

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

FACTORS AFFECTING THE RETENTION DECISIONS OF FEMALE SURFACE WARFARE OFFICERS

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This thesis delineates factors affecting the retention decisions of female Surface Warfare Officers. The data were obtained from in-depth interviews conducted with 12 female senior officers and 15 female junior officers. The transcripts from the interviews revealed 19 general themes. Based on the research, the data regarding the decisions that female officers make to either stay in the Navy or leave leads to four broad categories: economic factors, Navy “taste factors,” leadership factors, and family issues. The most common negative factors influencing female junior officers to leave the Navy are quality of life issues, lack of confidence in senior leadership, and family concerns. The main reasons the female senior officers stayed in the Navy were job satisfaction, their love for being out at sea and ship driving, and their commitment to taking advantage of the opportunities offered to them and forging a path for the women who followed. This thesis concludes with recommendations for further research and policy changes to assist personnel officials in understanding the retention decisions of female Surface Warfare Officers and potentially increasing the retention rate of the female officers.

KEYWORDS: Retention, Females, Surface Warfare