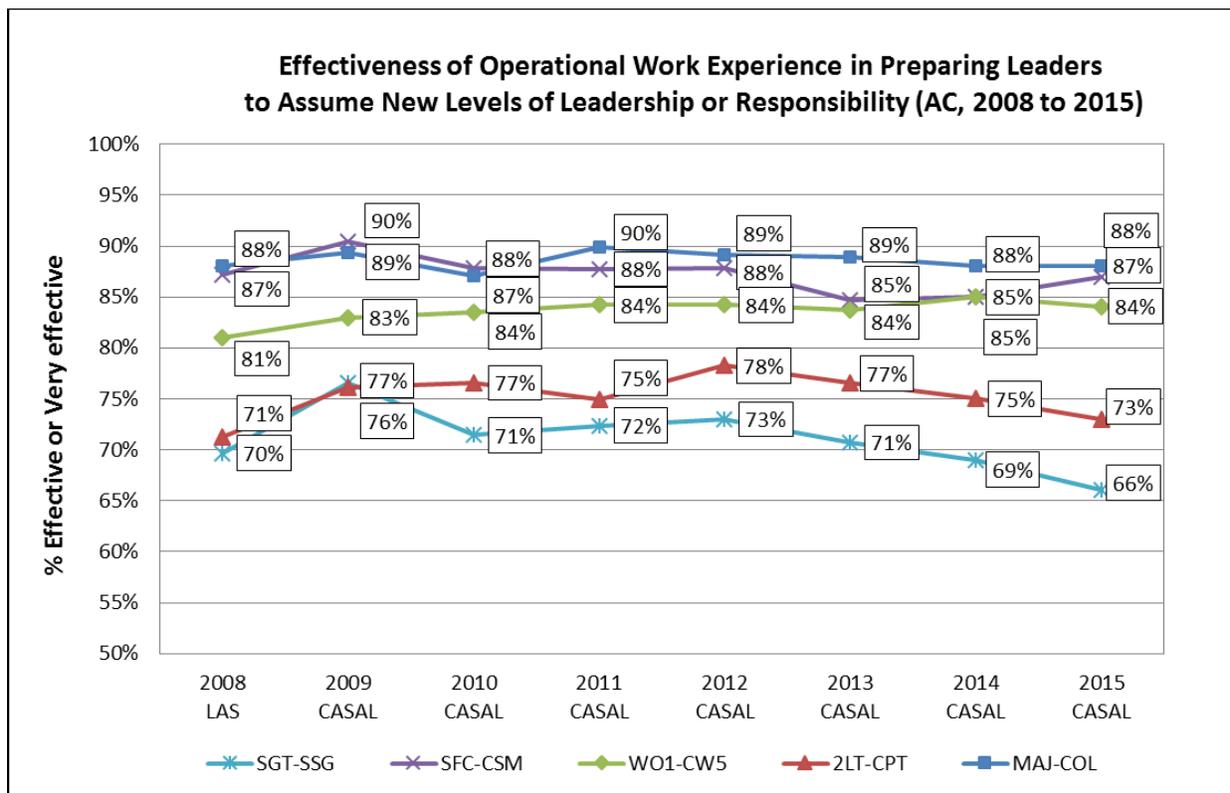
**Figure 39. Reserve Component Leader Ratings for the Army Leader Development Domains (2008 to 2015)**



## Operational Experience

Operational experiences continue to be the highest impact method for developing Army leaders. A large percentage of leaders at all levels and in both components report operational work experiences have been effective or very effective in preparing them to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility. Favorable ratings by rank group generally run parallel over time (see Figure 40), though a notable change since 2012 is a decline in favorable ratings by company grade officers and Jr NCOs. While still at favorable levels, the percentage of leaders in these rank groups rating operational experience as effective has declined 5% and 7%, respectively, over the past three years. Favorable ratings by field grade officers, warrant officers, and Sr NCOs remain at strong levels and show consistency over time.

**Figure 40. Ratings of Effectiveness for Operational Experience From 2008 to 2015**



## Self-Development

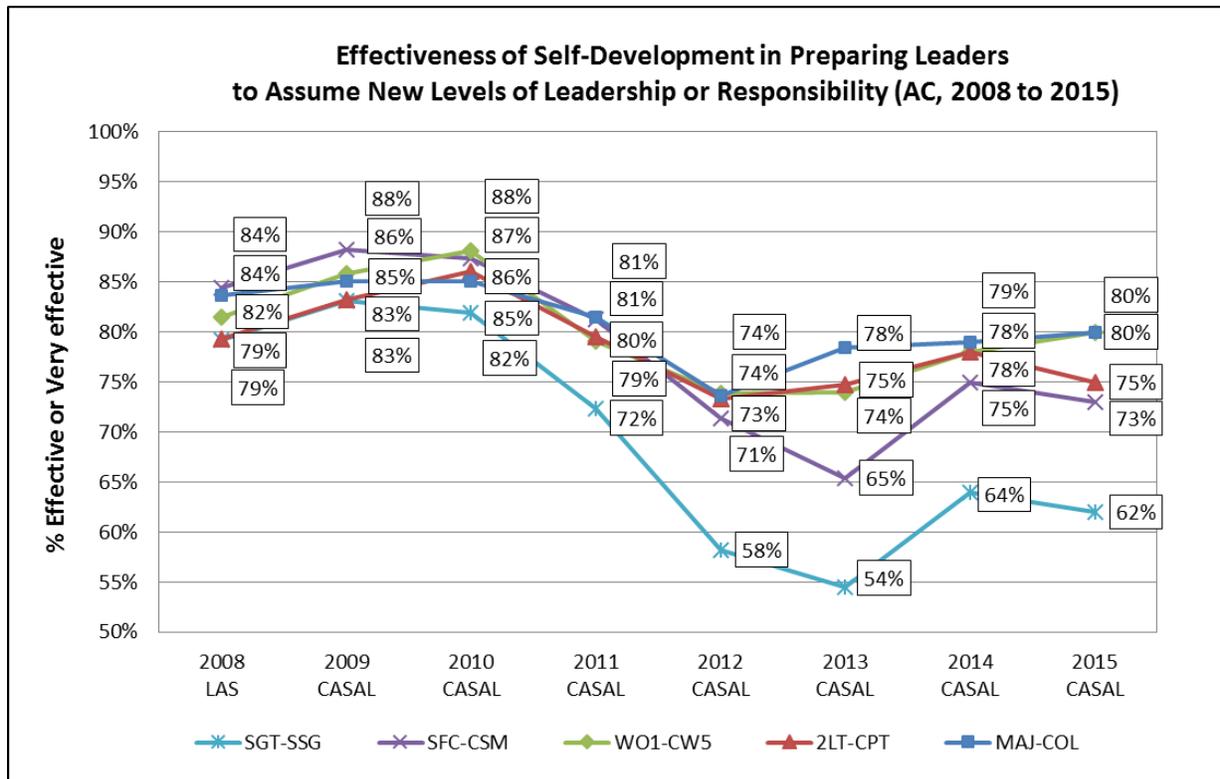
Self-development encompasses the planned, goal-oriented learning that reinforces and expands the depth and breadth of an individual's knowledge base, self-awareness, and situational awareness to enhance professional competence and meet personal objectives (ADP 7-0). Self-development represents a continuous, life-long process that is used to supplement

and enhance knowledge and skills Army leaders gain through their operational experiences and institutional education and training (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009).

Favorable attitudes toward self-development have shifted since 2010, especially for NCOs. After a notable decline starting in 2011, ratings have gradually improved after 2013.

In recent years, CASAL has reported a shift in attitudes toward the effectiveness of self-development. A decline in the level of favorable attitudes was first observed in 2011. In years prior to 2012, more than three-fourths of leaders rated self-development effective. In 2012 and 2013, that proportion fell to about two-thirds of leaders. More recently, attitudes toward self-development are trending upward, as closer to three-fourths of leaders in both components rate self-development as effective in 2014 and 2015. Despite the noted decline, no more than 10% of leaders (at the component level) have rated their self-development ineffective during this range of years.

**Figure 41. Ratings of Effectiveness for Self-Development From 2008 to 2015**



Closer examination of these trends shows that (less favorable) ratings for self-development by NCOs have heavily influenced the overall trend (see Figure 41). From 2008 to 2010, more than three-fourths of Jr NCOs (79% to 83%) rated their self-development effective for preparing

them for leadership. This decreased to a low of 54% in 2013 before improving (62% to 64%) in 2014 and 2015. Favorable ratings by Sr NCOs also follow this pattern, from more than three-fourths favorable prior to 2012 to a low of 65% in 2013 and returning to about three-fourths favorable in 2014 and 2015. The observed decline in favorable ratings for officers and warrant officers has been more subtle, and ratings for these rank groups have remained at or near three-fourths favorability. One potential reason for the decline was due to the new and expanded requirements for self-development that were enacted during these years. This explanation is particularly relevant for the NCO Corps, which introduced a program of Structured Self-Development (SSD) with levels aligned with professional military education and career progression objectives.

Despite the fluctuation in ratings on self-development effectiveness, this domain has consistently been rated by a majority of leaders as having a moderate to strong positive impact on their development. More than half of leaders (57%) indicate self-development has had a large or great positive impact on their development as a leader, while more than one-fourth (28%) rate the impact as moderate.

### Institutional Education

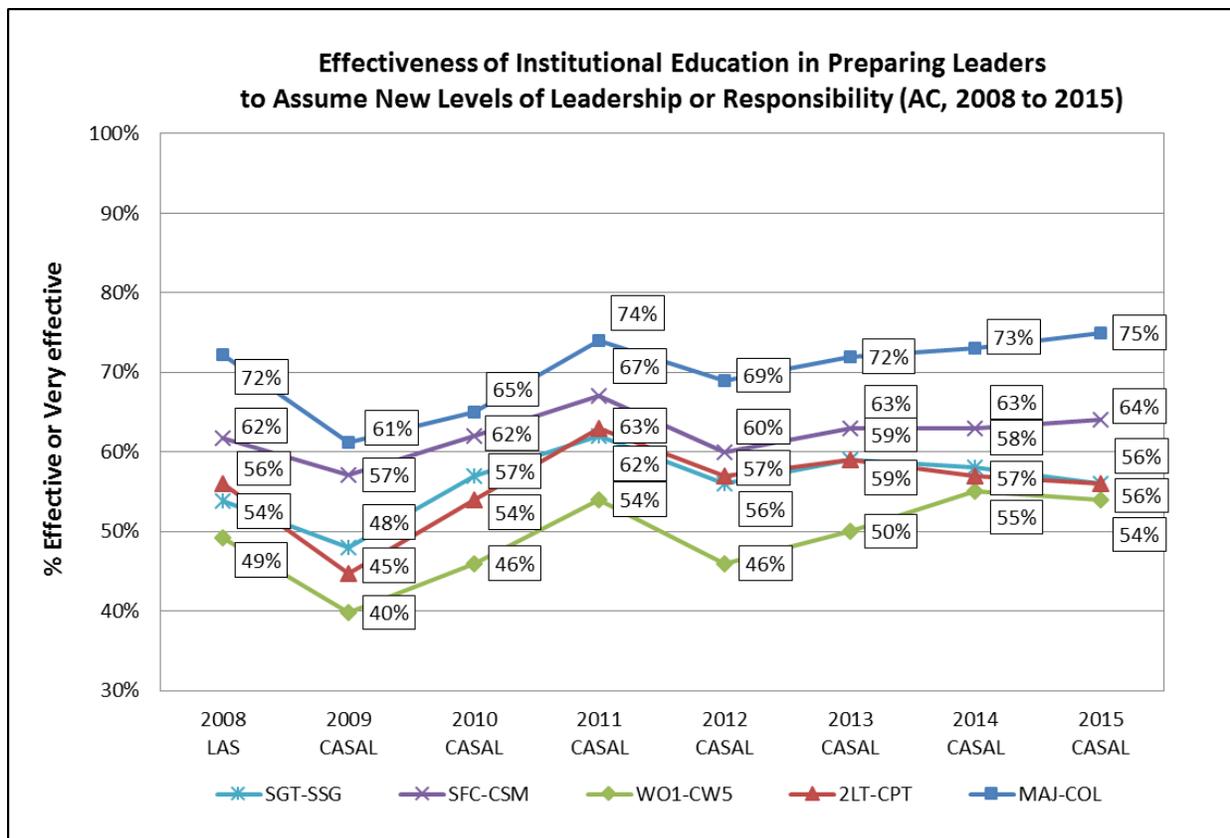
An established pattern in CASAL results is that favorable attitudes toward the institutional education domain consistently lag behind operational experiences and self-development. In 2015, 61% of AC leaders rate institutional education effective or very effective in preparing them to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility, while 17% rate it ineffective. In comparison, 69% of RC leaders rate institutional education effective and 12% rate it ineffective. Since 2012, the proportion of favorable ratings for institutional education has remained within a 4% range for leaders in both the AC (58-62% effective) and RC (68-70% effective).

Operational experience and self-development continue to be favored over institutional education for preparing leaders for increased responsibilities.

CASAL results have also consistently shown that leader attitudes toward the effectiveness of institutional education increase with rank and length of service, and ratings by rank groups generally run parallel over time (see Figure 42). These results represent global assessments by respondents about the effectiveness of the institutional domain as a whole and do not reflect attitudes about specific courses or schools. Results for specific education systems are discussed in the following sections.

Nearly half of AC respondents (47%) rate resident course attendance as having a large or great positive impact on their development, while about one-third (30%) indicate the impact has been moderate. In comparison, more than half of RC respondents (56%) rate the impact of resident course attendance as large or great and 27% rate it as moderate. A consistent pattern in CASAL results is that Army leaders in both components favor the learning that occurs at resident courses over non-resident distributed learning (DL). About one-fourth of AC respondents (23%) rate Army-provided DL (nonresident courses) as having a large or great impact, while 28% rate the impact as moderate. For RC respondents, 29% rate the impact of nonresident and DL courses as large or great, and 32% rate it as moderate.

**Figure 42. Ratings of Effectiveness for Institutional Education From 2008 to 2015**



## 2.2 Subordinate Development

The Army requires all of its leaders to develop subordinates' skills, knowledge, and attitudes (AR 600-100). In developmental relationships, it is the leader's responsibility to help subordinates learn. Leaders develop subordinates through assessing developmental needs; providing coaching, counseling, and mentoring; creating challenging assignments in their jobs; and providing developmental feedback (ADRP 6-22).

The practice of subordinate development (i.e., leaders' abilities to develop others) continues to be an area of concern that requires attention and focus. Subordinate leader development requires a concerted effort in both enabling superiors to do it well and holding them accountable for this leadership responsibility. Further, given the frequent percentage of leaders who are rated ineffective or neutral by their subordinates, the role of every Army leader in taking charge of their own development is of elevated importance.

### **2.2.1 Leader Effectiveness in Developing Others**

The core leader competency *Develops Others* has consistently received the least favorable assessments across rank levels and positions. Less than two-thirds of leaders across the Army (64%) rate their immediate superior effective at developing their subordinates. Since 2009, the percentage of AC leaders rated effective or very effective in developing subordinates has ranged from 59% to 64% (about three in five) while the percentage of leaders rated ineffective has ranged from 18% to 21% (about one in five).

The 2014 CASAL gained a deeper understanding of subordinate development through assessment of several doctrinal behaviors (ADRP 6-22) that comprise the competency *Develops Others*. Results confirmed strong relationships between each of developmental behaviors and the competency *Develops Others* ( $r$ 's = .78 to .82). About two-thirds of AC leaders were rated effective across these behaviors, while 18% or less were rated ineffective. Specific results included the following:

- 68% of leaders were rated effective at coaching subordinates to improve what they are capable of doing (16% ineffective).
- 66% of leaders were rated effective at creating or calling attention to leader development opportunities (16% ineffective).
- 65% of leaders were rated effective at providing appropriate developmental feedback (18% ineffective).
- 66% of leaders were rated effective at assessing the developmental needs of subordinates (16% ineffective); results from the 2015 CASAL for this item (67% effective, 17% ineffective) were consistent with the prior year.

### **Subordinate Development Actions**

Field Manual (FM) 6-22, *Leader Development*, states that developing leaders involves a holistic, comprehensive, and purposeful group of activities. Leader development occurs through daily opportunities to learn and teach, and in a range of settings such as at home station, in offices, laboratories, depots, maintenance bays, during exercises, and while deployed.

The 2014 CASAL sought to understand the types of activities Army leaders engage in when developing their subordinates. Respondents were asked to describe the actions taken by their immediate superior in the past year to develop their (i.e., the respondent's) leadership skills (Riley, Hatfield, Freeman, Fallesen, & Gunther, 2015). Five broad categories of themes emerged from the comments and included: promoting continuous learning; providing learning/developmental opportunities; assessing performance and development; focusing on individual development; and exemplifying leader behaviors.

The most prominent and relevant themes within these five categories were included as items in the 2015 CASAL. This was done to better determine the level of engagement in these developmental activities in the Army. Notably, the fourteen items that reflect developmental activities also align with the four fundamentals of development as described in FM 6-22:

- **Setting conditions** for development involves leaders personally modeling behaviors that encourage development, and creating environments that encourage learning.
- **Providing feedback** starts with opportunities for observation and assessment and leads to immediate, short bursts of feedback on actual leader actions that enhance development, in addition to regular counseling.
- **Enhancing learning** involves the use of leaders as a learning source (i.e., role modeling, mentoring, coaching) and encouraging subordinate self-study, training, and education.
- **Creating opportunities** includes deliberate position assignments and other methods integrated into day-to-day activities that challenge and grow leaders' skills.

A majority of leaders develop subordinates through setting favorable conditions for development, though relatively fewer create opportunities for development or actively enhance subordinate learning.

Table 24 displays the percentage of AC and RC respondents who acknowledged various developmental actions taken by their immediate superior in the past 12 months. Individual actions are nested within the four fundamentals of development (described above), then presented in descending order by frequency of respondent selections<sup>27</sup>.

The following points summarize these findings regarding developmental actions (AC results are noted in parentheses):

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<sup>27</sup> The item assessing developmental actions by one's immediate superior was assessed using a select-all-that-apply method, whereby respondents indicated whether their immediate superior had engaged in each of the behaviors in the past 12 months. Ratings were not made regarding the effectiveness or frequency with which one's immediate superior engaged in these actions.

- More than half of respondents report their immediate superior sets favorable conditions by remaining approachable (61%) and fostering a climate for development (52%), a positive finding.
- More leaders give feedback through encouragement and/or praise (60%) compared to the 46% who provide formal or informal developmental counseling feedback.
- A majority of respondents indicate their immediate superior involved the respondent in a decision-making or planning process in the past year (56%). These interactions can serve as a form of on-the-job development (e.g., five minute job shadow, see FM 6-22), and often can involve showing the subordinate a task or process related to job duties at the next level. A majority of respondents also indicate development occurs (more traditionally) through their immediate superior sharing experiences, lessons learned, or advice (53%).
- Referrals and authorizations for training, education, and other learning were selected by just under one-third of respondents. Examples of these actions include recommendations for continued education (29%), authorization for course attendance (26%), and other learning resources (19%).
- Leaders delegate tasks to develop subordinates (49%), but relatively fewer respondents indicate their superior provided them with opportunities to lead (37%), or created or called attention to challenging job assignments (26%).

While RC leaders perform their functions across fewer days (unless activated), reserve units benefit from the civilian skills that leaders bring to bear during battle assemblies. Reserve leaders utilize the experience and leadership acquired by subordinates from their civilian careers and develop strategies that can be executed on-duty and off, acknowledging that subordinates must balance the responsibilities of their Army duties, civilian position, and family life (FM 6-22). CASAL results show RC respondents perceive developmental actions by their immediate superiors at levels consistent with the AC (+/- 3% across the activities). One difference is that 44% of RC respondents report their immediate superior delegated tasks to develop them, compared to 49% of AC respondents. One possible explanation for this 5% difference is that RC leaders typically operate under different temporal constraints during a weekend battle assembly compared to the continuous operations of an AC unit or organization. For example, RC leaders may less often perceive opportunities to delegate or 'hand off' tasks that are time sensitive.

Approximately 8% of AC respondents (9% RC) indicated their immediate superior has engaged in no actions to develop them (the subordinate) in the past 12 months. An additional 6% of respondents indicated this type of development did not apply to their current situation (e.g., immediate superior had just arrived at the unit, or respondent was attending a resident school or course). Finally, it is important to note that these results indicate the types of activities

leaders use to develop subordinates as viewed from the receiver of the development (i.e., the subordinate). A pattern previously observed in results of the 2014 CASAL was that respondents reported themselves engaging in a broader range of activities to develop their subordinates and in higher frequency than what they recognized or gave credit to their immediate superior for doing (i.e., to develop the respondent, as the subordinate) (Riley et al., 2015).

