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**MBA PROFESSIONAL PROJECT**

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## **BAHRAIN DEPENDENT ENTRY AUTHORIZATION (DEA) QUOTA LIMITATIONS (NAVSUP FLC BAHRAIN)**

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**June 2021**

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LIMITATIONS (NAVSUP FLC BAHRAIN)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Dependent Entry Authorization (DEA) quota is the Navy's approval, by area commanders, to grant permission to bring dependents to an assigned area of operation outside of the United States. The DEA quota restricts most dependents from accompanying their families, specifically to Bahrain. The family member limitation is problematic for Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) Fleet Logistics Center (FLC) Bahrain, impacting interest level of skilled and qualified personnel to consider FLC Bahrain as a place of employment and to contribute to the effective accomplishment of the FLC Bahrain mission.

This MBA professional project analyzes the impacts the DEA quota has on attracting qualified personnel and the effects the quota has on FLC Bahrain effectiveness and mission accomplishment. Survey data collected from the NAVSUP enterprise is used to identify causes of deterrence and incentives for taking positions in Bahrain. We provide recommendations that FLC Bahrain may implement to mitigate the DEA quota's negative effects to its organization's mission and effectiveness. The project's goal is to offer solutions for improving the pool of quality personnel interested in FLC Bahrain that will increase the effectiveness of the organization.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AOR	Area of Responsibility
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
AWF	Acquisition Workforce
BUMED	Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CMC	Command Master Chief
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
CO	Commanding Officer
COMUSNAVCENT	Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command
CONUS	Continental United States
CUSNC	Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command
DEA	Dependent Entry Authorization
DOD	Department of Defense
DON	Department of the Navy
EFMP	Exceptional Family Member Program
FLC	Fleet Logistics Center
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GS	General Schedule
IAW	In Accordance With
MOS	Military One Source
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAVCENT	United States Naval Forces Central Command
NAVINSGEN	Navy Inspector General
NAVSUP	Naval Supply Systems Command
NEC	Navy Enlisted Classification
OCONUS	Outside of Continental United States
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OPTEMPO	Operational Tempo
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PII	Personally Identifiable Information

SHRM	Society for Human Resource Management
SUBSPEC	Subspecialty Code
XO	Executive Officer



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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

To accomplish any mission, all organizations need skilled personnel to perform the work at hand (Breaugh, 2016). Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) is a global enterprise supporting the U.S. Navy and Department of Defense (DOD) warfighters with “full spectrum operational logistics support and quality of life programs to Navy, Joint, and Coalition Warfighters, DOD civilians, and their families in the NAVCENT [Naval Forces Central Command] AOR [Area of Operations]” (NAVSUP Fleet Logistics Center Bahrain, n.d.). Particularly, NAVSUP Fleet Logistics Center (FLC) Bahrain has struggled to recruit and retain skilled personnel, which may be jeopardizing its mission.

FLC Bahrain’s attempt to recruit the right personnel is compounded by other underlying issues. Cyclical interest in FLC Bahrain from small recruiting pools, consistent vacancies, and concern that the right personnel are not filling billets to accomplish their mission are consistent issues FLC Bahrain faces. FLC Bahrain also faces policy and environmental restraints that are unique to the region.

NAVSUP has eight major Fleet Logistics Centers worldwide (NAVSUP, n.d.) and multiple smaller, over-the-horizon locations supporting the eight larger FLCs. A dedicated NAVSUP workforce has contributed to the organization’s success in providing global logistics. However, recruiting quality personnel is challenging. There are approximately 137 positions at FLC Bahrain. 30 of those positions are vacant as of April 2021, 24 of those are civilian billets. Consequently, roughly 20% of the workforce is deficient, causing an abundant workload placed on the service members and civilian employees currently on station.

Geographic factors and policy have a negative effect on FLC Bahrain’s efforts to retain and recruit. Bahrain, although a progressive country, suffers by association with other less developed and violent countries in the region. Its sheer distance from the United States adds another layer of difficulty. Cultural factors that clash with many aspects of Western culture and values is yet another barrier that limits desire to serve at FLC Bahrain.

Aside from geographic factors, candidates must jump through several policy hoops that can make it difficult for all seemingly qualified candidates to be considered eligible.

Skilled personnel are needed to succeed in the mission. Qualified personnel face additional policy and geographic constraints that restrict the candidate pool. The Dependent Entry Approval (DEA) policy is one policy that has a negative effect on FLC Bahrain by restricting the pool of candidates. DEA is the approval, by Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (COMUSNAVCENT), to grant permission for dependents to accompany DOD members (Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command [CUSNC], 2015). NAVSUP FLC Bahrain has 16 DEA quotas. This approval allows for support personnel not directly in conflict, if approved, to fill billets with family members accompanying them to the Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) location they are assigned to. This limits the number of families that can accompany DOD members to FLC Bahrain.

Research and observation suggest that these factors have a negative effect on recruiting interested candidates. However, FLC Bahrain needs a better understanding of how potential candidates perceive FLC Bahrain positions and major influences that deter personnel from accepting a position. This study investigates potential candidates' interest in FLC Bahrain positions and how policy and geographic factors influence interest. Specifically, this research addresses two questions posed by NAVSUP FLC Bahrain that we answer utilizing a survey among the NAVSUP Enterprise population and analysis of procedures and literature.

- How will the current DEA quota limit impact recruitment efforts and mission accomplishment in Bahrain?
- How would an increase in quotas change the effectiveness of FLC Bahrain?

Our research goal was to address the effect of NAVSUP's specific questions on the impact that DEA quota limitations have on attracting qualified personnel, and the impact that the quotas have on accomplishing FLC Bahrain's mission. Also, we assess the utility

of the DEA quota requirement and offer implementation guidance for FLC Bahrain and enact recommended solutions from our analyzed descriptive data.

Our efforts in conducting this research are to provide the NAVSUP enterprise with solutions to DEA regulations. This will allow NAVSUP to continue to offer world-class logistics support within the Central Command (CENTCOM) AOR, while following protocol established by commanders involved in the overall long-term strategy for the region. Having a larger pool of qualified applicants to fill billets and support NAVSUP's diverse mission is the ultimate benefit—and goal—of our studies. Our research and recommendations are specific to solving NAVSUP FLC Bahrain's recruitment issue. This limits our scope for recommendations and our pool of affected personnel.

This report consists of six chapters, including this introduction chapter. Chapter II provides a background on FLC Bahrain's mission, quality requirements, and policies that affect recruiting. Chapter III includes a literature review of constraints by geographical locations, the effect of policies on recruiting, and how candidate pools affect mission accomplishment and effectiveness to an organization. Chapter IV provides the methodology of the survey used to poll the NAVSUP FLCs and an analysis of the collected data. Chapter V presents the research findings, provides the analysis, and explains the implications of the findings. Chapter VI provides recommendations to improve FLC Bahrain's recruiting efforts and a summary of the research, before presenting conclusions and areas for further research.

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## **II. BACKGROUND**

To meet their mission of supporting forward deployed war fighters, FLC Bahrain demands specific skill sets and qualities in each candidate. Broad support of supply functions are itemized into specific supply categories within FLC Bahrain. These categories require personnel with expertise in postal services, fuel, contracting, logistics, transportation, movement of household goods, hazardous materials management, quality of life services, administration, and leadership roles that require specific qualifications (NAVSUP Fleet Logistics Center Bahrain, n.d.). Among these qualifications are knowledge, skills, and ability in specific areas as well as specified certificates and education. Aside from these areas of expertise, there are additional billet requirements for officers, enlisted, and civilians.

### **A. REQUIREMENTS**

Officer designators identify the general framework of the career an officer is pursuing, the promotion and career development requirements, and an overall indicator of resources the Navy has to fulfill requirements with the designated resources available (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations [CNO], 2009). Additional Qualification Designation (AQD) codes further specify qualifications needed or required for specific billets (Navy Personnel Command, 1995) while Subspecialty (SUBSPEC) codes identify further applications required by the billet regarding training, education, and experience needed to meet billet requirements (CNO, 2009).

Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) codes define general skills and requirements of service members and assist in placing them in the right location for mission accomplishment. Enlisted requirements fall under specific communities within the Navy. The rates under the community (Logistic Specialist, Culinary Specialist, Retail Specialist) are then coded by specific enlisted career fields that reflect training, skills, and knowledge gained. These skill sets gained can be assigned as a quality requirement to billets that demand certain criteria in expertise and experience to fulfill the organization's mission (Chief of Naval Operations, 2021).

Navy civilians face U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) civilian service standards and guidelines regarding classification of positions. General Schedule (GS) positions, defined by OPM, make up the majority of civilian positions at FLC Bahrain. Their position descriptions are made up of nine factors ranging from knowledge requirements and guidelines to personal contacts and physical demands (Office of Personnel Management, 1991). GS positions have four-digit series codes, a descriptive series title (derived from an occupational group), and a grade (1–15) rating the complexity of the requirements (Chief of Naval Operations, 2021). The occupational group codes that comprise the majority of FLC Bahrain vacancies are the 1102 contracting series, the 2100 transportation group, and the 0300 group covering clerical services, office services, and overall administration (Office of Personnel Management, n.d.).

## **B. POLICY OBSTACLES**

DOD members transferring to a command overseas must adhere to what seems like an overwhelming number of policies. The Dependent Entry Authorization policy, while very restrictive, is not the only policy affecting the size of the talent pool from which FLC Bahrain recruits. Job opportunities within the NAVSUP Enterprise, including FLC Bahrain, are military (including reservists), civil servants, and contractors. Personnel within these workforces are qualified for overseas assignments but must be screened in accordance with (IAW) direction by the secretary of the Navy (SECNAV; Instruction 5300.39B, 2020). Screening and official direction is required for military, civilians, and their families stationed overseas. Contractors do not qualify for DEA approvals. Policies that constrict the size of the talent pool include Family Care Plan, Exceptional Family Members Plan, Pregnancy Guidelines, Medical Screenings, Managing Civilian Billets, and DEA Quotas.

