A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF AIR MOBILITY COMMAND'S PHOENIX HORIZON-REACH PROGRAM

GRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER

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Abstract

As one of AMC's premiere professional development programs, the Phoenix Horizon-Reach (PH-R) program has existed in its current unchanged form for 26 years. By analyzing the validity of the program in today's significantly changed environment and by identifying recommendations and opportunities for improvement, this paper will serve to strength the program to meet the difficult challenges outlined in the current NDS.

As such, this graduate research paper analyzed program information, promotion data, and participant and non-participant interviews to evaluate one of Air Mobility Command's (AMC) leadership development programs, PH-R. In addition, the purpose of the research was to evaluate the program's ability to meet its original intent through a qualitative cost-benefit analysis to identify gaps and recommend program improvements.

Promotion board data was analyzed, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 total rated officers, and various academic research findings were analyzed and incorporated on leadership development programs. The interviews included three General officers, six Colonels, six Lieutenant Colonels, and three Majors with both participation and non-participation in the program. The officers interviewed were selected randomly to eliminate bias.

Next, using qualitative analysis with Tesch's eight-step coding process and NVivo analysis software, multiple themes were identified from the insights discovered during the interviews. Ultimately, through the analysis of themes from interviews

combined with information learned during the literature review, a few areas of program improvement were identified.

Acknowledgments

I want to express my sincere appreciation to my faculty advisor, Dr. Seong-Jong Joo, for his guidance and support throughout this graduate research effort. I would, also, like to thank my sponsor, Major General Gordy, Expeditionary Center Commander, for agreeing to be my sponsor late in the research process. Finally, I would like to thank the Air Mobility Command A1K organization, specifically Captain Robert Drye, for his help in obtaining the data necessary to conduct this research.

Zachary L. Coburn

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF AIR MOBILITY COMMAND'S PHOENIX HORIZON-REACH PROGRAM

I. Introduction

Background

The PH-R program was created out of necessity by one of the founding generals of AMC, General Ronald Fogleman. The program was implemented under the Phoenix Horizon parent program a year after AMC's inception in 1993.

The Phoenix Horizon program contains a subset of three development programs, Phoenix Horizon-Mobility (PH-M), Phoenix Horizon-Torch (PH-T), and PH-R. While each program has a different focus, each is designed to provide breadth or depth to an officer's professional experience.

The PH-M program aims to take an AMC officer from their primary career field and place them into a Contingency Response Wing (CRW) to provide experience across multiple mission sets. The goal of the PH-T program is to take rated AMC officers and place them in an AMC staff role earlier than a typical staff assignment to provide breadth and depth.

The PH-R program aims to crossflow rated officers from one AMC mission to another, airlift to tanker or tanker to airlift with a goal to

> Create a large pool of highly competitive mobility officers by first identifying future air-mobility leaders assigned within and outside AMC, tracking them in a worldwide database through O-6 selection, and finally placing graduates of professional military education programs, squadron commanders, and other high-potential mobility officers in key joint, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), and Air Staff positions. (Lenderman, 2008)

At its creation, General Fogleman saw the program as a way to "cross-pollinate" merging Strategic Air Command (SAC) tanker crews (Lenderman, 2008). General Fogleman also created the PH-R program when SAC was divested and merged with AMC as a means to instill a "mobility" culture into tanker SAC crews that were not mobility focused before the merge. However, the program has existed in the same form for 26 years without significant changes.

According to the current Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), with America's return to an era of, "great power competition" as outlined in the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS), it is imperative that we strengthen squadron leadership and culture (Goldfein & Wilson, 2018). As part of his alignment strategy, CSAF released his plan to revitalize the Air Force's core fighting unit, the squadron.

As historical promotion data has proven, it is very likely that PH-R program participants will command at the squadron-level and beyond. With the current CSAF focus to revitalize squadrons, this study supports his number two priority; strengthen squadron leadership and culture.

Over 26 years since its inception as a professional development program, there have not been any formal research initiatives to analyze and evaluate the PH-R program's ability to develop its participants. However, beyond a lack of research evaluation, it is imperative to evaluate how leadership development functions can be improved to develop leaders more effectively, ultimately ensuring success against peer and near-peer adversaries.

This research will serve to strengthen squadron leadership and culture by hopefully identifying gaps in the PH-R program's ability to develop future leaders and

recommend ways to strengthen the program's ability to produce leaders capable of successfully overcoming today's leadership challenges.

Problem Statement

In today's return to an environment of "great power competition," it is imperative to evaluate Air Force leadership programs to ensure they are producing the leaders necessary to lead organizations to compete and win against peer and near-peer adversaries. Since its inception in 1993, the PH-R program has existed for the most part with very few changes.

Additionally, over its history, there is a research gap in evaluating the program's ability to meet General Fogleman's original intent or identify if that intent is still valid in the significantly different environment from 26 years ago. It is essential to evaluate program performance because, the organizations often lack evidence to understand the value of their investment in leadership development and fail to track and measure those results over time (Gurdjian, Halbeisen, & Lane, 2014).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to analyze the PH-R program's ability to develop future leaders for command by determining the program's actual and perceived benefits and comparing them to the program's actual and perceived cost to understand if the program is meeting its original intent and if that intent is still valid 26 years later.

Research Questions

1. Is the PH-R program still meeting its original intent and is the intent of the program valid today?

Investigative Questions

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the PH-R program?
2. What are the perceived and actual costs and value of the PH-R program?

Methodology

The research was conducted through a qualitative study of the PH-R program. First, promotion data was gathered and analyzed from both PH-R and non-PH-R participants to build a foundation for the importance of the research. Next, as the PH-R program is unique and previous research on the program does not exist within or outside of the U.S. Air Force, useful journal articles were gathered and analyzed. This research helped to construct the research questions and frame leadership development theory. Lastly, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain qualitative information from interview participants. This information was then formed into common themes, and ultimately, quantitative data.

The interview questions were crafted to tie back to the research and investigative questions that were developed to solve the study's problem. In addition, the research selected participants by providing a Microsoft Excel randomizing tool to AMC/A1K to randomly select the required participants to minimize bias. Before the interviews, the bullet background paper in Appendix B and a consent form with the interview questions were sent to the individuals so that they could review the questions to be prepared to provide more substantive responses. Due to the world-wide nature of U.S. Air Force assignments, interviews were conducted via phone conversation or follow-up email if clarification was needed. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Interview data was used to understand program validity, effects on the organization, costs, value, and recommendations for change. The target groups consisted of four categories of to capture data at multiple levels of leadership; General Officer, graduated Wing or Group Commander, graduated Squadron Commander, and senior Major with greater than14 years of service.

The data was then coded with qualitative analysis software, NVivo, using Tesch's eight-step coding process (Creswell & Creswell, 2017: p. 198). The coded data then provided quantitative data for analysis to inform the research.

Assumptions and Limitations

To be able to conduct the research, a few assumptions had to be established. The first assumption is that conducting 18 interviews will provide a representative sample of the total population of participants, leaders, and possible participants of the PH-R program. The second assumption for the scope of the paper is the boarding process used to identify participants of the program is correctly identifying the appropriate individuals to participate in the program. The final assumption made is that civilian and military leadership development processes have similarities.

There is a significant potential limitation of the study involving bias (Creswell & Creswell, 2017: p. 202). By interviewing people to obtain useful data, they can introduce bias from their experiences with the PH-R program. Throughout the research, attempts were made to reduce the bias by randomizing and interviewing individuals who both participated and did not participate in the PH-R program. Finally, it is understood that confirmation bias from the researcher could bias the research results. To eliminate bias,

results were verified with outside entities to ensure the methods and results were genuine (Creswell & Creswell, 2017: p. 202).

Moreover, access to data was in some respects, difficult due to Personally Identifiable Information (PII) restrictions. When analyzing participants of a leadership development program, the organizations that oversee the program have lots of restrictions on what they can and cannot provide to a researcher without high-level approvals. The restrictions on information can lead to gaps in the required information to develop complete results. Research was also conducted at the A1K section at AMC for two days to work with their leadership to see what information they can and cannot provide.

Implications

This research could highlight deficiencies in the PH-R program as a leadership development program. It could either highlight the need to revamp the program or validate that the program works as intended in its current form. Moreover, findings could provide recommendations to enhance the leadership development of the PH-R program.

II. Literature Review

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to develop an understanding of how leadership development programs should be designed and executed. To develop this understanding, the chapter will first build a foundational understanding of the PH and PH-R programs from their current USAF guidance, the PH Concept of Employment (CONEMP) document. Moreover, the chapter will outline how the PH-R program began and why analyzing the validity of the program in today's environment is essential. The chapter will ultimately aim to develop an understanding by detailing a few case studies on how leadership development programs should be designed, executed, and evaluated.

PH CONEMP

The PH CONEMP is the governing document of the PH-R program. The document is maintained and executed by the AMC Officer and Civilian Force Development Office, also known as AMC/A1KO. According to the CONEMP (AMC/A1KO, 2017),

> PHOENIX HORIZON (PH) is AMC's leadership and force development program, recognized throughout the Air Force as a benchmark program that complements Air Force efforts to develop air and space leaders. PH graduates will be high performing officers deliberately developed early in their careers with a focus on preparing them for senior leadership opportunities in the Air Force and/or Joint community.

The CONEMP further spells out educational opportunities that are intended to provide all participants broadening and professional development opportunities. These events include attending an Airlift/Tanker Association (A/TA) convention at least once,

receiving a tour of AMC and United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), and attending the Rapid Global Mobility Course (RGMC).

Moreover, according to the document (AMC/A1KO, 2017),

> PH-R is an AMC-sponsored force development program for board selected officers with 4-8 years of Total Active Federal Commissioned Service. PH-R identifies mobility pilots with the potential to lead in multiple MWS communities by way of changing their primary aircraft. The goal is to develop well-rounded mobility officers for advanced leadership opportunities in tomorrow's Air Force. PH-R allows selected officers to crossflow between AMC's MWSs. Crossflow opportunities are a function of force development requirements, available programmed flying training and MWS manning/experience and are made as an investment towards future Air Force senior leader development. Most selected airlift officers will crossflow to a tanker MWS, and most tanker officers will crossflow to an airlift MWS. However, no restriction exists against airlift-to-airlift or tanker-to-tanker crossflows.

The CONEMP recommends how the PH-R officer should progress in their assignment to "develop broad leadership skills"(AMC/A1KO, 2017). These recommendations are spelled out by year and recommend that the officer should be gaining flying proficiency, operational deployments, all working toward instructor pilot upgrade (AMC/A1KO, 2017). Moreover, year two should focus on squadron and group leadership roles. Ultimately in year three, the member should move towards wing leadership roles (AMC/A1KO, 2017).

Lastly, the document spells out how the PH-R program will be managed by three entities; the senior mentor, program manager, and senior advisor. The 18th Air Force Commander is the senior mentor of the program providing broad direction, oversight, and mentorship of program officers every quarter (AMC/A1KO, 2017).

The program manager is Wing Vice Commander or O-6 equivalent and is responsible for ensuring organization participants are being mentored, meeting the intent

of the program, and will meet a provide feedback to participants on a semi-annual basis (AMC/A1KO, 2017).

The final entity of the PH-R program is the senior advisor. The senior advisor is the senior PH-R member in their second to the third year of participation in their organization and works to ensure that participants can meet the educational opportunities (AMC/A1KO, 2017). The senior advisor is also a liaison between the senior mentor, program managers, and participating member's leadership to ensure program feedback occurs promptly (AMC/A1KO, 2017).

The Rise of Air Mobility and Its Generals

With the rise in global operations in the early 2000s, Colonel Lenderman explores reasons for a significant increase in the number of mobility generals in the USAF. A significant reason for the increase is a transition towards globalization and ultimately a surge in air mobility operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. As this transition was occurring, AMC was born from Strategic Air Command (SAC) (Lenderman, 2008). During this time, General Fogleman saw a need to grow and develop AMC leadership organically. As a result, the leadership development umbrella program, PH was created. Furthermore, the PH-R program was created as a means to cross-pollinate prior SAC crews with the newly minted mobility mindset and culture from AMC (Lenderman, 2008).

Squadron Revitalization Implementation Plan

In 2018 the U.S. Secretary of Defense released the NDS outlining a return to an era of "great power competition."(Goldfein & Wilson, 2018) In response, the current CSAF General Goldfein released his Squadron Revitalization Implementation plan. In

his plan, he outlined three main lines of effort; focus on the mission, strengthen squadron leadership and culture, and take care of Airmen and families (Goldfein & Wilson, 2018). Analyzing and improving leadership development programs such as the PH-R program directly support General Goldfein's priority to strengthen squadron leadership and culture.

Leadership Development Growing Talent Strategically

The challenge of designing leadership development programs is incorporating the organization's strategy. However, aligning business strategy with leadership development program design is an essential facet of designing leadership development programs (Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014). Figure 1 shows an example model for how organizational strategy should flow in alignment down to leader development objectives.

Figure 1. Framework for a leadership development program
(Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014)

By using a model like in Figure 1, when developing a leader development program, the organization can ensure that its leader development program will focus on building leaders that are relevant to face the challenges and opportunities required.

Additionally, the article outlines that organizational culture and systems are needed to support leadership development in a few key ways; senior leader support,

alignment with existing human resource practices, and accountability (Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014). However, the organization should focus its resources in a few key areas. These areas include; leadership development objectives and desired outcomes, critical positions for development, and identifying employees for development based on foundational, growth and career dimensions (Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014).

A leadership development program should include challenging experience, opportunities for feedback, and reflection using tools like assessment, coaching, and mentoring (Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014). Additionally, a culture that is tolerant of mistakes and failures enables leadership development program participants to try out new approaches (Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014).

A successful leadership development program should include an evaluation process that can enable corrections and evaluate the effectiveness of leadership development efforts (Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014). Table 1 below outlines possible questions that should be asked when evaluating the effectiveness of a leadership development program

Table 1. Potential evaluation questions
(Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014)

What goals and expectations does the organization have for the leader development program?
How do we expect participants to grow and develop as a result of their participation in the program?
How quickly do we expect change to occur?
What impact will participants' growth and development have on their work groups and divisions, as well as the organization as a whole?
When participants complete the leader development program, how might the organizational context facilitate or inhibit their ability to apply what they learned and continue to grow and learn?