**Table 24. Leader Development Actions Taken by Respondents' Immediate Superiors**

<b>Percentage of AC and RC Respondents Perceiving Actions that Their Immediate Superiors Took in the Past 12 Months to Develop the Respondents' Leadership Skills</b>		
	Active Component	Reserve Component
<b><i>Setting Conditions for Development</i></b>		
1. Remained approachable for me to seek input and ask questions	61%	61%
2. Fostered a climate for development (e.g., allowed learning from honest mistakes)	52%	49%
<b><i>Providing Feedback</i></b>		
3. Provided encouragement and/or praise	60%	62%
4. Provided me with feedback on my performance (e.g., formal or informal counseling)	46%	44%
<b><i>Enhancing Learning</i></b>		
5. Involved me in a decision-making or planning process	56%	55%
6. Shared experiences, lessons learned, or advice	53%	50%
7. Encouraged or recommended continuing education (e.g., college courses, job certifications)	29%	27%
8. Provided training, teaching, coaching or skill development	28%	27%
9. Provided mentoring to prepare me for future roles or assignments	27%	26%
10. Authorized or allowed me to attend resident training or education	26%	28%
11. Referred me to developmental resources (e.g., online courses, readings, study topics)	19%	19%
<b><i>Creating Opportunities</i></b>		
12. Delegated tasks to develop me	49%	44%
13. Provided me with new opportunities to lead	37%	38%
14. Created or called attention to challenging job assignments or opportunities	26%	29%

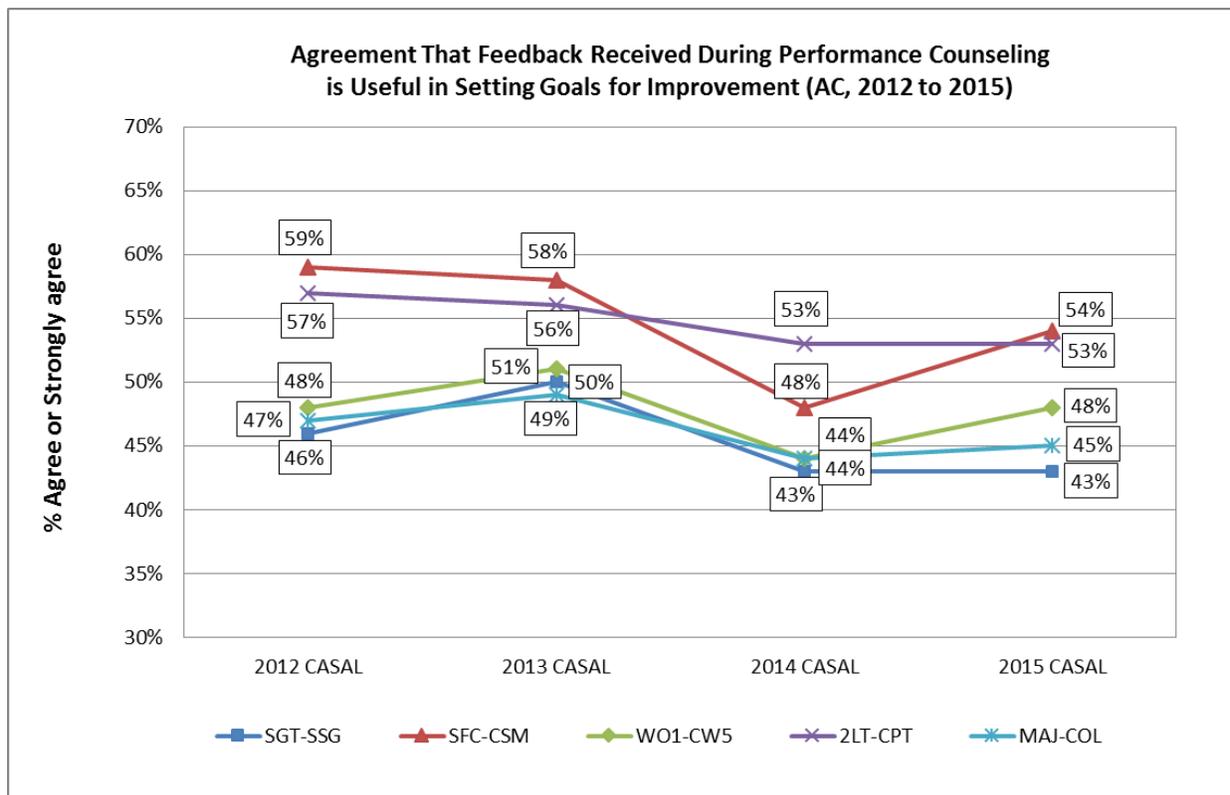
## 2.2.2 Formal and Informal Counseling

As a developmental practice, performance counseling has consistently been rated relatively low in terms of its positive impact on leaders. In 2015, only one in three leaders (33% AC; 35% RC) rate the developmental counseling received from their immediate superior as having a large or great impact on their development. Twenty-eight percent rate the impact as moderate while 39% indicate it has a small, very little, or no positive impact (for RC leaders, 29% and 36%, respectively). These results show consistent trends over the past several years. In comparison, larger percentages of leaders rate on-the-job training and informal learning from peers (72%) or superiors (64%) as having a large or great impact on their development.

1 in 3 AC leaders rate developmental counseling as having a large or great impact on their development, while half agree counseling is useful in setting performance goals for improvement.

Another consistent finding is that nearly half of leaders overall (48% AC; 50% RC) agree the feedback they received during their last performance counseling was useful in helping them set performance goals for improvement. Since 2012, favorable attitudes at the rank group level have fluctuated (see Figure 43).

**Figure 43. Ratings of the Usefulness of Performance Counseling Received by Rank Group (2012 to 2015)**



Other results show that performance counseling feedback does not tend to cover how well a leader practices the six principles of the mission command philosophy. While awareness and understanding of the mission command philosophy has increased among Army leaders since 2013, only about one-third of AC leaders (32%) and slightly more in the RC (37%) agree their last performance counseling covered their practice of mission command (36% and 29% disagree, respectively). Notably, field grade officers report the highest levels of disagreement (50% AC; 39% RC) that they are getting this feedback. Figure 44 displays the results of the 2015 CASAL regarding the perceived usefulness of respondents' most recent performance counseling.

**Figure 44. Ratings for the Usefulness of Performance Counseling Feedback by Rank Group**

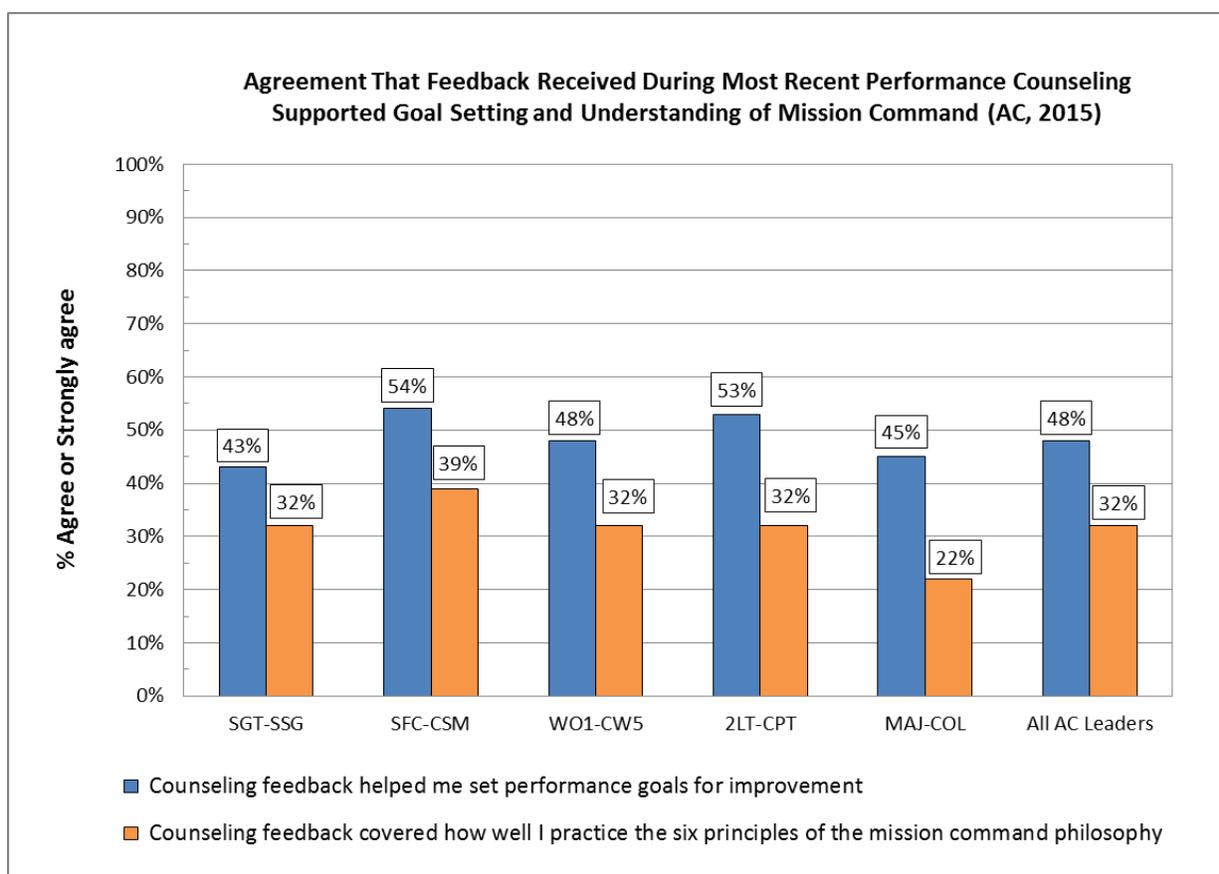


Table 25 displays the frequency with which Army leaders report receiving formal or informal performance counseling. These results demonstrate stable trends, especially regarding the percentage of AC leaders who indicate they 'never or almost never' receive formal or informal counseling; the range includes nearly one in five company grade officers, to one in four Jr NCOs.

**Table 25. Frequency With Which Active Component Leaders Report Receiving Formal or Informal Performance Counseling**

How often do you receive formal or informal performance counseling?					
Active Component	Monthly or More Often	Quarterly	Semi-Annually	At Rating Time	Never or Almost Never
<b>MAJ-COL</b>	24%	19%	11%	25%	21%
<b>2LT-CPT</b>	26%	28%	8%	20%	18%
<b>WO1-CW5</b>	20%	24%	7%	26%	23%
<b>SFC-CSM</b>	25%	32%	5%	15%	23%
<b>SGT-SSG</b>	19%	27%	4%	25%	25%
<b>Total</b>	22%	27%	7%	22%	22%

An aspect of counseling first examined in the 2014 CASAL was leader attitudes regarding the frequency with which they currently receive formal or informal performance counseling (i.e., too frequent, too infrequent, about right). Results from the 2015 CASAL mirror those observed in the previous year. Only half of leaders (51% AC; 51% RC) characterize the frequency with which they currently receive performance counseling as ‘about right’ while nearly half (46% AC; 46% RC) feel they receive counseling too infrequently or much too infrequently (i.e., it is not happening enough).

- The proportion of AC leaders indicating they need more frequent counseling includes 44% of field grade officers, 50% of company grade officers, 49% of warrant officers, 35% of Sr NCOs, and 52% of Jr NCOs.
- For RC leaders, counseling occurs too infrequently for 50% of field grade officers, 48% of company grade officers, 46% of warrant officers, 43% of Sr NCOs, and 44% of Jr NCOs.

These results reinforce previous CASAL findings that there is currently an unmet need in the Army with regard to performance counseling: for the frequency of the interaction, the usefulness of the feedback received in setting performance goals for improvement, and for helping leaders understand how well they practice leadership related to the mission command philosophy.

Half of AC leaders perceive they receive counseling at about the right frequency while nearly half feel they receive counseling too infrequently.

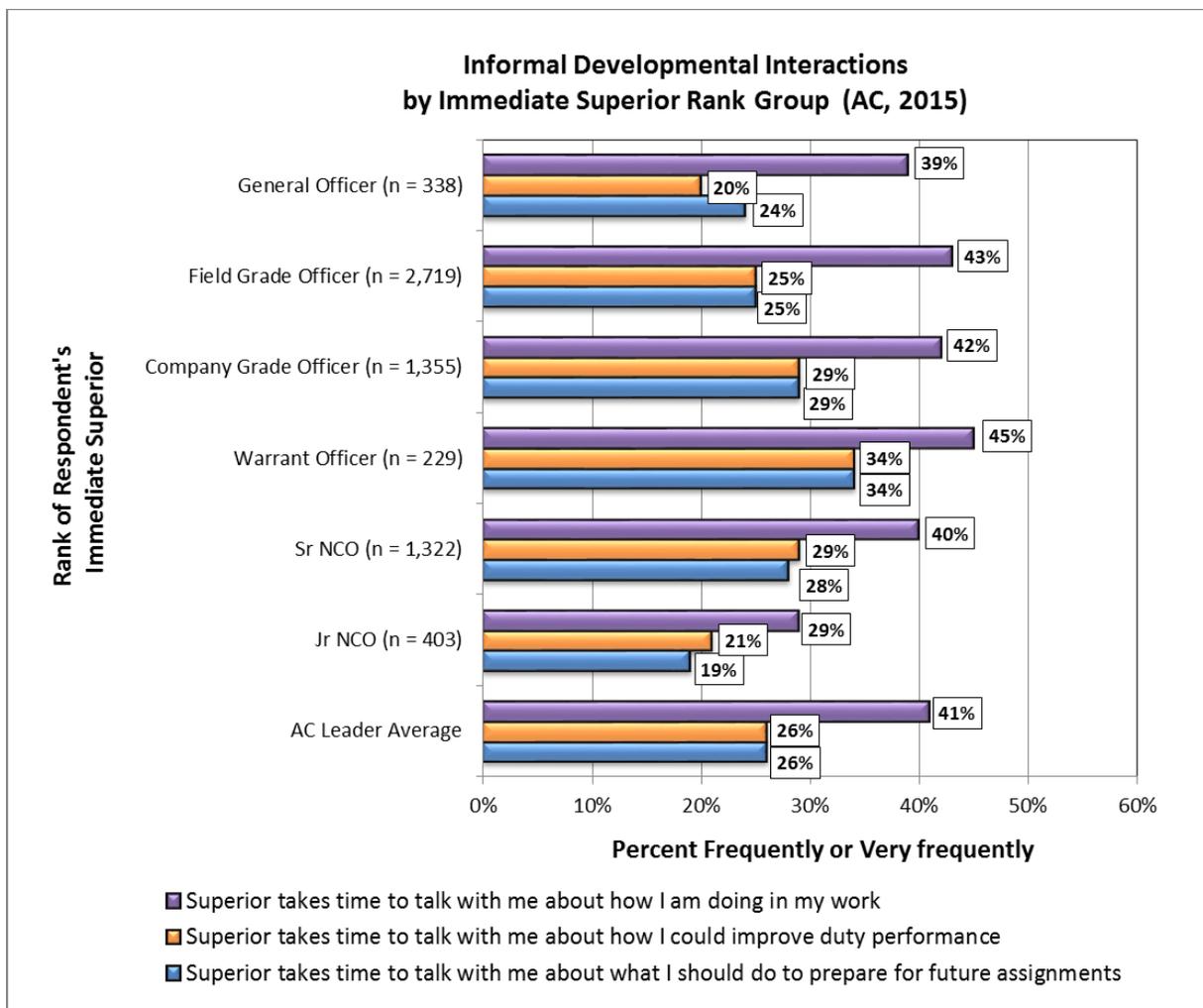
The occurrence of less formal developmental interactions are more common than traditional counseling, a pattern observed by CASAL results in recent years. These types of interactions include supervisor-subordinate discussions on job performance, performance improvement, and preparing for future roles. The relative frequency with which these types of interactions

occur between superiors and subordinates varies. Two-fifths or fewer AC leaders report that their immediate superior frequently or very frequently talks with them about the following:

- How they are doing in their work – 41% (49% rarely or occasionally; 11% never)
- How they could improve their duty performance – 26% (56% rarely or occasionally; 17% never)
- What to do to prepare for future assignments – 26% (51% rarely or occasionally; 23% never)

Results for RC leaders indicate comparable frequencies of interaction for each of these discussion areas, and results for both components are consistent with those observed in 2014. Results for each rank level (see Figure 45) generally follow a consistent pattern; work performance is most frequently discussed, followed by how to improve duty performance, and what to do to prepare for future assignments.

**Figure 45. Frequency of Developmental Interactions Between Active Component Superiors and Subordinates**



## Seeking Developmental Feedback

As stated in ADP 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, individuals are responsible for their own professional growth. Thus, it is important for every Army leader to seek out or request developmental feedback from his/her superior and others to benefit their growth as a leader. Results of the 2015 CASAL show that:

- Nearly one-third of leaders (31% AC; 29% RC) frequently seek developmental feedback from their immediate superior, while larger percentages do so rarely or occasionally (59% AC; 63% RC).
- More than one-third of leaders (41% AC; 37% RC) frequently seek developmental feedback from someone other than their immediate superior, and more than half (53% AC; 57% RC) do so rarely or occasionally.

Results from the 2014 CASAL provide a source to understand leaders' propensity to seek out developmental feedback from others. Specifically, it was found that nearly half of leaders reported frequently or very frequently seeking developmental feedback from their peers (48% AC; 47% RC), while smaller percentages asked their immediate superior (40% AC; 40% RC), and those subordinate to them (35% AC; 36% RC). Only small percentages of leaders reported frequently or very frequently asking for feedback from their superior two levels higher (12% AC; 13% RC). Across these relationships, leaders showed strong propensity to seek feedback at least rarely or occasionally from others; between 28% and 41% of the rank groups indicated they 'never' seek feedback from their superior two levels higher.

To reiterate results for junior level leaders, there are notable performance counseling 'gaps' for AC company grade officers and Jr NCOs, as half of these leaders report receiving counseling too infrequently (50% and 52%, respectively), and a contingent report 'never' receiving formal or informal counseling (18% and 25%, respectively). These conditions place greater impetus on these junior leaders to seek out developmental feedback. However, results show that most (56% of company grade officers, 53% of Jr NCOs) seek or ask for developmental feedback from their immediate superior either rarely or occasionally, while smaller percentages (37% each cohort) report doing so frequently or very frequently.

### **2.2.3 Mentoring**

The Army's definition of mentoring describes a voluntary and developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience, characterized by mutual trust and respect (AR 600-100). Army leadership doctrine (ADRP 6-22) expounds on this definition by identifying general characteristics of a mentoring relationship. Namely,

mentorship affects both personal and professional development; both individuals must be active participants; and contrary to common belief, mentoring is not limited to superior-subordinate relationships.

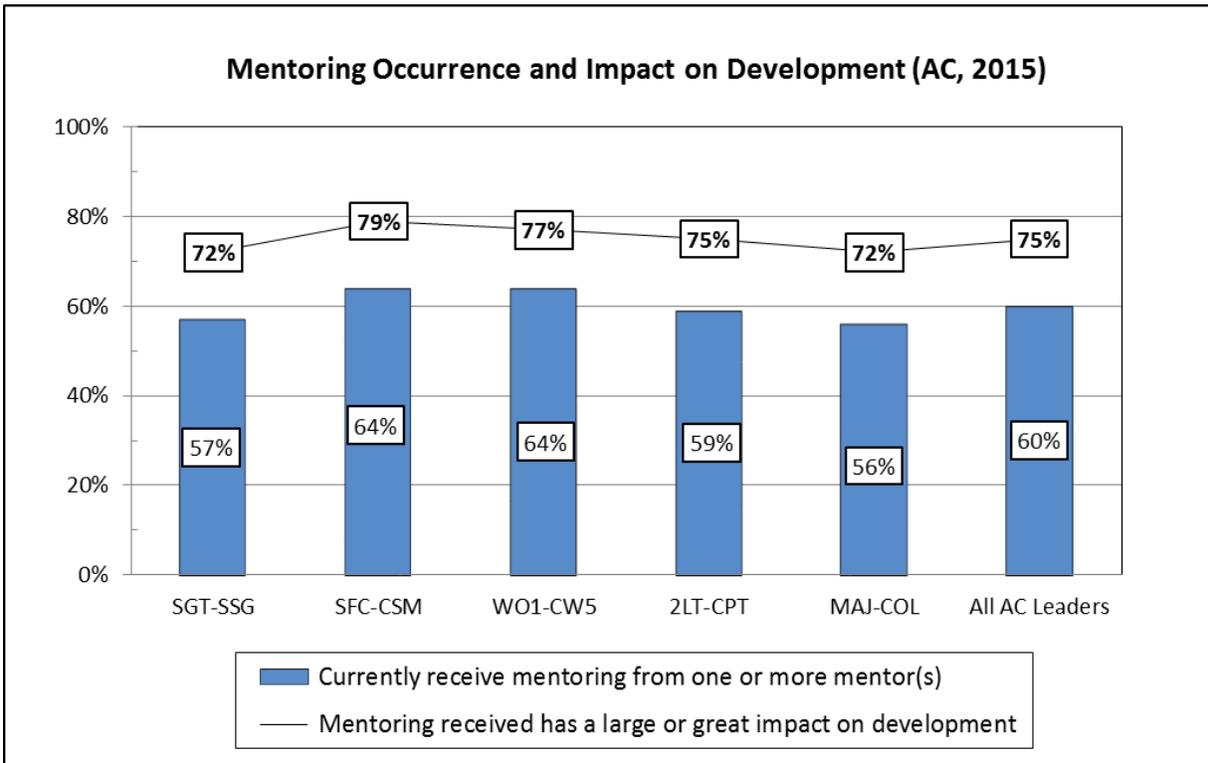
More than half of Army leaders (60% AC; 55% RC) indicate they currently receive mentoring from one or more mentors. These percentages (2015 CASAL) are higher than those reported during the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) study conducted from 2000 to 2004 (Fallesen et al., 2005). During ATLDP, less than one-half of uniformed leaders (40%) reported having a mentor.