### **1. Family Care Plans**

Military members who intend to transfer to a foreign duty station without their dependents must first adhere to a Navy Family Care Policies to ensure their dependents are cared for at home. Civilians are not required to have a Family Care Plan, because the DOD does not have the authority to obligate them (U.S. Navy Family Care Policy, 2007).



However, they are strongly encouraged to establish Family Care Plans that are consistent with this instruction. Family Care Plans act as tools for military, civil servants, and the DOD to ensure appropriate care is given to dependents while maintaining the flexibility to place personnel in appropriate locations to accomplish missions; in case unaccompanied obligation is necessary (military) or needed (civilians), plans are in place. Service members selected for an unaccompanied tour will only be eligible if they meet the requirements outlined in the U.S. Navy Family Care Policy. The purpose of this document is to aid service members in creating suitable family care plans and detailing legal options and guidance. For an overseas unaccompanied tour, service members' chance of selection will in part be based on the member's quality of family care planning. Service members who have minor dependents may affect the degree of effort required in their plan to ensure that their family is cared for while serving overseas for an extended deployment or unaccompanied tour (U.S. Navy Family Care Policy, 2007). While this plan is limiting, most service members who have a well thought-out Family Care Plan will find that their chances of gaining a billet in Bahrain should not be hindered.

## **2. Exceptional Family Member Policy (EFMP)**

Due to the “extremely limited” medical facilities specializing in EFMP care, members with dependents who qualify for the EFMP program will not be able to be accompanied (BUMED [Bureau of Medicine and Surgery], 2016). The suitability screening states that “family members with medical conditions or disabilities requiring specialized medical, educational, or related services will not be transferred to areas where those needs cannot be met” (Department of the Navy, 2007). Using data from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the total number of Navy service members enrolled in the EFMP in 2016 was 13,319 (Nowicki, 2020). The total number of Navy service members for the same year was 320,101 (Military One Source Demographics, 2017). Although EFMP care in Bahrain is extremely limited (CUSNC, 2015), the EFMP affects only around 4% of Navy service members and therefore does little to decrease the talent pool for FLC Bahrain.

### **3. Pregnancy Guidelines**

Service members who are pregnant or become pregnant while in Bahrain are denied billets. This deferment severely lessens the available manpower and talent pool for overseas assignments and limits such commands in their ability to make selections (Navy Policy on Parenthood and Pregnancy, 2019). Upon notification of pregnancy, all pregnant service members will be given operational deferment, effectively barring them from any transfer to an operational assignment during the gestation, delivery, and post-delivery phases of their pregnancy.

Stipulations for pregnant women are spelled out further in the Navy instruction *Guidelines Concerning Pregnant Servicewomen*. Per these guidelines, pregnant women are barred from transferring to an overseas duty location after the end of their 28th week of pregnancy. If a pregnant service member hasn't reached their 28th week, they may be assigned to an overseas duty location provided that the duty station has adequate medical facilities with obstetrical capabilities and adequate government or civilian housing. If pregnant and already serving in an overseas location, and the duty station does not have adequate OB/GYN care or housing, the pregnant service member must be reassigned prior to the 20th week of their pregnancy (Guidelines Concerning Pregnant Servicewomen, 2003). Non-married military members and civilian employees who become pregnant while in Bahrain will not be eligible for a new DEA quota for their newborn child. The expectant parent will be sent to the continental United States (CONUS) due to Bahraini law, which discourages single parent births (CNO, 2003). For any Bahrain command, including FLC, deferment of pregnant service members further reduces the talent pool and limits family planning.

### **4. Medical Screenings**

The Navy has recognized that the screening process for service members and their dependents is crucial. An absence from duty or a necessity for an early return will result in unplanned expenditures and deficiencies in staffing that likely can be avoided by proper adherence of the screening process (BUMED, 2016). The screening process verifies that each service member, including dependents, does not have issues in "performance,

disciplinary, financial, educational, psychological, and medical or other physical attributes that would preclude successful completion of an overseas/remote assignment” (BUMED, 2016). In addition to these factors, it is the responsibility of the commanding officer (CO) that the service member and each member of the family that will transfer has no issues with dental, behavior, or family stability, and can be subject to a personal interview by the Command Master Chief (CMC) or the CO (BUMED, 2016). Medical screenings were not shown to be a major restriction in the filling of qualified billets as much as they caused delays by not being done properly before the individual arrived in Bahrain (Navy Inspector General [NAVINSGEN], 2019). The main restrictions were service members who had dependents with extra health concerns. While they may not be able to bring their dependents OCONUS, they still qualify for unaccompanied stationing. However, this does not account for all personnel who do not apply for FLC Bahrain due to known health conditions or other issues that preclude them from eligibility.

## **5. DEA Requirements**

DEA requirements are extremely restrictive: The policy limits the amount of eligible accompanying dependents to 11% in Bahrain. Bahrain Dependent Entry and Quota Management Business Rules provides guidance for the management of the DEA process for DOD personnel assigned to Bahrain on accompanied orders. Per the approved Secretary of Defense Memo (2000), the DEA quotas in Bahrain were set at 686. The 686 quotas should not be confused with “people” (CUSNC, 2015). A DEA quota is issued to a sponsor (DOD members) for all authorized dependents, not to each individual dependent. One sponsor, regardless of the number of authorized dependents, equals one DEA quota counted against the prospective command’s quota authorization. The instruction applies to all DOD military and civilian personnel assigned to the Kingdom of Bahrain activities on permanent change of station orders. COMUSNAVCENT is responsible for managing and enforcing the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD) limitation on accompanied billets (CUSNC/C5F, 2015). Commands requesting DEA quotas must submit requests through COMUSNAVCENT. FLC Bahrain is funded for 137 allocated positions, equating to a DEA quota of 16. According to the DOD 2019 Demographic Profile of active-duty Navy personnel, 50.% are married (Military One Source [MOS], 2019). There are no

demographics as to the dependent status of the DOD civilian force, however, data from the 2020 U.S. census for adults aged 30–34 years states 49% are married with increasing percentages as the age brackets rise (United States Census Bureau, 2020). Considering this fact, FLC Bahrain quota is extremely restrictive for those interested in taking a tour without being departed from their family.

In order for FLC Bahrain to meet its mission, they require skilled personnel with an interest to serve there. The policy constraints, however, can act as barriers that prevent qualified and quality candidates from applying. In the next chapter, we review literature that analyzes how environmental and policy factors affect the talent pool of candidates.

### **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

When most Americans think of the Middle East, it most likely conjures up images of a hot, desert climate, a place that has been ravaged by war for thousands of years, and a site of two major U.S. campaigns that claimed the lives of 7,000 Americans. Because Bahrain is located firmly in the Middle East, it suffers by association. This negative association with the Middle East and Bahrain affects the pool of willing applicants to pursue a job in Bahrain. False associations with safety and security deter potential members from ever considering a job in the region. Regarding crime, the U.S. State Department concludes in a Bahrain travel advisory that it is rare for violent crime to occur, and the Bahraini rate of crime is low (Department of State, n.d.). Bahrain's political unrest often results in political protests and demonstrations; however, it poses a minimal threat to society. A research project published by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) collected data that shows that 10 years after the 2011 Arab Spring protests, hundreds of protests and riots still occur in Bahrain each year. Most of the protests are peaceful (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2020). It forces the question, does FLC Bahrain suffer from low recruitment because of its association with its location in the Middle East? Is a false narrative one restraint FLC Bahrain faces in recruiting? The following research will help solve the problem of poor recruitment for FLC Bahrain and specifically looks at the geographical factors, and policy effects on candidate work pools at FLC Bahrain.

#### **A. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS**

Serving in overseas assignments presents numerous challenges to DOD members and families. Like the military, it is crucial for businesses and other organizations to operate successfully all over the world. For that reason, there is considerable research on how geographical locations can have an effect on recruitment, retention, and the development of employees to perform in positions overseas. Many studies focus on the recruitment and development of expatriates, or a person who lives outside their native country. The search

for literature on this thesis topic revealed several factors that contribute to how geographic constraints play a role in influencing candidate pools and recruitment.

## **1. Influence of Cultural Factors on Candidate Pools**

There is considerable research on how a desirable, or undesirable location can have an effect on the candidate pool. A Global Relocation Survey asserted that countries present harder recruitment challenges due to a number of factors including lack of infrastructure, language barrier, environmental conditions, and culture that collectively make candidates feel isolated (Dolins, 1998). One study concluded that Cultural Factors make up 58.8% of the success factors that contribute to an effective overseas assignment (Hauser, 2000). Briscoe and Shulers International Human Resource Management research has found that American firms have better expatriate success rates in Japan and European countries based upon their ability to adapt to the culture (Briscoe, 2004). Middle Eastern countries like Bahrain on the other hand, present greater cultural challenges to Western culture. One example applies to potential women candidates that are required to dress more conservatively, covering their head, arms and legs. In other Middle Eastern countries, there are various laws that restrict women from driving, walking alone, or conversing with men that are not their husbands (Briscoe, 2004). This thesis will show that these various cultural differences can hinder recruitment efforts of DOD members.

## **2. Overseas Challenges**

Constraints exist that restrict candidates from seeking positions overseas. Family effects and lifestyle constraints are two factors that limits the talent pool and an organization's effectiveness.