Lastly, the research advertises the Return on Learning Experience (ROLE) model, shown in Figure 2. The ROLE model helps understand how a leader development

program can have significant impacts on the development of an individual, noted as, "Application and Proximal Impact" and "Distal Impact" (Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014).

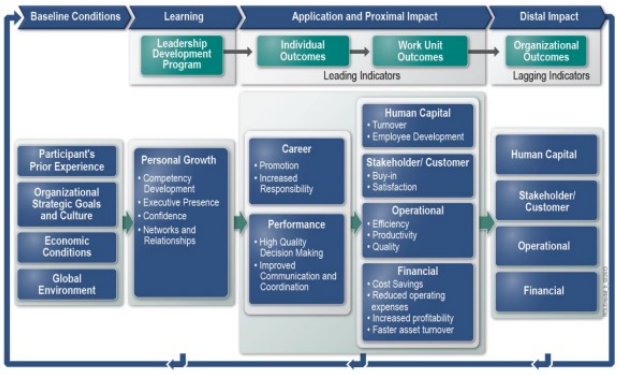


Figure 2. ROLE model
(Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014)

Why Leadership Development Programs Fails

A significant number of organizations invest in leadership development programs. For example, 66% of 500 top executives identified leadership development as their number one priority (Gurdjian et al., 2014). However, only a small population of senior-level managers agreed that their leadership development programs produce effective global leaders (Gurdjian et al., 2014). There are multiple reasons why leadership development programs fail. These reasons include; overlooking context, decoupling reflection from real work, underestimating mindsets, and failing to measure results (Gurdjian et al., 2014).

First, overlooking context at its basic level means misapplying a previously successful strategy to a new situation. This concept is known as "one size fits all" (Gurdjian et al., 2014). Next, decoupling reflection from real work means that when development occurs in a classroom setting, the participant will retain significantly less learning than in a hands-on environment (Gurdjian et al., 2014).

Understanding mindsets is an essential dimension of why leadership development programs fail. As part of development, organizations should challenge the future leader's mindsets and underlying thinking. However, this process can be very uncomfortable, and if the future leader's mindset is not challenged, it will not change or improve itself to develop the leader appropriately (Gurdjian et al., 2014).

Finally, failing to measure the results of the program means that the program will not significantly improve over time and adjust to new challenges. Measuring results is a critical facet of any leadership development program to ensure that it is still valid and meeting the needs of the organization.

Leadership Development a Senior Leader Case Study

In 2014 former Director of the Air Force General Officer Management directed an assessment of its core development process, the Development Team (DT). This purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of developing current and future Air Force needs. Figure 3 below outlines the Leader-Input Framework for Evaluation (LIFE) model.

Figure 3. LIFE
(Newcomer, J. M., Kolberg, S. L., & Corey, 2007)

This model shows that in any successful leadership development program; strategy, alignment, talent, and performance should feed into an assessment of the program. If done correctly, it will enable an understanding of organizational impact as well as results to be able to evaluate and adjust the program as necessary over time. Table 2 lists questions to understand if an organization is in alignment with the LIFE model.

Table 2. Investigative questions to support the LIFE model
(Newcomer, J. M., Kolberg, S. L., & Corey, 2007)

Element	*Investigative Question*
Strategy	How does (development program) posture (or fail to posture) leaders to meet organizational objectives?
Objective Alignment	How do the objectives of (development program) align (or fail to align) with the organization's strategic objectives?
Talent Management	How does (development program) adequately posture (or fail to posture) officer talent capable of filling talent gaps within the organization?
Performance Measurement	How does (development program) measure (or fail to measure) leaders' past performance when determining internal moves, developmental education, and leadership positions?
Assessment	How effective (or ineffective) is (development program) at assessing the results of its graduates to ensure they meet organizational objectives?
Impact on Environment	How does the (development program) affect (or not affect) the overall organizational environment?

III. Methodology

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter outlines and describe the research design and methodology that was used to develop the case study research findings. The chapter will also cover the interview question development, methods, as well as data collection and processing. The chapter will conclude by detailing how the validity and reliability of the data were evaluated.

Research Design

This researcher designed this case study to examine the PH-R program to answer the primary research and investigative questions. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), a case study is, "a type of qualitative research in which in-depth data are gathered relative to a single individual, program, or event for the purpose of learning more about an unknown or poorly understood the situation." This case study was designed to understand the validity of the PH-R program, quantify the costs and benefits of the program, and understand to what degree the program develops participants of the program to be USAF leaders.

Data Collection and Preparation

This section will first describe the interview participants in the study. Next, it will describe the interview format and medium. It will also cover the interview questions and how they were developed. Lastly, it will outline how the data was prepared for analysis.

Interview Participants

Participants in this study were current or former rated USAF MAF officers, all pilots. Four specific categories were developed to select the participants to interview. These categories included General officers, former operations group or wing commanders, former squadron commanders, and Majors with a cumulative Total Active Federal Commission Service Date (TAFCSD) of greater than 14 years. These four categories were developed to provide perspectives from multiple levels of leadership and development. Moreover, the categories contained both participants of the program as well as non-participants.

To help reduce bias and gain a 360 degree perspective of the program, the interview categories were broken down equally into participants and non-participants. Due to the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) Internal Review Board (IRB) requirements for interviewing study participants, the study was limited to 20 participants. The reasoning behind the limit was because any increase in participants would have required a significantly higher level of approval and required an extensive amount of time to accomplish.

Next, the requested participants were divided equally by PH-R participants and non-participants as well as the categories as noted in

Table 3 below. Due to the sensitive nature and potential PII contained in contact information for prospective interviewees, research was conducted in conjunction with the AMC/A1K organization to select the 20 participants at random. To facilitate the random selection, AMC/A1K was provided with an excel tool developed for this study according to the demographics listed in

Table 3.

Table 3. Total interviews desired

Interview Category	# PH-R Participants	# PH-R Non-Participants
Senior Leader (>O-6)	1	1
Graduated OG or WG/CC	3	3
Graduated SQ/CC	3	3
Senior Maj (14 Years TAFCSD)	3	3
Total	**10**	**10**

Finally, participation was solicited from the list of names provided by AMC/A1K.

Due to the global nature of potential participants, participation was first solicited via email. The bullet background paper was attached to the email as well as the question sheet listed in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively. If there was no response, a follow-up call was made to attempt to garner participation.

Interview Structure and Methodology

All interviews were conducted using the semi-structured format entirely over the phone. By using the semi-structured interview format, the standard questions listed in Appendix C were followed, and the questions were probed or tailored as necessary to gain more insight (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015: p. 142). The individuals were then given a short background of the interviewer's career and the ground rules. Then consent (both via consent form and verbally) was verified, and the interviewer connected the conversation to a digital recording line. A recording service was used to record and transfer the digital files to a computer for transcription. The NVivo Artificial Intelligence (AI) transcription service was then used to transcribe the interviews. After the NVivo Artificial Intelligence transcription service was complete, appropriate corrections were made to any words or meanings that were transcribed incorrectly.

Interview Protocol and Questions

To ensure that questions developed for the interviews were valid and supported answering the research and investigative questions, the interview question matrix shown below in Table 4 was developed. This method was developed from a similar process in Maj Nolan's Graduate Research Project (GRP), An Intrinsic Case Study Analysis of USAF CGO as HiPo Officers, to understand which interview question applies to which research or investigative question (Nolan, 2010). By using this iterative process, the questions were refined to make the interview process more efficient and guarantee that the research would answer the investigative and research questions.

Table 4. Interview question matrix

	PH-R Particpaints Only		
	Research Question	Investigative Question 1	Investigative Question 2
Interview Question 1	X		
Interview Question 2	X		
Interview Question 3		X	X
Interview Question 4		X	X
	Participants and non-participants (focus on organizational experience)		
	Research Question	Investigative Question 1	Investigative Question 2
Interview Question 1	X	X	X
Interview Question 2			X
Interview Question 3	X	X	X
Interview Question 4	X	X	X
	All (Focus on Air Force or AMC Writ Large)		
	Research Question	Investigative Question 1	Investigative Question 2
Interview Question 1		X	
Interview Question 2		X	
Interview Question 3	X		
Interview Question 4			X
Interview Question 5			X

Research Question
1. Is the PH-R program still meeting its original intent and is the intent of the program valid today?
Investigative Questions
1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the PH-R program?
2. What are the perceived and actual costs and value of the PH-R program?

Post Interview and Wrap-up

After each interview was completed and transcribed appropriately, the transcriptions were imported into NVivo. Next, a new case was created, and the demographics listed in the interview questions in Appendix C were added. After the demographics to that particular respondent's case were tied to the corresponding case, the coding process began. Coding is the process or organizing and grouping data into common themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017: p. 197). The iterative process that was

used to enhance coding accuracy was Tesch's eight-step coding process listed in Table 5 below. The overall coding results are listed in Appendix E.

Table 5. Tesch's eight steps in the coding process
(Creswell & Creswell, 2017: p. 198)

1. Get a sense of the whole. Read all the transcriptions carefully. Perhaps jot down some ideas as they come to mind as you read.

2. Pick one document (i.e. one interview)- the most interesting one, the shortest, the one on top of the pile. Go through it, asking yourself, "What is this about?" Do not think about the substance of the information but its underlying meaning. Write thoughts in the margin.

3. When you have completed this task for several participants, make a list of all topics. Cluster together similar topics. Form these topics into columns, perhaps arrayed as major, unique, and leftover topics.

4. Now take this list and go back to your data. Abbreviate the topics as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text. Try this preliminary organizing scheme to see if new categories and codes emerge.

5. Find the most descriptive wording for your topics and turn them into categories. Look for ways of reducing your total list of categories by grouping topics that relate to each other. Perhaps draw lines between your categories to show interrelationships.

6. Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetize these codes.

7. Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and perform a preliminary analysis.

8. If necessary, recode your existing data. (pp. 142-149)

Once the coding process was completed, the data was then checked for reliability and validity. This verification was conducted using a few methods. These methods included triangulating different data sources, using member checking (classmates), and finally, using an external auditor (the paper advisor of this study).

IV. Analysis and Results

Chapter Overview

This chapter will first build a foundation of understanding why the study is vital by analyzing the promotion data. It will then detail the demographics of the 18 interview respondents. Next, the chapter will analyze the overall perception of the respondents of the PH-R program. It will then ultimately analyze the results of the coded data from interviews of the respondents to answer the research and investigative questions.

PH-R Promotion Data

It is necessary to build a foundation for why this case study is necessary. As mentioned above in the introduction, understanding the validity of the PH-R leadership development program will help to inform current leaders of the program on how to align the program to meet the current CSAFs number two priority to strengthen squadron culture and leadership, ultimately meeting the guidance of the NDS.

As such, various promotion data of participants in the PH-R program was gathered, consolidated, and analyzed and compared to the rest of the MAF's promotion rates. In doing so, one can understand that PH-R participants are promoting at significantly higher rates both below the zone and in the zone to Major (Maj), Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col), and Colonel (Col) as compared to non-PH participants in the MAF. These higher promotion rates indirectly indicate that more opportunity is afforded to PH-R participants to lead at the squadron commander level and beyond.

Figure 4 and Figure 5 below highlight the PH-R Lt Col and Col below the Promotion Zone (BPZ) promotion rates over a five board period as compared to the rest

of the Non-PH MAF rates. As shown in the charts, the overall Non-PH AMC selection rate is relatively steady while the PH-R AMC and Non-AMC rates have significant variability. However, it appears that they are still mostly above the Non-PH AMC rates.

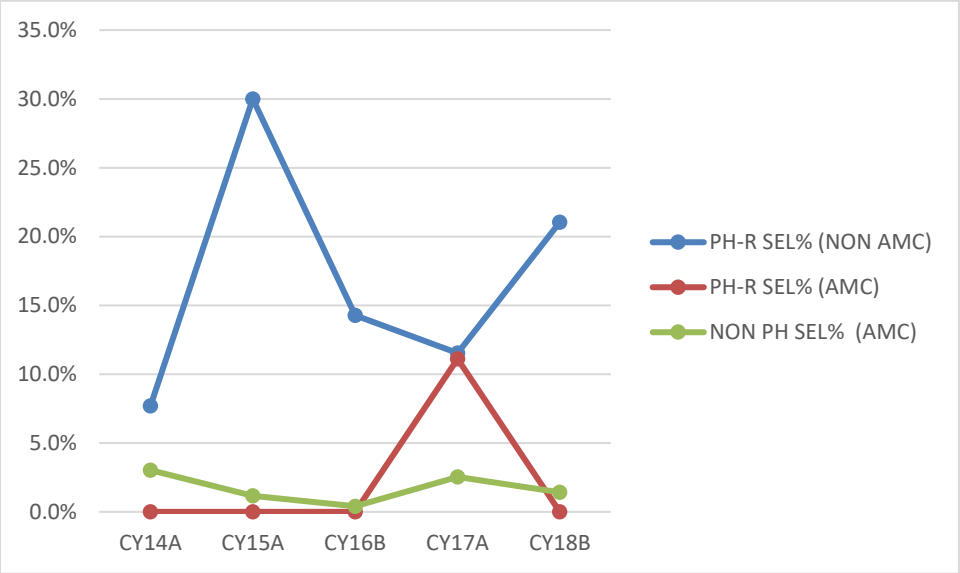


Figure 4. Lt Col BPZ selection rates
(NON-AMC means the individual was assigned outside of AMC at promotion board)

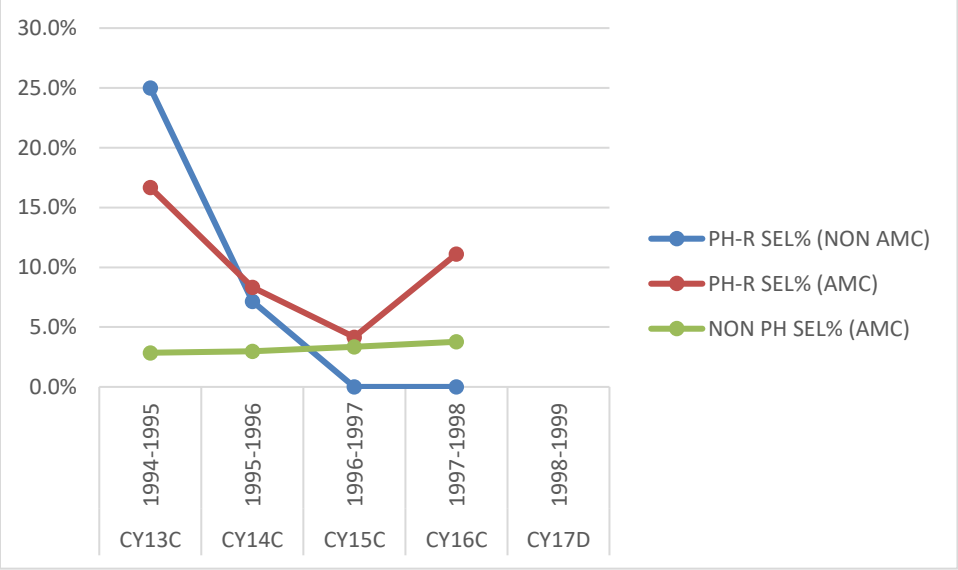


Figure 5. Col BPZ selection rates
(NON-AMC means the individual was assigned outside of AMC at promotion board)

On the other hand, Figure 6, Figure 7, and Figure 8 below show the Maj, Lt Col, and Col in the Promotion Zone (IPZ) promotion rates respectively compared to AMC. The figures show that the IPZ PH-R selection rates are significantly above the Non-PH AMC selection rates.