60% of AC leaders currently receive mentoring. For most, the need is being met regarding its frequency and impact on development.

Mentoring remains a valuable component of Army leader development. Results of the 2015 CASAL continue to show that respondents who receive mentoring view the relationship as beneficial and impactful on their development. Three-fourths of respondents (75% AC; 76% RC) indicate mentoring has had a large or great impact on their development as a leader, a finding consistent across rank groups (see Figure 46). Further, no more than 7% of any rank group indicates mentoring has had a small, very little, or no positive impact on their development. During ATLDP, nearly two-thirds of respondents rated the mentoring they received as effective (61% to 69%). The study also reported that over 80% of leaders agreed mentoring had a positive effect on their development, as more than three-fourths of officers agreed that mentoring is important for their personal and professional development (Fallesen et al., 2005).

Additional results from the previous CASAL (2014) showed that a majority of respondents (85% AC; 87% RC) characterized the frequency with which they receive mentoring as 'about right.' One in seven respondents in both components (14% AC; 12% RC) reported that they interact with their mentor too infrequently, and results were consistent across rank groups. Overall, these findings provide strong indications that, for most leaders who receive mentoring, the need is currently being met with regard to the frequency of desired interaction and the impact on development.

**Figure 46. The Occurrence of Mentoring and Impact on Development for Active Component Respondents**



The following points summarize from whom respondents currently receive mentoring, as assessed by the 2015 CASAL:

- Half of AC respondents (53%) report their primary mentor is a Soldier or Army civilian outside of their current unit or chain of command, while another 7% indicate their mentor is a person outside of the Army.
- About one-fifth of AC respondents report their mentor is their immediate superior or supervisor (21%), while a near equal percentage report it is another Soldier or Army civilian within their unit or chain of command (19%).
- One-fourth of AC company grade officers (25%) and one-third of Jr NCOs (36%) identify their immediate superior or supervisor as their primary mentor.
- In comparison, just over one-third of RC respondents (35%) identify their mentor as a Soldier or Army civilian outside of their unit or chain of command, while nearly one-third (31%) identify their immediate superior or supervisor as their primary mentor.
- More than one-fourth of RC respondents (28%) report their mentor is another member of their unit or organization, while 6% indicate it is a person outside of the Army.

Most AC respondents report frequent interaction with their current mentor, but there are notable differences by rank group and level. Overall, leaders at junior levels interact more frequently with their mentor(s) than do leaders at more senior levels.

- Half of AC Jr NCOs (50%) interact with their mentor weekly or more often.
- In comparison, smaller percentages of company grade officers (39%), warrant officers (34%), and Sr NCOs (32%) interact with their mentor weekly or more often.
- Mentoring interactions occur even less frequently for most AC field grade officers, as 53% report interacting with their mentor 'monthly' or 'quarterly', while 25% indicate it is less often than quarterly.
- In the reserve component, nearly half of respondents (46%) interact with their mentor more often than monthly; 30% interact with their mentor monthly, while 24% interact less often than monthly.

Finally, about two-thirds of respondents (65% AC; 65% RC) indicate they provide mentoring to one or more individuals. AC Sr NCOs (79%) are the rank group with the largest percentage providing mentoring, followed by warrant officers (72%), field grade officers (70%), and Jr NCOs (64%). Notably, a smaller percentage of AC company grade officers (39%) indicate they mentor others, which is consistent with the 2014 findings. In the RC, a majority of Sr NCOs (77%), field grade officers (72%), and warrant officers (70%) provide mentoring, compared to smaller percentages of Jr NCOs (58%) and company grade officers (50%).

### Expectations for Mentoring

Of AC respondents who currently receive mentoring, a majority report that it is meeting (55%) or exceeding (38%) their expectations. Only 7% of AC and RC respondents (consistent across rank groups) indicate that the mentoring they receive is falling short of their expectations. A new question was added to the 2015 CASAL to understand how mentoring could be improved for those who indicate it is not meeting their expectations. These respondents were asked how they would like the mentoring they receive to be better. Four broad categories of themes emerged from the comments and included the frequency of interaction, who should provide mentoring, how mentoring should occur, and what is discussed or accomplished during mentoring. The four categories and their respective themes are described in detail below.

***Frequency of interaction.*** Themes within this category indicated broadly that respondents would prefer more frequent contact and interaction with their mentors. This included the ability to check in with mentors more regularly and have more time with them on a regular basis. The majority of comments did not provide a specific desired frequency, but simply indicated more contact with their mentor would be preferred. Additionally, a few respondents

mentioned they would prefer interactions that were proactive, and not in response to a crisis or in times of stress.

**Who should provide mentoring.** The comments within this category included themes related to the desired characteristics of what respondents would like to see in their mentor. Specifically, respondents prefer proactive, engaged, genuine, and committed mentors, who take a personal interest in the mentee's career, and advocate on their behalf. Several respondents indicated that mentoring by someone within their same career field, MOS, branch, or unit would be helpful, given this individual would likely have the relevant experience to provide insight and guidance on how to succeed. While some respondents felt it would be more ideal to have their mentor closer to them (e.g., within the same unit or organization, closer geographically), others felt an outside mentor who could provide a different perspective would be beneficial. Some also felt that their mentor should be their current immediate superior, which would facilitate opportunities to work through practical issues. Less frequently mentioned comments included having a strong mentor who is willing to speak out and challenge ideas, a capable mentor who leads by example and exhibits Army values, and one who is passionate and believes in the Army's future.

Mentors should be proactive, engaged, genuine, and take a personal interest in the mentee's career.

**How mentoring should occur.** The comments within this category addressed how respondents felt mentoring should occur and what it should entail. Some respondents preferred having more formal and structured interactions with a mentor. Also noted were desires for more one-on-one time and face-to-face interaction. Respondents mentioned mentors should demonstrate care and concern for their personal and professional future and welfare, provide deliberate, candid, open, and honest feedback in a dialogue (e.g., not just a one-way conversation), and be able to communicate and listen effectively. A few respondents also felt that more functions or activities with their mentor would be helpful, including meetings, conferences, and networking opportunities with their mentor and others within similar career paths, units, or organizations.

Some leaders prefer mentoring to be formal and structured, while others prefer less formal networking opportunities with others in their career field.

A conclusion of the officer phase of the ATLDP study (Fallesen et al., 2005) was that leaders generally desired mentoring but did not want it to turn into a formal mentoring program. In 2005, the Army G1 created a web-based Mentorship Program that provided training information, chat forums, and ways to match people interested in having a mentor with potential mentors. The program was discontinued because of lack of use. In the 2015 CASAL, relatively few respondents commented that Army mentoring should be a formalized program

(40 mentions out of 904 comments), including a network of vetted, designated mentors (uniformed and civilians), where potential mentees are matched to appropriate mentors (e.g., based on their career field, job duties, MOS, branch, or even component).

Irrespective of its format (i.e., formal or informal), some respondents indicated there is a need for resources, tools, training, education, and networking for mentors and mentees. The Army currently has resources available on mentoring, including ADRP 6-22, FM 6-22, and interactive multimedia lessons on developing others and seeking feedback (see Virtual Improvement Center (VIC) Catalog: A guide to leadership development materials, 2012). Respondents indicated that mentors might benefit from training on how to be an effective mentor, how to tailor or cater to individual needs, including taking the personality of the mentee into account when providing feedback. Recommendations also included having scenario or role-playing practice, workshops, objective creation and planning practice, mentor meetings, and resources for handling uniformed versus civilian mentor relationships.

***What is discussed or accomplished during mentoring.*** Themes within this category reflected what respondents would prefer to occur during their mentoring sessions. Notably, several of the themes lend support to the notion that doctrinal definitions and distinctions between developmental methods (i.e., counseling, coaching, and mentoring) are not universally interpreted and understood by Army leaders.<sup>28</sup> The most frequently mentioned themes included more specific, in-depth, constructive, and practical feedback related to duty performance and responsibilities, and development. Respondents placed emphasis on having discussions related to achievements and what they do well, as well as a focus on where they may be struggling, what barriers they are encountering, any areas for improvement, and recommendations or guidance on how to improve. Respondents also reported a desire for follow-up or a critical post-evaluation of performance. In situations where one's mentor is also his/her immediate superior, respondents reported that providing clear explanations of daily duties, expectations, and explaining how the mentee fits in the organization would be helpful.

The second most common theme in this category involved career management. This included having a mentor provide assistance with setting short and long-term career goals, explaining and tracking timely career and job assignment progression, having discussions on how to

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<sup>28</sup> Special Note. Several themes within this category reflect the developmental techniques of counseling and coaching as described in ADRP 6-22 (as opposed to actual mentoring). *Counseling* is the process used by leaders to guide subordinates to improve performance and develop their potential (7-61). *Coaching* refers to the function of helping someone through a set of tasks or with general qualities (7-62). *Mentoring* focuses primarily on developing a more experienced leader for the future, through advice and counsel over time and to help with professional and personal growth (7-66, 7-67).

maintain competitiveness (e.g., through broadening assignments, education, leader development course opportunities), providing guidance on how to make the most impact on their organization and Army, and periodic azimuth checks on their progress. Similarly, respondents indicated a helpful approach would include mentoring with a future focus, in which mentors provided guidance on what is expected and what knowledge is required to succeed at different levels or to replace senior leaders after retirement or incapacitation.

Mentors should provide specific, constructive, and practical feedback, and assist with goal setting and career management.

Less frequent comments related to what should be discussed during mentoring included having a leadership focus (e.g., how to be more effective as a leader, how to build leadership skills), providing positive and negative feedback, having how-to type discussions on a variety of topics (e.g., how to handle situations with senior leaders, how to accomplish a specific mission), and giving sound advice to work through specific issues or concerns (e.g., moral or ethical dilemmas, issues that affect unit readiness). Respondents also indicated action-driven advice and guidance for performing various leadership duties would be more helpful if it occurred prior to assuming said leadership roles. Recommendations included meaningful lessons learned conversations and sharing of knowledge, continuing leader development workshops, leader development programs, and other scheduled events. Respondents also reported that job shadowing would be helpful, as well as more exposure in general to different events, meetings, or decision-making processes that are unknown to the mentee to provide an understanding of the bigger picture.

### The Relationship between Infrequent Counseling and Seeking Feedback and Mentoring

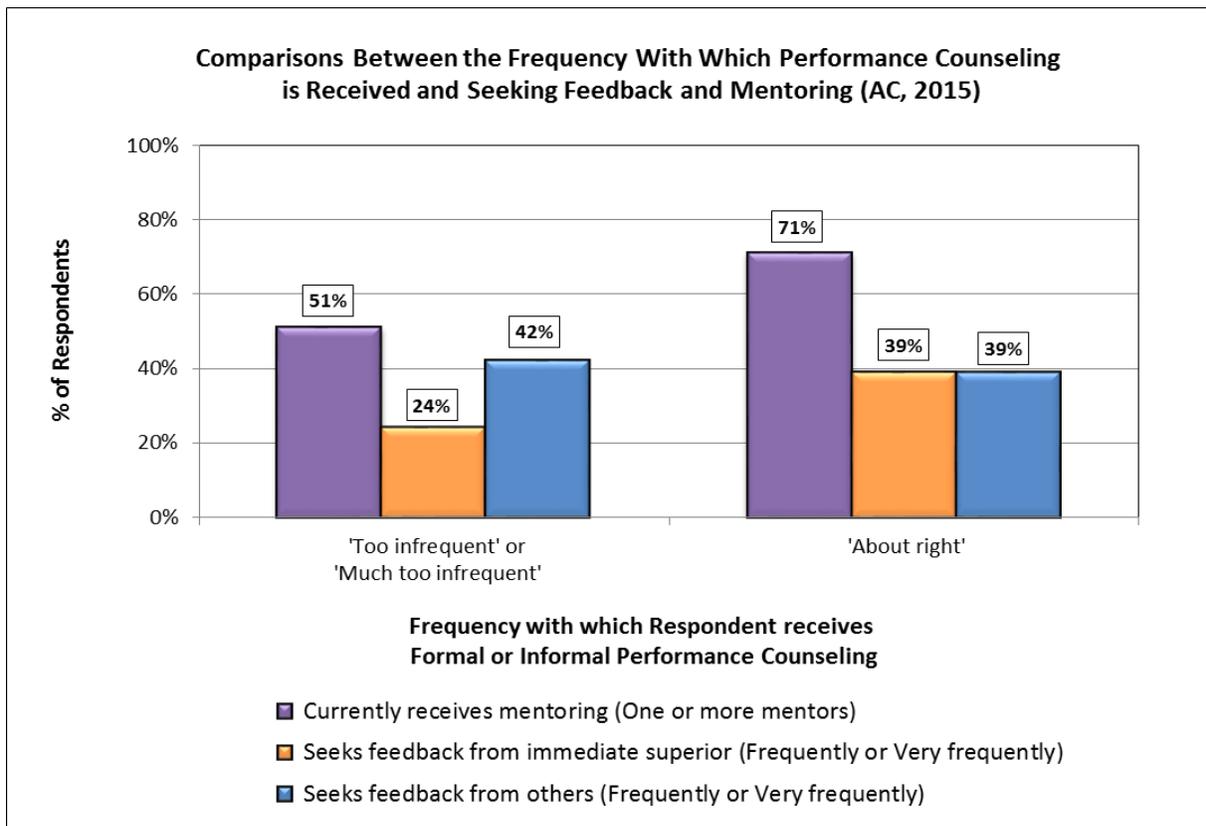
A series of analyses examined the interrelationships between the frequency of counseling and respondent propensity to seek feedback and mentoring. As a reference, 46% of AC respondents characterize the frequency with which they currently receive formal or informal performance feedback (counseling) as 'too infrequent' or 'much too infrequent' while 51% characterize the frequency as 'about right'.

Leaders who receive infrequent performance counseling do not tend to compensate by seeking developmental feedback or mentoring.

Responses were examined to determine the extent to which those who do not received the desired amount of counseling from their immediate superior actively compensate by seeking out feedback (i.e., from their immediate superior, or others) or developmental relationships (i.e., finding a mentor).

Results indicate that in instances where counseling is not being received, feedback is also not being requested. AC respondents who report they are not receiving counseling at a desired frequency ('too infrequent' or 'much too infrequent') report less frequently seeking out or asking for feedback from their immediate superior (compared to leaders who characterize the frequency of counseling received as 'about right'). In addition, the frequency with which AC respondents receive counseling does not significantly impact the frequency with which they seek out feedback from someone other than their immediate superior (see Figure 47).

**Figure 47. Comparisons Between the Frequency With Which Performance Counseling is Received and Seeking Feedback and Mentoring**



Respondents who report receiving counseling too infrequently also do not tend to compensate by seeking out mentoring. While 71% of AC respondents who characterize the frequency of their counseling as 'about right' report having one or more mentors, about half of those who fall within the 'too infrequent counseling' group (49%) report they do not have a mentor. Not surprisingly, a majority of respondents who receive infrequent counseling but do receive mentoring indicate their mentor is someone other than their immediate superior (87%). These findings are consistent with those observed in 2014.

## 2.3 Leader Development Practices and Programs

Since 2005, CASAL has assessed the relative contribution that various practices have had on leader development. In 2015, respondents rated a list of 14 developmental practices in terms of the positive impact each has had on their development as a leader. The findings on the positive impact of these practices are integrated into results discussions throughout this report. In addition, a brief overview and summary is provided here. Leader development practices are activities such as on-the-job training, opportunities to lead others, self-development, resident and nonresident course attendance, formal leader development from within one's unit, and broadening experiences with outside organizations.

CASAL findings show a relatively stable rank ordering of leader development practices in terms of the positive impact each practice has on development. Findings are also generally consistent between the active and reserve components. 2015 results indicate the perceived positive impact of leader development practices fall within three tiers, determined statistically through pair-wise comparison of means<sup>29</sup>:

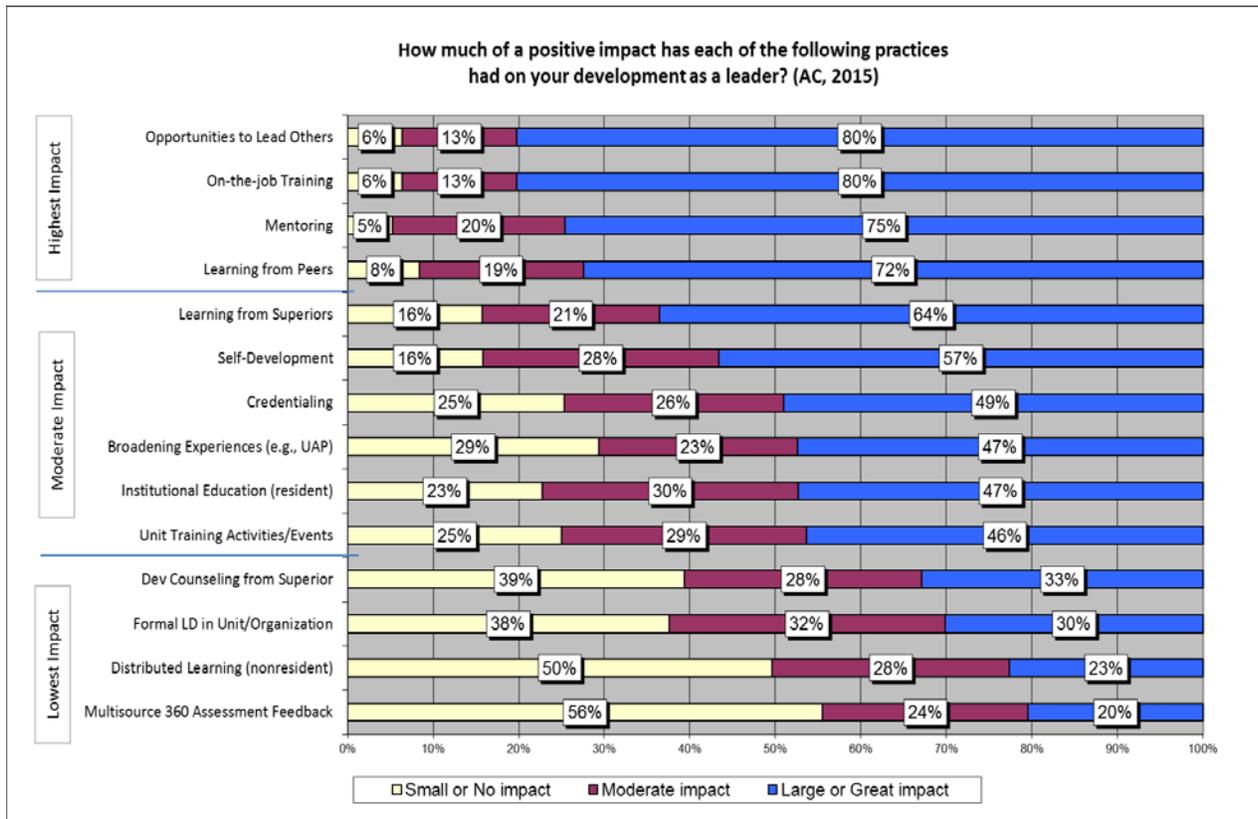
- Highest impact – practices include opportunities to lead others, on-the-job training, mentoring, and learning from peers.
- Moderate impact – practices include learning from superiors, self-development, credentialing, broadening experiences, resident (military) institutional education, and unit training activities/events.
- Lowest impact – practices include developmental counseling from immediate superior, formal leader development programs within units, distributed learning (DL), and multisource 360 assessment feedback.

Results of AC leader ratings for the 2015 CASAL are presented in Figure 48. The trend in the relative ordering of these practices (lowest to highest impact) has remained generally consistent across years. The figure shows relative impact of the practices, but does not address other factors that differ, such as required supporting activities (e.g., a curriculum, faculty, trainers, online resources), required time (e.g., 15 minutes, 9 months) or cost (e.g., no direct costs, \$50 per leader, \$25,000 per leader).