### ***a. Family Effects***

Several studies surmise that families relocating to a foreign country have the biggest impact on the success or failure on a position overseas. Dolin's research found that when families were asked to list the formative challenges, "respondents indicated family adjustment (68%) and children's education (67%) as the leading issues, followed by spouse resistance (54%) and spouse's career (44%)" (Dolins, 1998, p. 7). Briscoe's research

echoes this challenge and offers that other leading family problems are poor communication with spouse on the decision to relocate, families being denied language or cultural lessons, and spouse not offered any counseling on jobs or other opportunities (Briscoe, 2004).

***b. Lifestyle Constraints***

Lifestyle can present another challenge to moving to a different geographic location. In the Middle East for example, society is less accepting to alternative lifestyles. This can apply to anyone who is part of the gay community or unmarried couples. It can even present prejudice against single parents. Briscoe's research in this area suggests this social dissimilarity hinders DOD members from selecting a geographic area that is intolerant to these life choices (Briscoe, 2004).

Another study performed by the University of South Florida on recruitment efforts to major Florida public institutions found that a clear trend emerged. All applicants who applied showed a clear preference for their local region and, in particular, their home country (Micceri & Wajeeh, 1998). These factors are likely the reason why many candidates choose to avoid an overseas assignment all together. Together, these studies support the conclusion that geographic constraints have a profound effect on the candidate pool.

**B. POLICY CONSTRAINTS**

Specific studies of the effect that DOD and Department of the Navy (DON) policy has on recruiting and hiring to specified locations within the organization do not exist in a clear cause and effect form of literature. The effect of DEA quotas are not captured in studies. However, conclusions can be drawn from how policy influences candidate pools. There are two ways to look at policy restraints and their effects on recruiting. The first is that the DOD and DON suffer from bureaucratic deceleration brought on by policy. Entry into the workforce as a civil servant is a lengthy process, while career development and flexibility are limited. This negatively impacts the quality pool for entry level civilian talent due to policy, and ultimately the organizations within the DON. "They say this generation doesn't get it, they do get it, but we are making it too hard for them to serve" (Department

of the Navy, 2019). The second is the effect of DOD and DON policy on family members, when policy forces families to physically separate, negatively impacting the pool of willing candidates to take positions requiring family separation. In some cases, “the pool to draw from is rather small and the younger persons fit to be sent abroad are deployed several times. ... Their family no longer accepts this and forces the soldier to leave the Military” (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2007). The DEA quota is not highlighted in studies; however, the quality of applicants reduces the pool of qualified to recruit from due to hiring policies. Separation has lasting negative effects on adolescents in separated families, and it can be deduced that DEA quota limitations add to the combined negative effects in recruiting to FLC Bahrain. In short, policy constrains recruiting pools.

### **1. Bureaucratic Deceleration**

The DON’s answer to underperformance due to restrictive policy is the Department of the Navy 2019–2030 Civilian Human Capital Strategy (DON, 2019). It exists as a strategy to address the policy issues that have made hiring a bureaucratic nightmare within the DON, and to close the talent gap between the people attracted to serving in the private sector versus the DON (DON, 2019). The DON addresses issues to get them ahead—the need of agility for civilian careers to progress and easier hiring process for both applicants and supervisors trying to fill vacancies (DON, 2019). The civil service application and hiring process is noted as a difficult process for applicants across all branches, with a service agency average (Air Force) of 125 days for one position versus large private industry firms needing 60 days “to fill 60 positions” (Askins, 2015). In regard to hiring at FLC Bahrain, the NAVSUP director of Civilian Human Resources explained that from selection to starting work in Bahrain, the timeline is approximately 145 days with a goal number of 120 days (S. Stada, personal communication, April 1, 2021). When overall hiring of qualified civil servants because of policy is an issue, further restrictive policy for assignments overseas adds to the difficulty of recruiting in OCONUS location. Layers of policy detract from the candidate pools initially and have a trickle-down effect when it comes to an organization trying to operate successfully OCONUS, such as FLC Bahrain. The background information we gathered on restrictive DOD and DON policy deduces that family accompaniment restrictions serving the FLC Bahrain organization constrains



interest and negatively impacts recruiting. This deduction comes from common knowledge that when families are separated, negative externalities occur. The emphasis of a work–life balance for the success of an organization is critical to the people, and therefore the organization. “Increasingly young people have highlighted the fact that family and social life is sacred. If they can attain this work–life balance, then they are more likely to be retained in their jobs. Both the ‘Policy for People’ and the ‘Defense Mission’ recognize the importance of families to the success of the Armed Forces” (NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], 2007).

## **2. Policy and Separation**

Policy and physical separation take a huge toll on members of the DOD. The respected and anticipated sacrifices of military service garner respect and come with opportunities, but ultimately take its toll on members and their families. It is safe to conclude that military service requires a level of sacrifice not normally found in common career fields or daily jobs. Hazardous duty, imminent danger, and separation from loved ones are combined factors that contribute to the sacrificial qualities one faces when serving in the military. Walker (2005), in referencing Ender, also points out the inherent benefits of being in a family, particularly when you are a child, with a military parent that affords the unique opportunity mostly “military brats” get to experience—moving to different cultures, learning different languages, and getting life experience most do not get to experience, and then developing beneficial qualities from these experiences. However, the literature notes that the negatives outweigh the positives. “Military brats” ultimately suffer from relationship issues, loneliness, and not feeling like they have a home (Walker, 2005). In the end it adds up: “Nevertheless, repeatedly saying good-bye to friends, family, school, community, even pets and possessions, leaves its mark” (Walker, 2005).

In a 2013 journal article, the author notes, in descriptive findings, that children from families with a deployed service member “clearly demonstrate higher levels” of alcohol and excessive alcohol use, and prescription as well as illegal drug use in more instances than families without a deployed family member. The author notes other studies connecting military families and psychological problems of the children in them (Swahn, 2013).

The effects are amplified when the separation is due to service members being in the same area as Bahrain. Michelle Kelly's research in *The Effects of Military-Induced Separation on Family Factors and Child Behavior* is a data driven, qualitative study that examines what happens to child and maternal behavior when the father is deployed. The results concluded that separations did temporarily impact the family's ability to maintain close relationships. Furthermore, the study also concluded that families with fathers sent to the Persian Gulf War suffered more than those that experienced separation from routine deployments (Kelley, 1994, p. 103).

DOD and DON policy has created a family separation problem that affects both the talent pools within the DON and organizations like FLC Bahrain's mission accomplishment. These policies are daily realities faced by service members and civil servants. DON members face restraints of spending time with loved ones due to policy effects. FLC Bahrain's recruiting is inherently impacted by the possibility of separation from family. Separation that comes from extended DON policy to restrict family members from being together, along with rough DEA quotas and other combining policies, increases these effects. Policy creates civilian hiring challenges and family separation issues that combine to negatively influence candidate pools for FLC Bahrain.

### **C. TALENT POOL UTILIZATION FOR QUALITY OUTCOMES**

One mark of an organization's success can be defined by the quality of the employees, and a large candidate pool facilitates a better selection of quality candidates. The literature showed that constraints do influence the quality of applicants. This suggests that the conditions and policies that limit potential job applicants in Bahrain will influence candidate pools in a negative manner. A leading human resource consulting firm based in California published a 2018 report titled "Talent Acquisition Analytics: Using Analytics for Smarter Sourcing and Hiring." It states: "Talent Analytics (TA) refers to the systematic discovery of meaningful patterns in data to support decision making related to recruitment and onboarding processes, activities, and outcomes" (Deloitte, 2020). The consulting firm used three primary categories of measurement: efficiency, effectiveness, and impact. The effectiveness measurement had specifically to do with talent outcomes. Key analytics for

talent outcomes are quality of candidates and hires. One of the key measures used to achieve quality of candidates was candidate pool depth. Therefore, quality of candidates is a direct correlation to candidate pool depth.

Literature also shows that the depth of qualified candidates directly correlates to organizational success. *Talent Acquisition: A Guide to Understanding and Managing the Recruitment Process* is a report published by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). SHRM is the largest HR pre-professional organization in the world, with 300,000 members in over 165 countries. The book offers useful recommendations for talent acquisition practices based on peer-reviewed research. SHRM presents “a model of the recruitment process: Establish recruitment objectives, develop a recruitment strategy, carry out recruitment activities, and measure and evaluate recruitment results” (Breagh, 2016). Like the Deloitte report, SHRM shows that there is a direct correlation between the depth of the candidate pool and the quality of the candidates. In their model, the quality of the candidates is reflected in the Yield Ratio for recruitment. The deeper the candidate pool, the more opportunity to find the best fit for the position. A good fit for the position equates to a more effective and productive organization (Breagh, 2016).

In 2015, then Under Secretary of Defense Frank Kendall commissioned a study to address deficiencies in the DOD acquisition workforce. The DOD published the “Acquisition Workforce (AWF) Strategic Plan FY2016–FY2021,” which directly addresses the issues FLC is experiencing. It discusses the DOD’s problem with finding quality candidates to fulfill mission essential roles. It notes that there are many barriers to getting the number of applicants needed to ensure high quality of employees (DOD, 2015). To improve the hiring process and increase the quality of the talent pool, the plan directs the implementation of the following initiatives:

- Reduce barriers to hiring
- Utilize all tools available in funding and human resource hiring per the newest guidance
- Offer competitive compensation and incentives

- Drive down risk to mission to acceptable levels by focusing on incentives to fill key billet gaps
- Improve work–life balance
- Offer alternative work schedules and expanded telecommuting (DOD, 2015)

The plan emphasizes the importance of talent acquisition and how “as a department, the DOD must take positive action to guarantee that we have the professionals in place who have the knowledge, skills, experience, and capabilities to lead the organization into the future” (DOD, 2015).