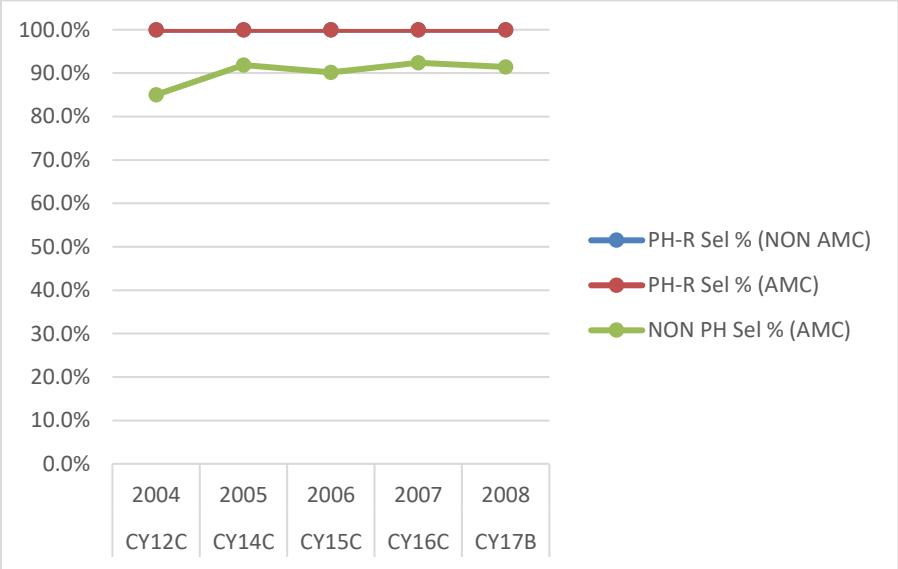


Figure 6. Maj IPZ selection rates
(NON-AMC means the individual was assigned outside of AMC at promotion board)

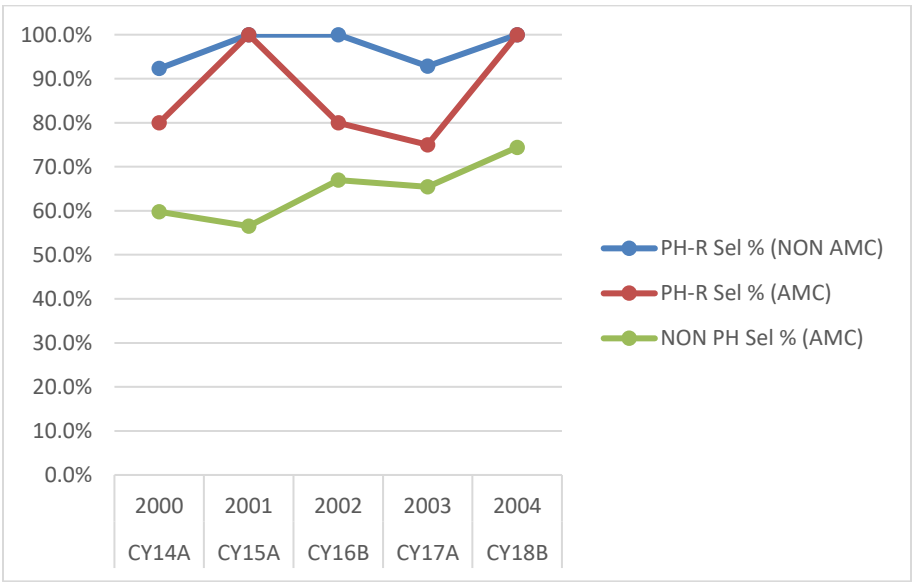


Figure 7. Lt Col IPZ selection rates
(NON-AMC means the individual was assigned outside of AMC at promotion board)

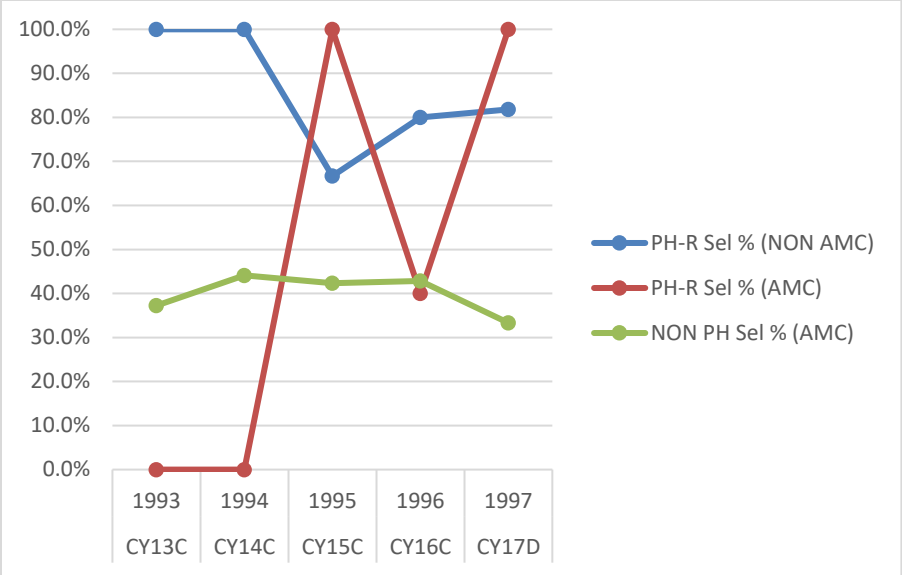


Figure 8. Col IPZ selection rates
(NON-AMC means the individual was assigned outside of AMC at promotion board)

Interview Demographics

It is important to note that despite multiple attempts, three participants in the senior major category never responded for participation. In addition, one more senior leader was included in the study by recommendation of another participating senior leader because of his prior experience as a senior leader of the program and because of his opposing perspective. In total, 18 officers were interviewed as listed in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Total categories of interviews conducted

Interview Category	# PH-R Participants	# PH-R Non-Participants	Total
Senior Leader (>O-6)	1	2	3
Graduated OG or WG/CC	3	3	6
Graduated SQ/CC	2	4	6
Senior Maj (14 Years TAFCSD)	2	1	3
Total	**8**	**10**	**18**

The overall result was a participation rate of 90%. It is also important to note, the desired sample from a population of approximately 2,200 rated officers. For the four categories,

this included a pool of 99 senior leaders, 213 graduated wing or group commanders, 331 graduated squadron commanders, and 1,568 senior majors.

The rank and commissioning year group for all of the 18 participants is listed in Table 7 below. Overall, by interviewing 18 respondents, over nine hours of audio was recorded, transcribed, and coded.

Table 7. Interview rank demographics (all)

	Commisioning Year Group												
Rank	**1984**	**1990**	**1993**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2005**	**2006**	**Total Participants**
Lt Gen (Ret)	1												1
Maj Gen		1											1
Brig Gen			1										1
Col				1	1	3		1					6
Lt Col							3	2	1				6
Maj										1	1	1	3
Total	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**18**

The participants were further grouped by Non-PH-R and PH-R in Table 8 and Table 9, respectively. In total, 10 Non-PH-R and 8 PH-R participants were interviewed across 12 total commissioning year-groups, the oldest being 1983 and the most recent being 2006.

Table 8. Interview rank demographics (Non-PH-R)

Non-PH-R Rank	1984	1993	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
Lt Gen (Ret)	1								1
Brig Gen		1							1
Col			1	1		1			3
Lt Col					1	2	1		4
Maj								1	1
Total	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**10**

Table 9. Interview rank demographics (PH-R)

PH-R Rank	1990	1996	1997	1998	2005	2006	Total
Maj Gen	1						1
Col		1	2				3
Lt Col				2			2
Maj					1	1	2
Total	**1**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**8**

Finally, it is essential to point out that one of the Non-PH-R respondents was selected for the PH-R program. However, he went to the PH-M program instead. After completion of the PH-M program, he was then cross-flowed outside of the PH-R program. Despite this, he was able to give the perspective of a PH-R program participant because of his insight and experience with the PH-M program.

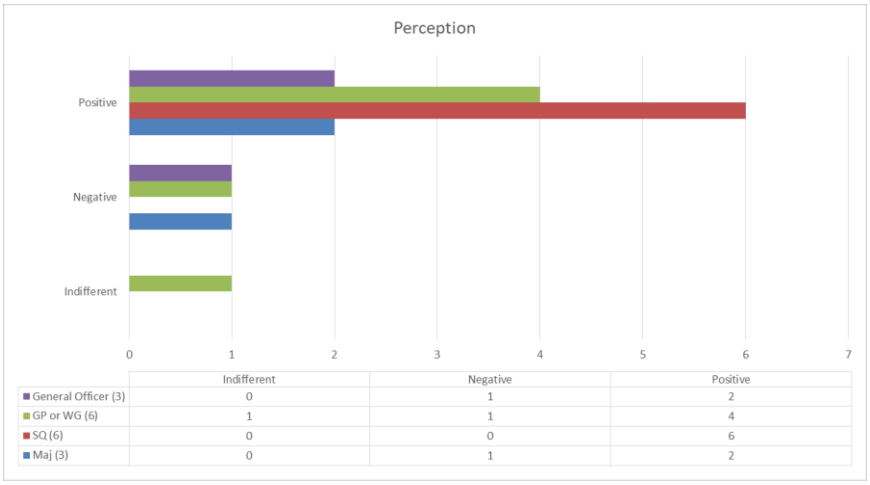
Research and Investigative Questions Answered

This section will attempt to use the data coded from interviews to answer the research and investigative questions. The overall coding results are list in Appendix E.

Program Perception

The overall perception of all interviewees was that they had a positive perception of the PH-R program. Of the 18 total officers interviewed, as noted in Figure 9, 14 had a

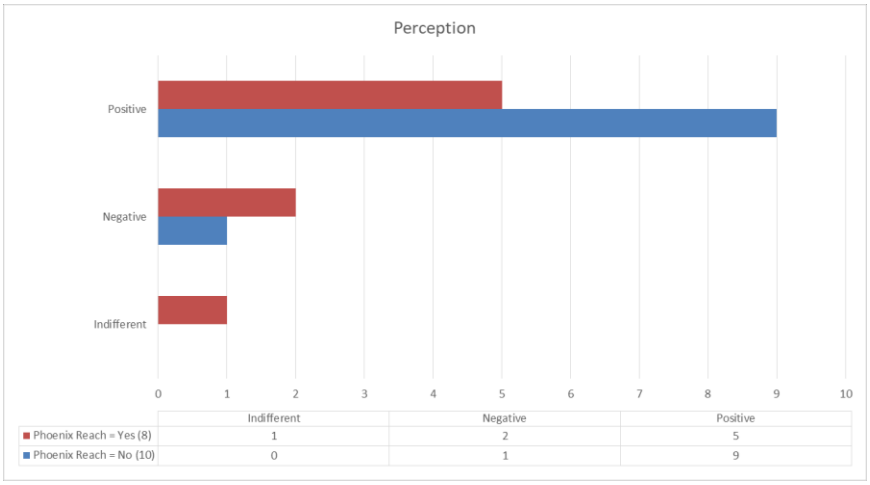
positive view of the program, three had an unfavorable view, and one had an indifferent view.



	Indifferent	Negative	Positive
General Officer (3)	0	1	2
GP or WG (6)	1	1	4
SQ (6)	0	0	6
Maj (3)	0	1	2

Figure 9. PH-R perception (interview category)

Additionally, as shown in Figure 10, the only person to have a negative or indifferent view of the program was not a PH-R participant.



	Indifferent	Negative	Positive
Phoenix Reach = Yes (8)	1	2	5
Phoenix Reach = No (10)	0	1	9

Figure 10. PH-R perception (participation)

After understanding the officer's overall perception of the PH-R program, the participant's view on the validity of the program was analyzed.

Is the PH-R Program Valid?

To help understand the validity of the program, the respondent was given time to read and understand the background information on the interview question sheet listed in Appendix C. They were then asked if they saw the program as still being valid 26 years later. The results shown in Figure 11, indicate that 14 respondents believed the program is still valid, four believed it is not valid, and one said some portions of it were valid.