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<sup>29</sup> The three tiers of impact presented in Figure 48 also fit the following practical rules of thumb: Highest impact – 67% or more Large/Great impact and less than 10% Small/No impact; Moderate impact – About 40% to 66% Large/Great impact and between 10% to 33% Small/No impact; Lowest impact – Less than 40% Large/Great impact and more than 33% Small/No impact.

**Figure 48. The Impact of Various Practices on the Development of Active Component Leaders**



Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback Program

MSAF provides uniformed and civilian leaders a validated 360-degree approach to garnering feedback. Assessments from superiors, peers, and subordinates are compared to the assessed leader’s self-assessment based on the Leadership Requirements Model (ADRP 6-22). The goals of the program are to increase leaders’ self-awareness of their abilities and to help them improve their leadership (AR 350-1). The program provides individual and unit-level feedback reports; confidential and anonymous feedback from others; developmental resources available online (i.e., the Virtual Improvement Center; VIC); and dedicated support staff. The program is complemented by a professional coaching component whereby MSAF participants interact with a coach (in person, via telephone, or via e-mail) to receive assistance in interpreting their feedback report; to create an individual leadership development plan (ILDLP); and to receive suggestions on resources and activities for developing their leadership skills.

The percentage of AC leaders that report having been assessed through the MSAF program increased steadily from 45% in 2012 to 71% in 2015. The proportions of AC leaders who have been assessed by MSAF in the past 36 months include 91% of field grade officers, 67% of

company grade officers, 93% of warrant officers, 50% of Sr NCOs, and 20% of Jr NCOs. Participation by RC leaders also increased, from 32% in 2012 to 65% in 2015. The proportions of RC leaders who have been assessed by MSAF in the past 36 months include 87% of field grade officers, 67% of company grade officers, 85% of warrant officers, 32% of Sr NCOs, and 14% of Jr NCOs.

About half of respondents rate the MSAF program as effective or very effective for making them more aware of their strengths (49% AC; 52% RC) and their developmental needs (47% AC; 51% RC). These results show a slight decline when compared to results from 2014 (53% to 59% effective), 2013 (59% to 62% effective) and 2012 (58% to 65% effective).

About half of assessed respondents view MSAF as effective for increasing awareness of their strengths and developmental needs. Larger percentages of NCOs than officers view MSAF favorably.

NCOs who use MSAF continue to view the program more favorably than officers, as 70% of Sr NCOs and 61% of Jr NCOs rate the program as effective or very effective for increasing their self-awareness (compared to about 40% of AC field grade officers, company grade officers, and warrant officers).

Additional results of the 2015 CASAL show the following:

- More than half of AC Sr NCOs and Jr NCOs (64% and 55%, respectively) rate the program as effective for improving their leadership capabilities.
- In comparison, smaller percentages of AC field grade officers (28%), company grade officers (33%) and warrant officers (38%) rate the program as effective for improving their leadership capabilities.
- Nearly one-third of AC respondents (31%) rate the program as effective for improving their unit or organization, while an equal percentage (31%) rate it as neither effective nor ineffective. However, CASAL did not collect whether respondents were assessed as part of a unit 360 event or an individual event.

The level of favorable attitudes regarding the developmental value of MSAF are consistent with results of the 2014 CASAL and show a slight decline compared to results from 2012 and 2013.

The percentage of MSAF participants identifying improvement to their leadership is within 11 points of the percentage of PME graduates who assess their most recent course as effective for improving their leadership capabilities (see section 2.6). Participants rate the impact that multi-source assessment feedback on their development similar to the impact of Army-provided DL or developmental counseling. Considering the time, effort, and budget expended to various leader development programs, MSAF has a favorable return on investment.

Previous CASAL reports have proposed several potential factors that explain participant attitudes about the MSAF program. First, the imbalance in favorable ratings for the MSAF program between rank groups (i.e., NCOs and officers) has been addressed in program evaluation research (Hinds & Freeman, 2014). Findings have indicated larger percentages of NCOs (42%) initiated an MSAF assessment for their own self-development (i.e., to increase their personal insight) while two-thirds or more of officers and warrant officers (66% and 74%, respectively) participated in MSAF to fulfill an OER requirement (i.e., box check for initiating an assessment). Additionally, previous MSAF program evaluation (Freeman, Foster, & Brittain, 2012) noted that the OER requirement for MSAF was implemented to increase participation, though the mandate may have inadvertently spurred resistance to its value as a developmental tool. In response to participant feedback, program improvements have been made to feature a shortened survey instrument (requiring less time to complete) and various enhancements to the online portal.

Second, the observed decline in ratings for the perceived effectiveness of MSAF in improving the leadership capabilities of leaders and units is likely influenced by the degree to which respondents participate in the program. The online assessment and feedback component is designed primarily to collect feedback for leaders to increase their self-awareness and to serve as a guide for development. The optimal impact of the process (i.e., improving leadership capabilities) is realized through the assessed leader's actions that follow feedback receipt, such as requesting additional feedback from others, interacting with a coach, developing an individual leadership development plan (ILDLP), and self-initiated learning. The other benefits are less tangible, prompting leaders to think about what is expected of them as a leader and to make decisions and take actions every day that takes into account their strengths and their development needs.

The program evaluation by Freeman, Hinds, Jenkins, Keller-Glaze, & Daugherty (2015) reported that following feedback receipt, only 57% of assessed leaders viewed their individual feedback report (IFR) and 12% created an ILDP. Results of the 2014 program evaluation (Hinds & Freeman, 2014) indicated that two out of three respondents devoted minimal effort to their development planning (40% spent less than five hours per month, and 24% reported spending no time on development planning). Moreover, the MSAF program's VIC and coaching components continue to be underutilized resources, accessed or engaged by less than 10% of MSAF participants. These later components of the MSAF program are valuable tools but require time, effort, and commitment by leaders to 'own' the process of their personal development.

## Credentialing

Many occupations are guided by certain professional and technical standards. The process of meeting these standards and earning official recognition (i.e., in the form of licenses or certificates) is termed *credentialing* (Army Credentialing Opportunities On-line, 2016). Civilian credentials can contribute to a Soldier's personal and professional career development, and benefit Soldiers in the form of promotion points (e.g., promotion to sergeant and staff sergeant). Army University requested that baseline information be collected through CASAL on credentialing.

Army Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL), a website resource for enlisted Soldiers and warrant officers, provides information on how to fulfill requirements for civilian certifications and licenses related to their military occupational specialties (MOS). The website was first launched for enlisted members in 2002, for warrant officers in 2009, and was redesigned in 2015. The site provides background information about civilian certifications and licensures; identifies licenses and certificates relevant to Army MOS; describes how to fill any gaps between Army training and experience and civilian credentialing requirements; and provides information on resources to facilitate credentialing (Army Credentialing Opportunities On-line, 2015). A majority of AC warrant officers (58%), Sr NCOs (74%) and Jr NCOs (62%) report they are aware of Army COOL. Smaller percentages of respondents in the RC indicate they are aware of this resource (42% of warrant officers, 52% of Sr NCOs, and 46% of Jr NCOs).

Overall, more than one-fourth of Army leaders (28% AC; 29% RC) report they currently hold one or more credentials (i.e., a professional certification or license). As would be expected, credentials are largely job-specific and in many cases required for performance of certain duties. The professional certifications, licenses, and training that respondents reported holding tend to align with occupational or functional areas such as medical care, transportation (e.g., commercial vehicles, aircraft), legal services (e.g., law license), project management (e.g., lean six sigma), information technology (e.g., A+, Network+), mechanical engineering, specific trades (e.g., corrections, culinary or food service), and various other areas. Respondents obtained credentials primarily from sources outside of the Army (15% AC; 19% RC) though approximately 10% have received a credential from an Army source. AC and RC leader experience with credentials is presented in Tables 26 and 27.

More than one-fourth of AC leaders hold credentials, and about half indicate credentialing has had a large or great impact on their development.

**Table 26. Active Component Leader Experience With Obtaining Credentials**

What is your experience with credentials (i.e., professional certifications or licenses)?				
Active Component	Hold credential(s) from an Army source	Hold credential(s) from source outside of the Army	Currently involved in a credentialing process	No credentials
MAJ-COL	9%	23%	5%	67%
2LT-CPT	8%	13%	4%	76%
WO1-CW5	13%	22%	5%	65%
SFC-CSM	9%	9%	5%	78%
SGT-SSG	15%	10%	5%	73%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>72%</b>

**Table 27. Reserve Component Leader Experience With Obtaining Credentials**

What is your experience with credentials (i.e., professional certifications or licenses)?				
Reserve Component	Hold credential(s) from an Army source	Hold credential(s) from source outside of the Army	Currently involved in a credentialing process	No credentials
MAJ-COL	7%	27%	3%	65%
2LT-CPT	8%	23%	4%	68%
WO1-CW5	11%	22%	4%	67%
SFC-CSM	9%	14%	3%	76%
SGT-SSG	9%	14%	4%	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>71%</b>

One-half of Army leaders (49% AC; 51% RC) indicate obtaining credentials has had a large or great impact on their development, while one-fourth (26% AC; 25% RC) report the impact has been moderate. Results show little variation across rank groups. In comparison to other leader development practices, credentialing is viewed as having a larger positive impact on development than practices such as developmental counseling and formal leader development activities within one's unit.

## 2.4 Unit Leader Development

Two holistic indicators provide context for the current quality and level of support for leader development in units. At a broad level, less than one-third of respondents (30% AC; 31% RC) rate formal leader development programs within their units (e.g., OPD/NCOPD, Sergeant's Time) as having a large or great impact on their development; comparable percentages (32% AC; 32% RC) indicate the impact is moderate. While formal unit programs are important, these results suggest unit programs are not perceived as having a substantial impact on development for most leaders. Further, the relative rank ordering for the impact of formal leader development in units has been consistently low in comparison to other developmental practices.

Additionally, prior year CASAL findings have shown that the perceived priority for leader development in units and organizations is generally low. In the 2015 CASAL, half of AC respondents (52%) rate the priority their unit or organization places on leader

Half of AC respondents report a high priority for leader development in their unit or organization, a level consistent with past results.

development to be high or very high. Trend results from 2008 to 2010 show that comparable percentages of respondents (a low of 46% to a high of 55%) rated their unit's priority for leader development as high or very high. In 2015, about one-fifth of AC respondents (19%) report their unit places low or very low priority on leader development, and this includes 19% of company grade officers and 28% of Jr NCOs. Results of a recent inspection of Army leader development programs indicated that while commanding generals list leader development as a top priority, officers, warrant officers, and NCOs tended to perceive a low priority for leader development at the unit level (IG, 2015).

### Formal Plans and Guidance for Leader Development

Field Manual 6-22, *Leader Development*, is the Army's first doctrine dedicated solely to leader development and was first published in June 2015. It describes leader development as a mindset and a process (not merely an event) that is reflected by everything leaders do. Organizational leader development plans must nest in the purpose and guidance of the higher organization's plan. Leader development plans should provide guidance to subordinate units yet allow them freedom to determine practices and schedules most conducive to their missions.

FM 6-22 provides guidance on leader development program development following the same steps used in the operations process (see ADP 5-0). Considerations for plan development include visualizing goals and end states for leader development, identifying learning enablers and developmental opportunities, and designing evaluation measures. Optimally, this resource will serve as an enabler to increase the proportion of units and higher headquarters that develop and execute formal leader development plans, and in turn increase the awareness of subordinate leaders at all levels regarding the components and details of the plans.

Results of the 2015 CASAL show that only about one-third of AC respondents (34%) are aware of their unit's or higher headquarters' formal plan or published guidance for leader development. This includes 36% of field grade officers, 32% of company grade officers, 30% of warrant officers, 46% of Sr NCOs, and 25% of Jr NCOs. About one-fifth of respondents (21%) report their unit does not have a formal plan or guidance for leader development, while 45% do not know. These results provide context for results of a recent inspection of Army leader development programs, which estimated that 64% of brigade and battalion teams had established programs (IG, 2015).

One-third (34%) of AC respondents indicate awareness of their unit's formal plan or published guidance for leader development.

Respondents who were aware of their unit's plan for leader development were asked to identify various details of the plan. Results show that of these components, existing unit leader development plans most frequently consist of a clear stated purpose for development (70%) and less frequently cite details such as what will be developed, how leaders will be developed, or developmental goals for specific levels or ranks (see Table 28).

**Table 28. Respondent Awareness of the Components of Formal Plans or Guidance for Unit Leader Development**

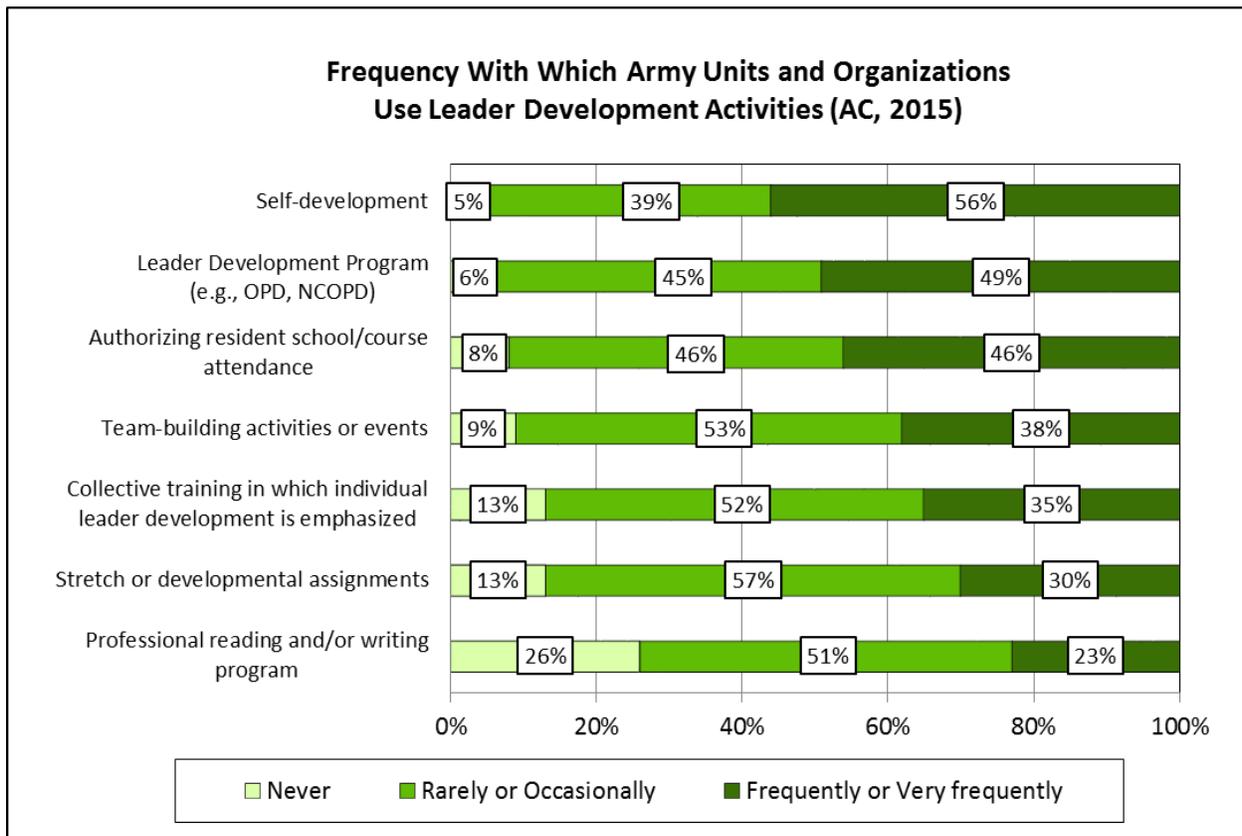
Percentage of Responses to the Item: <i>Which of the following describes the plan or published guidance for leader development in your unit or higher headquarters?</i> (Results for AC Leaders Aware Their Unit has a Formal Plan/Guidance for Leader Development)	
	AC Respondents (n = 3,198)
1. A clear purpose for leader development is stated	70%
2. Identifies what will be developed	59%
3. Identifies how leaders will be developed (e.g., pre-planned assignment progression, stretch assignments, and developmental goal setting)	56%
4. Directs unit leaders to produce or sustain a climate of learning	55%
5. Identifies developmental goals for leaders at various levels, echelons, or ranks	54%
6. Respondent unaware of the details of the leader development plan or guidance	8%

It is important to consider that these results represent respondent perceptions. In reality, a larger percentage of Army units and organizations may currently have formal plans or guidance for leader development. These results are valuable as they provide an indication of the percentage of AC leaders who are aware that formal plans or guidance exist in their unit or higher headquarters, and who are cognizant of the various components of a well-established plan for leader development.

Unit Leader Development Activities

The 2015 CASAL asked respondents to rate the frequency with which their unit or organization uses various methods from FM 6-22 to develop leaders (see Figure 49). A positive finding is that six of the seven methods are used to develop leaders in at least 87% of units and organizations. A seventh method, professional reading programs, is used in at least 74% of units and organizations.

**Figure 49. Frequency With Which Army Units and Organizations Use Leader Development Activities**



Across rank groups, there is general consistency with regard to ratings for the frequency with which units or organizations utilize these development methods. The notable exception is that Jr NCOs indicate in higher percentages that each of these methods is used rarely or occasionally as opposed to frequently or very frequently.

It is not surprising that the largest percentage of respondents report self-development is used frequently or very frequently to develop leaders. This method of development is arguably the least resource intensive for a unit as it places primary responsibility on the individual Soldier to plan and execute. However, CASAL results have consistently demonstrated that large percentages of leaders view on-the-job training and opportunities to lead as having a large or great impact on their development, and more impactful than self-development and institutional education for most respondents. Thus, unit leaders should strive to capitalize on the learning that occurs in the operational domain by more frequently utilizing methods such as setting development goals within expected duties, stretch or developmental assignments, collective training, team-building activities or events, and honest feedback and self-reflection.

## **2.5 Personnel Management System**

Over half of Army leaders (56% AC, 56% RC) rate the Army effective at supporting their development through formal personnel management practices (e.g., evaluations, assignments). As expected, leaders with shorter lengths of service such as company grade officers (51% effective) and Jr NCOs (41% effective) hold less favorable views than leaders in more senior rank groups (63% to 67% effective). About one-fourth of AC company grade officers and Jr NCOs (23% and 26%, respectively) rate the Army ineffective in supporting their development through formal personnel management practices. These results reflect and support a pattern of neutral to moderately favorable attitudes toward personnel management practices as assessed by CASAL in recent years.

### Assignment Practices

The assignment process is a mechanism by which the Army can utilize leadership talent and deliberately develop leadership skills. Assignment decisions can be made to ensure that leaders receive experiences through an appropriate mix of assignments and through serving in

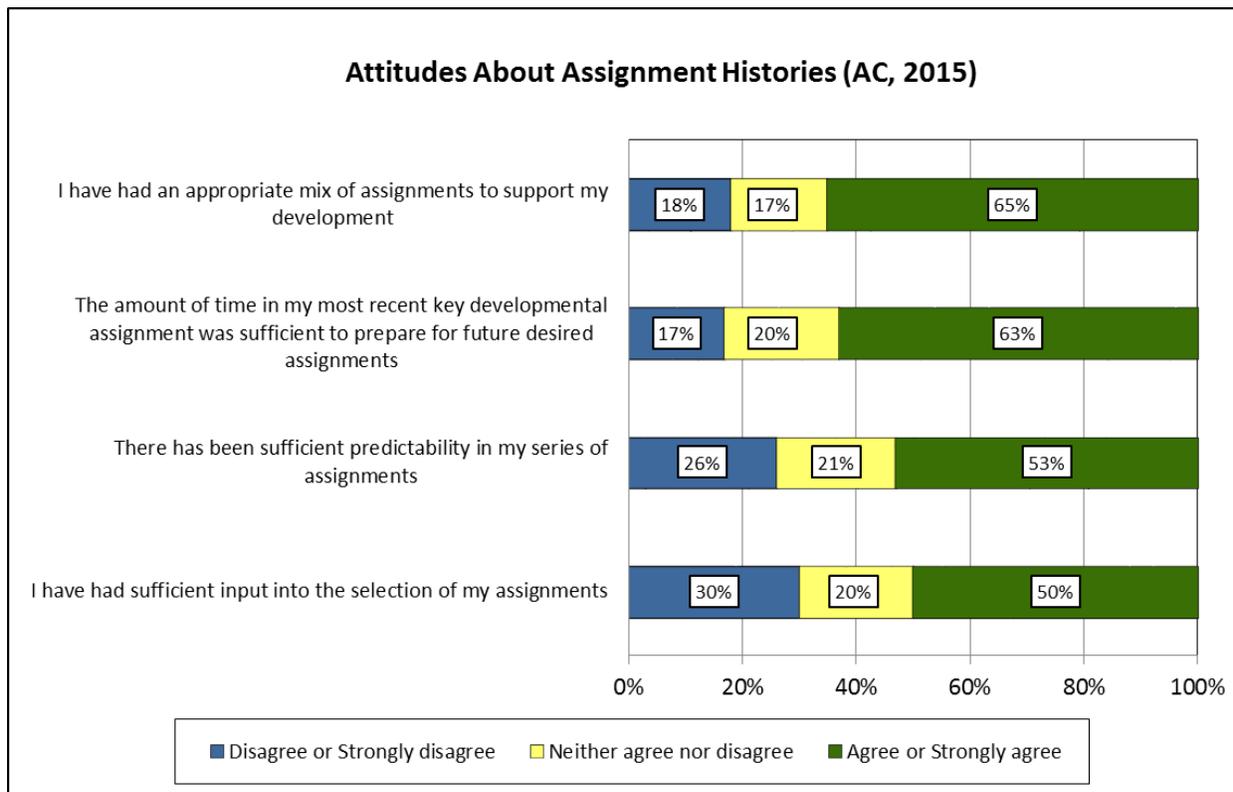
Most AC respondents agree their assignment history included an appropriate mix and dwell time, though only half agree they had sufficient predictability and input.

assignments for an adequate duration to prepare for future responsibilities. For example, the officer assignment process is based on several factors and considerations, including the needs of the Army, force stabilization and availability, but also an officer's

professional development needs. As each branch and functional area has a life-cycle development model, a typical officer’s career needs are examined to ensure the next assignment is progressive, sequential, and achieves professional development goals for that grade (see Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA Pam) 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*). Assignments are one of several aspects of how organizations employ talent management concepts. CASAL assesses leader attitudes regarding assignment practices through four considerations: the mix of assignments to support development; the dwell time for key developmental assignments; and the degree of predictability and input into the selection of assignments.