Additionally, from 2017 to 2019, no CNO-level ship maintenance had been completed on time. In the Executive Summary, NAVINSGEN recommended the following actions: increase DEA quotas, utilize additional incentives to fill the civilian vacancies with experienced personnel and subsequently improve FLC, and investigate alternative methods of employment such as telework (NAVINSGEN, 2019). As the literature shows, the deficiency in candidate quality negatively impacts organizational outcome.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

Research has shown that the success of an organization is closely tied to the quality of its employees (Breaugh, 2016). Constraints in the environment and policy have a negative effect on the talent pool. It also shows a correlation between deficiency in candidate pools and a deficiency in organizational outcomes. This chapter reviewed literature on environmental constraints as well as policy constraints that are specific to Bahrain. The next chapter provides an overview on the methodology used to collect and analyze the data.

## IV. METHODS

### A. DATA COLLECTION

This chapter provides information on the data collection method via two surveys and an analysis of the collected data. The survey for this thesis was sent to the FLC Bahrain XO, who agreed to assist with distribution to members of his own command in Bahrain and the CONUS FLCs, which include Norfolk, San Diego, Jacksonville, and Puget Sound. This chapter also includes the data and data analysis used to evaluate responses to gain a better understanding of DOD personnel's interest in serving at FLC Bahrain. We utilized non-Personally Identifiable Information (PII) data from FLC Bahrain, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. FLC Bahrain Non-PII Manning Data

Paygrade Type	Authorized	Inventory
GS Employee	58	52
Military	64	55
Total	122	107

#### 1. FLC CONUS and Bahrain Survey

The surveys were designed to elicit responses from personnel in the NAVSUP FLC enterprise to gain a better understanding of the reasons they might choose to serve overseas, with a number of specific locations, including Bahrain, and the motivations and detractors that ultimately affect their decision. There were two very similar versions of the survey. The first version was distributed to CONUS FLCs to gauge their interest in serving at FLC Bahrain, and the motivating and demotivating factors in that decision. The other version was distributed to FLC Bahrain members, who did not need to be asked if they would serve there, but rather were asked similar questions about why they made the decision to serve at FLC Bahrain. The survey asked which factors played a role in making a decision to serve at FLC Bahrain, including family influence, incentives, personal motivating and

demotivating reasons, and geographic location. We analyzed the results to determine if there were consistencies and inconsistencies in relation to DOD members with family and CONUS versus DOD members in Bahrain.

## **2. Description**

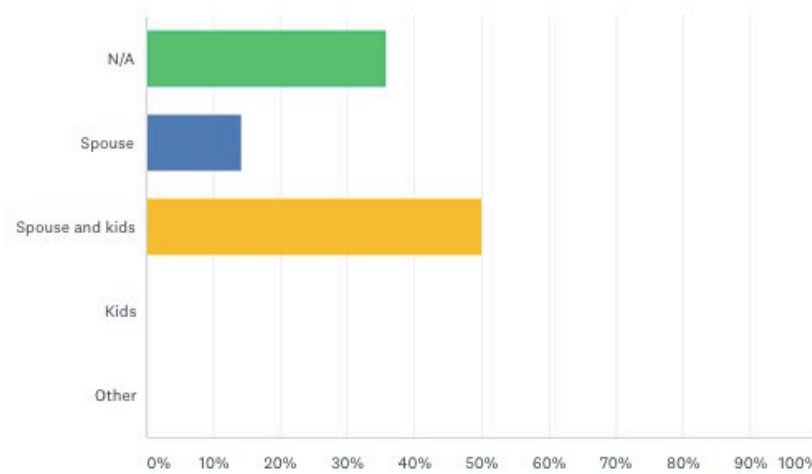
The FLC Executive Officers (XO) and Executive Directors (for distribution to civilians) sent an invitation email out to all members of their own respective commands with the link connecting them to the survey developed on Survey Monkey. The survey was active for a total of two weeks to allow time for all members to view and complete the survey. With the assistance of the XOs, the survey was distributed to approximately 3,300 DOD civilians, active duty officers, and enlisted personnel currently serving at all FLCs previously mentioned as of March 2021. The initial email was sent on March 22, 2021, and a final follow-up email was sent on April 1, 2021. The survey was open until April 22, 2021, allowing a two-week time frame for responses. The surveys consisted of 17 questions each, including demographic information, family status, previous tour history, interest in serving in various locations including Bahrain, incentives, and motivators and detractors to serving at FLC Bahrain.

The survey used multiple-choice questions and Likert-scale questions to gauge the level of interest in the aforementioned categories. The survey also utilized open-ended questions to allow respondents to provide additional information as to what would motivate them to accept a tour at FLC Bahrain or why they would rather avoid it.

Of the estimated 3,300 DOD members who received the survey, a total of 51 responded (28 CONUS, 23 Bahrain). The responses consisted of 49 complete responses and 2 incomplete responses. This represents a 1.5% response rate within the 5 FLCs included in the survey. The most important demographic feature is how many dependents respondents have. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the employees serving in Bahrain have far fewer dependents than their CONUS counterparts.

## Do you have dependents?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

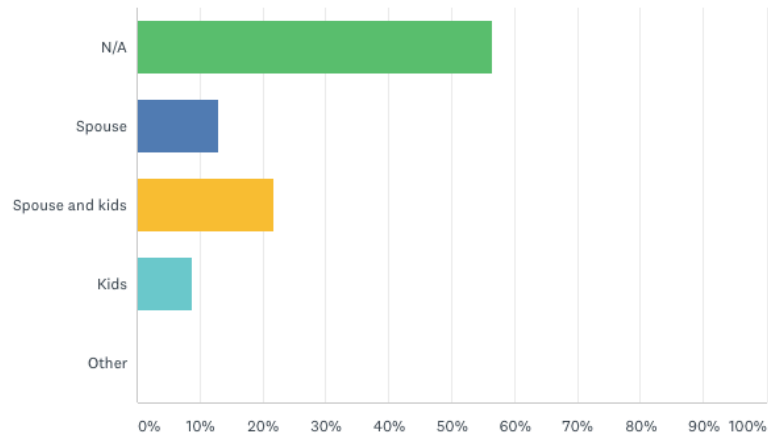


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
N/A	35.71%	10
Spouse	14.29%	4
Spouse and kids	50.00%	14
Kids	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>28</b>

Figure 1. CONUS Members with Dependents

## Do you have dependents?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
N/A	56.52%	13
Spouse	13.04%	3
Spouse and kids	21.74%	5
Kids	8.70%	2
Other	0.00%	0
TOTAL		23

Figure 2. Bahrain Members with Dependents

A breakdown of gender and civilian vs active duty rank demographics for both CONUS and FLC Bahrain are shown in Table 1 and Table 2. The survey in its entirety can be found in Appendix A.



Table 2. CONUS FLC Survey Demographics Breakdown

CHARACTERISTIC	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	22	78.57%
Female	4	14.29%
Unanswered	2	0.00%
<b>ACTIVE MILITARY</b>	16	57.14%
<b>CIVILLIAN</b>	12	42.86%
<b>RANK</b>		
O6	1	6.25%
O5	1	6.25%
O4	3	18.75%
O3	4	25.00%
O2	0	0.00%
O1	0	0.00%
W1	0	0.00%
W2	0	0.00%
W3	0	0.00%
W4	0	0.00%
W5	0	0.00%
E9	1	6.25%
E8	0	0.00%
E7	2	12.50%
E6	2	12.50%
E5	1	6.25%
E4	0	0.00%
E3	1	6.25%
E2	0	0.00%
E1	0	0.00%
<b>PAYGRADE</b>		
GS15	2	16.67%
GS14	0	0.00%
GS13	4	33.33%
GS12	4	33.33%
GS11	2	16.67%

CHARACTERISTIC	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
GS10	0	0.00%
GS09	0	0.00%
GS08	0	0.00%
GS07	0	0.00%
GS06	0	0.00%
GS05	0	0.00%
GS04	0	0.00%
GS03	0	0.00%
GS02	0	0.00%
GS01	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%

Table 3. FLC Bahrain Demographics Breakdown

CHARACTERISTIC	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	17	73.91%
Female	5	21.74%
Unanswered	1	4.35%
<b>ACTIVE MILITARY</b>	8	34.78%
<b>CIVILLIAN</b>	15	65.22%
<b>RANK</b>		
O6	0	0.00%
O5	2	25.00%
O4	2	25.00%
O3	2	25.00%
O2	0	0.00%
O1	0	0.00%
W1	0	0.00%
W2	0	0.00%
W3	0	0.00%
W4	0	0.00%
W5	0	0.00%
E9	0	0.00%

CHARACTERISTIC	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
E8	0	0.00%
E7	0	0.00%
E6	1	12.50%
E5	0	0.00%
E4	1	12.50%
E3	0	0.00%
E2	0	0.00%
E1	0	0.00%
<b>PAYGRADE</b>		
GS15	0	0.00%
GS14	1	6.67%
GS13	6	40.00%
GS12	3	20.00%
GS11	4	26.67%
GS10	0	0.00%
GS09	0	0.00%
GS08	0	0.00%
GS07	1	6.67%
GS06	0	0.00%
GS05	0	0.00%
GS04	0	0.00%
GS03	0	0.00%
GS02	0	0.00%
GS01	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%

## B. DATA ANALYSIS

The low response rate from the survey makes it necessary to present our data as descriptive. We are unable to make claims about the population sampled.

### 1. Data Limitations

With a survey response rate of 1.5% of the 3,300 personnel, the data was presented as descriptive. No claims about the NAVSUP Enterprise population sampled can be made. However, our descriptive analysis of the respondents does reflect similar concerns as the

Navy Inspector General assessment of DEA quota issues producing gapped billets, ultimately effecting mission accomplishment (DON, 2019). Additionally, no claims about civil servant or military personnel can be made. Only summaries of the data collected, by the 51 respondents, was made in our analysis.

## **2. Survey Analysis**

We gathered data from Survey Monkey and compiled it into a Microsoft Excel document spreadsheet for ease of analysis. Once the data was reviewed, we began compiling the data into common groupings so we could identify common themes and trends among the responses. The specific trends and themes are discussed in Chapter IV.