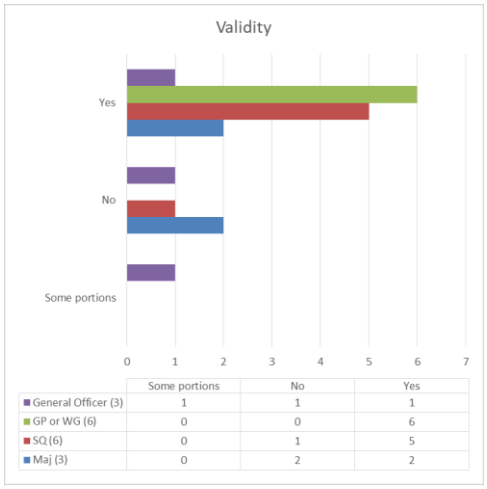


Figure 11. Program validity (interview category)

In addition, of the respondents that said the program was valid, the top three reasons for thinking the program was valid were for the program's propensity for cross-pollination, giving individuals different perspectives, and grooming leaders

Figure 12. Program validity yes (interview category)

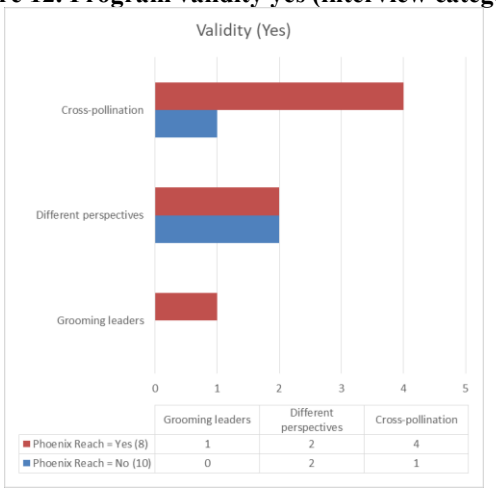


Figure 13. Program validity yes (participation)

However, the top three reasons for those that thought the program was not valid were because the program is not recognized outside of AMC, the challenge of cultural acceptance, and because they thought there are better alternatives. It is important to note that of those that responded that the program was not recognized outside of AMC, three were non-PH-R participants, and one was. Additionally, the two that listed cultural acceptance as a reason the program is not valid were PH-R participants.

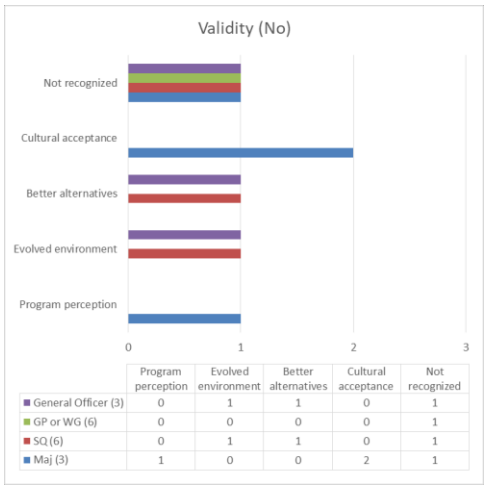


Figure 14. Program validity no (interview category)

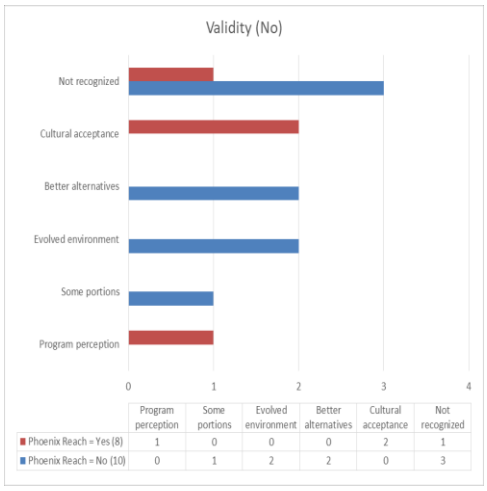
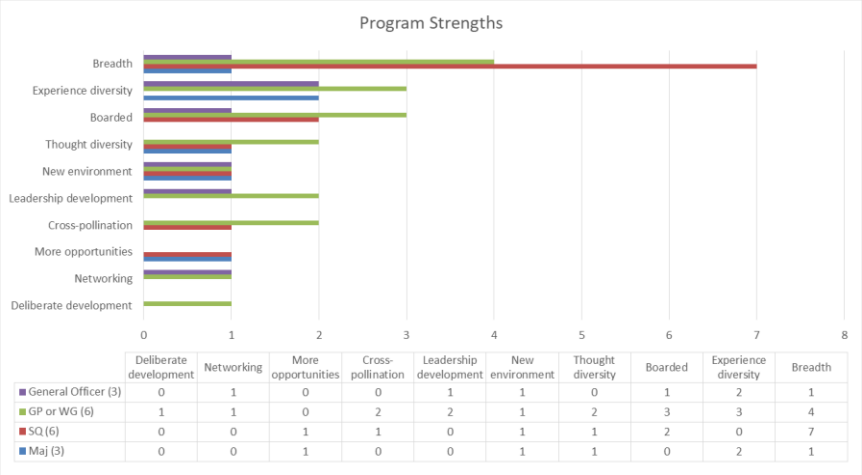


Figure 15. Program validity no (participation)

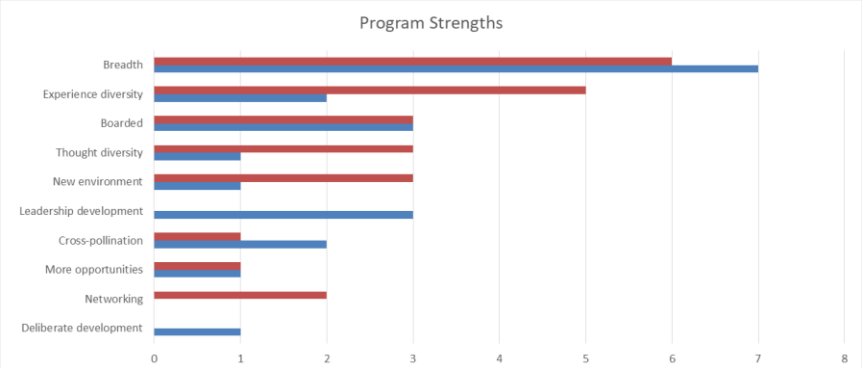
What are the Strengths and Weaknesses of the PH-R Program?

Next, the strengths and weaknesses of the PH-R program from an Air Force perspective were analyzed. For the strengths of the program, Figure 16 and Figure 17 show the top three discussed by the respondents were breadth, experience diversity, and the program being boarded.



	Deliberate development	Networking	More opportunities	Cross-pollination	Leadership development	New environment	Thought diversity	Boarded	Experience diversity	Breadth
General Officer (3)	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	1
GP or WG (6)	1	1	0	2	2	1	2	3	3	4
SQ (6)	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	7
Maj (3)	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	1

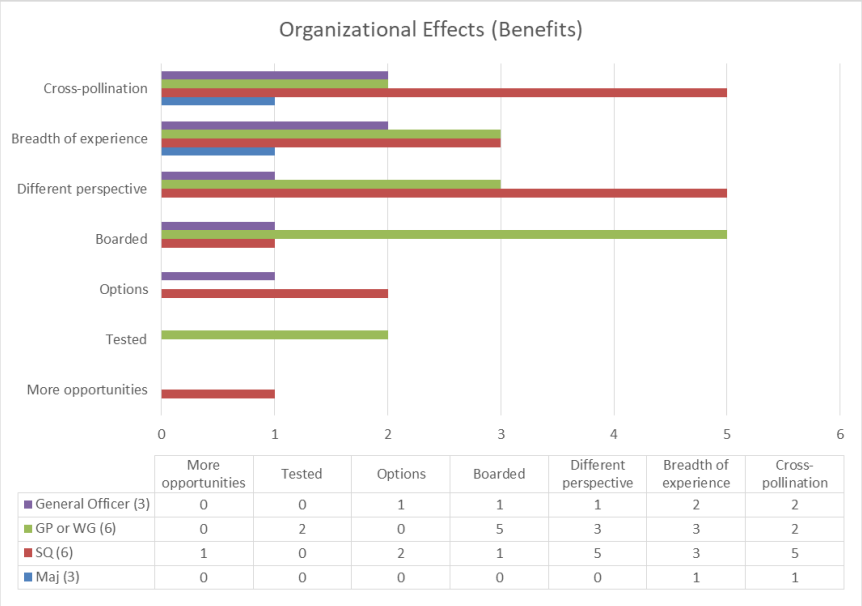
Figure 16. Program strengths (interview category)



	Deliberate development	Networking	More opportunities	Cross-pollination	Leadership development	New environment	Thought diversity	Boarded	Experience diversity	Breadth
Phoenix Reach = Yes (8)	0	2	1	1	0	3	3	3	5	6
Phoenix Reach = No (10)	1	0	1	2	3	1	1	3	2	7

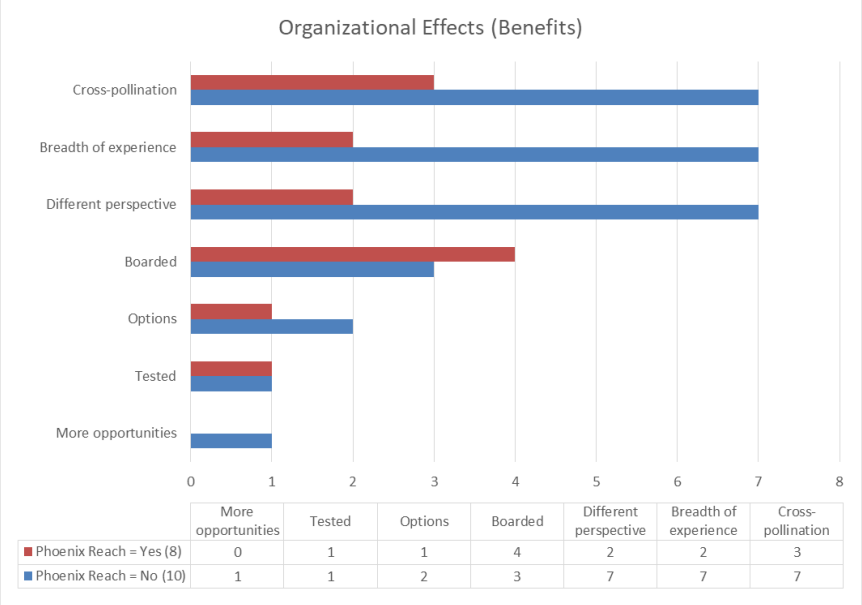
Figure 17. Program strengths (participation)

In addition to asking about the strengths of the program, respondents were asked about any observed beneficial effects of having PH-R participants within their organizations. Of the 18 interviewed, 16 responded that they observed the benefits of having PH-R participants in their organizations. As shown in Figure 18 and Figure 19, the top three benefits discussed by respondents were cross-pollination, breadth of experience, and different perspectives.



	More opportunities	Tested	Options	Boarded	Different perspective	Breadth of experience	Cross-pollination
General Officer (3)	0	0	1	1	1	2	2
GP or WG (6)	0	2	0	5	3	3	2
SQ (6)	1	0	2	1	5	3	5
Maj (3)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

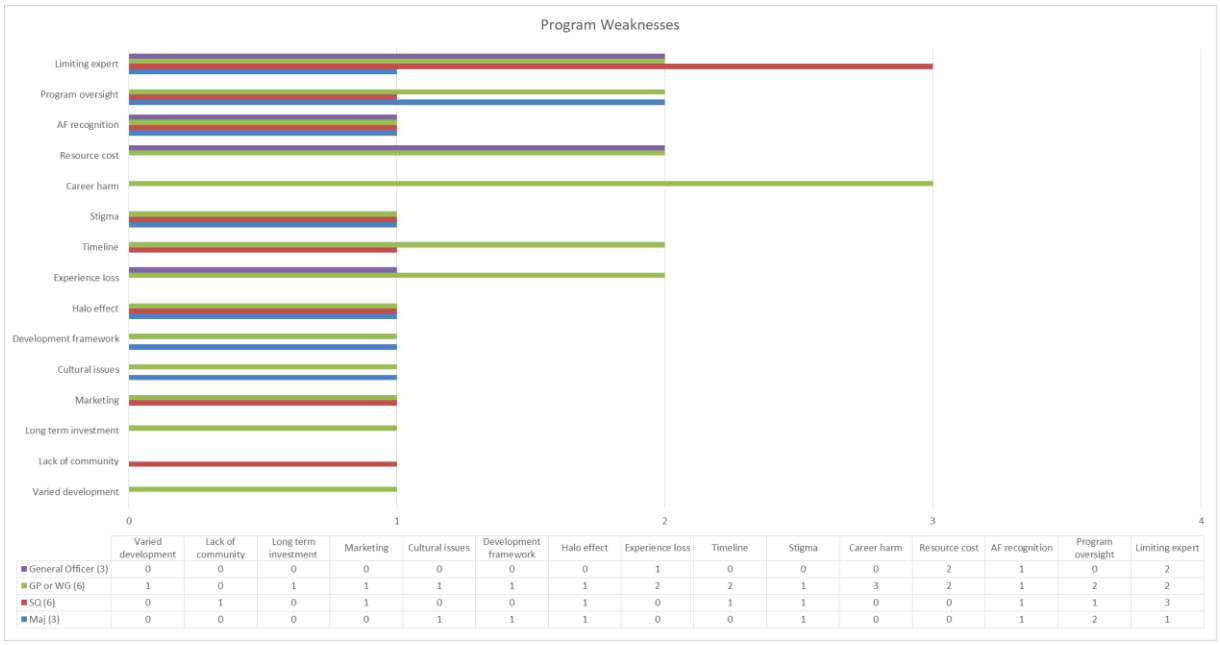
Figure 18. Organizational effects benefits (interview category)



	More opportunities	Tested	Options	Boarded	Different perspective	Breadth of experience	Cross-pollination
Phoenix Reach = Yes (8)	0	1	1	4	2	2	3
Phoenix Reach = No (10)	1	1	2	3	7	7	7

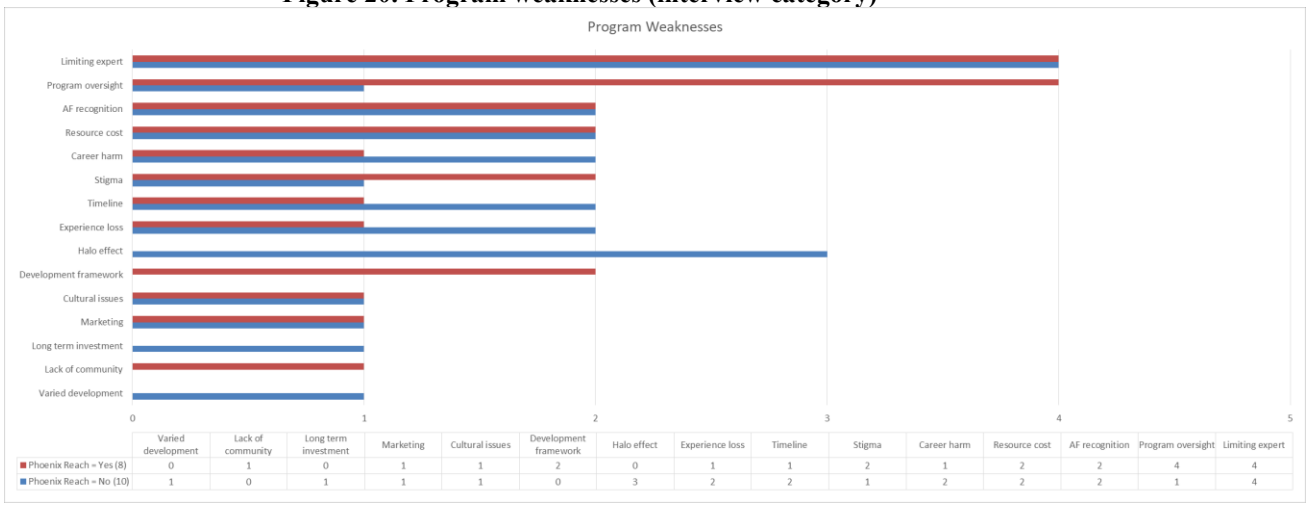
Figure 19. Organizational effects benefits (participation)

The Air Force-level weaknesses of the PH-R program were then analyzed. The top three discussed weaknesses of the program were limiting the participant to be an expert (in the second airframe), program oversight, and AF recognition (recognition of the program outside of AMC).