Figure 50 provides a broad summary of 2015 CASAL results for assignment practices. In general, AC leaders tend to agree they have served in an appropriate mix of assignments and for a sufficient amount of time in key developmental assignments. Assignment predictability and leader input into the selection of assignments are aspects of the process rated least favorably. At an overall level, these results have remained fairly consistent since 2012 (each consideration +/-3%).

**Figure 50. Active Component Leader Ratings for Assignment Histories**



Favorable attitudes regarding the developmental nature of assignments tend to increase with rank and length of service (see Table 29). Results of the 2015 CASAL show that with the exception of Jr NCOs, a majority of leaders agree they have had an appropriate mix of assignments and spent a sufficient amount of time in their most recent key developmental assignment. Leaders at junior levels have served in fewer assignments and thus have fewer experiences on which to base favorable attitudes (i.e., sequencing, dwell time) than do leaders with more extensive assignment histories. As leaders progress in rank and experience in the Army, they are afforded more opportunities to base their assessment regarding the mix of assignments, time spent in assignments, and the developmental value of these experiences.

**Table 29. Active Component Leader Attitudes Regarding Assignment Practices**

AC Leaders (% Agree or Strongly agree)	I have had an appropriate mix of assignments to support my development	Amount of time in most recent key developmental assignment was sufficient	There has been sufficient predictability in series of assignments	I have had sufficient input into the selection of my assignments
<b>MAJ-COL</b>	78%	79%	66%	69%
<b>2LT-CPT</b>	62%	65%	53%	48%
<b>WO1-CW5</b>	69%	67%	60%	59%
<b>SFC-CSM</b>	74%	69%	54%	48%
<b>SGT-SSG</b>	48%	46%	42%	38%
<b>Total</b>	65%	63%	53%	50%

Attitudes regarding the assignment process tend to be less favorable, and there are notable differences between rank groups. Two-thirds of field grade officers agree they have had sufficient predictability and input into the selection of their assignments. Company grade officers, warrant officers, and Sr NCOs report lower levels of agreement that they have had predictability and input into their assignments. Again, Jr NCOs report the least agreement, and these results show consistent trends with past years. Consider that for newer leaders, allowing input into assignment selection can especially enhance the leaders' sense of control over their careers. Likewise, assignment predictability can allow leaders to better plan and prepare for their next assignment(s), and may mitigate leaders' stress associated with balancing commitments to family and work.

#### Assignments, Leader Development, and Career Satisfaction

Army leaders are developed through training, experience, and education. When aligned properly, assignment practices and developmental opportunities throughout a leader's career

can positively impact a leader's level of career satisfaction. A stepwise multiple regression<sup>30</sup> was conducted to examine the relative impact various factors have on respondents' level of career satisfaction. The factors examined included components of the Army's personnel management and leader development systems and excluded aspects such as pay, benefits, or personal values. The model included a range of factors expected to impact career satisfaction as demonstrated in past CASAL results. Specifically examined were attitudes regarding respondents' assignment histories and the effectiveness of the leader development domains on ratings of satisfaction with their careers. Results indicate that four out of the seven factors examined accounted for one-third ( $R^2 = .33, p < .001$ ) of the variance in AC respondent ratings of career satisfaction. Of the factors examined, respondent ratings of the effectiveness of operational experience in preparing them to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility was the largest contributing factor to ratings of career satisfaction, explaining 20% of the variance in career satisfaction alone. Over and above the variance explained by the effectiveness of operational experience, agreement that the respondent has had an appropriate mix of assignments to support their development, effectiveness of Army institutional courses/schools in preparing the respondent to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility, and agreement the respondent had sufficient input into the selection of their assignments also explained significant variance in career satisfaction. The other three factors that were examined also significantly explained statistically significant variation in respondents' career satisfaction, though they each contributed less than 1% additional explained variance.

Effective operational experiences, an appropriate mix of assignments, effective institutional education, and having input into assignment selection strongly contribute to leaders' career satisfaction, though these factors have a modest effect on intentions to remain in the Army.

Further examination of leader attitudes regarding assignment practices and the effectiveness of leader development domains found only minimal effects on leaders' intention to remain in the Army. While AC respondent attitudes regarding assignment histories and the effectiveness of leader development domains have a robust effect on ratings of career satisfaction, these factors have only a modest effect on intentions to remain in the Army ( $R^2 = .10, p < .001$ ).

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<sup>30</sup> Stepwise regression results lists the factors that significantly contribute to the model, not all variables examined. For these analyses, the following factors were examined: agreement there has been sufficient predictability in respondent's series of assignments; agreement respondent has had sufficient input into the selection of their assignments; agreement the amount of time in respondent's most recent key developmental assignment was sufficient to prepare respondent for future desired assignments; I have had an appropriate mix of assignments to support my development. effectiveness of operational experience in preparing respondent to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility; effectiveness of self-development in preparing respondent to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility; and effectiveness of Army institutional courses/schools in preparing respondent to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility.

## 2.6 Institutional Education

The Army institutional training and education system provides leaders the attributes and competencies required to operate successfully in any environment (AR 350-1). This section summarizes perceptions about the quality of Army education, the instructive process, and the effectiveness of education systems in preparing Army leaders. This section begins with an overview of CASAL results on the *Quality of Army Education* and *Education Systems*. These findings are then described in more detail throughout this section.

### ***Quality of Army Education***

- 61% of AC leaders and 69% in the RC rate institutional education as effective or very effective for preparing them to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility.
- The quality of Army courses and schools is viewed as moderately positive and has trended more favorably in recent years. Overall, 75% of recent AC graduates rate the quality of the education received at their respective course as good or very good (79% effective for the RC). More than half of recent graduates found what they learned in the course to be ‘of considerable use’ or ‘extremely useful’ (see Figures 51 and 52).
- Course cadre continue to receive positive ratings, as 70% agree instructors and faculty provided constructive feedback on student leadership capabilities.
- About half of recent graduates rate their respective course effective for improving their leadership capabilities; one in five rates their course ineffective in this regard.
- 61% of recent graduates agree the content of their course was relevant to their next job, while 22% disagree.

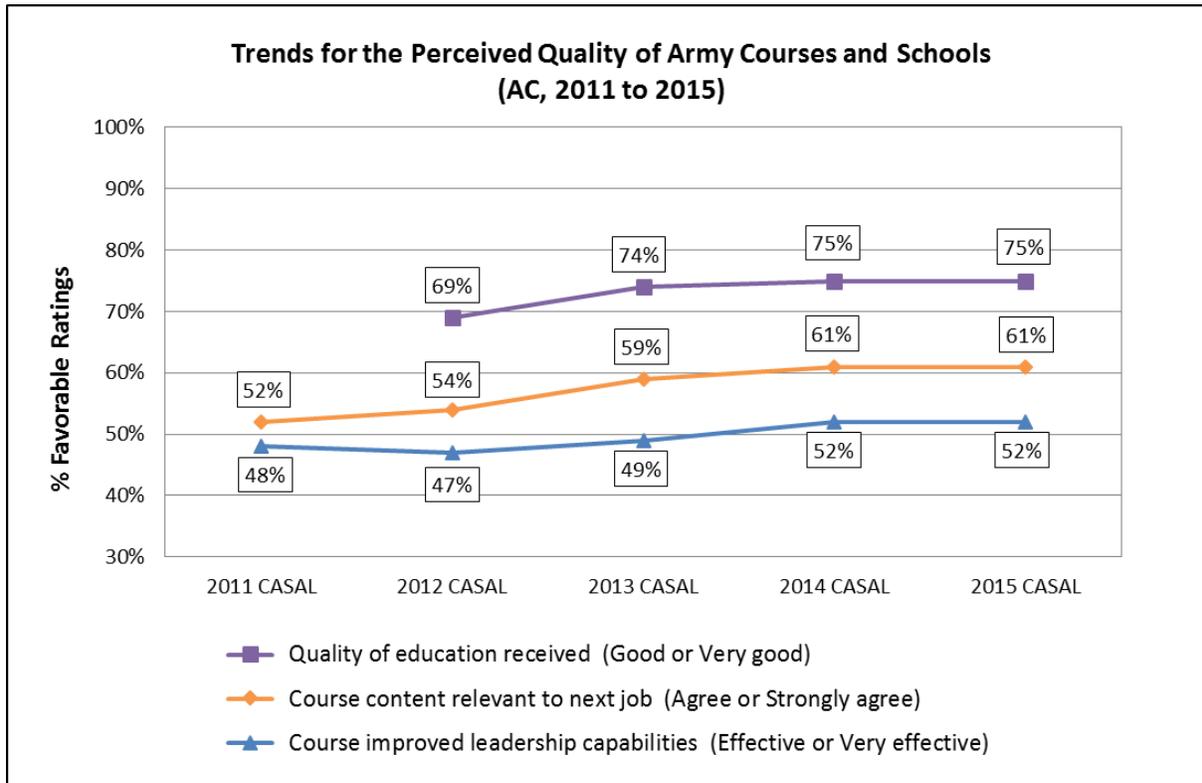
### ***Education Systems***

- As reported in prior year CASAL reports, ratings for the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) B and Captains Career Course (CCC) continue to show room for improvement in effectively improving learners’ leadership capabilities. Findings also suggest graduates see opportunity to increase the degree of rigor or challenge presented in these courses.
- A majority of warrant officer course and school graduates rate the quality of the education they received as good or very good, and course cadre receive favorable ratings for modeling leadership competencies and attributes. However, warrant officer courses are not generally viewed by learners as effective for improving leadership capabilities.
- A consistent finding across CASAL administrations is that the Warrior Leader Course (WLC), Advanced Leader Course (ALC) common core, and Senior Leader Course (SLC) continue to show room for improvement with regard to the perceived level of rigor or

challenge offered by the courses. Many NCOs do not perceive that these courses challenged them to perform at a higher level.

- Rank group comparisons for various PME quality metrics are presented for the active and reserve components in Tables 30 and 31.

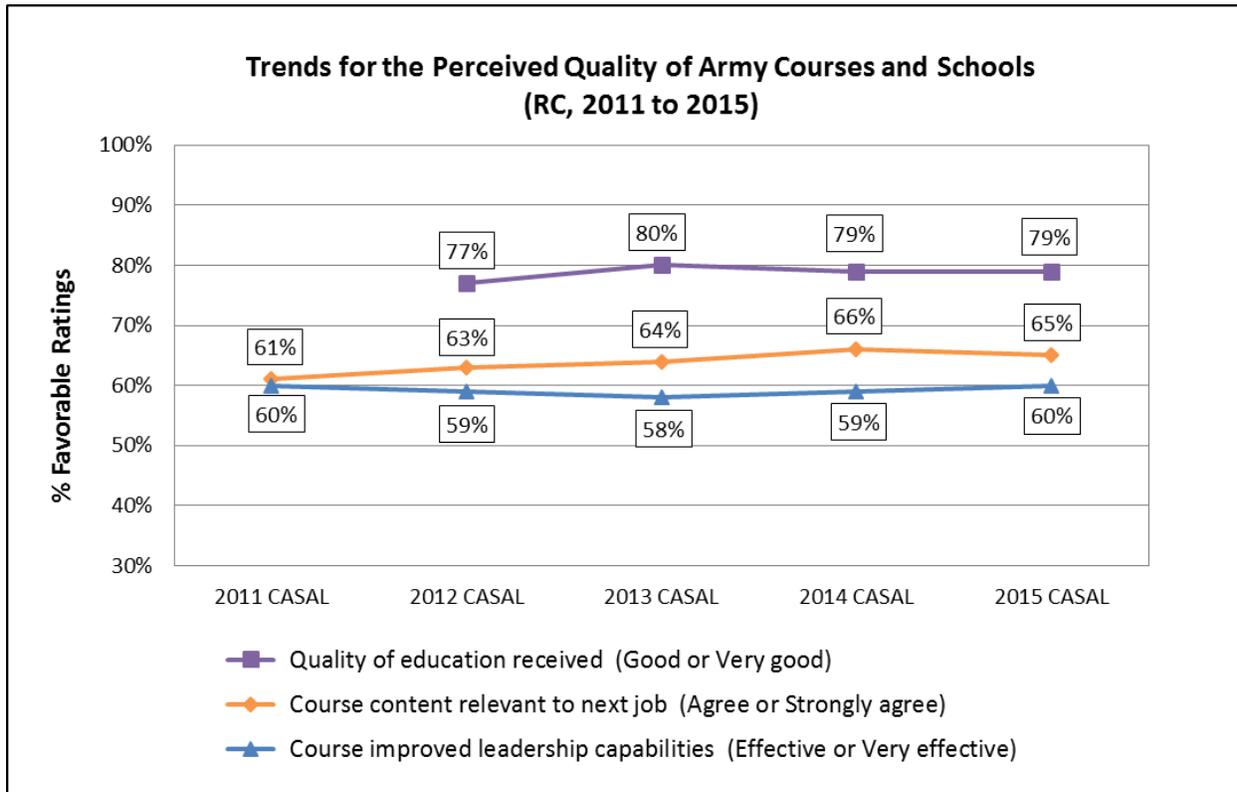
**Figure 51. Trends for the Quality of Army Courses/Schools for Active Component Respondents**



**Table 30. Metrics for Education System Quality by Active Component Rank Group**

Quality of Army Education System	2015 CASAL Metric for Recent Course Graduates (2014-2015)	NCO (n = 1,093)	Warrant Officer (n = 574)	Officer (n = 1,164)
Quality of education received	Good or Very good	75%	79%	74%
Challenging students to perform at a higher level	Effective or Very effective	61%	57%	62%
Improving leadership capabilities	Effective or Very effective	56%	45%	51%
Usefulness of what was learned	'Of considerable use' or 'Extremely useful'	54%	51%	52%

**Figure 52. Trends for the Quality of Army Courses/Schools for Reserve Component Respondents**



**Table 31. Metrics for Education System Quality by Reserve Component Rank Group**

Quality of Army Education System	2015 CASAL Metric for Recent Course Graduates (2014-2015)	NCO (n = 934)	Warrant Officer (n = 449)	Officer (n = 946)
Quality of education received	Good or Very good	77%	80%	81%
Challenging students to perform at a higher level	Effective or Very effective	68%	67%	71%
Improving leadership capabilities	Effective or Very effective	64%	54%	59%
Usefulness of what was learned	'Of considerable use' or 'Extremely useful'	57%	54%	65%

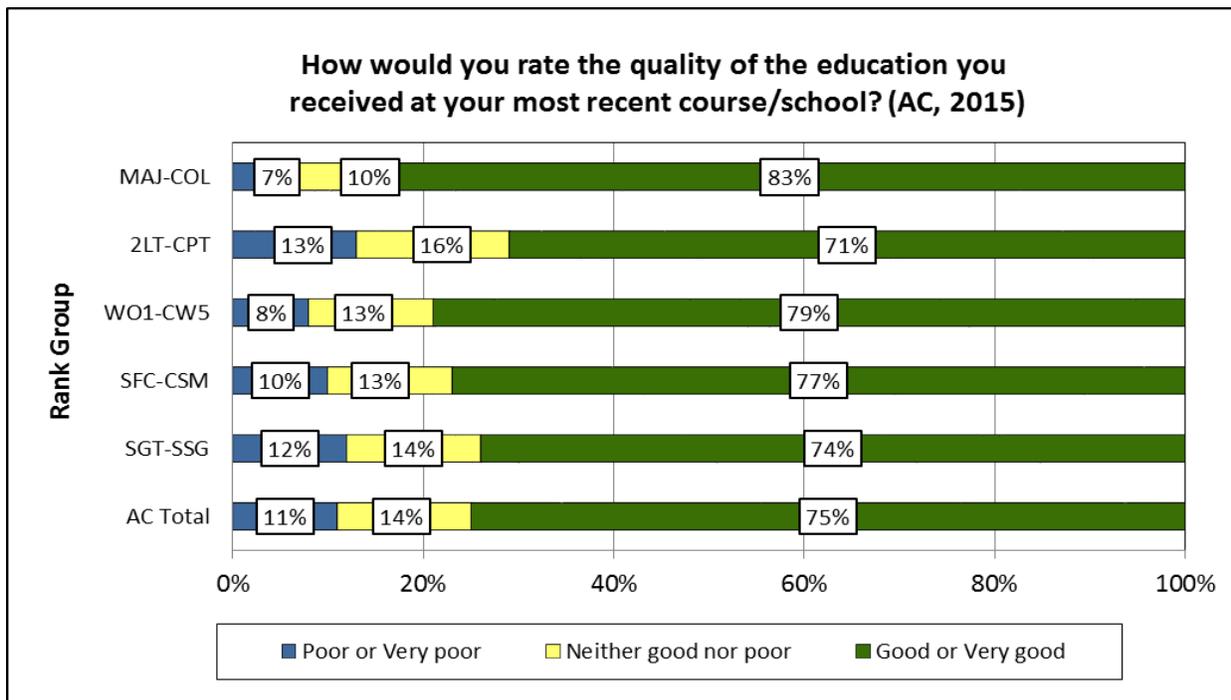
## 2.6.1 Quality of Army Education

### The Course Experience

The quality of the education received at Army courses and schools continues to be favorable.<sup>31</sup> A majority of Army leaders across rank cohorts rate the quality of the education they received in their most recent course as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ (between 7% and 13% rate the education quality as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’). Attitudes about education quality increase with rank and length of service (see Figure 53). The levels of favorable ratings toward education quality are consistent with results from 2014 and are more favorable than those observed in 2012. From 2009 to 2011, CASAL assessed attitudes about the quality of the leader development received at Army courses and schools; results showed a similar pattern in ratings by rank group, though the percentage of favorable ratings was lower during these years (59% to 61% ‘good’ or ‘very good’).

75% of recent PME graduates rate the quality of education received as good or very good.

**Figure 53. Perceptions of Recent Graduates About the Quality of Education Received at Courses/Schools**



<sup>31</sup> To facilitate year-to-year trend analysis for indicators of the quality of Army education, the percentage values representing recent graduates only includes respondents who completed their most recent course within the two most recent years of the survey. For the 2015 CASAL, this includes Army course graduates from 2014 and 2015.

Additionally, more than two-thirds of recent graduates (70%) agree course instructors and faculty provided them with constructive feedback on their leadership capabilities (16% disagree). Ratings for instructor quality have remained positive in recent years. Sixty-one percent of recent graduates rate their course effective at challenging them to perform at a higher level, while one in five (19%) rates their course ineffective. This is an area that has shown room for improvement in recent years, across education systems. Previous CASAL findings have also indicated that only about half of recent graduates felt course activities and activity assessments were sufficiently challenging to separate high performers from low performing students (57% agreed and 25% disagreed in 2014).