## **3. Open-Ended Questions**

The researchers read all of the open-ended responses and grouped them into categories based on subjects of interest. The results revealed multiple responses focusing on reasons for wanting to serve (or not serve) at respondents' top and bottom picks for an overseas FLC location and reasons for serving (or not serving) at FLC Bahrain. Data provided through open-ended questions allowed the researchers to gain a better understanding of the range of motivators and detractors that effect an individual's decision to serve overseas, particularly in FLC Bahrain. Specific, anonymous quotations from the survey respondents are referenced in Chapter V to provide further support for interpretations of the data collected.

## **V. ANALYSIS**

We analyzed the data collected and found three key themes that influenced desire to serve in Bahrain. First, geography is directly related with desire to serve in a specific area. Second, dependents are a major component in deciding whether to serve OCONUS. Third, incentives to serve at FLC Bahrain are viewed differently by CONUS NAVSUP employees compared to FLC Bahrain employees. The description of our findings is depicted in graphs and quotes, first from CONUS NAVSUP personnel, then FLC Bahrain personnel. We then explain the descriptive data's relationship to the key themes and how the data relates to desire to serve at FLC Bahrain.

### **A. GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS**

Geographic factors specific to certain areas relate to the surveyed population's interest in serving in those locations. We identified knowledge and prior experience, culture, quality of life, geographic isolation, safety concerns, and civilian tax burden as major factors in considering serving OCONUS. These geographic factors applied to the population's interest in serving OCONUS, and they were amplified when related to the Middle East and Bahrain.

#### **1. Knowledge and Prior Experience**

Participants explained that their first-hand experience of an area positively influenced their willingness to serve a tour in an OCONUS location. They explained that a lack of experience in an OCONUS area, or associated knowledge of the location, acts as a deterrent to serve there. Participants explained their interest in FLC locations by using phrases such as "knowledge of the area," "I have been and lived in all three," and "prior experience." Similarly, if respondents had no knowledge of the area, they indicated that their bottom choice was ranked that way because they knew nothing of the area. The knowledge or lack of knowledge as it relates to interest in a duty station is reflected in Table 4.

Table 4. Knowledge in Relation in Relation to Interest in Serving at each FLC Location

	<b>Please indicate your interest in serving at each FLC location. Why did you pick your top and bottom location(s)?</b>
<b>Knowledge of Area</b>	<p>Knowledge of areas, knowledge of healthcare services...</p> <p>Top choice was based on the location and culture in that area. Based on the what I know about the area make it more appealing.</p> <p>Base on knowledge of the areas, the supporting mission, and weather I have been stationed and lived in all three of the locations and enjoyed very much.</p> <p>I visited Muscat Oman during deployment. The rest are tied for second based on what I've heard or not heard about them.</p> <p>Top picks because I've been to those locations before and know the culture and areas.</p> <p>Prior experience or desire to live in the location. I enjoy OCONUS tours so I would at least consider the other locations.</p> <p>I love the location and I have been in the area before.</p> <p>I enjoy the weather of the Middle East and close to my spouses country. The other three, I lived in Greece for three years and would go back, I loved Australia when I visited, as I lived in New Zealand, and have never had an opportunity to reside in Spain and I we want too.</p>
<b>Lack of Knowledge</b>	<p>Bottom choices were made because I do not know too much about the area.</p>

Knowledge of the area as it relates to interest in a duty station is further illustrated by the low interest in Middle Eastern countries by CONUS employees. In contrast, Bahrain DOD members show a higher degree of interest in Middle Eastern countries, as shown in Figure 3. The CONUS survey participants indicated interest levels by answering yes and absolutely yes in serving at Middle Eastern FLC locations. By combining yes and absolutely yes answers, Bahrain's interest level was 61%, Oman's was 52%, and the United

Arab Emirates was 48%. Comparing the results to survey participants located in Bahrain who answered yes and absolutely yes in serving at Middle Eastern FLC locations, interest in Bahrain was 91%, Oman was 66%, and the United Arab Emirates was 81%.

These responses suggest that interest in serving in Middle Eastern locations is related to participants' direct experience with the area. Respondents located CONUS have less interest in the Middle Eastern service locations. CONUS NAVSUP employees' lack of experience in and knowledge of the Middle East likely decreases their willingness to serve in Bahrain and thus adversely affects the talent pool of willing candidates to take a position at FLC Bahrain.



Figure 3. Difference of Middle East Location Interest Levels between CONUS and Bahrain

## 2. Culture

Participants noted that culture positively or negatively influenced their willingness to serve a tour in an OCONUS location. They explained that a major contributing reason to serve overseas is to experience a different culture. For example, participants explained they wanted “to learn something different, experience life living aboard, learn a new

culture.” However, the data collected shows that Middle Eastern culture is also a reason that people avoid FLC Bahrain. For example, one respondent stated they would not choose FLC Bahrain because of the “danger, weather, cultural differences.” Another wanted to avoid it for “all the Middle East stereotypes.” Tables 5 further displays examples of participant responses to the questions of why they were attracted or deterred by each FLC location.

Table 5. Culture in Relation to Serving at FLC OCONUS Locations

	<b>Please indicate your interest in serving at each FLC location. Why did you pick your top and bottom location(s)?</b>
<b>Culture</b>	<p>Lifestyle/cultural/ activities options</p> <p>My top were picked due to a desire to experience the culture and travel opportunities.</p> <p>Because I like living aboard and experiencing the cultures.</p> <p>Culture/travel/career enhancement</p> <p>The experience the opportunity to visit middle east ...unique experience.</p> <p>Great location and easy to fly around middle east and Europe.</p> <p>Good work experience and good central location for travel around the surrounding areas.</p> <p>To learn something different, experience life living aboard, learn a new culture, and to work not only GS and military but to work with local nationals.</p> <p>Opportunity to live overseas and travel.</p> <p>Location, ease of travel in some countries and interest in visiting that part of the world.</p> <p>I am a multicultural person, love languages, love different food, good professional experience and we get some extra pay</p>
	<p>I don't like the Middle East</p> <p>Being in the middle east, limited resources, strain to family and relationships</p>



	Please indicate your interest in serving at each FLC location. Why did you pick your top and bottom location(s)?
<b>Disdain for Middle East</b>	<p>The extreme heat.</p> <p>Danger, weather, cultural differences, does not align with long-term career goals or family desires/priorities.</p> <p>All the middle east stereotypes.</p>

This data is consistent with literature reviewed, in particular the study by Hauser (2000) that concludes that cultural factors make up 58.8% of the success factors that contribute to an effective overseas assignment.

The survey indicated that culture is decreasingly important as a person considers serving OCONUS versus serving at FLC Bahrain. The survey data from CONUS NAVSUP employees showed the following about cultural effects in attracting personnel to FLC Bahrain: 36% of CONUS respondents indicated that experiencing a different culture was an attractive reason for serving OCONUS, 25% indicated experiencing a different culture was a factor in wanting to select a tour specifically at FLC Bahrain, and only 9% of Bahrain survey respondents (already serving in Bahrain), indicated experiencing another culture as a reason to choose a location.

Overseas billets initially draw one-third interest because of the opportunity to experience a different culture. However, when it comes to actually serving in Bahrain, NAVSUP employees do not consider Bahrain's culture as a major factor in the decision to serve there. Culture is a factor in consideration of serving overseas, but when it comes to actually serving at FLC Bahrain, the allure of the Bahrain culture is not a positive influence.

Disdain for Middle Eastern culture makes serving in Bahrain undesirable for some considering a position at FLC. The survey's data showed 18% of people surveyed, or approximately 1 in 5, are deterred by the culture. Although the personnel surveyed serving in Bahrain have a negligible association to the culture, some NAVSUP employees are still deterred by disdain for the Middle East. The 4% of survey respondents serving at FLC

Bahrain with disdain for the Middle East further indicates that culture is rarely a negative factor for personnel already in the Middle East, but 18% of CONUS respondents indicated that the culture deters them from considering serving at FLC Bahrain. Although culture's importance for those serving at FLC Bahrain is minor, the deterring factors of culture affect FLC Bahrain's mission. The negative cultural associations of the Middle East by CONUS NAVSUP employees reduce the talent pool of willing candidates, therefore adversely affecting FLC Bahrain's mission accomplishment.

### 3. Quality of Life

Participants noted that quality of life positively or negatively influenced their willingness to serve a tour in an OCONUS location. Participants explained they wanted "whichever location I feel I will be happiest living in." However, the data collected shows that poor quality of life, or "personal unhappiness," as one respondent stated, is also a reason to avoid an OCONUS location. Table 6 further displays examples of participant responses as to how quality of life can attract or deter them to serve at an OCONUS duty station.

Table 6. Quality of Life Related to Serving at OCONUS FLC Locations

	<b>Please indicate your interest in serving at each FLC location. Why did you pick your top and bottom location(s)?</b>
<b>Quality of Life</b>	<p>My picks are based on my personal desire to live in each location. Whichever location I feel I will be happiest living in.</p> <p>Family and personal happiness, potential career enhancing job.</p> <p>Geographic preference and quality of life.</p> <p>The Middle East, Europe, and Japan are ideal locations to move with family members. They have a good quality of life.</p> <p>Quality of Life and safety to self.</p> <p>Location and good quality of life.</p>
<b>Poor Quality of Life</b>	<p>Bottom: danger, family and personal unhappiness, geographic isolation, does not align with career goals.</p> <p>Djibouti was rated low for life/work balance</p> <p>Locations have very poor quality of life</p> <p>Poor Quality of life.</p>

As evident by Table 6, both CONUS and Bahrain respondents rate quality of life as an important factor in selecting an assignment, not only for themselves, but especially if they are bringing their family. It is also understandable that if dependents are forced to relocate, they will be satisfied with a location that will contribute to their quality of life as well. Understandably, poor quality of life serves as a deterrent for all DOD members. For military members in particular, most seek out shore commands that are more relaxed in terms of OPTEMPO if they just rotated from an operational command that offered very little in terms of a work-life balance. A negative perception of quality of life deters 1 in 3 CONUS survey respondents from Bahrain. In reality, approximately only 1 in 10 Bahrain employees surveyed are affected by a negative quality of life in Bahrain.