	Varied development	Lack of community	Long term investment	Marketing	Cultural issues	Development framework	Halo effect	Experience loss	Timeline	Stigma	Career harm	Resource cost	AF recognition	Program oversight	Limiting expert
General Officer (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	2
GP or WG (6)	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	2	1	2	2
SQ (6)	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	3
Maj (3)	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1

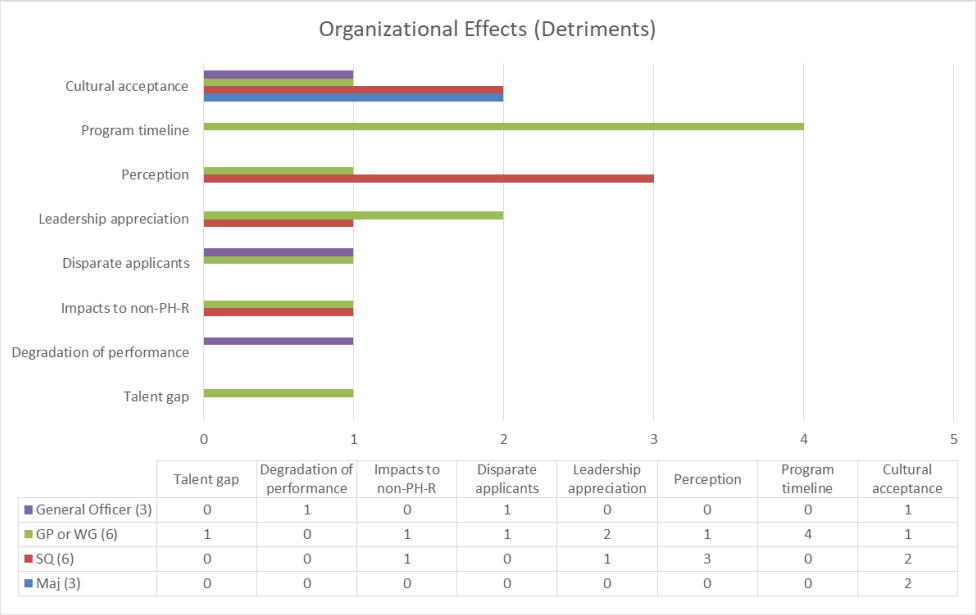
Figure 20. Program weaknesses (interview category)



	Varied development	Lack of community	Long term investment	Marketing	Cultural issues	Development framework	Halo effect	Experience loss	Timeline	Stigma	Career harm	Resource cost	AF recognition	Program oversight	Limiting expert
Phoenix Reach = Yes (8)	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	2	2	4	4
Phoenix Reach = No (10)	1	0	1	1	1	0	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	4

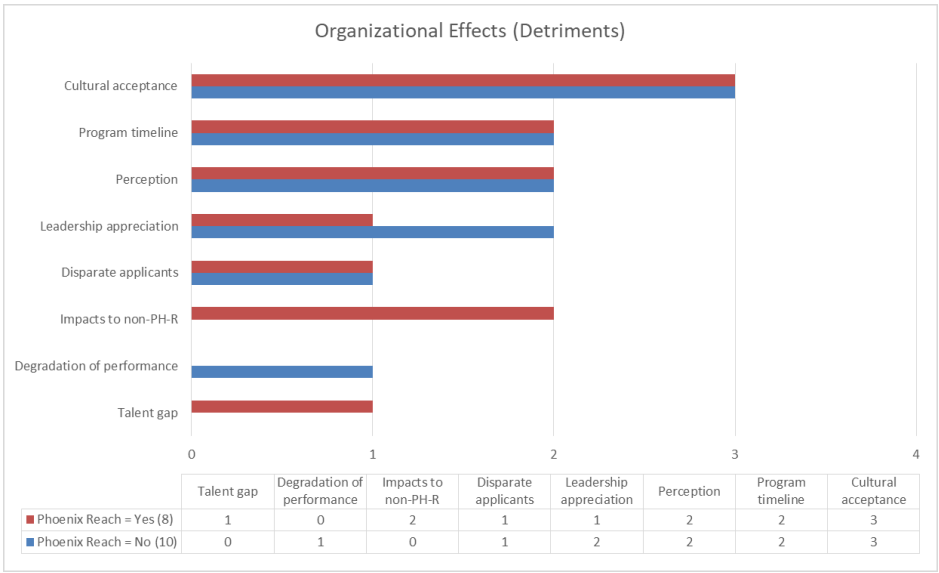
Figure 21. Program weaknesses (participation)

After the weaknesses of the program were analyzed, the organizational detriments that could be observed by respondents within their organizations were analyzed. The top three detriments discussed by the respondents shown in Figure 22 and Figure 23 were cultural acceptance, program timeline, and perception of the program (both AF and non-participant).



	Talent gap	Degradation of performance	Impacts to non-PH-R	Disparate applicants	Leadership appreciation	Perception	Program timeline	Cultural acceptance
General Officer (3)	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
GP or WG (6)	1	0	1	1	2	1	4	1
SQ (6)	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	2
Maj (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Figure 22. Organizational detriments (interview category)



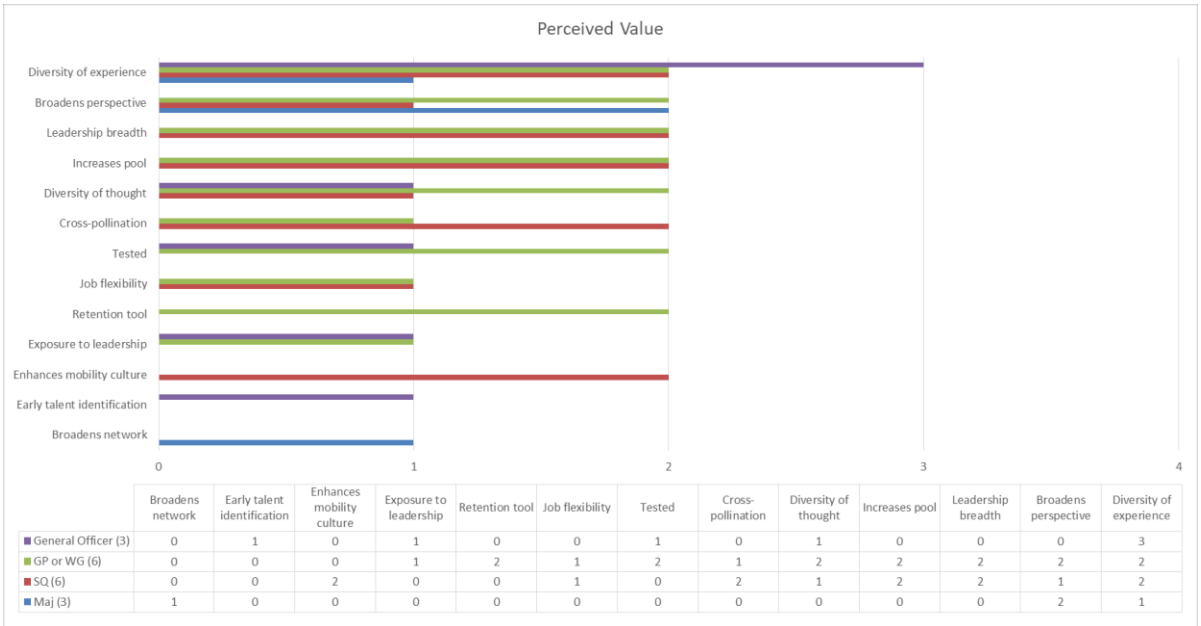
	Talent gap	Degradation of performance	Impacts to non-PH-R	Disparate applicants	Leadership appreciation	Perception	Program timeline	Cultural acceptance
Phoenix Reach = Yes (8)	1	0	2	1	1	2	2	3
Phoenix Reach = No (10)	0	1	0	1	2	2	2	3

Figure 23. Organizational detriments (participation)

What are the Perceived Value and Costs of the PH-R Program?

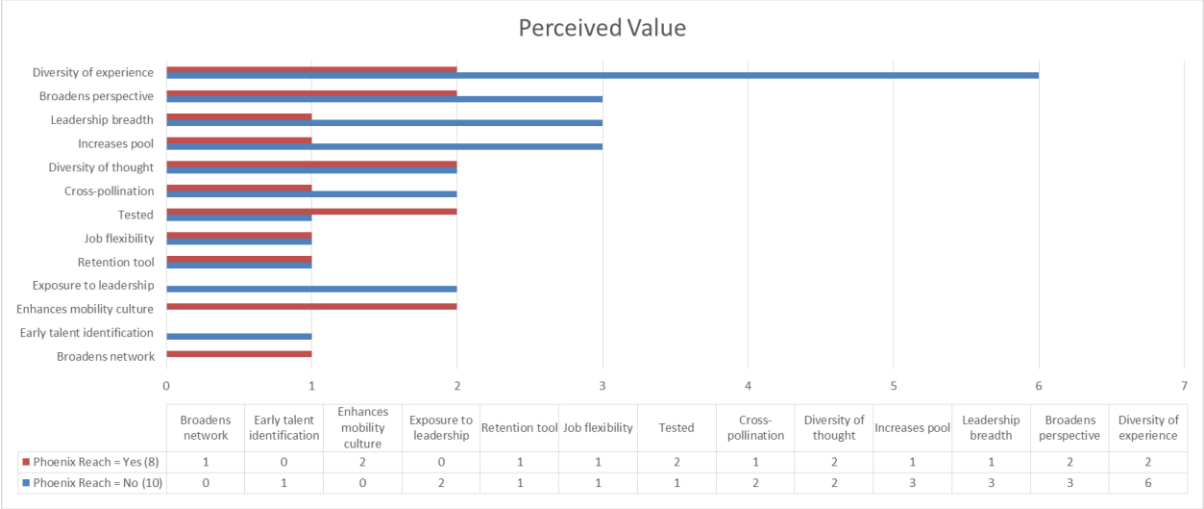
The perceived value and costs of the PH-R program were then analyzed. An important point to make is that the respondents were asked to focus on the intangible value and cost to the AF or AMC as a whole. Overall, eight officers stated that diversity of experience, broadening perspective, and leadership breadth were the top three

intangible values that the PH-R program brought to the AF or AMC. Interestingly enough, significantly more non-PH-R respondents listed diversity of experience than PH-R participants as a perceived valued.



	Broadens network	Early talent identification	Enhances mobility culture	Exposure to leadership	Retention tool	Job flexibility	Tested	Cross-pollination	Diversity of thought	Increases pool	Leadership breadth	Broadens perspective	Diversity of experience
General Officer (3)	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
GP or WG (6)	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
SQ (6)	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	2	2	1	2
Maj (3)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1

Figure 24. Perceived value (interview category)

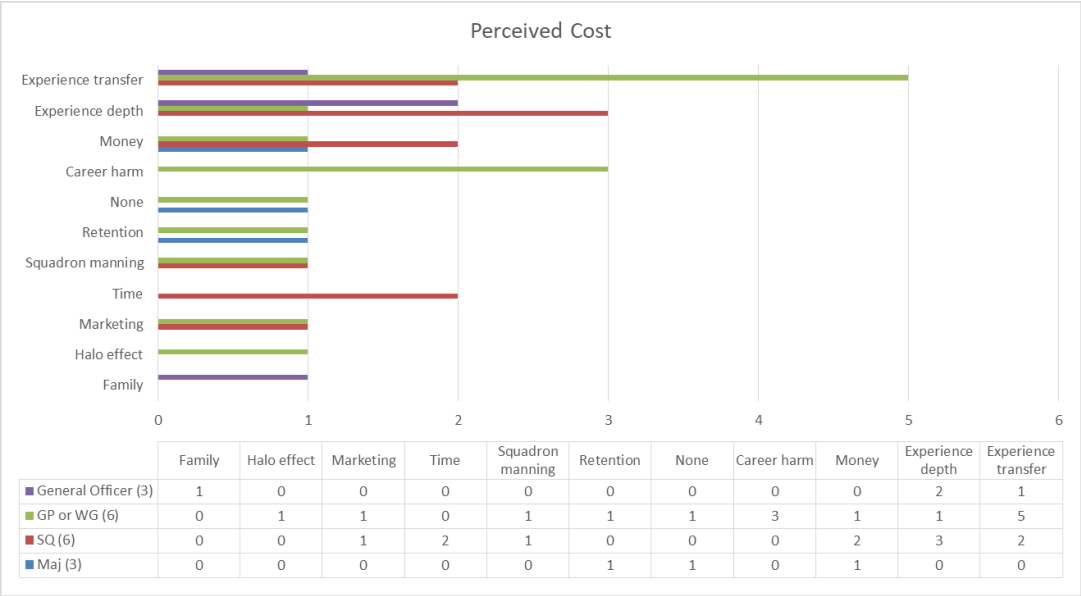


	Broadens network	Early talent identification	Enhances mobility culture	Exposure to leadership	Retention tool	Job flexibility	Tested	Cross-pollination	Diversity of thought	Increases pool	Leadership breadth	Broadens perspective	Diversity of experience
Phoenix Reach = Yes (8)	1	0	2	0	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2
Phoenix Reach = No (10)	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	6