### Utility of Course Learning for Army Duties

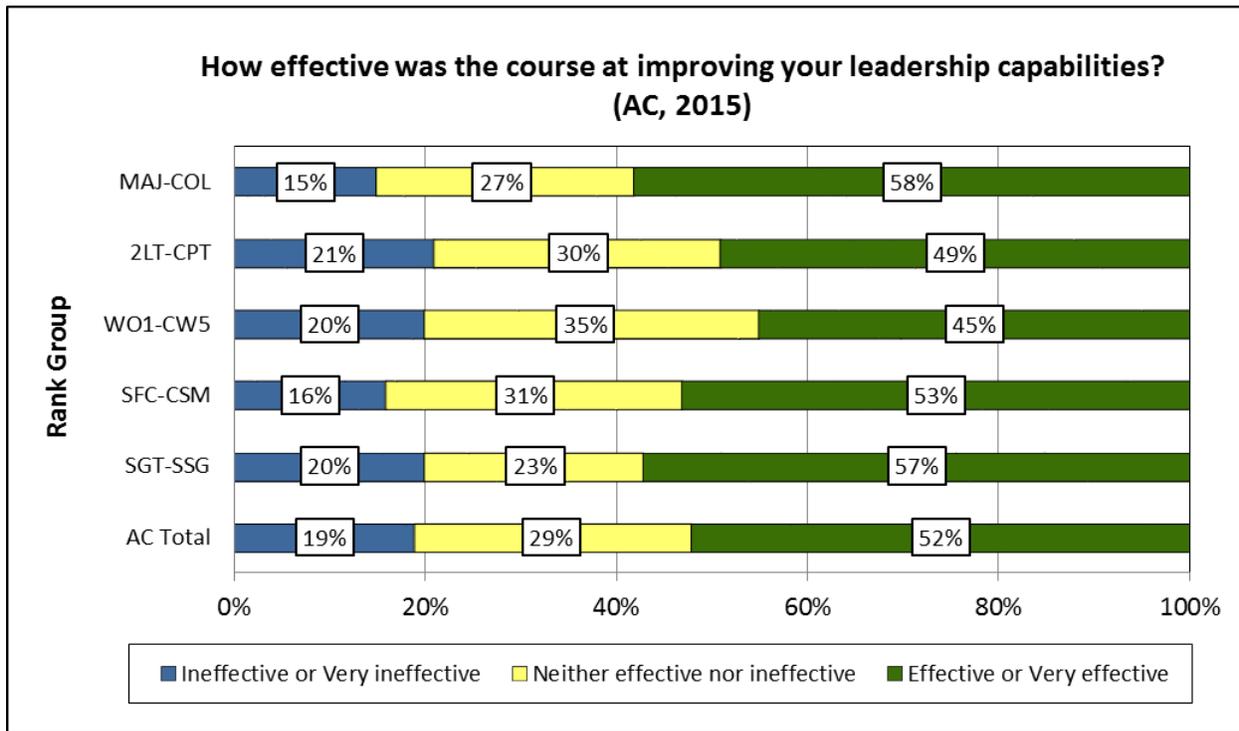
An objective of Army education is to arm learners with knowledge and skills that will help them to successfully perform their duties (see TRADOC Pam 525-8-2). CASAL results have consistently shown mixed attitudes about the usefulness and relevance of what Army courses offer learners, as well as learners' effectiveness in applying new knowledge and skills to their assigned duties.

Overall, 53% of recent graduates rate what they learned in their course/school as being 'of considerable use' or 'extremely useful', while 34% indicate 'of some use.' Sixty-one percent of graduates agree their course was relevant to their current duties, while about one-fifth (22%) indicate disagreement. The levels of favorable results for these considerations show stability in recent years.

### Learning Outcomes

About half of recent graduates (52%) rate their most recent course effective or very effective at improving their leadership capabilities, while one-fifth (19%) rate the course ineffective (see Figure 54). These results reflect a fairly consistent pattern of moderate ratings, which has shown only slight fluctuation since first assessed by CASAL in 2007 (from a high of 55% in 2007 to a low of 46% in 2009). Also consistent is that a larger percentage of RC graduates rate their courses effective for improving their leadership capabilities (when compared to AC graduates). In 2015, 60% of RC graduates rate their course effective for improving their leadership capabilities. Effective ratings by RC graduates have ranged from 58% to 65% since 2007.

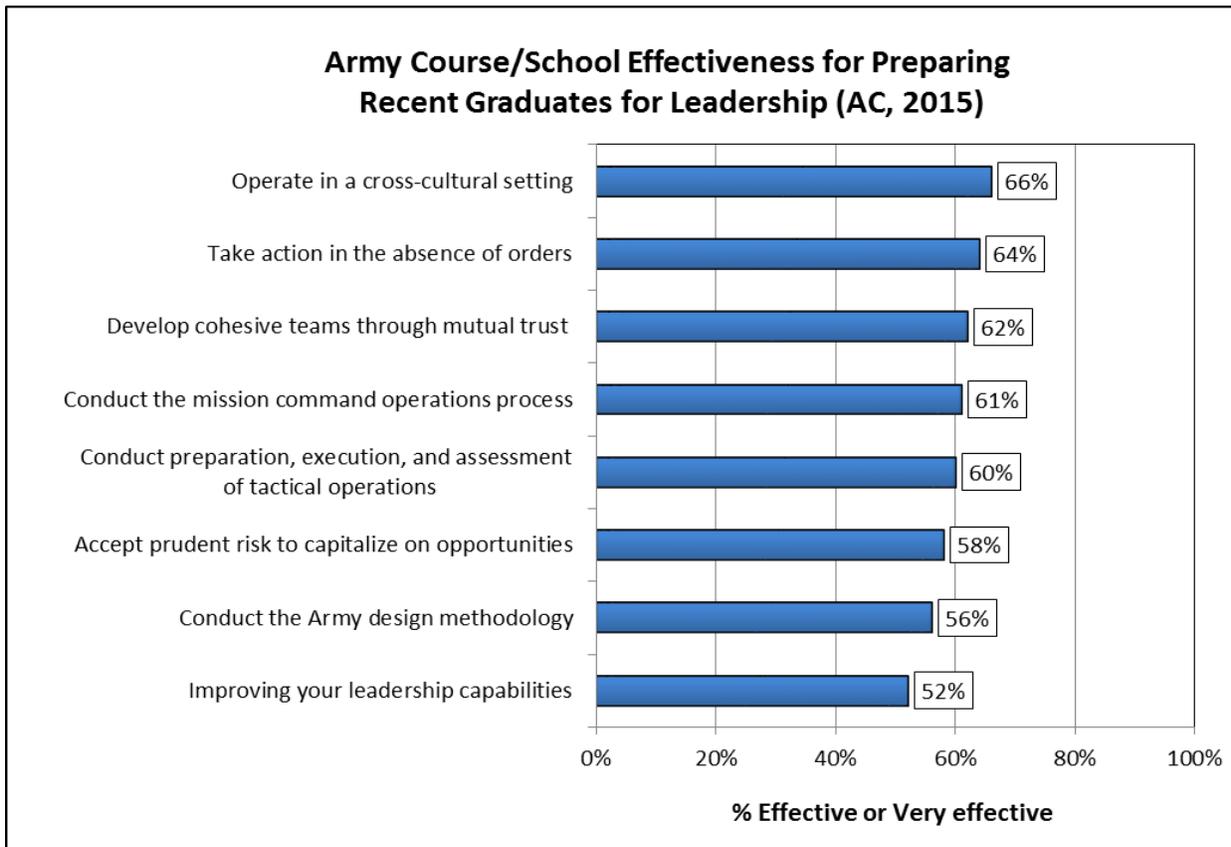
**Figure 54. Army Course Effectiveness in Improving Leadership Capabilities**



The 2015 CASAL included assessment of several course learning outcomes related to leadership, including the demonstration of mission command principles, warfighting functions, and cross-cultural competence. At an overall level, results indicate a majority of recent AC graduates rate their course effective or very effective at preparing them to perform the range of leadership functions presented in Figure 55. Army courses are rated most favorably on preparing learners to operate in cross-cultural settings and take action in the absence of orders. Smaller percentages of graduates rate the courses effective at preparing them to accept prudent risk to capitalize on opportunities and to conduct the Army design methodology.

52% of recent PME graduates rate their course effective or very effective at improving their leadership capabilities.

**Figure 55. Army Course/School Effectiveness in Preparing Graduates for Leadership**



### **2.6.2 Army Courses and Schools**

This section summarizes CASAL findings for officer, warrant officer, and NCO PME. Interpretation of these results requires a note of caution. The intent of CASAL has been to identify and track trends in the quality of Army education as it pertains to educating and preparing leaders for increased responsibilities (i.e., developing leadership skills and abilities). CASAL does not assess the intended learning outcomes specific to each course or school. Rather, CASAL results offer a broad look at the same areas across all courses: quality of the education, the relevance and utility of what is learned, and the contribution of Army education to developing leadership skills and capabilities.

Results are discussed for select courses and schools where a sufficient number of recent graduates (i.e., > 90) provided ratings. The 2015 results presented are constrained to the

respondents who completed the specified course within the past two years<sup>32</sup>. For clarity in interpretation, percentages reflect ratings by AC respondents.

### Officer Courses

The 2015 CASAL assessed recent graduates of the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) B, Captains Career Course (CCC), Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) / Intermediate Level Education (ILE) resident, and the Army War College (AWC) or other Senior Service College Program (SSC)<sup>33</sup>. Courses for junior officers are consistently rated less favorably compared to higher level courses. For example, smaller percentages of company grade officers rate BOLC B and CCC favorably compared to the percentage of field grade officers that rate CGSOC/ILE and AWC favorably.

- The quality of education received at BOLC B and CCC is rated by respondents as very positive (69% and 76%, respectively) while even larger proportions of ILE and AWC graduates rate the education quality positively (87% and 96%, respectively).
- The course cadre at all four officer courses examined (BOLC B, CCC, CGSOC/ILE and AWC) continue to be viewed as effective. The levels of agreement that course instructors and faculty provide constructive feedback on student leadership capabilities are at or above a two-thirds threshold of favorability.
- More than half of recent graduates of BOLC B (56%) and CCC (60%) rate the course effective at challenging them to perform at a higher level.
- The quality of education received at CGSOC/ILE is rated very favorably by a majority of recent graduates (87%). However, smaller percentages of recent graduates (68%) believe the course increased their leadership capabilities.
- AWC graduates continue to report positive assessments for their course experience and the relevance of what is learned.
- Percentages of favorable ratings for officer course characteristics are presented in Figure 56. Ratings for attitudes about course outcomes are presented in Table 32.

A continued area for consideration across officer courses is the level of rigor or challenge posed to learners as part of the education. A notable finding reported in the 2012 CASAL (Riley et al., 2013) was that one-fifth of recent graduates of ILE and about one-third from BOLC B (35%) and

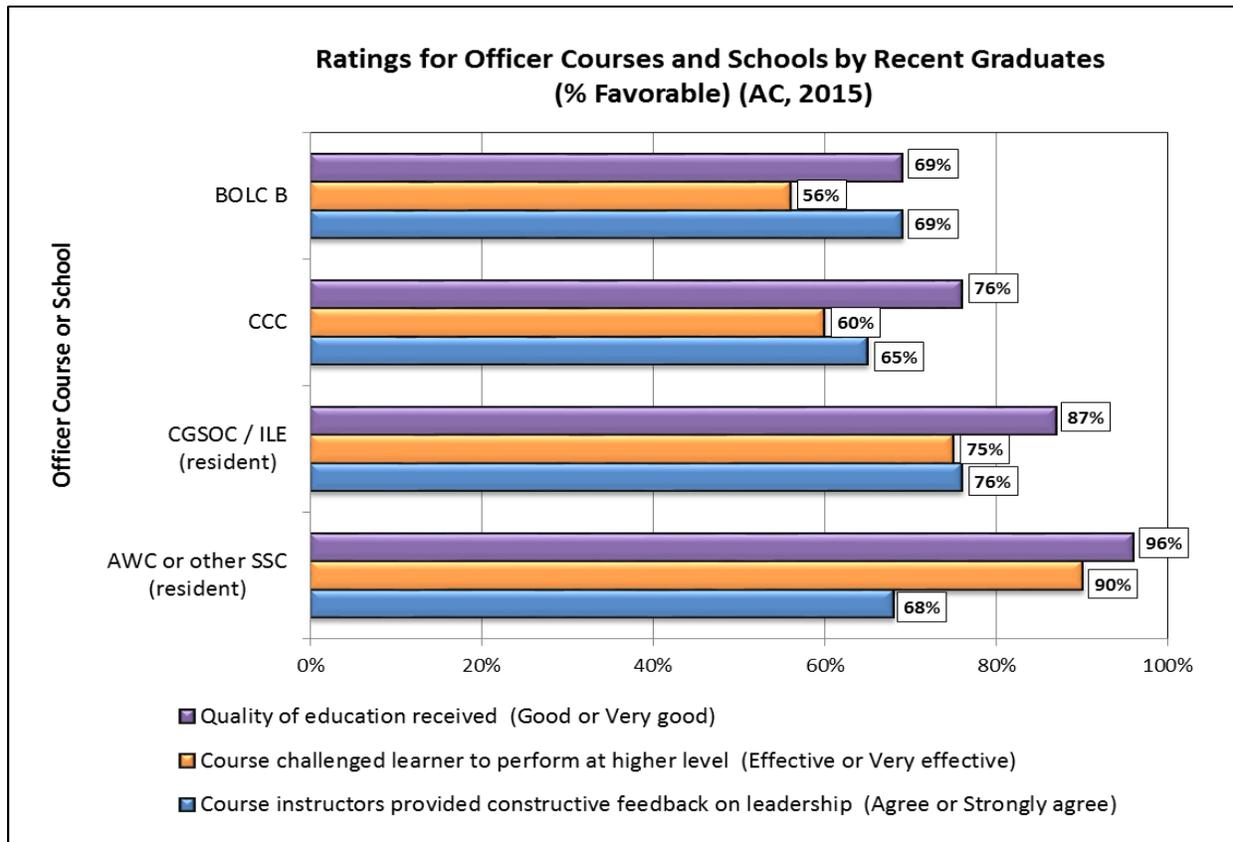
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<sup>32</sup> Results in this section reflect perceptions of 2015 CASAL respondents who completed the course in calendar years 2014 and 2015. The level of sampling in CASAL does not allow for examination of results for a single course year (e.g., 2015 course graduates alone). Where applicable, patterns in item favorability across CASAL years are discussed.

<sup>33</sup> Active component officer course-level analyses included the following samples of respondents by course: BOLC B – 611; CCC – 247; CGSOC/ILE resident – 91; AWC or other SSSC Program – 134.

CCC (31%) indicated their respective course fell short or fell well short of their expectations. The most frequently cited reason for a course not meeting expectations by this sub-group of leaders related to a lack of rigor or challenge in the course.

**Figure 56. Ratings for Active Component Officer Courses and Schools by Recent Graduates**



About three-fourths of recent graduates of CGSOC/ILE and AWC agree their course was relevant to their current job (74% and 76%, respectively). Smaller levels of agreement are found among recent graduates of BOLC B (59%) and CCC (62%). Similarly, a larger percentage of graduates from CGSOC/ILE (68%) and AWC (61%) rate their course effective or very effective at improving their leadership capabilities. In comparison, only about half of junior officer graduates rate BOLC B (50%) and CCC (47%) effective at improving their leadership capabilities.

**Table 32. Ratings for Active Component Officer Courses in Preparing Graduates for Leadership**

Course Effective or Very Effective at Preparing Graduates to...	BOLC B	CCC	CGSOC or ILE resident	AWC or other SSC
Conduct the mission command operations process	58%	78%	85%	58%
Conduct the Army design methodology	46%	58%	85%	62%
Conduct preparation, execution and assessment of tactical operations	66%	64%	78%	31%
Develop cohesive teams through mutual trust	64%	58%	75%	67%
Accept prudent risk to capitalize on opportunities	59%	53%	62%	64%
Take action in the absence of orders	64%	60%	63%	53%
Operate in a cross-cultural setting	66%	70%	67%	89%
Course effective/very effective at improving leadership capabilities	50%	47%	68%	61%

### Warrant Officer Courses

The 2015 CASAL assessed recent graduates of the Warrant Officer Basic Course (WOBC) / BOLC B, the Warrant Officer Advanced Course (WOAC), the Warrant Officer Staff Course (WOSC) / Warrant Officer Intermediate Level Education (WOILE), and the Warrant Officer Senior Staff Course (WOSSC) / Warrant Officer Senior Service Education (WOSSE)<sup>34</sup>. A notable pattern is that ratings by recent graduates of warrant officer courses have consistently shown less favorability compared to officer and NCO courses.

- Ratings for the quality of the education received at the four warrant officer courses examined are generally positive. Assessments by recent graduates of these courses consistently meet or exceed a two-thirds threshold of favorability (i.e., ‘good’ or ‘very good’ quality of education).
- About two-thirds of WOBC/BOLC B graduates (65%) agree the course content was relevant to their current job. Smaller percentages of graduates of other warrant officer courses agree the course content was relevant to their current jobs (ranging from 56% to 60%).

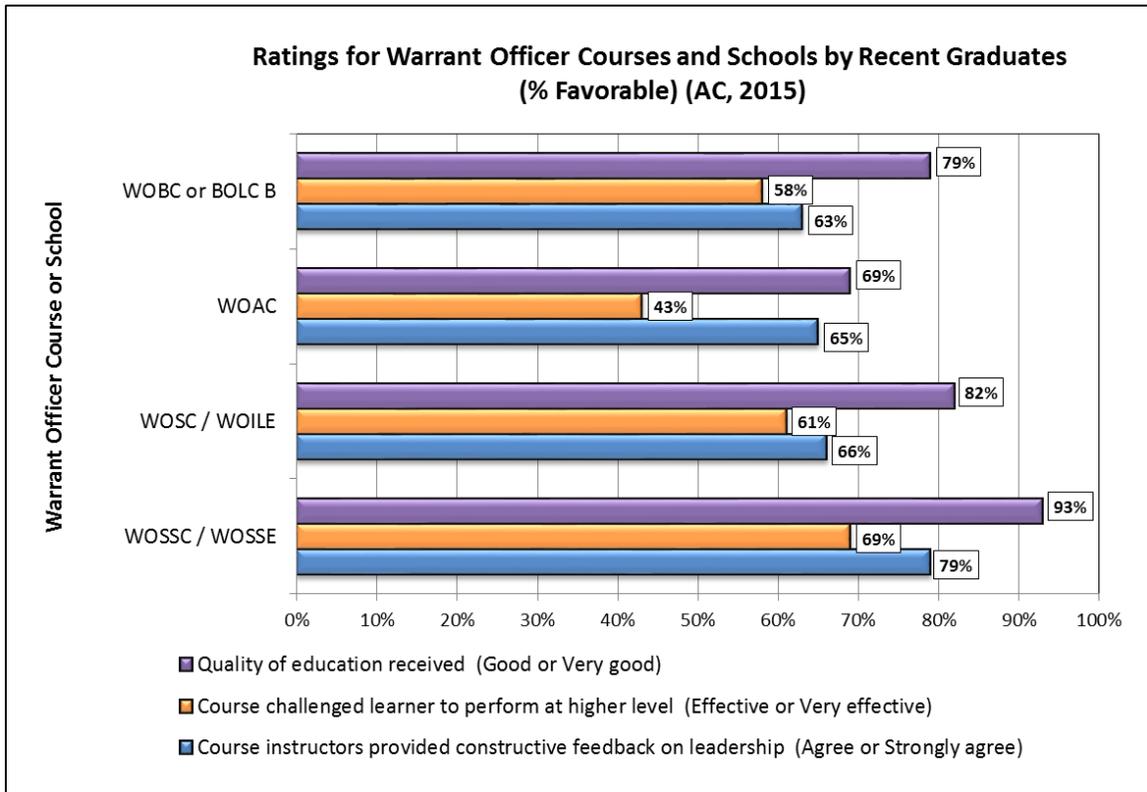
<sup>34</sup> AC warrant officer course-level analyses included the following samples of respondents by course: WOBC or BOLC B – 188; WOAC – 137; WOILE or WOSC – 170; WOSSE or WOSSC – 71. The respondent sample completed or graduated from their course within calendar years 2014 and 2015.

- Two-thirds or more of WOSSC/WOSSE (69%) rate their course effective or very effective at challenging them to perform at a higher level. Smaller percentages of WOBC /BOLC B (58%), WOAC (43%) and WOSC/WOILE (61%) graduates rate their course effective in this regard. The results of the 2012 CASAL noted that a 'lack of rigor or challenge' was a primary reason given as to why warrant officer courses fell short of the expectations of over 40% of recent graduates (Riley et al., 2013).
- Across CASAL administrations, smaller percentages of warrant officer graduates rate leadership aspects of courses favorably compared to other cohorts. One-third to a little over half of recent graduates (ranging from 39% to 58%) rate their course experience as effective for improving their leadership capabilities.
- Percentages of favorable ratings for warrant officer course characteristics are presented in Figure 57. Ratings for attitudes about course outcomes are presented in Table 33.

