



The Effect of Trust in Leadership and Hazing Climate on Unit Cohesion

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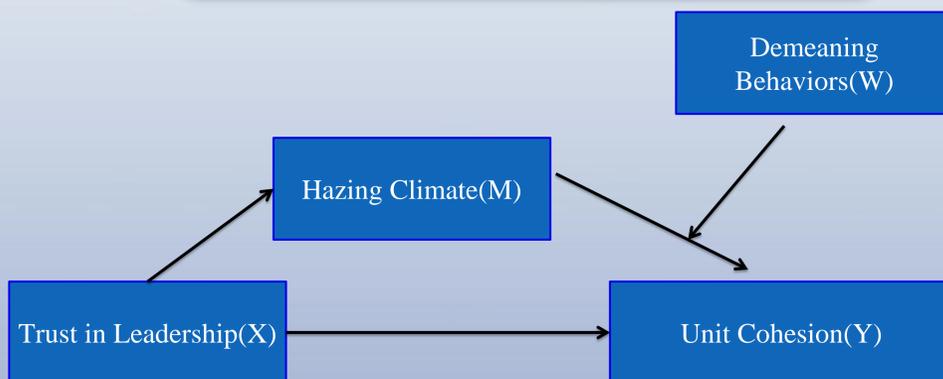


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Background

- Hazing can include forms of initiation, excessive corrective measures, and celebratory conduct that is perceived as necessary to be acknowledged as a "legitimate" member of the group and is not attributed to group-relevant assessments, preparations, or chance (Cimino, 2011).
- Hazing has been found to have serious psychological, physical, and work place repercussions ranging from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to suicide and decreased mission readiness (Svec, 2013; Rush, 2012).
- Bullying (e.g. demeaning behaviors) may be confused with hazing and sometimes overlap in scenarios, and is included in the model (Chu, 2012).
- Scholars believe that leadership may play a key role in discouraging hazing (Kowalski & Waldron, 2010).

Hypothesized Model



Method

- Data from FY 2014 DEOCS Survey.
- Participants**
 - N = 3,528 military personnel across all services.
 - 84.8% male, 58% E4-E6, 27% racial minority.
- Measures** (Scored on a 4-point likert scale 1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree)
 - Trust in Leadership:** 3-item scale (e.g., I trust that my organization's leadership will represent my best interests).
 - Unit Cohesion:** 4-item scale (e.g., Members trust each other to get the job done).
 - Hazing:** 3-item scale (e.g., Newcomers are harassed or humiliated prior to being accepted into the organization).
 - Demeaning Behaviors (Bullying):** 3-item scale (e.g., Certain members are excessively teased to the point where they are unable to defend themselves).

Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Key Study Variables

Summary: Moderate levels of unit cohesion, hazing climate, and demeaning behaviors are in the sample (2 = moderately disagree, 3 = moderately agree, 4 = strongly agree).

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
E4-E6	58%	1.02	----					
Male	84.8%	.36	-.02	---				
Trust in Leadership	2.77	.76	.11**	-.05*	.88			
Hazing Climate	3.29	.60	.20**	.01	.24**	.78		
Unit Cohesion	2.86	.64	.13**	-.09**	.75**	.27**	.88	
Demeaning Behaviors	2.94	.70	.23**	-.04*	.46**	.56**	.48**	.78

Note. N = 3528. Cronbach alphas are in the diagonal.
*p < .05. **p < .001

Table 2. Mediator Variable Model: Hazing Climate Regressed on Predictors: Trust in leadership is significantly related to hazing climate. The predictors in the table only explain 8% of the variance in hazing climate.

Predictor	B	SE	t
Constant	2.58**	.05	49.50
Trust in Leadership	.17**	.01	13.62
Gender	.03	.03	1.12
Rank	.09**	.01	9.58

Note. R² = .08, F (3/3524) = 102.82**.
*p < .05. **p < .001

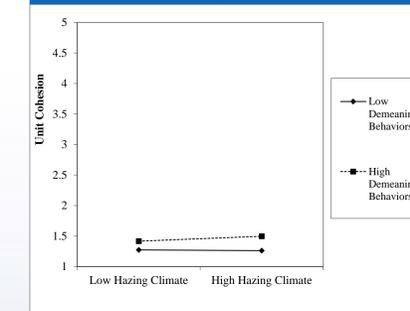
Table 3. Dependent Variable Model: Unit Cohesion Regressed on the Predictors: Trust in leadership is the strongest predictor of unit cohesion. The predictors in the table explain 60% of the variance in unit cohesion.

Predictor	B	SE	t
Constant	1.39***	.14	9.98
Hazing Climate	-.13**	.04	-3.11
Trust in Leadership	.56***	.01	54.92
Demeaning Behaviors	-.04	.05	-.74
Hazing x Demeaning Behaviors	.05**	.01	3.62
Gender	-.10	.02	-5.09
Rank	.01*	.01	2.06

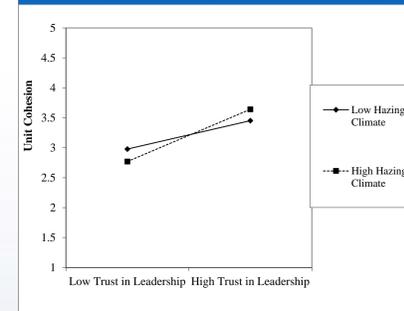
Note: R² = .60, F (6/3521) = 863.88***.
*p < .05 **p < .005 ***p < .001.

Results

Interaction of unit climate and demeaning behaviors



Interaction of Trust in Leadership and Hazing Climate (1 unit case study)



Discussion & Implications

- There is still confusion regarding the differences between hazing and bullying (demeaning behaviors).
- The results indicate that hazing and demeaning behavior neither increase nor decrease cohesion.
- Improvement on measurement of hazing and demeaning behaviors is needed.
- Leader behaviors that establish trust (e.g., representing group members' best interests and treating group members fairly) are main determinants of organizational cohesion.

Future Directions

- Analyze relationships for different sub groups (i.e., women and minorities).
- Investigate unit level vs. individual level analyses.
- Conduct common-method bias and confirmatory factor analyses.

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