Figure 25. Perceived value (participation)

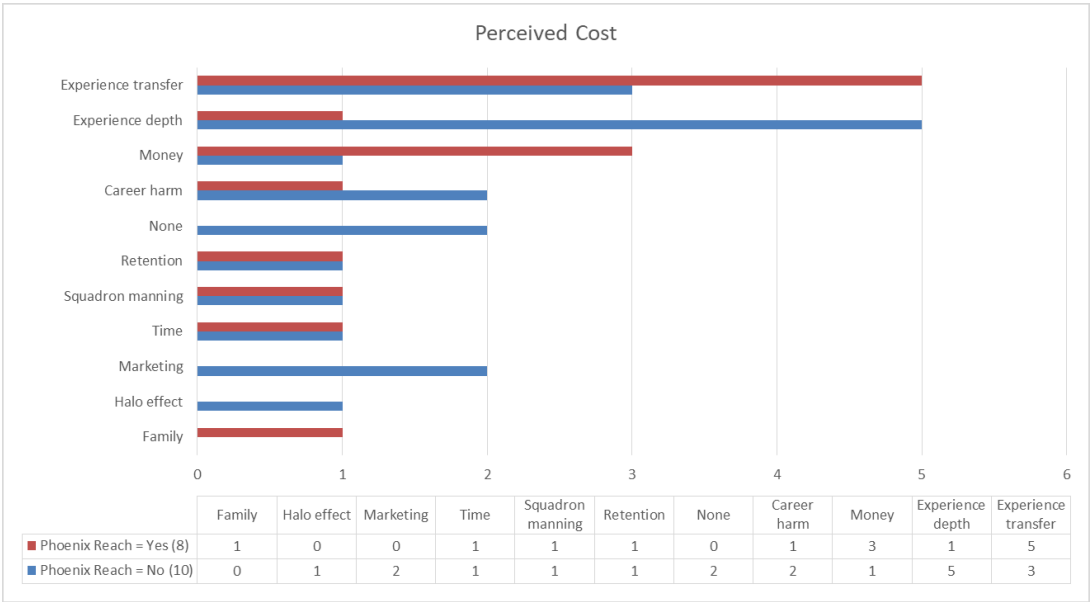
Finally, coded interview data on perceived cost was analyzed. As shown in Figure 26 and Figure 27 below, the respondents stated that experience transfer (from one

community to another), experience depth, and money were the top three perceived costs of the PH-R program.



	Family	Halo effect	Marketing	Time	Squadron manning	Retention	None	Career harm	Money	Experience depth	Experience transfer
General Officer (3)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
GP or WG (6)	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	5
SQ (6)	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	3	2
Maj (3)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0

Figure 26. Perceived cost (interview category)



	Family	Halo effect	Marketing	Time	Squadron manning	Retention	None	Career harm	Money	Experience depth	Experience transfer
Phoenix Reach = Yes (8)	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	3	1	5
Phoenix Reach = No (10)	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	5	3

Figure 27. Perceived cost (participation)

The top three results of answering each of the research and investigative questions of the PH-R program was then consolidated in Figure 28 below. If there was a tie in the results of the top three responses, both responses were listed.

Air Force Level	
Strengths (18)	**Weaknesses (18)**
1. Breadth (13)	1. Limiting expert (8)
2. Experience diversity (7)	2. Program oversight (5)
3. Boarded (6)	3. AF recognition (4)
Value (18)	**Cost (18)**
1. Experience diversity (8)	1. Experience transfer (8)
2. Broadens perspective (5)	2. Experience depth (6)
3. Leadership breadth (4)	3. Monetary cost (4)
4. Larger talent pool (4)	
Organizational Experiences	
Benefits (16)	**Detriments (13)**
1. Cross-pollination (10)	1. Cultural acceptance (6)
2. Breadth (9)	2. Timeline (4)
3. Different perspective (9)	3. Perception (4)
PH-R Program Overall	
Valid (14)	**Not Valid (4)**
1. Cross-pollination (5)	1. Not recognized (program)(4)
2. Different perspectives (4)	2. Cultural acceptance (2)
3. Grooming leaders (1)	3. Better alternatives (2)

*(X) = number of respondents

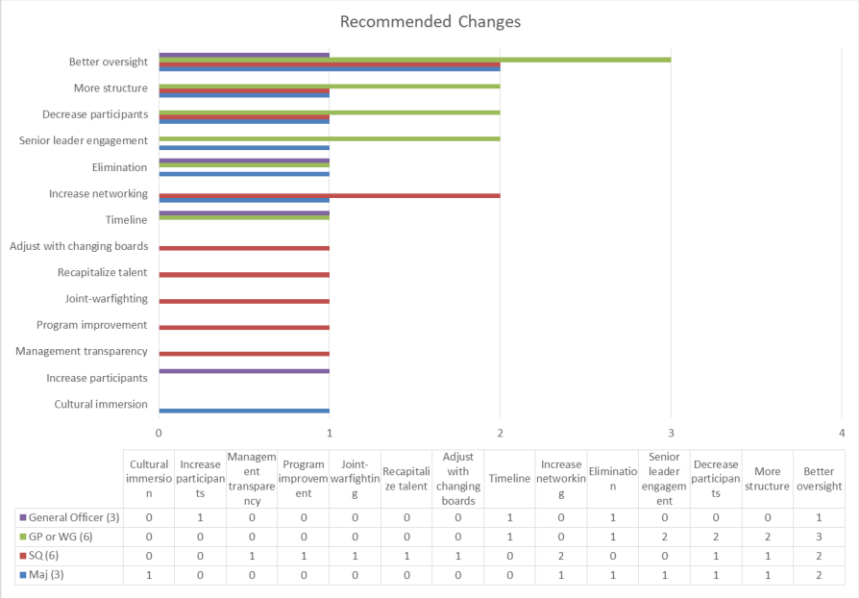
Figure 28. PH-R Research Analysis

To understand opportunities for improvement, the overall top three results of answering the research and investigative questions were consolidated and sorted by similar theme across the categories; detriments, weaknesses, cost, and reasons the program is not valid. The similar themes across categories by the top responses from the respondents were then sorted. The top five opportunities for program improvement are listed in Table 10. These include experience depth, cultural acceptance, program recognition, experience transfer, and program oversight.

Table 10. Opportunities for program improvement

	Experience Depth	Cultural Acceptance	Program Recognition	Experience Transfer	Program oversight	Monetary cost	Perception	Timeline	Better alternatives
Detriments (13)	0	6	0	0	0	0	4	4	0
Weaknesses (18)	8	0	4	0	5	0	0	0	0
Cost (18)	6	0	0	8	0	4	0	0	0
Not Valid (4)	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	2
Respondent Totals	14	8	8	8	5	4	4	4	2

However, when compared to the top five recommended program changes from respondents listed in Figure 29 and Figure 30, there are some differences. The top five recommended program changes include; better oversight, more structure, decrease participants, senior leader engagement, and elimination. Interestingly enough, more PH-R participants recommended changes than non-PH-R participants.



	Cultural immersion	Increase participants	Management transparency	Program improvement	Joint-warfighting	Recapitalize talent	Adjust with changing boards	Timeline	Increase networking	Elimination	Senior leader engagement	Decrease participants	More structure	Better oversight
General Officer (3)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
GP or WG (6)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	2	3
SQ (6)	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	2
Maj (3)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2

Figure 29. Recommended changes (interview category)

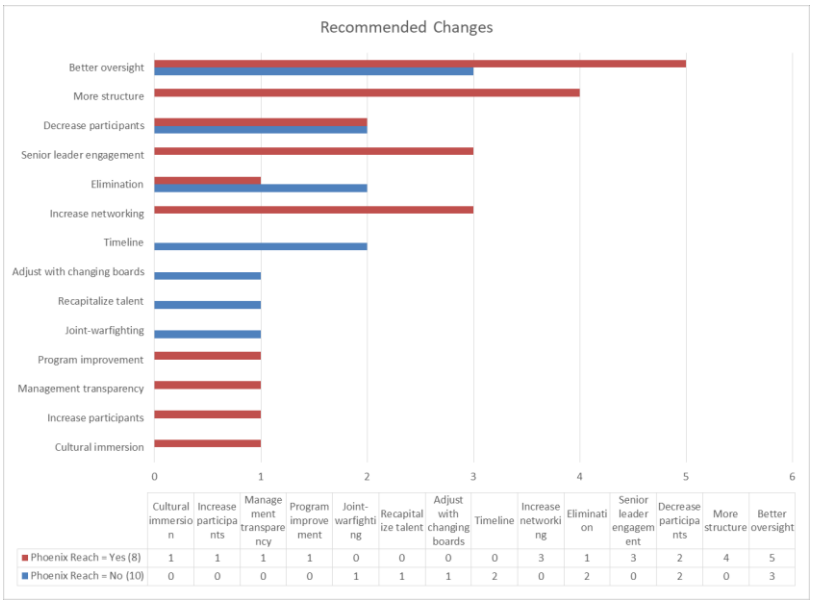


Figure 30. Recommended changes (participation)

Finally, by comparing the PH-R opportunities for program improvement with the respondent's recommended changes in Table 11, a few active themes were identified. This comparison was accomplished by identifying if the recommendation would affect the program improvement opportunity. An "X" was then placed in the table if the recommendation could affect the opportunity for program improvement. Finally, the sums of all of the "Xs" were rank-ordered from highest to lowest recommendation and opportunity.

Table 11. Recommendations and opportunities comparison matrix

	Opportunities for Program Improvement					
Recommendations	**Program Oversight**	**Cultural Acceptance**	**Program Recognition**	**Experience Depth**	**Experience Transfer**	**Totals**
Better oversight	X	X	X	X		**3**
More structure	X	X		X		**2**
Senior Leader Engagement	X	X	X			**2**
Decrease Participants	X		X			**1**
Totals	**4**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**0**	

Summary

In summary, it was determined that the overall perception of the PH-R program from the 18 respondents is overwhelmingly positive. It was determined that most of the respondents feel the program is valid and still meets its original intent. However, a few respondents feel that the program is not valid, or some portions of it are valid.

In addition, the research was able to identify the top three strengths (breadth, experience diversity, and a boarded program) and weaknesses (limiting expertise, program oversight, and AF recognition) as well as the top three costs (experience transfer, experience depth, and monetary cost) and value (experience diversity, broadens perspective, leadership breadth, and larger talent pool) of the PH-R program. The top three organizational benefits (cross-pollination, breadth, and different perspective) and detriments (cultural acceptance, timeline, and perception) of the program from the respondent's experiences were also identified.

In the end, the top five program opportunities were compared with the top five program improvement recommendations to identify the overall top three recommendations for PH-R program improvement. The top three opportunities for improvement include; program oversight, cultural acceptance, and program recognition.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter Overview

This chapter will discuss the overall conclusions of the PH-R study. Next, it will identify the significance of the research. It will then provide recommendations for action. Lastly, it will conclude by making recommendations for further research.

Conclusions of Research

After the results of the interview data were thoroughly analyzed, three main opportunities for improvement were identified. These include;

1. Program oversight
2. Cultural acceptance
3. Program recognition

Program oversight

Quite a few respondents mentioned a few areas within program oversight for improvement. The first was a propensity for participants of the program to have vastly different experiences. Respondents mentioned the wide variation in participant's experiences in the PH-R program for a few reasons; PH-R program managers of applicants do not always have knowledge or experience with the program, participants are not always mentored appropriately, and lastly, some respondents felt that the AMC/A1K office could improve tracking and development of PH-R participant's post-program participation.

First, multiple respondents discussed significant variation in how PH-R program managers viewed the PH-R program. Furthermore, a few respondents mentioned that

there is some variation across the AMC enterprise in the way that PH-R program managers appreciate participants of the program as well as their understanding of the talents that PH-R participants bring to their gaining organizations.

Further, because not every PH-R program manager was a previous program participant, the respondents mentioned this variation was possibly due to the overall education of the program to the PH-R program managers from the program's owning organization, AMC/A1K. Reducing variation in program manager appreciation of the PH-R program is vital because as discussed by Dugan and Gavan O'shea (2014), organizational culture and systems are required to support leadership and development in a few key ways; senior leader support, alignment with existing human resource practices, and accountability (Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014, pp. 14–15). As vice wing commanders, PH-R program manager support and appreciation of the capabilities and limitations of the PH-R is necessary to eliminate the variation in development and ultimately return on investment of PH-R participants.

Next, in the interviews, multiple respondents mentioned they were not mentored promptly or at all by their assigned senior mentor. A few participants even mentioned that they had to seek out development opportunities or mentoring on their own. This failure of mentoring is a violation of the mentoring processes spelled out in the PH CONEMP. More specifically, the CONEMP states, the program manager is the Vice Wing Commander or O-6 equivalent and is responsible for ensuring organization participants are being mentored, meeting the intent of the program, and will meet a provide feedback to participants on a semi-annual basis (AMC/A1KO, 2017, pp. 9–10). Since the PH-R is less structured than other PH programs, it is even more essential that it

includes tools like assessment, coaching and mentoring (Dugan & Gavan O'shea, 2014, p. 14)

A significant number of respondents felt that the AMC/A1KO office could improve overall tracking and development of PH-R participant's post-program participation. A few participants even felt that the tracking and development efforts did not match the significant investment in time and money that AMC made in participants of the program. As such, these few individuals stated that if more focus was not placed on the tracking and development of PH-R participants, the program might as well be eliminated because AMC was not realizing a significant return on investment.