#### 4. Geographic Isolation

Participants noted that geographic isolation can act as a deterrent to serving in an OCONUS location as well. This is shown by the poor ranking of locations such as Djibouti and Diego Garcia in conjunction with respondent comments such as “they are too remote, not much family support” or that their “bottom [choices] were due to isolation or less desirable climate/everyday convenience for the family.” It is clear that isolated duty locations are not as desirable as other foreign duty locations. Table 7 displays examples of participant responses as to how geographic isolation deters them from an OCONUS duty station.

Table 7. Isolation as a Reason Not to Serve at OCONUS FLC Locations

	<b>Please indicate your interest in serving at each FLC location. Why did you pick your top and bottom location(s)?</b>
<b>Isolation</b>	<p>My bottom [choices] were due to isolation or less desirable climate / everyday convenience for the family.</p> <p>Bottom: danger, family and personal unhappiness, geographic isolation, does not align with career goals.</p> <p>The bottom ones because they are too remote, not much family support and not something I'd be personally interested in.</p>

## 5. Safety Concerns

Respondents noted that concerns about personal safety can act as a deterrent to serving in an OCONUS location as well. Respondents noted that “safety to self” and “family safety” were concerns they had about taking a tour overseas that mainly pertained to the Middle East AOR. Table 8 displays examples of participant responses as to how safety plays a role in selecting an OCONUS duty station.

Table 8. Safety as a Reason Not to Serve at OCONUS FLC Locations

	Please indicate your interest in serving at each FLC location. Why did you pick your top and bottom location(s)?
<b>Safety</b>	Bottom: danger, family and personal unhappiness, geographic isolation, does not align with career goals.  Quality of Life and safety to self. Family safety  The location poses additional risk, far from home.  Danger, weather, cultural differences, does not align with long-term career goals or family desires/priorities.  All the middle east stereotypes.

DOD members can be accompanied by their dependents to overseas locations, unlike a deployment to a theater that is inherently dangerous. Justifiably, some survey respondents perceive certain FLC locations as dangerous and do not wish to put their families in harm’s way. A few respondents said they would be willing to serve anywhere except the Middle East or Africa. It is likely the perception that those areas are constantly in a state of unrest. This deters a portion of NAVSUP survey participants, leading them to rank locations in the CENTCOM AOR toward the bottom of preferred overseas locations.

## 6. Civilian Tax Burden

Civilian participants noted that tax burden is another reason to avoid serving in an OCONUS position. Civilian respondents pointed out in the survey that they “do not receive

the same tax advantages as military counterparts but live and work within the same environment.” While the military’s pay is not taxed while serving in an OCONUS location, their civilian coworkers are not afforded the same tax-free benefits. Table 9 further displays examples of participant responses as to how the tax burden on civilians deters them from an OCONUS duty station.

Table 9. Civilian Tax Burden as a Reason to Avoid FLC Bahrain

	Why would you want to avoid a tour at FLC Bahrain? Please explain.
<b>Tax Burden</b>	<p>The tax burden for OCONUS PCS that is now attached to the employee and the limitation on length of tour</p> <p>Do not receive the same tax advantages as Military counterparts but live and work within the same environment. Work pace is extremely fast and the command is traditionally under staffed.</p> <p>The issue for civilian is taxes. We have to now pay taxes on our physical move and storage of household goods. You want us but we have to pay to be here.</p> <p>Due to the tax charged to us DOD Civilians for our PCS trips and Non-Temporary Storage tax as well. I am being charged for working overseas. DOD Civilians are the only ones who have to pay full Federal Tax, now tax to move here, will not do it again. Even filling RITA I still do not get back everything I am charged.</p>

## B. DEPENDENTS AS A FACTOR

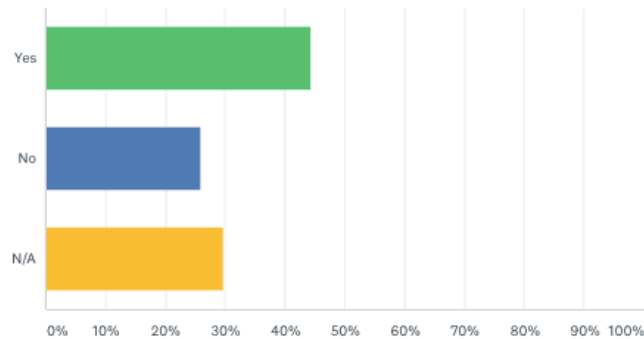
Dependents are a major factor in the decision to serve in Bahrain for CONUS respondents, and they are also a factor to those already stationed in Bahrain who responded to our survey. We identified the effects of accompaniment and family separation causing strain as major factors related to dependents and desire to serve in Bahrain. Analysis shows that most respondents indicated that being able to bring dependents directly affected or would affect their decision to go to Bahrain.

## 1. Effects of Accompaniment

Participants noted that the ability to have family accompany them to a location positively influenced their willingness to accept a position at FLC Bahrain. Participants noted that 44% would accept a position in Bahrain if they were allowed to bring their dependents (see Figure 4). Excluding participants without dependents, the total indicating they would accept a position at FLC Bahrain increases to 63%. Participants indicated that 48% would not accept a position at FLC Bahrain if they were not allowed to bring their families (see Figure 5). Excluding participants without dependents, the total indicating they would not accept a position at FLC Bahrain is 68%. The survey showed approximately 2 in 3 participants would not even consider Bahrain without the ability to bring family.

If you were allowed to bring your family, would you accept a position at FLC Bahrain?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 1

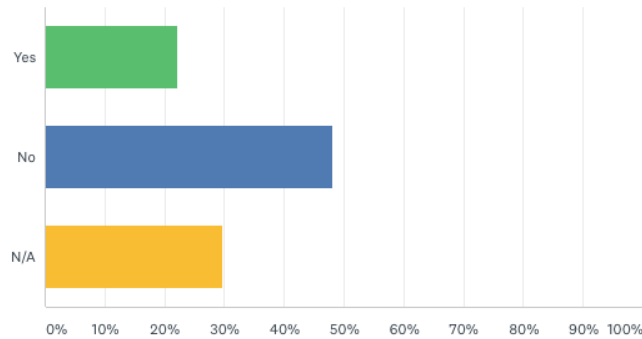


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	44.44% 12
No	25.93% 7
N/A	29.63% 8
TOTAL	27

Figure 4. Decision Factor Based on Bringing Dependents (CONUS Response)

If you were not allowed to bring your family, would you accept a position at FLC Bahrain?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	22.22%	6
No	48.15%	13
N/A	29.63%	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>27</b>

Figure 5. Decision Factor Based on Not Bringing Dependents

## 2. Family Separation Causes Strain

Family separation is a major point of concern when deciding on whether to accept a billet in Bahrain. Participants noted that being away from family, and the strain that separation causes, is a major reason for avoiding a tour at FLC Bahrain. Participants explained reasons for avoiding FLC Bahrain as due to “strain to family and relationships,” “not allowing my family to come to Bahrain is too much time away,” and “separation anxiety if I went as a geo-bachelor.” Table 10 displays examples of respondents’ concerns about being away from family and the strain that it causes.

Table 10. Family Strain as a Reason to Avoid FLC Bahrain

	Why would you want to avoid a tour at FLC Bahrain? Please explain.
<b>Strain on Family</b>	<p>...strain to family and relationships</p> <p>far from home and expensive plane ticket when you want to visit the states</p> <p>Not being able to have my family with me on a “shore duty” makes it almost an automatic no. Coming from an operational duty being underway greater than 50% of the time, and then not allowing my family to come to Bahrain is to much time away.</p> <p>Not able to take family due to external reason like divorce agreement constraints for taking children out of state. Keeping my kids in better educational institutes. Not taking my spouse away from a career enhancing job.</p> <p>I have concerns about schools for my child, culture shock for my spouse, and separation anxiety if I went as a geo-bachelor.</p> <p>Family reasons</p> <p>I would avoid a tour if I could not bring my spouse.</p> <p>Possibility of being away from family for an extended period of time.</p> <p>No reason to avoid as long as a DEA is available. Reduced desire to come if unaccompanied.</p> <p>It can get very lonely and you get homesick a lot</p>

## C. INCENTIVES REGARDING BAHRAIN

Incentives offer additional enticement to NAVSUP employees surveyed in taking positions OCONUS. We identified incentives from a CONUS perspective, incentives from a Bahrain employee perspective, and promotion opportunity/mission impact as three incentive factors that influenced a person’s desire to serve in Bahrain. Analysis shows CONUS and Bahrain respondents view incentives differently.

### 1. Incentives from CONUS Perspective

CONUS participants noted pay was overwhelmingly favored in incentivizing duty preference at FLC Bahrain. Preferred follow-on orders, milestone tour, gaining a skill set, or other incentives combined to approximately 39% of overall incentives. Pay as an incentive enticed approximately 61% of the surveyed population, as indicated in Figure 6. Table 11 shows that respondents expanded pay as a preference in incentivizing duty with



phrases such as “extra pay,” “incentives such as pay,” “the pay and only the pay,” “other pay entitlements,” and “for the money.” The survey indicated that pay as an incentive enticed OCONUS employees, while none of the respondents noted that gaining a skill set was a factor that persuaded them to consider Bahrain.