Warrant officer attitudes regarding the relevance of their education are moderately favorable. While 65% of WOBC/BOLC B graduates agree their course was relevant to their current job, smaller percentages of graduates from WOAC (56%), WOSC/WOILE (59%), and WOSSC/WOSSE (60%) indicate agreement.

A majority of WOSSC/WOSSE graduates rate their course effective for improving their leadership capabilities, compared to smaller percentages of WOSC/ILE (51%), WOAC (39%), and WOBC/BOLC B (39%). The trend in consistently less favorable ratings on the perceived contribution of warrant officer courses for improving leadership capabilities is expected, especially given the predominantly technical orientation of the warrant officer cohort. However, DA PAM 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, states that a goal of warrant officer training and education is to produce highly specialized expert officers, leaders and trainers who are fully competent in technical, tactical, and leadership skills. In 2012, an Army-wide study of the warrant officer cohort concluded that the role of warrant officers serving as technical experts has expanded to include greater leadership and strategic-level functions (Lamphear et al., 2012). Warrant officers are being utilized in a broader range of roles to include formal and informal leadership responsibilities at platoon, company, battalion and higher echelons, and as members of staffs. Thus, it is important that warrant officers receive the appropriate preparation for these roles at the courses they attend.

**Figure 57. Ratings for Active Component WO Courses and Schools by Recent Graduates**



**Table 33. Ratings for Active Component WO Courses in Preparing Graduates for Leadership**

Course Effective or Very effective at Preparing Graduates to...	WOBC or BOLC B	WOAC	WOSC or WOILE	WOSSC or WOSSE
Conduct the mission command operations process	54%	51%	70%	64%
Conduct the Army design methodology	53%	49%	62%	65%
Conduct preparation, execution and assessment of tactical operations	56%	48%	60%	56%
Develop cohesive teams through mutual trust	59%	59%	65%	65%
Accept prudent risk to capitalize on opportunities	54%	54%	56%	59%
Take action in the absence of orders	68%	57%	59%	71%
Operate in a cross-cultural setting	61%	56%	72%	77%
Course effective/very effective at improving leadership capabilities	39%	39%	51%	58%

## Noncommissioned Officer Courses

The 2015 CASAL assessed recent graduates of the Warrior Leader Course (WLC), Advanced Leader Course (ALC) common core, Senior Leader Course (SLC), and Sergeants Major Course (SMC)<sup>35</sup>. The SMC continues to be the most favorably rated and well received course within non-commissioned officer education system (NCOES), while courses at lower levels continue to show room for improvement in various respects.

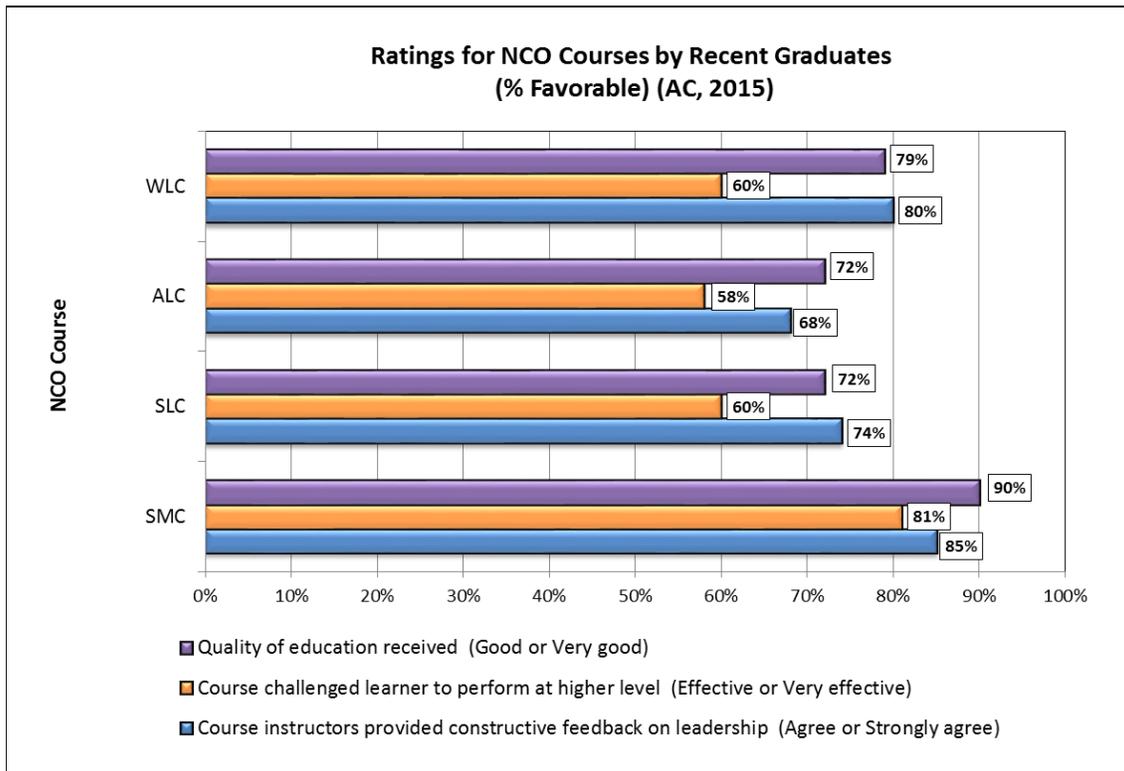
- Four out of five recent WLC graduates rate the quality of education received as good or very good (79%) and agree instructors and faculty provided constructive feedback on student leadership capabilities (80%).
- Ratings for ALC common core indicate the quality of education received exceeds a two-thirds favorability threshold (72%), though a smaller percentage of recent graduates (54%) rate the course effective for improving their leadership capabilities. The common core DL portion of ALC is preparation for the MOS-specific resident phase of the course. ALC is well attended but not generally viewed as challenging by many NCOs.
- The SLC also exceeds a two-thirds favorability threshold with regard to course quality (72%). About half of recent SLC graduates (51%) rate the course effective for improving their leadership capabilities.
- Four out of five recent SMC graduates (81%) rate the course effective at challenging them to perform at a higher level. Two-thirds rate the course effective for improving their leadership capabilities (68%) and agree the course content was relevant to their current job (72%).
- Percentages of favorable ratings for NCO course characteristics are presented in Figure 58. Ratings for attitudes about course outcomes are presented in Table 34.

A consistent pattern observed across NCOES courses is that the level of rigor or challenge shows room for improvement. Just over half of recent graduates of WLC (60%), ALC (58%), and SLC (60%) rate their course effective at challenging them to perform at a higher level. The 2012 CASAL found that one-third of recent graduates from these three courses (WLC, ALC, and SLC) indicated the course fell short or well short of their expectations. The most frequently cited reason was a 'lack of rigor or challenge (e.g., the course felt like a check-the-block activity)' – a response given by about two-thirds of this sub-group (Riley et al., 2013). Another frequently cited reason indicated that for some NCOs the information presented in these courses was not new to the learner (e.g., covered in previous course, learned through self-development, or

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<sup>35</sup> Active component NCO course-level analyses included the following samples of respondents by course: WLC – 181; ALC – 454; SLC – 354; SMC – 101. The respondent sample completed or graduated from their course within calendar years 2014 and 2015.

**Figure 58. Ratings for Active Component NCO Courses and Schools by Recent Graduates**



**Table 34. Ratings for Active Component NCO Courses in Preparing Graduates for Leadership**

Course Effective or Very Effective at Preparing Graduates to...	WLC	ALC common core	SLC	SMC
Conduct the mission command operations process	56%	54%	53%	90%
Conduct the Army design methodology	54%	52%	50%	88%
Conduct preparation, execution and assessment of tactical operations	66%	57%	55%	81%
Develop cohesive teams through mutual trust	61%	60%	60%	76%
Accept prudent risk to capitalize on opportunities	60%	58%	58%	70%
Take action in the absence of orders	67%	68%	66%	76%
Operate in a cross-cultural setting	66%	62%	64%	82%
Course effective/very effective at improving leadership capabilities	64%	54%	51%	68%

through experiences). This factor would also contribute to a lack of perceived challenge in these courses. Results of the 2015 CASAL indicate the level of rigor or challenge continues to be an area for improvement for NCOES courses prior to SMC.

NCOs provide moderately favorable ratings regarding course effectiveness in improving leadership capabilities and relevance to subsequent duties. The SMC is rated most favorably regarding the course improving graduates' leadership (68%) and relevance to graduates' subsequent jobs (72% agreement). Modest percentages of graduates of SLC (61%), ALC (60%), and WLC (51%) agree the content of their course was relevant to their current job. Similarly, smaller percentages of graduates (51% SLC, 54% ALC, 64% WLC) rate their course effective for improving their leadership capabilities (16% to 22% ineffective).

### ***Summary of Findings on Institutional Education***

The quality of the education received in Army courses and schools is rated favorably by 75% of recent course graduates; results show a positive increase since first assessed in 2012. About two-thirds of recent graduates agree course instructors and faculty provided them with constructive feedback on their leadership capabilities.

CASAL results continue to point to the level of rigor or challenge (associated with several courses) as a persistent area for improvement. Specifically, course effectiveness at challenging learners to perform at a higher level falls below a two-thirds favorability threshold for each course examined with the exception of CGSOC/ILE resident, AWC, WOSSC/WOSSE, and SMC.

The effectiveness of courses in preparing learners for leadership continues to be rated less favorably than other aspects of the course. A stable trend sustained in 2015 results is that only about half of recent graduates rate their course effective at improving their leadership capabilities. In fact, the only courses that exceed a two-thirds favorability threshold are CGSOC/ILE resident and SMC, while WLC falls just short of the threshold.

The most favorably rated courses for improving learners' leadership capabilities are CGSOC/ILE, SMC, and WLC. All other courses are rated effective by less than two-thirds of recent graduates.

Courses vary in their perceived effectiveness for preparing graduates for learning outcomes related to leadership, mission command principles, warfighting functions, and cross-cultural competence. Each of the education systems (officer, warrant officer, and NCO) appears to be effective in preparing leaders to operate in cross-cultural settings. However, while NCO courses

are rated favorably in preparing learners to take action in the absence of orders (66% to 76% effective), less favorable ratings are observed across the officer courses (53% to 64% effective).

## **2.7 Unit-Based Training**

The operational training domain of leader development includes activities that organizations undertake while at home station, at maneuver combat training centers, during joint exercises, at mobilization centers, and while operationally deployed (ADRP 7-0, 2012f). Unit training is dual purposed; to both prepare units for operations and to exercise and improve individual skills of leading and developing units. This section summarizes CASAL results on unit-level training and combat training center experiences.

### Unit-level Training

Overall, unit training activities and events are viewed as having a smaller positive impact on leader development compared to other methods such as on-the-job training, opportunities to lead, and receiving feedback from others. Nearly half of AC and RC leaders (46% and 54%, respectively) indicate unit training activities or events have had a large or great positive impact on their development. More than one-fourth of leaders (29% AC and 28% RC) indicate the impact has been moderate.

Findings from the 2013 CASAL showed that about two-thirds of Army leaders agreed that unit training is sufficiently challenging (64%) and used realistic scenarios to prepare their unit for successful mission performance (67%). Additionally, the results of the 2014 Status of Forces Survey (SOFS) (Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program, 2015) provides broader indications of unit training readiness. These results showed that large percentages of Army field grade officers (90%), company grade officers (78%), and noncommissioned officers (87%) felt they were well prepared to perform their wartime job. Also positive was that large percentages of these respondents felt their training had well prepared them to perform their wartime job (82%, 71%, and 73%, respectively). However, smaller percentages of field grade officers (69%), company grade officers (60%), and noncommissioned officers (54%) felt their own unit was well prepared to perform its wartime mission.

### Combat Training Centers

The purpose of the combat training center (CTC) program is to generate ready units and agile leaders who are confident in their abilities to operate in complex environments (AR 350-50). The proportion of active and reserve component leaders who have participated as part of the

training audience at a CTC has declined in recent years. In 2015, about half of AC leaders (52%)

Half of current AC leaders (52%) and one-third in the RC (34%) have trained at a CTC. The percentage of the Force with CTC experience is on a downward trend.

report having trained at a CTC in their career, compared to a range of 55% to 61% of leaders assessed by CASAL from 2006 to 2013. In comparison, one-third of RC leaders (34%) now report having trained at a CTC in their career, compared to a range of 38% to 47% of leaders from 2006 to 2013.

The key components of the CTC program's mission are to provide commanders, staffs, and units

CTC experiences are perceived as moderately to strongly effective in developing leadership skills, and favorable attitudes are trending upward.

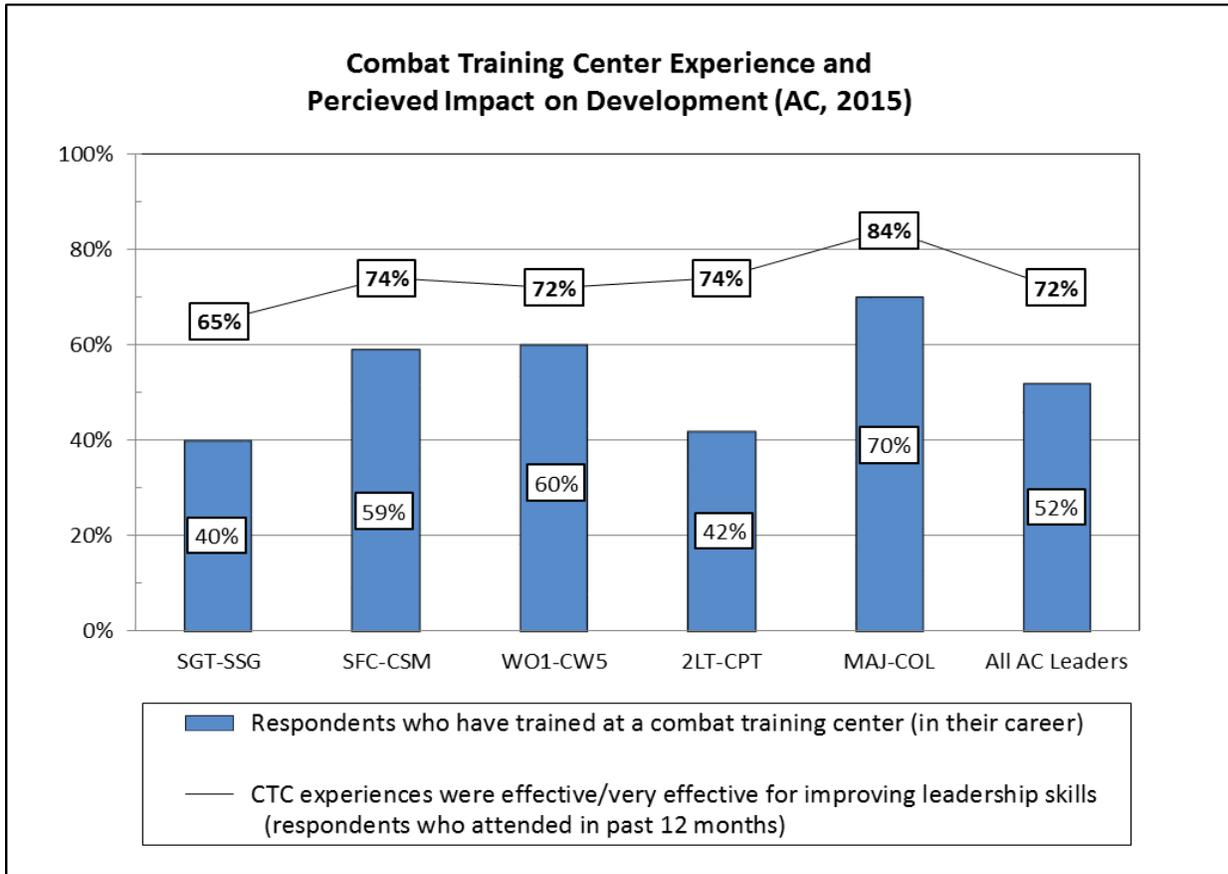
an operational experience focused on unit readiness balanced with leader development requirements (see AR 350-50). CASAL ratings on the effectiveness of CTCs in developing leaders remain moderate to strong, and have trended more favorably in recent years. With respect to leaders who had trained at a CTC within the past 12

months (from the time of the survey):

- 75% rate the CTC experience as effective or very effective for improving their leadership skills.
- 78% rate the CTC experience as effective or very effective for improving their unit's mission readiness.
- Previous CASAL results (2009-2013) consistently showed that about two-thirds of leaders viewed CTC experiences as effective for leadership improvement (66% to 71% effective) and for providing leadership feedback (67% to 69% effective). Three-fourths of leaders viewed CTC experiences effective for improving their unit's mission readiness (75% in 2012 and 2013).

Results of 2015 CASAL indicators for CTC experiences by AC rank groups are presented in Figure 59.

**Figure 59. AC Leader Attendance and Perceived Effectiveness of Combat Training Centers**



## Conclusions and Considerations for Improvement

CASAL results continue to show that leadership doctrine and the Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS) endorse sound leadership requirements. Attributes and competencies that doctrine and the ALDS expect of Army leaders are closely related to leaders producing desired outcomes. Effective leaders produce proficient teams and capable units. What leaders do and how well they do it impact morale, unit cohesion, confidence in the team's ability to perform missions, leader effectiveness, productivity, and the absence of counterproductive leadership behaviors.

However, numerous leaders (27% of military leaders) are rated ineffective or neutral in critical leadership skills that they perform in their operational assignments. Considering contributing factors, military education courses receive ratings on improving leadership capabilities that are among the lowest indicators. This finding about education combined with the finding that many leaders are not receiving adequate leader development support from their immediate superior and do not have adequate time for self-development makes for a situation whereby leader development happens largely unintentionally. If training models and principles are correct, increased attention on leadership and deliberate practice of the skills will increase leadership capabilities and decrease undesired outcomes due to ineffective leadership or inattentive development.

As in past years CASAL findings lead to areas that should be studied in greater detail or acted upon to address a problem or take advantage of an opportunity. In some cases the measured levels are sufficient, and in other cases areas needing improvement are identified. Individual agencies, including CAL, have acted upon the findings in the past, but the efforts have not been consistently integrated and synchronized. The leader development initiative process under the Army Leader Development Program (ALDP, DA PAM 350-58) is an existing way to determine whether findings merit improvement and to identify what actions that the Army and the leader development community should take. The Army is also working to add a tenet of *leading* to the strategic readiness assessment program (SRT, AR 525-30). HQ DA staff are looking at the best ways to incorporate *leading* with the five other tenets (equipping, training, manning, sustaining, and installation). In the readiness program, strategic indicators are used to identify what strategic levers could be applied. In both the ALDP and SRT programs, CASAL findings provide information on the state of leadership and leader development. CASAL assessments help select which shortfalls or opportunities should be addressed. CASAL is also a valuable source of information on human performance capabilities and development for Army Warfighting Challenges, human dimension initiatives, gender integration, resiliency, and other similar programs and studies.

A follow-up study is underway that will help to identify the percentage of attitudes and ratings that are associated with three levels of risk to readiness. Mid to senior level leaders will be surveyed to determine what percentage of effective leaders produce minimal, medium, and significant risk of mission failure. These results will be available in the future to aid the interpretation of CASAL results.

Findings from the 2015 CASAL provide the Army with several new insights on the quality of leadership and leader development within the Army. The points under the following sections, *What can be done*, are considerations for improvement and are not provided as an exhaustive list of everything that is being done or could be done. These points provide a sample of actions responding to each category of findings. They stem from the judgment of the authors over several years of conducting the CASAL studies and are shaped by criteria that try to address highest need with the most promise at the lowest resource expenditure. They are not intended as a complete plan for action, but as a starting point for additional consideration and implementation. As individual leaders read and consider the findings and the given ideas for action, they too can consider what areas they can influence and how they would do so. The following points highlight new insights, important trends observed across multiple years, and areas that warrant further consideration.

## **Quality of Leadership**

### Leadership Effectiveness and Satisfaction

**Findings.** Assessing the quality of leadership provides a gauge on the readiness and future capabilities of the force. Army leader attitudes toward the quality of leadership continue to be generally positive. A majority of active component (AC) respondents view their superiors (71%) and peers (77%) as effective leaders. Reserve component (RC) respondents also view their superiors (75%) and peers (80%) as effective leaders. Additionally, a large percentage of respondents (78% AC, 83% RC) with supervisory responsibilities rate their subordinates as effective leaders. Small percentages of respondents rate their superiors (14%), peers (7%), and subordinates (6%) as ineffective leaders and about 15% of AC and RC rate each of them neither effective nor ineffective. From 59% to 71% of subordinates of AC NCOs rate their NCO leader effective or very effective. From 74% to 87% of AC subordinates rate their company, battalion, or brigade commanders effective or very effective. Twelve percent of first sergeants and company commanders are rated ineffective or very ineffective. Levels of satisfaction with the quality of military (63%) and civilian (57%) leadership in units and organizations remain stable since first assessed in 2013 and are not improving. About one-fifth of uniformed and civilian leaders report dissatisfaction with either type of leadership.