Cultural acceptance

The second opportunity for program improvement that was identified is cultural acceptance. Cultural acceptance for this study was defined as the propensity for the PH-R participant's gaining community to accept the attitudes, thoughts, perspectives, and experiences of the PH-R participant. As the interview data was analyzed, the cultural acceptance theme emerged with discussions of many of the respondents.

A relationship emerged that as the disparity of the values between communities that the PH-R participant was a member of increases, the challenge for the participant to be culturally accepted also increases. An example of this disparity of values is between the KC-10 and C-130 communities. One respondent specifically mentioned being a member of the C-130 community in which they stated as a tactical asset, the community valued tactical prowess and expertise.

However, when the respondent participated in the PH-R program and went to the KC-10 community, a strategic asset, he stated that the community valued a person's reputation and ability to fit in with others (personal reputation) over tactical prowess and expertise. As such, the respondent stated that he was not culturally accepted by the KC-10 community and was ignored in his attempts to cross-pollinate his gaining community with his diversity of thought, experience, and perspective. He also stated his personal development was hindered because he was continually being ignored and had significant challenges trying to be culturally accepted.

Program recognition

The final opportunity for program improvement that was identified in the research analysis was program recognition. Many respondents felt that the PH-R program is only valued within AMC. Part of the reason for this is that many operational commands within the AF do not crossflow aviators within their commands to other airframes. The Combat Air Forces (CAF) for example very rarely crossflow their aviators to other airframes within the CAF. If the CAF decides to crossflow an aviator, it is for divestment or crew-ratio leveling.

Right or wrong, the CAF writ large values combat expertise and cross flowing to other airframes like in the PH-R program as stated by many respondents limits the expertise of participants. The adverse effects of program recognition can be seen in the promotion data to Colonel as there is a smaller selection rate overall in PH-R participant IPZ and BPZ promotion rates (shown in Figure 5 and Figure 8 above). One possible

explanation is that AF promotion boards are consolidated at the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) and contain board members that are in jobs across the AF enterprise.

Recommendations for Action

After an analysis of the literature review and the overall results of the study, a few possible recommendations for action were developed:

1. Program oversight
    a. Engage with senior leaders to define the product that the PH-R program should be producing (the end goal)
    b. Consider adding a Special Duty Identifier (SDI) to pull data on individuals more accurately and efficiently instead of manually tracking
    c. Focus on performance of PH-R participants instead of promotion data to evaluate and adjust program success.
        i. Track outplacement and assignment post-program participation (Wing level jobs, above wing level, MAJCOM, AOC, HAF, Joint, etc.)
        ii. Track performance of individuals within and post-program participation (stratifications, vectors, IDE/SDE selection, etc.)
    d. Regularly analyze the performance of PH-R participants to understand areas for improvement to meet desired participant development

2. Cultural acceptance
    a. Conduct participant interviews by potential gaining commanders to determine if the PH-R selectee is a good fit for the gaining community's culture
    b. Offer a cultural immersion for PH-R selectees (a few days to a week-long)
    c. Increase messaging about the PH-R program's importance as well as cultural acceptance by senior leaders across the enterprise
3. Program recognition
    a. Enhance and enforce training of PH-R stakeholders (AMC/A1KO officers, senior mentor, program managers, and senior advisor)
    b. Increase senior leader messaging about the importance, successes, strengths, and value of the program both inside and outside of AMC
    c. Reduce messaging of promotion results of PH-R participants (creates an image of careerism)
    d. Increase messaging of successes of PH-R participants (see program oversight above)

Recommendations for Future Research

After analyzing the overall research and recommendations for research areas provided by respondents, five areas for future research were identified. The five critical areas for potential research listed below are:

1. Analyzing and providing the optimum number of participants of the PH-R program per airframe accounting for upgrade time and cost
2. Analysis of the timeline of the PH-R program to determine if it can be adjusted
3. Analysis of PH-R participant's performance post-program participation
4. Analysis of PH-R participant's retention post-program participation
5. Comparison of PH-R program performance with other PH programs

Ultimately, if data of mobility pilots from A1K becomes more accessible for research, for example with an implementation of SDIs, more advanced analysis such as survival or regression models can be conducted to determine correlation for items such as participation, performance, and retention.

Summary

First, this case study built a foundation for the importance of determining if General Fogleman's vision of cross-pollinating mobility culture in the PH-R program is still valid. The importance of today is to meet the peer and near-peer adversary competitive challenges of the NDS and the current CSAF's number two priority to strengthen squadron culture and leadership. To further strengthen this importance, PH-R participant promotion data was analyzed and compared with non-PH-R participant promotion data to understand the high likelihood that PH-R participants will command at the squadron level and beyond.

With the understanding of the likelihood that PH-R participants will command, the qualitative data from interviews of respondents were analyzed to understand the

validity of the program in its current state. Overall, it was determined that the program is valid; however, needs improvement.

Five opportunities for improvement were then identified and matrixed with five of the respondent's recommendations to improve and then rank-ordered. From the matrix, three opportunities for PH-R program improvement were then identified. These opportunities for improvement included program oversight, cultural acceptance, and program recognition. Lastly, a few recommendations for action as well as a few future research areas were identified.

Ultimately by understanding this case study and implementing the recommendations for action, the PH-R program will continue to maintain its validity and improve the product and relevancy of PH-R participants produced by the program. As a result, this will ensure that the AMC will continue to produce relevant leaders that can enhance squadron culture and leadership to meet the challenges of the NDS.

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Appendix A – IRB Approval Letter

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR FORCE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE OHIO

28 March, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR Seong-Jong Joo, PHD

FROM: William A. Cunningham, Ph.D.

AFIT IRB Research Reviewer

2950 Hobson Way

Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433-7765

SUBJECT: Approval for exemption request from human experimentation requirements (32 CFR 219, DoD 3216.2 and AFI 40-402) for examining the AMC Phoenix Reach Program Study REN2019012E Joo (Coburn).

1. Your request was based on the Code of Federal Regulations, title 32, part 219, section 101, paragraph (b) (2) Research activities that involve the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior unless: (i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

2. Your study qualifies for this exemption because you are not collecting sensitive data, which could reasonably damage the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. Further, the demographic data you are utilizing and the way that you plan to report it cannot realistically be expected to map a given response to a specific subject.

3. This determination pertains only to the Federal, Department of Defense, and Air Force regulations that govern the use of human subjects in research. Further, if a subject's future response reasonably places them at risk of criminal or civil liability or is damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation, you are required to file an adverse event report with this office immediately.

WILLIAM A CUNNINGHAM, PH.D.

AFIT Exempt Determination Official

Appendix B – Bullet Background Paper for Interview Participants

TALKING PAPER

ON

AMC PHOENIX REACH PROGRAM ANALYSIS RESEARCH PROJECT

- The purpose of this talking paper is to introduce an Air Mobility Command (AMC) research study by the Air Force Institute of Technology's (AFIT) Advanced Study of Air Mobility (ASAM) program. The purpose of this research is to analyze the Phoenix Reach program's ability to develop future leaders for command by determining the program's actual and perceived benefit and comparing it to the program's actual and perceived cost.

- Issue / Research Problem Statement

  --The Phoenix Reach program is an AMC professional development program under the Phoenix Horizon umbrella. The program aims to competitively select candidates for participation between 4 to 8 years of their Total Active Federal Commission Service Date (TAFCSD). After selection, participants leave their current community as young instructor pilots, either tanker or airlift, and crossflow to the opposite community. Once the participant crossflows, they are broadened and developed through instructor pilot certification in their new community. However, beyond crossflowing to another community, in its current form, the program has very minimal deliberate development objectives.

  -- The AMC Phoenix Reach program is considered a leadership development program. However, since its inception in 1993, there has not been a cost-benefit analysis to research program performance in developing leaders.

- Research Objectives

  -- Determine the actual and perceived costs and benefits of the program to identify gaps and ultimately recommendations for improvement.

  -- Determine the degree to which the Phoenix Reach program develops the leadership ability of its participants.

- Research Methodology

  -- Statistical analysis, semi-structured interviews, content analysis of organizational documents

- Points of Contact

  -- Principal Investigator, Maj Zach Coburn, Student, AFIT, ASAM

Appendix C – Interview Questions
2019 AFIT AMC Phoenix Reach Program Study
Interview Script

Icebreaker/Introduction

Name:
Rank:
Commissioning year group:
Current Organization/Position:
Phoenix Reach Participant: Yes/No
If Yes,
First Airframe: Second Airframe:
TAFCSD Started PR:
If No
Airframe(s):

In this research, we are examining Air Mobility Command's (AMC's) Phoenix Horizon program; Phoenix Reach. The program was created out of necessity by General Ronald Fogleman in 1993 at AMC's inception to "cross-pollinate" merging Strategic Air Command (SAC) tanker crews. As SAC was divested and merged with AMC, General Fogleman saw the Phoenix Reach program as a means to instill a "mobility" culture into tanker SAC crews that were previously not mobility focused. Further, since its inception as a professional development program, there have not been any formal research initiatives to analyze and evaluate the Phoenix Reach program's ability to develop its participants. However, beyond a lack of research evaluation, it is imperative to evaluate how we can develop leaders more effectively to ensure we can compete against peer and near-peer adversaries and win.

As historical promotion data has proven, it is very likely that Phoenix Reach program participants will command at the squadron-level and beyond. With the current CSAF's focus to revitalize squadrons, this study supports his number 2 priority; Strengthen squadron leadership and culture. The way that this research will serve to strengthen squadron leadership and culture is to hopefully identify gaps in the Phoenix Reach program's ability to develop future leaders and recommend ways to strengthen the leadership ability of its' participants.

Questions for Majors

Participants	Non-Participants
1. Why did you decide to apply for the PR program?	1. Did you consider applying for the program?
2. Did you understand the purpose of the PH-R program? Do you feel that purpose is valid today?	2. Would you recommend any changes to the program?
3. Do you feel the program adequately developed you as an Air Force leader?	
4. Would you recommend any changes to the program?	

Questions for Previous Squadron Commanders

Participants	Participants and Non-Participants
1. Why did you decide to apply for the PR program?	1. Did you have PR participants in your squadron?
2. Did you understand the purpose of the PH-R program? Do you feel that purpose is valid today?	2. If yes, did it benefit or have negative effects on your squadron?
3. Do you feel the PR program adequately developed you to lead a squadron? (if so, what skills did it provide/if not, what skills do you wish you would have had)	3. Would you recommend the program to squadron aviators?
4. Did you feel you had enough time to become an experienced instructor in both airframes?	4. Would you recommend any changes to the program?

Questions for previous Group or Wing Commanders

Participants	Participants and Non-Participants
1. Why did you decide to apply for the PR program?	1. Did you have PR participants in your GP or WG?
2. Did you understand the purpose of the PH-R program? Do you feel that purpose is valid today?	2. If yes, did it benefit or have negative effects on your GP or WG?
3. Do you feel the PR program adequately developed you to lead a GP or a WG? (if so, what skills did it provide/if not, what skills do you wish you would have had)	3. Would you recommend the program to GP or WG aviators?
4. Did you feel you had enough time to become an experienced instructor in both airframes?	4. Would you recommend any changes to the program?

Questions for General Officers

Participants	Participants and Non-Participants
1. Why did you decide to apply for the PR program?	1. Did you mentor any PR participants under your command?
2. Did you understand the purpose of the PH-R program? Do you feel that purpose is valid today?	2. If yes, did it benefit or have negative effects on your organization?
3. Do you feel the PR program adequately developed you to be an Air Force Senior Leader? (if so, what skills did it provide/if not, what skills do you wish you would have had)	3. Would you recommend the program to aviators in your organization?
4. Did you feel you had enough time to become an experienced instructor in both airframes?	4. Would you recommend any changes?

Questions for All Interviewees (Focus on Air Force or AMC as a whole)

1. What are the strengths of the PR program?
2. What are the weakness of the PR program?
3. What is your perception of the PR program?
4. What value does the PR program have?
5. What costs does the PR program have?

Appendix D – Interview Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEW

DATA AND INFORMAITON QUALITY RESEARCH

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by a researcher from the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), Advanced Study of Air Mobility (ASAM) program. The main objective of the project is to determine the actual and perceived costs and benefits of the Phoenix Reach program to identify gaps and ultimately recommendations for improvement. Additionally, this research aims to determine the degree to which the program develops the leadership ability of its participants. The results of this study will be included in a graduate research paper and briefing, as well as possible research publications. You were randomly selected as a possible participant in this study because of your knowledge of and experience with the program. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

- This interview is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time or for any reason. I expect that the interview will take 30-60 minutes.

- You will not be compensated for this interview.

- The information you tell us will be kept confidential.

- I would like to record this interview so that I can transcribe it and use it for analysis as part of this study. I will not record this interview without your permission. If you grant permission for this conversation to be recorded, you have the right to revoke permission and/or end the interview at any time.

- Data collection for this project will be completed by May 2019. All interview documents will be stored in a secure work space until 1 year after that date. The documents will then be destroyed.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

(Please initial) [ ] I give permission for this interview to be recorded and transcribed.

Name of Subject:

Signature of Subject _____ Date _____

Signature of Investigator _____ Date _____

Please contact Maj Coburn with any questions or concerns at zachary.coburn@us.af.mil or 919-602-3838.