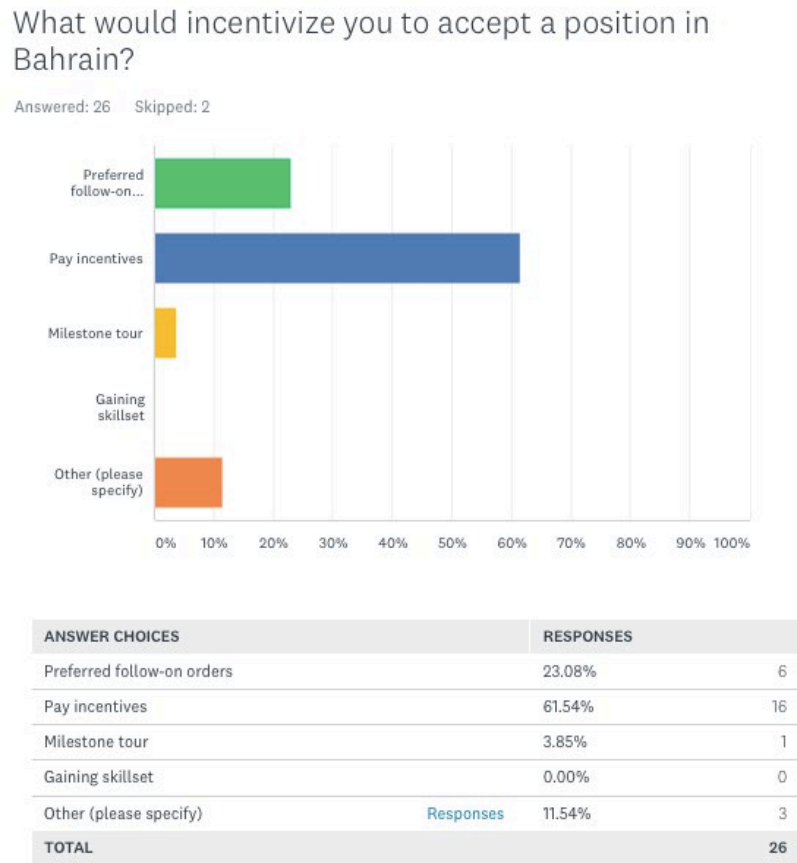


Figure 6. Incentives to Serve at FLC Bahrain (CONUS Responses)

Table 11. Incentives to Serve at FLC Bahrain (CONUS Responses)

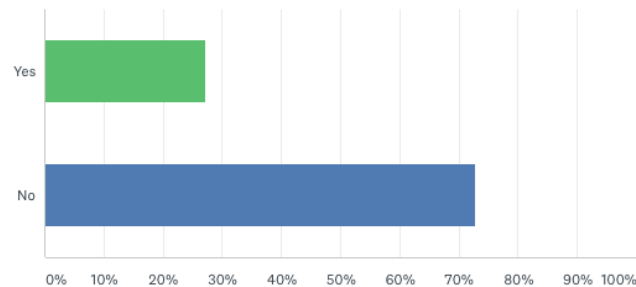
	Why would you want to select a tour at FLC Bahrain? Please explain
<b>Incentives</b>	<p>Extra pay and a new adventure</p> <p>Incentives such as pay and benefits</p> <p>Additional pay, unique experience.</p> <p>If there was an incentive that made it worth while for my family and I.</p> <p>The pay and only the pay.</p> <p>The mission impact on the AOR, location, culture and promotion</p> <p>To be selected for higher grade or gain supervisory experience (GS).</p> <p>Important of mission, professional development, tax free, other pay entitlements</p> <p>Experience and money.</p> <p>for the money</p>

## 2. Incentives from the Bahrain Employee Perspective

For Bahrain respondents, incentives did not drive their reasons to serve at FLC Bahrain. Our analysis indicates that other factors such as high OPTEMPO, mission impact, or other opportunities are the main reasons they chose to serve at FLC Bahrain. The data collected shows that 72% of respondents did not select a tour at FLC Bahrain based on incentives alone (see Figure 7). This finding suggests that Bahrain employees are motivated by different reasons than their CONUS counterparts.

Did you select a tour at FLC Bahrain based purely on incentives?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 1



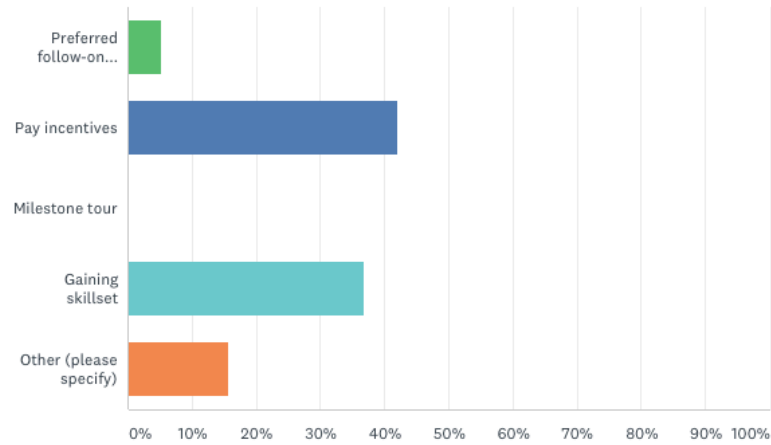
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	27.27%	6
No	72.73%	16
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>22</b>

Figure 7. Incentives as a Motivator for FLC Bahrain Employees

Bahrain respondents were also asked to indicate the most influential incentives to serving at FLC Bahrain (see Figure 8). Respondents were asked to rate which incentive was most important to them from the following options: preferred follow-on orders, pay incentives, milestone tour, gaining a skill set, or other. Similar to CONUS respondents, pay is still favored by the majority at 42%. However, slightly less of the majority, 37% of Bahrain respondents, were motivated to serve there in order to gain a new skill set. In contrast, no respondents serving CONUS selected gaining a skill set as an incentive. Our analysis indicates that an opportunity to learn something new or accepting a position beneficial to one's career is a powerful motivator for those serving in Bahrain. As one respondent said, "My prior OCONUS position would not provide me what I wanted; [the] position in Bahrain did." Another respondent stated, "Contracting as an enlisted person is very rare. Opportunity to show that contracting can be done by the enlisted force, much like the Army and Air Force, is paramount for change." Table 12 displays more examples of respondents' willingness to serve in Bahrain in order to gain a new skill set.

## What incentivized you to accept a position in Bahrain?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Preferred follow-on orders	5.26%	1
Pay incentives	42.11%	8
Milestone tour	0.00%	0
Gaining skillset	36.84%	7
Other (please specify)	15.79%	3
		Responses
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	

Figure 8. Incentives to Serve at FLC Bahrain (Bahrain Responses)

Table 12. New Skill Set as a Reason to Serve at FLC Bahrain (Bahrain Responses)

	Why did you select a tour at FLC Bahrain? Please explain.
New Skillset	<p>Contracting as an enlisted person is very rare. Opportunity to show that contracting can be done by the enlisted force, much like the army and air force, is paramount for change.</p> <p>My prior OCONUS position would not provide me what I wanted, position in Bahrain did.</p> <p>Only O5 contracting billet overseas.</p> <p>The challenge of being stationed overseas and the opportunity to learn outside of what I was comfortable with</p> <p>Developmental assignment that provides exceptional opportunities that would not be afforded in the US</p> <p>I was looking for a position and formerly a TARP Rep contractor in Bahrain I applied and accepted the position.</p>

### 3. Promotion Opportunity and Mission Impact

Respondents explained that the prospect of promotion and mission impact positively influenced their willingness to serve a tour at FLC Bahrain. In both surveys, respondents were asked if their selection boards considered FLC Bahrain a career-enhancing milestone. Figures 9 and 10 show the CONUS and Bahrain responses to this question. Based on the data collected, less than 50% of CONUS respondents believe that their selection board considers Bahrain either career enhancing or absolutely career enhancing. Also, almost 35% view the location as not career enhancing. By contrast, almost 60% of Bahrain respondents viewed the jobs as career enhancing and only 18% view the positions in Bahrain as not career enhancing.

Bahrain and CONUS respondents also explained that mission impact positively influenced their willingness to serve a tour at FLC Bahrain. As some respondents stated, their reason to serve at FLC Bahrain was for the “challenge, opportunity, and to support the NAVCENT/C5F AOR mission.” Another respondent stated they would serve there for the “location and exposure to U.S. FIFTH Fleet.” This mission impact was an important difference that showed how Bahrain respondents were again motivated by incentives other than pay.