The factors that most strongly contribute to uniformed leader satisfaction with military leadership include the level of trust among unit members, perceptions that senior leaders place trust in subordinates, the effectiveness of leaders at lessening subordinate workload stress, and standards being upheld. An absence of those actions is related to dissatisfaction.

**What can be done.** More widespread attention to the skills of leadership would set the conditions for improving those skills. Deliberate attention and deliberate practice should increase leadership capabilities in the Army. Core curriculum on influence could be added or that which does exist could be implemented or improved. Leader development practices that are most impactful, such as opportunities for development during operational assignments, should be the impetus for leaders to do more in the area of unit leader development. Unit leaders have the authority to set unit goals for leadership improvement, assess individual leadership performance, provide feedback to individuals, assist with individual development plans, and generally to engage more in developing subordinates. FM 6-22, *Leader Development*, provides guidance for superiors to help subordinates plan and engage in leader development. FM 6-22 also helps with how to assess and improve leadership competencies. More widespread use of the techniques in FM 6-22 can make a difference in improving leadership.

#### Leadership Requirements Model

**Findings.** The Leadership Requirements Model is the Army's validated model that describes what is expected of its leaders and what the Army Leader Development Strategy aspires to produce or enhance. The findings about the effective performance of attributes and competencies and their criticality help to isolate where there is most need for improvement. Eighty percent of Army leaders are rated well above the 67% benchmark in demonstrating the doctrinally defined 13 leader attributes in the categories of character, presence, and intellect. However, with the exception of two competencies, fewer leaders are rated effective on the ten leadership competencies. Regular Army, Army National Guard and US Army Reserve respondents do not differ from each other by more than 3% in terms of leaders rated effective on the competencies. The competencies *Gets Results* and *Prepares Self* continue to be rated as strengths, consistent with past results. The *Leads* category of competencies represents the essence of the Army's definition of leadership - influence and providing purpose, motivation, and direction. These are the most critical of leadership competencies. Yet the five competencies in this category (*Leads Others*, *Builds Trust*, *Extends Influence Beyond the Chain of Command*, *Leads by Example*, and *Communicates*) are not among the most favorably assessed. While *Leads Others* is above a two-thirds benchmark of effectiveness, it is the second lowest competency, where over

one-fourth of AC leaders (and one-third of civilian leaders) are rated neutral or ineffective. A leader's demonstration of effective leadership is strongly associated with trust-building behavior, exercising the principles of mission command, and the absence of counterproductive leadership behavior. CASAL results confirm that measures of attributes, competencies, and supporting behaviors from the Leadership Requirements Model have significant positive impact on desired outcomes. High ratings of the attributes, competencies, and behaviors correspond to high ratings of desired outcomes, such as effectiveness, team efficacy, cohesion, morale, and the absence of counterproductive leadership behaviors. The competencies and attributes most strongly associated with effective leadership are *Leads Others*, demonstrating *Sound Judgment*, and *Building Trust*. Competencies have more predictive power of outcomes by three times what leader attributes predict, and, trends consistently show that fewer Army leaders are effective in performing competencies than demonstrating attributes.

**What can be done.** Cultivate an Army-wide emphasis on improving critical leadership skills, specifically those within the *Leads* category of competencies. A general and pervasive emphasis is recommended because of the broad and unintentional ways that leadership development happens currently. The increased attention would be supported by publishing a training document that describes the core actions involved in leading others. The core would cover effective influence techniques, ways to build and sustain trust, effective communication, and what it means to lead by example. The emphasis would be reinforced by developing instruction on leadership actions at the direct level of leadership. Implementation could be enhanced by integrating the leadership learning objectives into tactical, branch, MOS, or functional area curricula. It could be beneficial to create an assessment to assign leadership proficiency grades to individuals. Such a capability could be investigated in order to show strengths and limitations at a given leader's rank or experience level more clearly than with current assessment capabilities. Implementing actions associated with the other findings would contribute to an Army-wide emphasis.

## **Climate and Situational Factors**

### Commitment and Morale

**Findings.** Commitment is an indicator of leaders' overarching motivation to want to do a good job, and morale indicates the degree of a positive outlook on what they need to do. A high percentage of leaders who are committed to their duties and report good morale indicates favorable conditions for being conscientious and a willingness to overcome

obstacles that can interfere with what needs to be done. An overwhelming majority of Army leaders continue to show strong commitment to their teams or immediate work groups, and this is consistently among the most favorable indicators assessed by CASAL. The level of morale in the Army is moderate and remains largely unchanged in recent years.

**What can be done.** Past results show that leaders who get to know those they lead, who affirm subordinates' contributions to their units, and who help them develop will strengthen subordinates' commitment and morale. One straightforward way to sustain or improve commitment and morale is simply for leaders to fulfill their responsibilities of leading and developing others. It is important to continue to assess commitment and morale so any changes in the effect that leadership has on them can be identified.

### Career Satisfaction

**Findings.** Career satisfaction represents a compilation of affective and other attitudes regarding characteristics spanning a leader's career. High career satisfaction is a result indicating the favorability of past experiences and is a predictor of future attitudes. The percentage of leaders reporting satisfaction with their Army career has slowly trended downward since 2009, but remains at a favorable level for all rank groups. Data beyond CASAL's coverage shows that the largest drop in job satisfaction from 2009 to 2012 was due to job security, even while attitudes toward pay and benefits increased. Regarding leader development issues, career satisfaction is strongly associated with attitudes toward the effectiveness of operational experiences for development, having an appropriate mix of assignments to support development, effectiveness of institutional education for development, and having sufficient input into the selection of assignments. Career satisfaction relates positively to a leader's intentions to remain in the Army.

**What can be done.** While career satisfaction is currently at a favorable level, career satisfaction and the leadership and leader development factors that affect it should continue to be tracked. Career satisfaction is affected by factors beyond leadership and leader development that need to be understood as well. Personnel management and human resource management stakeholders are aware of these factors and have historically assessed them through the Army Research Institute's Sample Survey of Military Personnel.

## Career Intentions

**Findings.** Of leaders not currently eligible for retirement, intentions to remain in the Army continue to be high. More than half of AC captains (55%) report they intend to stay in the Army until retirement eligible or beyond 20 years, which is a level attained in 2013 and is notably higher than percentages observed since 2000. Leaders may become more resolute about reporting they intend to stay if they believe there is a greater possibility of involuntary separation. They may believe that any edge that they can use to counter the possibility they are among the percentage separated is worth responding that they are committed to staying.

**What can be done.** Continue through this survey and other Army surveys to track the career intentions of leaders to ensure that an abundant flow of quality leaders is possible into the future. The Army-wide emphasis on improving leadership mentioned above and its associated improved outcomes should have direct favorable impacts on career intentions.

## Workload Stress

**Findings.** Stress can act as either a motivator or a distractor. Knowing the level of stress created by missions or the amount of work tied to those missions helps identify complicating factors that leaders and subordinates must address. Unabated workload stress leads to lowered well-being levels and poor work quality. CASAL results show that stress from a high workload persists as an issue in the Army and is trending unfavorably. One in four AC leaders (25%) report workload stress is a serious problem while 59% rate it as a moderate problem. Less than half of respondents view unit leaders as effective at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates. Two-thirds rate their immediate superior effective at taking action to help subordinates manage excessive workload demands. 2015 CASAL found that leaders mitigate workload stress in subordinates by enacting problem-focused solutions (e.g., spreading the task load, prioritizing and planning, fostering effective communication) and attending to subordinates morale and well-being (e.g., showing appreciation, respecting time away). In contrast, workload stress is higher in organizations with ineffective and disengaged leadership, where care and concern are not shown to unit members, and where personnel and physical resource deficiencies are not addressed. The actions or inactions taken when high levels of workload are present can clearly be seen as issues to address through leadership.

**What can be done.** Leaders can be encouraged to use existing leadership instruction related to the competency *Gets results*, which is available through VIC and the Central Army

Registry. The instruction addresses distributing workload, planning and prioritizing taskings, and shielding subordinates from excessive taskings. In addition, the recent Team-Building training publication, ATP 6-22.6, can be followed to increase the capacity of teams to accommodate additional or peak workload. Findings from the 2015 CASAL on the ways that leaders mitigate stress can be incorporated into future updates to Chapter 9, Leadership in Practice, ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*.

### Leader Engagement

**Findings.** Army leaders in all rank groups score favorably on engagement as measured by a composite scale that assesses perceived work conditions, attitudes toward assigned duties, and their development. Leaders who score high on engagement view their units and teams favorably, report satisfaction with the quality of leadership in their unit, and perceive high levels of trust among unit members. Engagement is also positively related to effective leadership as demonstrated by one's immediate superior (i.e., core leader competencies, leader attributes, mission command, and absence of counterproductive leadership).

**What can be done.** Leaders who are sincere and communicate with subordinates throughout their organizations help demonstrate that they are willing to invest their energies in their people. All levels of leaders need to continue to demonstrate support internal to their organizations. CAL is developing an Army training circular on how to improve employee engagement in Army units and organizations. Important aspects to enhance engagement involve setting the conditions and ensuring personnel understand their purpose. The resource will be available through the Army Publishing Directorate.

### Mission Command

**Findings.** Since 2013, the percentage of leaders reporting familiarity with mission command doctrine (ADP 6-0) has increased for all rank groups. A majority of leaders continue to be rated effective in demonstrating the principles of the mission command philosophy. About one fourth of leaders are rated neutral or ineffective in following mission command principles. There are strong relationships between effectively exercising mission command, attaining high levels of trust, and perceptions of leader effectiveness.

**What can be done.** The effectiveness of mission command can be improved by improving leadership skills, as described in Leadership Effectiveness above. An increased Army emphasis on leadership improvement and the specific attributes, competencies, and

behaviors of the Leadership Requirements Model (LRM) will directly improve the six principles of mission command. Targeted areas for mission command include *Leading Others*, *Building Trust*, and *Developing Others*. Continue to show the field how the LRM with its implementation of core competencies mutually supports adherence to the principles of mission command.

### Trust

**Findings.** Perceptions of trust among unit members remain fairly stable since 2013. Half of AC leaders report there is high or very high trust in their units, while one-third report moderate trust. Trust exists in units where standards are upheld, where unit members are empowered to make decisions pertaining to their duties, and are allowed to learn from honest mistakes. Collective felt trust, or perceptions that an organization's leaders place trust in its members, is reported by two-thirds of respondents who agree that senior leaders in their unit or organization place trust in their subordinates. These attitudes are associated with working environments that are conducive to disciplined initiative.

**What can be done.** Through increased emphasis on the *Leads* category of competencies, Army leader skill in trust-building behavior can be enhanced. This begins with promoting a mindset of being a genuine and caring leader interested in engaging with their subordinates and learning their capabilities. Trust relationships are based on mutual interests. The mindset extends to leaders underwriting risks and creating environments where honest mistakes result in learning opportunities. Evaluations should be conducted after new leadership skill instruction is implemented to determine how trust is affected.

### Counterproductive Leadership

**Findings.** Counterproductive leadership is any leadership activity or attitude that goes against the desired outcomes of positive leadership actions. Small percentages of leaders are perceived as demonstrating any specific negative or counterproductive behavior associated with toxic leadership, and this has remained unchanged since 2010. The incidence of negative behaviors at brigade, battalion, and company command levels remains low. Negative leadership has a measurable and significant detrimental effect on subordinate motivation, work quality, commitment, engagement, and morale. Leaders who demonstrate counterproductive leadership behaviors tend to be viewed as ineffective at building trust and exercising mission command.

**What can be done.** The Army and the Center for Army Leadership have developed an understanding of the types of behaviors that can be classified as counterproductive. More needs to be learned about what causes leaders to engage in or demonstrate these negative behaviors. CAL can develop strategies and techniques for dealing with counterproductive leadership – how one can identify their own behaviors, how to try to shape to improve a superior’s counterproductive tendencies, and what steps leaders should take when a peer or subordinate leader predominantly uses negative leadership techniques. The materials will be an Army-wide resource to use to address and decrease counterproductive leadership behaviors.

## **Quality of Leader Development**

### Subordinate Development

**Findings.** Leaders develop subordinates through methods that align with four fundamentals of development as described in FM 6-22, *Leader Development*. CASAL results show that just over half of respondents indicate their immediate superior has developed them through remaining approachable for the subordinate to seek input and ask questions; providing encouragement or praise; involving the subordinate in a decision-making or planning process; fostering a climate for development (e.g., allow learning from mistakes); and sharing experiences, lessons learned, or advice. All of these are actions any leader can choose to adopt, can be improved through practice, and solidified as habits. None of these actions take great amounts of time or special training. Direct-level leaders must balance many demands, including the mission, superiors, and developing their direct reports. The skills for developing others start as simply as having questions to ask, knowing how to ask challenging questions that are not perceived as criticism, and helping motivate people to develop.

**What can be done.** Senior leaders and senior raters can reinforce the importance of developing subordinates through the leadership example they set, the developmental behaviors they role model, and the questions they ask their key subordinate leaders. Subordinate development can be perceived as one more thing to do that competes with an already high OPTEMPO and workload. However, preparing subordinates for those future roles with increased responsibility and authority is arguably just as important as meeting today’s training requirements. Treating leader development as separate from training and as additional work will interfere with improving the impact of counseling, coaching, or

teaching. As discussed below leader development can be integrated into the typical day of a leader without requiring more time or sacrificing attention on other must do's.

### Leader Effectiveness in Developing Others

**Findings.** The competency *Develops Others* requires continued focus and attention. Less than two-thirds of leaders are rated effective at developing subordinates, while about two-thirds are rated effective at assessing the developmental needs of subordinates. Addressing this need within the Army requires a multi-pronged approach – deliberate development of oneself and of others must become ingrained in the Army's culture.

**What can be done.** Emphasize a culture of unit leader development. Enhancements to leader development practices at the unit or organizational level will convey the importance of these activities. Fostering formal and informal counseling, mentorship, climates for learning, and a mindset for seeking feedback from others will ingrain these activities as a regular part of a leader's routine and will yield positive outcomes.

### Formal and Informal Performance Counseling

**Findings.** There continues to be an unmet need with regard to the frequency and quality of performance counseling. Nearly half of leaders characterize the frequency with which they receive counseling as 'too infrequent.' Only about half of leaders agree the counseling feedback they have received was useful in helping them to set performance goals for improvement, while fewer agree the counseling addressed how well they practice the mission command philosophy. Forty-one percent of leaders report their immediate superior frequently talks with them about how they are doing in their work, though more than half indicate discussions only occur rarely or occasionally about how to improve duty performance and prepare for future assignments.

**What can be done.** There is no easy substitute for achieving the desired impacts from developmental counseling other than leaders approaching it with a positive, developmental mindset and doing it. If leaders have not received good counseling themselves and do not have a picture of how to conduct it and do it effectively, they can engage in self-study or seek a mentor to help. Army resources exist on how to perform developmental counseling that can be found from the CAL website, Army Training Network, and Central Army Registry.

## Mentoring

**Findings.** More than half of leaders report they engage in mentoring, either as a mentor or mentee, or both. For most leaders who receive mentoring, the need is currently being met with regard to the frequency of desired interaction and its impact on development. The frequency and impact of performance counseling is not perceived as favorably. Leaders who desire better mentoring would like more frequent interaction, more in-depth discussions on current developmental needs and career path planning, mentors who are highly knowledgeable and engaged, and who hold a genuine interest in the mentee's development. The term mentoring is often used indiscriminately as any one-on-one development, but the Army makes important distinctions between mentoring, developmental counseling, and other roles such as training, teaching, and coaching. Each of these activities serves a different developmental purpose, but all are complementary. CASAL results show that leaders who do not receive sufficient counseling also do not tend to seek out feedback from others or mentoring relationships. Army leaders want authentic mentoring that will benefit their development and career progression. Very few leaders see a formal program for mentoring as the solution to developing leaders in the Army. A formal program for mentoring will not ensure that more leaders are participating. Currently at least two formal developmental programs are required of all Army leaders – one is developmental counseling, the other is the Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF) program. The programs themselves have been designed with three key elements in mind: assessment, feedback, and action planning. What is commonly lacking around both programs is participation and deliberate attention by participants to all three elements.

**What can be done.** Mentoring is a voluntary activity and if leaders want it, then they need to seek it out. It may take repeated attempts before achieving a beneficial relationship with a mentor. Mentors can be added or changed throughout one's career as interests, goals, and abilities change. Army resources, such as ADRP 6-22, are available on the basics of effective mentoring for those who want to improve their understanding of mentoring. Those seeking a mentor need to take the initiative to engage someone more experienced than themselves to establish a professional relationship. Related opportunities exist such as the MSAF program that could lead to mentoring. In the MSAF leaders ask people who know their work to assess them. The feedback from the assessments can be used with an MSAF-supplied coach or with others of the leader's own choosing. From these interactions a mentoring relationship may form.

## Unit Leader Development

**Findings.** CASAL and other surveys have consistently shown that leader development that occurs in operational assignments is the most impactful across the three domains. It is also known that more deliberate approaches to training (e.g., setting explicit training goals, measuring performance or learning, and providing feedback to the learner) tend to produce the best learning. However, the degree that leader development is a deliberate and strong aspect of unit operations is low. About half of AC respondents report that their unit or organization places a high priority on leader development. Only one-third of AC respondents are aware of a formal plan or guidance for leader development established by their unit or higher headquarters. This Army-wide statistic is considerably lower than the estimate from the 2015 IG Army Leader Development Inspection of selected units, which reported 64% of brigade and battalion teams have created leader development programs. CASAL respondents indicate Army units most frequently develop leaders through emphasizing self-development, conducting leader development programs (e.g., OPD/NCOPD), and authorizing resident course attendance. While these three practices are good to adopt, they may produce limited impact by themselves as they do not involve much unit attention and effort. Most units are assessed as only rarely or occasionally conducting team-building activities or events, emphasizing leader development in collective training, providing stretch or developmental assignments, or promoting professional reading programs to develop leaders.

**What can be done.** Leader development can be integrated into already occurring training and operational functions. Unit leaders are to establish a formal leader development program, especially at the combined arms unit level and support implementation of it by lower echelons. The guidance on ways to do this are provided in FM 6-22, *Leader Development*. Tables 2-2 and 2-3 list many elements that can be included in unit plans, and Chapter 3, Fundamentals of Development, describes how to implement leader development in unit operations.

## Institutional Education

**Findings.** Some attitudes toward Army education are positive and have remained steady as evidenced by the percentages of recent graduates rating the quality of education they receive as favorable. Attitudes regarding the relevance of course content to graduates' next assigned duties have trended up since 2011, however, currently the level is less than two-thirds agreement among recent graduates of WLC, ALC common core, SLC, WOBC, WOAC,

WOSC/WOILE, WOSSC/WOSSE, BOLC B, CCC, and AWC. Ten of 12 of the PME courses were assessed favorably by less than two thirds of graduates on the effectiveness for conducting, preparing, executing, and assessing tactical operations. The perceived course effectiveness for improving graduates' leadership capabilities remains well below the two-thirds level for 10 of 12 PME courses and at the 68% level for the other two.

**What can be done.** To learn more about strengths and weaknesses of PME courses, a more detailed assessment of instruction could be conducted on tactical operations and Army leadership than what has been done. The recommendations from the Leadership Requirements Model discussion above, calling for more basic education on leading and influencing others, should improve ratings of educational objectives to enhance leadership capabilities and set an improved foundation for unit leader development and self-development. The training document described above on the basics of leading others will serve as a common reference point for new leadership instruction. This may be the most resource-intensive suggestion of all because of the limited number of learning objectives dedicated to leadership skills in many Army courses.

#### Unit-Based Training

**Findings.** Combat Training Centers (CTC) provide a rich and stimulating environment, prime for practicing leadership with full complements of subordinates, peer, and superior leaders. About half of AC leaders (52%) and one-third in the RC (34%) have trained at a CTC at some point in their career. The percentage of the Force with CTC experience is on a downward trend. Three-fourths of leaders with recent CTC experience rate their training as effective for improving unit mission readiness (78%) and for improving their leadership skills (75%). The impact of CTCs is at the most favorable level observed since first assessed in 2009. Similarly high impact leader development can effectively occur during unit training outside of a CTC setting.

**What can be done.** Available resources should be utilized to enhance the leadership development aspects of collective training experiences. CAL's handbook titled *Developing Leadership during Unit Training Exercises* describes how to optimize the developmental value of unit-based training events for improving leadership. Many concepts within this handbook have been incorporated into Chapters 3 and 6 of FM 6-22, *Leader Development*. A Leadership Attributes and Competencies Reference Card (LARC) has been developed to provide a simple reminder to leaders and observer/controller/trainers as to the make-up of the full-range of expected leadership characteristics. The handbook provides guidance on how to approach the sensitive topic of leadership and how to provide leadership feedback.

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