Appendix E – NVivo Coding Results

Name	Description	Files	References
Adequate upgrade time	Were participants given enough time to make instructor pilot in both airframes?	9	12
No	No, the participant was not given enough time to make instructor pilot in both airframes	2	3
Yes	Yes, the participant was given enough time to make instructor pilot in both airframes	7	8
Application decision	What made PH-R participants apply for the program?	9	12
Aircraft divestment	The participant's first aircraft was retired	1	1
Broadening	The participant wanted to broaden their skill set	3	3
Career advancement	The participant wanted to advance their career	5	8
Different	The participant wanted to do something different	4	5
Family reasons	The participant wanted a different opportunity for their families	2	3
Fly longer	The participant wanted to continue flying	1	1
No alternatives	The participant didn't see any other options	1	1
Culture	Analysis of cultural issues	9	13
Known participants	Did you have known participants of the PH-R program in your organization?	18	19

Name	Description	Files	References
No	No, the respondent didn't have known participants of the PH-R program in their organization	1	1
Yes	Yes, the respondent had known participants of the PH-R program in their organization	17	17
Leadership development	Did the program adequately develop the PH-R participant to be a leader?	9	15
No	No, the program didn't adequately develop the PH-R participant to be a leader	0	0
Yes	Yes, the program adequately developed the PH-R participant to be a leader	9	13
Organizational Effects	What effects did the PH-R in the respondent's organization?	18	24
Benefits	Benefits to the respondent's organizations	16	21
Boarded	The program is selective and boarded	7	8
Cross pollination	The program enables new ideas, experience and fresh perspective	10	16
Breadth of experience	The program broadens participant's experience	9	10
Different perspective	The program gives participant's different perspectives	9	9
More opportunities	The program gives individuals more opportunities that they wouldn't have	1	1
Options	The program gives individuals more options in assignment or leadership	3	3
Tested	Individuals have to go to another community and succeed	2	2

Name	Description	Files	References
Detriments	Detriments to the respondent's organizations	13	18
Cultural acceptance	The new community has to culturally accept the PH-R participant	6	6
Degradation of performance	The participant went to the program and did not perform well	1	1
Disparate applicants	More applicants want to cross-flow out of the tanker than out of the airlift community	2	3
Impacts to non-PH-R	The halo effect has negative impacts to high performing non-PH-R participants in the same organization	2	3
Leadership appreciation	Organizational leadership does not appreciate the program or the individuals in the program	3	3
Perception	The negative perception that individuals in the program are "careerists"	4	7
Program timeline	The program timeline for upgrading to instructor pilot in both airframes is tight especially in the second airframe.	4	4
Talent gap	If a participant is not in the top 5-10% performance wise there is a gap in talent	1	1
Perceived costs	What are the intangible perceived costs to the AF or AMC of PH-R program?	18	21
Career harm	Has the potential to harm an individual's career	3	3
Experience depth	The depth of experience of a PH-R participant can be low especially in the second airframe	6	7

Name	Description	Files	References
Experience transfer	A PH-R participant's gaining community receives an experienced person at the expense of their first community	8	9
Family	A PH-R participant's family has to move	1	1
Halo effect	The participant already has a perception that they are high performing regardless of whether they are actually performing or not	1	1
Marketing	The advertising of the program to both potential applicants as well as to the rest of the AF	2	2
Money	Monetary cost	4	5
None	No perceived costs	2	2
Retention	Negative impacts to the retention of participants if they have a negative experience	2	2
Squadron manning	Transferring an experienced squadron member impacts manning	2	4
Time	It takes a long time to realize the benefits of a PH-R participant	2	3
Perceived value	What is the intangible perceived value of the PH-R program to the AF or AMC	18	21
Broadens network	It broadens participant's network	1	1
Broadens perspective	It broadens participant's perspectives	5	5
Cross-pollination	It cross-pollinates the second community with new perspective and experience to help prevent stove-piping	3	4

Name	Description	Files	References
Enhances mobility culture	It helps to improve the overall mobility enterprise culture	2	2
Diversity of experience	It gives participants diversity in their experiences	8	8
Diversity of thought	It gives participants diversity in their thoughts	4	4
Early talent identification	Because the program is boarded, it gives the enterprise the ability to identify talent early in an individual's career	1	1
Exposure to leadership	It helps to develop participants by exposing them to senior leaders	2	2
Increases pool	It increases the pool of talented leaders	4	4
Job flexibility	It gives individuals and the AF more flexibility (options) in assignments and where they can lead	2	3
Leadership breadth	It gives individuals leadership experience in multiple communities	4	4
Retention tool	If someone doesn't like their community or aircraft, it gives them a way to go to a new community	2	2
Tested	Participants have to go to a new community and succeed	3	3
Program perception	What is the respondent's overall perception of the program?	18	24
Indifferent	Not positive or negative	1	1
Negative	Negative perception	3	3
Positive	Positive perception	14	15

Name	Description	Files	References
Program strengths	What are the overall strengths of the PH-R program to the AF or AMC?	18	19
Boarded	It is selective	6	7
Breadth	Individuals of the program realize breadth	7	7
Broadening	It broadens perspective	6	6
Cross-pollination	It brings new perspective, diversity of thought, and diversity of experience to a new community	3	3
Experience diversity	It gives participants more diverse experiences	7	9
Leadership development	It gives participants more leadership opportunities in multiple communities	3	3
Deliberate development	It gives airlift to tanker or tanker to airlift deliberate development	1	1
More opportunities	It gives individuals more opportunities	2	2
Networking	It expands the network of individuals	2	2
New environment	It challenges individuals in a new environment	4	4
Thought diversity	It gives participants a more diversity in their thought	4	4
Program validity	Is the program still valid since its inception 26 years ago?	18	22
No	No, the program is not valid	4	8
Cultural acceptance	It relies on the ability of the culture in the second community to be accepting	2	2

Name	Description	Files	References
Evolved environment	The new environment of today's AF does not require the program	2	2
Better alternatives	There are better alternatives to the PH-R program	2	2
Not recognized	The program is not recognized or appreciated outside of AMC	4	5
Program perception	The program tends to have a negative perception	1	1
Some portions	Some portions of the program are valid	1	1
Yes	Yes, the program is valid	14	14
Cross pollination	The cross-pollination of experience, thought, and perspective to the new community is valid	5	5
Different perspectives	Bringing a different perspective to a new community is valid	4	5
Grooming leaders	Grooming diverse leaders is valid	1	1
Program Weaknesses	What are the PH-R program weaknesses to the AF or AMC?	18	22
AF recognition	The program is not recognized AF wide outside of AMC	4	5
Career harm	The program has potential to harm an individual's career	3	3
Cultural issues	The individual can experience cultural issues in their gaining community	2	2
Development framework	There isn't a lot of framework in the development of individuals in the program	2	2

Name	Description	Files	References
Experience loss	One community gains experience at another's expense	3	5
Halo effect	The participant already has a perception that they are high performing regardless of whether they are actually performing or not	3	3
Lack of community	PH-R participants do not have a structured community because contact information of members or program updates are not shared with previous members	1	1
Limiting expert	Participants have limited MWS expertise especially in the second aircraft	8	10
Long-term investment	It takes a long time for the AF or AMC to realize a return on investment of participants	1	1
Marketing	Marketing to potential applicants or senior leaders about the program in both AMC and the AF is lacking	2	4
Program oversight	Tracking and development of participants post program has issues	5	5
Resource cost	It costs a lot of time and money to develop a participant	4	4
Stigma	The stigma that a participant is a careerist	3	5
Timeline	The program's tight timeline to upgrade to instructor in both airframes limits their experience	3	5
Varied development	Individuals experience wide variation in their development depending on their leaders and the ability of cultures to accept them	1	1

Name	Description	Files	References
Recommend program	Would you recommend the PH-R program to individuals?	15	19
Depends	It depends on who the individuals are	4	4
No	No you would not recommend the PH-R program	0	0
Yes	Yes you would recommend the program	11	15
Recommended changes	Would you recommend any changes to the PH-R program in its current form?	18	33
No	No you would not recommend the program	2	5
Yes	Yes you would recommend changes to the program	16	27
Better oversight	Enhance oversight of the program	8	12
Cultural immersion	Allow a week or so cultural immersion of a participant to ensure the culture is a fit	1	1
Decrease participants	Decrease the overall number of participants to concentrate the talent of individuals in the program	4	4
Elimination	Eliminate the program	3	6
Increase networking	Increase networking opportunities	3	4
Increase participants	Increase the number of participants	1	3
Joint-warfighting	Add joint-warfighting development objectives	1	1
Management transparency	Give participants more transparency to the management of them	1	1

Name	Description	Files	References
More structure	Add more structure to the program	4	5
Program improvement	Improve the program	1	2
Recapitalize talent	Use the program as a retention tool	1	1
Senior leader engagement	Increase senior leader engagement opportunities	3	4
Timeline	Reduce the time it takes for a participant to upgrade in the program or increase the amount of time that is allotted to do so	2	2
Adjust with changing boards	As board timelines change, be more predictive to program timeline adjustments	1	1
Thoughts beneficial to research	Respondents that had thoughts beneficial to the research	13	20
Understanding of purpose	Did the respondent understand the purpose of the program before reading the background on the interview sheet?	18	25
No	No, the respondent did not understand the purpose	3	3
Yes	Yes, the respondent understood the purpose of the program	15	20

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF AIR MOBILITY COMMAND'S PHOENIX HORIZON-REACH (PH-R) PROGRAM

Maj Zachary L. Coburn
Advisor: Dr. Seong-Jong Joo, PhD
Advanced Study of Air Mobility (ENS)
Air Force Institute of Technology

Abstract

As one of AMC's premiere professional development programs, the Phoenix Horizon-Reach (PH-R) program has existed in its current unchanged form for 26 years. By analyzing the validity of the program in today's significantly changed environment and by identifying recommendations and opportunities for improvement, this paper will serve to strength the program to meet the difficult challenges outlined in the current NDS.

As such, this graduate research paper analyzed program information, promotion data, and participant and non-participant interviews to evaluate one of Air Mobility Command's (AMC) leadership development programs, PH-R. In addition, the purpose of the research was to evaluate the program's ability to meet its original intent through a qualitative cost-benefit analysis to identify gaps and recommend program improvements.

Additionally, promotion board data was analyzed, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 total rated officers, and various academic research findings were analyzed and incorporated on leadership development programs. The interviews included three General officers, six Colonels, six Lieutenant Colonels, and three Majors with both participation and non-participation in the program. The officers interviewed also were selected randomly to eliminate bias.

Next, using qualitative analysis with Tesch's eight-step coding process and NVivo analysis software, multiple themes were identified from the insights discovered during the interviews. Finally, through the analysis of themes from interviews combined with information learned during the literature review, a few areas of program improvement were identified.

Collaboration

AMC/A1K
HQ AMC

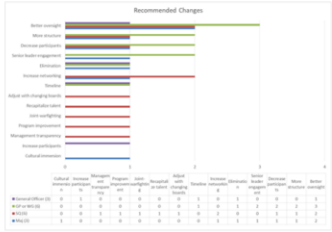
AIR FORCE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

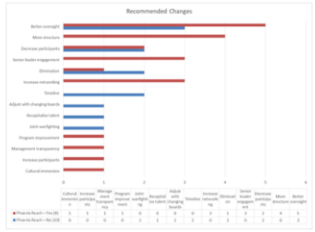
Analysis, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Air Force Level	
Strengths (18)	**Weaknesses (18)**
1. Breadth (13)	1. Limiting expert (8)
2. Experience diversity (7)	2. Program oversight (5)
3. Bounded (6)	3. AF recognition (4)
Value (18)	**Cost (18)**
1. Experience diversity (8)	1. Experience transfer (8)
2. Broadens perspective (5)	2. Experience depth (6)
3. Leadership breadth (4)	3. Monetary cost (4)
4. Larger talent pool (4)	
Organizational Experiences	
Benefits (16)	**Detriments (13)**
1. Cross-pollination (10)	1. Cultural acceptance (6)
2. Breadth (9)	2. Timeline (4)
3. Different perspective (9)	3. Perception (4)
PH-R Program Overall	
Valid (14)	**Not Valid (4)**
1. Cross-pollination (5)	1. Not recognized (program)(4)
2. Different perspectives (4)	2. Cultural acceptance (2)
3. Grooming leaders (1)	3. Better alternatives (2)

*[X] = number of respondents

	Experience Depth	Cultural Acceptance	Program Recognition	Experience Transfer	Program oversight	Monetary cost	Perception	Timeline	Better alternatives
Detriments (13)	0	6	0	0	0	0	4	4	0
Weaknesses (18)	8	0	4	0	5	0	0	0	0
Cost (18)	6	0	0	8	0	4	0	0	0
Not Valid (4)	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	2
Respondent Totals	14	8	8	8	5	4	4	4	2





Opportunities for Program Improvement						
Recommendations	Program Oversight	Cultural Acceptance	Program Recognition	Experience Depth	Experience Transfer	Totals
Better oversight	X	X	X	X		3
More structure	X	X		X		2
Senior Leader Engagement	X	X	X			2
Decrease Participants	X		X			1
Totals	4	3	3	2	0	

Significance

As one of AMC's premiere professional development programs, the PH-R program has existed in its current unchanged form for 26 years. By analyzing the validity of the program in today's significantly changed environment and by identifying recommendations and opportunities for improvement, this paper will serve to strength the program to meet the difficult challenges outlined in the NDS .

Methodology

This research used a case study methodology to ultimately identify opportunities for PH-R program improvement. The data for analysis was gathered through recorded and transcribed nine hours of interviews of 18 total current or former AMC rated officers which included; Majors, graduated Squadron Commanders, graduated Wing Commanders, and General Officers. The researcher then used a coding process to understand and quantify common themes from the interviews regarding program perception, validity, strengths, weaknesses, value, costs, and recommendations for improvement.

Next, by honing in on the top five themes of the categories; organizational detriments, weaknesses, costs, or by those who thought the program wasn't valid, the researcher used a concept similar to a business Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to identify the top five opportunities for program improvement; program oversight, cultural acceptance, program recognition, experience depth, and experience transfer. Next, a matrix was used to compare the top five recommendations for change by respondents (better oversight, more structure, senior leader engagement, and decrease participants) to understand which recommendations would be able to satisfy the top five opportunities. Finally, he rank ordered the matrix by which recommendation would satisfy the top five opportunities for improvement and was able to determine the top three areas that should be improved; program oversight, cultural acceptance, and program recognition.

Future Research

After analyzing the overall research and recommendations for research areas provided by respondents, five areas for future research were identified. The five critical areas for potential research listed below are:

1. Analyzing and providing the optimum number of participants of the PH-R program per airframe accounting for upgrade time and cost
2. Analyses of the timeline of the PH-R program to determine if it can be adjusted
3. Analysis of PH-R participant's performance post-program participation
4. Analysis of PH-R participant's retention post-program participation
5. Comparison of PH-R program performance with other PH programs

Curriculum Vita

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2007 - 2007 Student, C-17A Initial Qualification Training, Altus AFB, OK
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AWARDS

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Air Force Commendation Medal (1 OLC)
National Defense Service Medal
Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal

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