To what degree does your selection board consider FLC Bahrain a career enhancing milestone?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 2

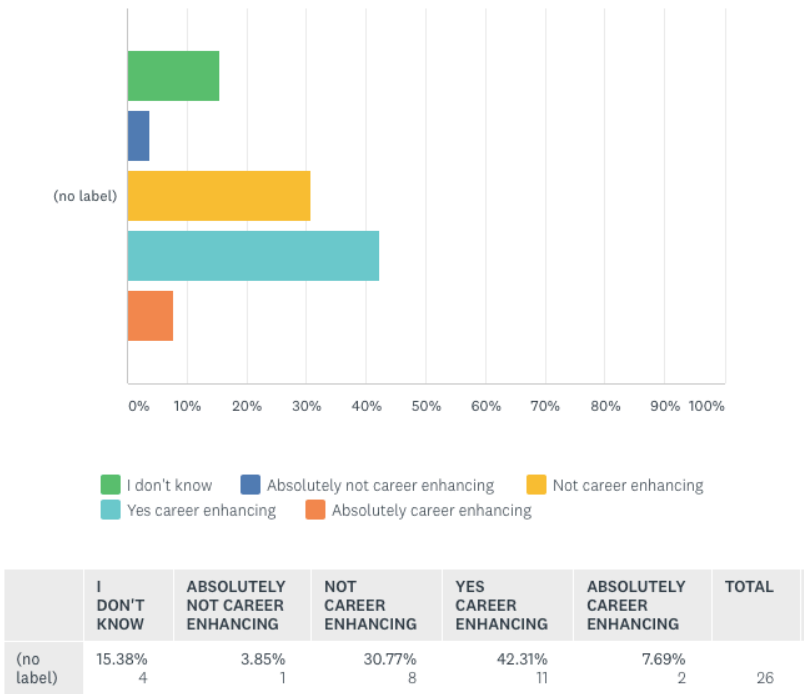
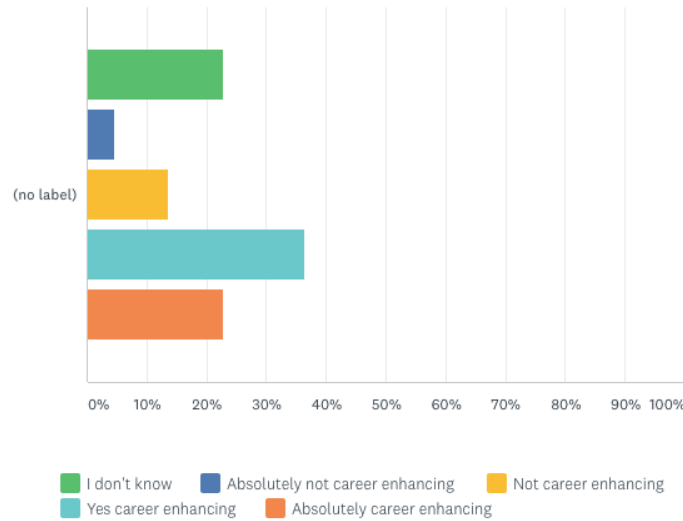


Figure 9. Perception of FLC Bahrain as Career Enhancing (CONUS Responses)

## To what degree does your selection board consider FLC Bahrain a career enhancing milestone?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 1



	I DON'T KNOW	ABSOLUTELY NOT CAREER ENHANCING	NOT CAREER ENHANCING	YES CAREER ENHANCING	ABSOLUTELY CAREER ENHANCING	TOTAL
(no label)	22.73% 5	4.55% 1	13.64% 3	36.36% 8	22.73% 5	22

Figure 10. Perception of FLC Bahrain as Career Enhancing (Bahrain Responses)

Participants indicated that Bahrain's restrictive environment, the inability for most to bring dependents, and lack of incentives negatively affected their willingness to serve. Responses indicated that geographical and policy barriers influenced interest in Bahrain. Additionally, poor quality of life, geographic isolation, and safety concerns are all negative drivers in a DOD member's decision matrix to serve in OCONUS areas and, in particular, Bahrain. Our analysis showed the CONUS respondent concerns were rarely experienced by Bahrain employees. Prior knowledge of an area tended to increase the chances someone would choose the location as a duty station, and aversion to the culture can lead to unfounded fear or concerns. In the section discussing dependents and strain caused by separation, the analysis showed that bringing family was a major factor in the respondents' decision to accept a job or not. Finally, the incentive section showed that those already in Bahrain were driven by different motivators than their CONUS counterparts. CONUS

respondents needed additional incentives such as pay. Conversely, Bahrain DOD members were not as motivated by incentives and chose Bahrain as an opportunity to develop new skill sets and serve in a high OPTEMPO area.



## VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FLC Bahrain faces unique challenges in completing their mission. Geographic factors, DEA quota, and lack of incentives combine to discourage candidates, shrinking the candidate pool and affecting FLC Bahrain mission readiness. Our research revealed that a maze of policies ultimately deterred respondents from considering a position in Bahrain because of the inability to be assigned with accompanying family members as shown in both our survey and NAVIG Report. A negative perception of the area due to lack of experience, culture, quality of life, and safety concerns, played a significant role in deterring respondents willingness to request Bahrain. The study also revealed that civil servants are faced with different negative tax regulations while serving in Bahrain.

Despite being considered a top-tier billet by the Office of Supply Corps Personnel, FLC Bahrain does not have the luxury, like other commands within and outside of the NAVSUP enterprise, to consistently choose from top-level talent (NAVPERSCOM, 2017). Additionally, civil servants within the NAVSUP enterprise have no formal declaration that a billet in Bahrain is career enhancing (S. Stada, personal communication, May 10, 2021). These issues contribute to recruiting pool challenges and negatively impact mission accomplishment and effectiveness in support of CENTCOM AOR warfighters.

### A. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. **Primary Research Question: How will the current DEA quota limit impact recruitment efforts and mission accomplishment in Bahrain?**

##### *a. Conclusion*

**Recruitment:** The current DEA policy of limiting dependents negatively impacts recruitment because the policy significantly shrinks the talent pool. Research indicates that over half of the DOD military and civilian workforce has dependents of some kind. According to survey respondents, 69% would accept orders to FLC Bahrain if they were allowed to take dependents.

**Mission Impact:** Our research further shows that the depth of qualified candidates directly correlates to organizational success (Breaugh, 2016). One example in the NAVIG

report states, “There is a lack of personnel experienced in NAVSUP FLC Bahrain ... to support accurate bills of material, statements of work, logistics support requirements and cost analyses for on-time contract award for ship repair” (NAVINSGEN, 2019). This gap in qualified personnel has caused 70% of contracting milestones to be missed, causing a delay of ships entering and completing maintenance periods on time (NAVINSGEN, 2019). The relationship between lack of personnel and decrease in mission accomplishment shows how the DEA quota limit is negatively impacting mission accomplishment at FLC Bahrain.

***b. Recommendation***

FLC Bahrain should submit a DEA increase request to NAVSUP headquarters, citing the 2019 NAV IG Report. An increase in DEA quotas would provide a wider talent pool to choose from and ensure a more sufficient, qualified, and diversified workforce.

**2. Primary Research Question: How would an increase in quotas change the effectiveness of FLC Bahrain?**

***a. Conclusion***

Effectiveness is considered the successful accomplishment of tasks in support of mission. The increase in quality candidates willing to serve at FLC Bahrain provides for a more effective mission accomplishment. Highly qualified personnel require less training, have a greater propensity to fill vacancies, and when accompanied by dependents, tend to remain on station for longer increasing continuity. Organizational success is linked closely to the process of acquiring talent (Breaugh, 2016). Organizations with quality personnel are more effective. An organization with a larger pool of interested talent to choose from, therefore, will make the organization more effective. With an increase in DEA quotas, interest and therefore the pool of talented personnel willing to serve at FLC Bahrain will rise, and so will FLC Bahrain’s effectiveness.

***b. Recommendation***

- FLC Bahrain should submit a DEA increase request to NAVSUP headquarters, citing the 2019 NAV IG Report.

- FLC Bahrain should offer tour extension bonuses for civilians willing to continue serving at FLC Bahrain.
- FLC Bahrain should offer an extended rotation plan to accompanied military personnel from 24 months to 30 or 36 months.

### **3. CONUS perception of Bahrain is impacting FLC effectiveness.**

#### ***a. Conclusion***

Survey respondents identified an aversion to the Middle East that negatively impacted a portion of CONUS respondents from considering Bahrain. The findings show that although violent crime is rare and the overall crime rate is low, some respondents had a perception of Bahrain as being unsafe and having a lower quality of life. Some also had a negative view of the culture, which contributed to an overall undesirable image associated with Bahrain (Department of State, n.d.). FLC Bahrain respondents rarely experienced the negative concerns voiced by their CONUS counterparts. The quality of work life in Bahrain “was statistically about the same” as overseas locations, while home life quality was “statistically the same” as the average overseas duty stations (NAVINGEN, 2019).

#### ***b. Recommendation***

- Market Bahrain as career enhancing to NAVSUP civilians and the Navy Supply Community.
- Educate the CONUS population that quality of life standards are equivalent to all OCONUS locations and safety concerns are largely unfounded.

### **4. Focus manning effort on civilian vacancies**

#### ***a. Conclusion***

A snapshot of FLC Bahrain as of April 2021 found that 24 of 30 vacant billets, or 80%, were civilian positions. The leading causes for civilian vacancies are the inability to

order a civilian to a position, and their pay not being tax-free like their military counterparts, while being subject to the same DEA quota restrictions.

***b. Recommendation***

FLC Bahrain must ensure maximum pay incentives are issued for civilians in order to decrease the gap in civilian billets. FLC Bahrain is authorized to offer a 25% pay increase based on a civilian's base pay salary to incentivize taking a position OCONUS. The command must ensure they are maximizing this pay incentive in order to attract a larger pool of qualified civilians.

**B. FURTHER RESEARCH**

1. Research telework as a possible solution to fill vacant positions at FLC Bahrain. The command could seek to integrate telework capabilities in a long-term solution utilizing the Maximum Telework Flexibilities regulations and policies outlined in the SECDEF memo from March 2020 (Barnett, 2020). This will potentially allow personnel living in the United States to complete work slotted for the vacant positions at FLC Bahrain.
2. The Bahrain DEA quota was set at 686 quotas in the year 2000 (CUSNC, 2015). Our research could not find what metric was used to come up with 686. An analysis of the number should be conducted to determine if the quota is still appropriate for the increased DOD population serving in the area. The size of the base has doubled since 2000, yet the DEA quota has not shifted.
3. Consider making the survey mandatory for one or more FLC locations to increase participants' feedback. Our low survey responses prohibited our ability to make claims about the NAVSUP population. Making the survey mandatory will increase participant numbers and add legitimacy to the negative effects that a low DEA quota has on effectiveness and mission accomplishment. This data would have more weight when being referenced in requests to increase the DEA quota for Bahrain.

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