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Research Article

Training Success Factors in The Coast Guard Special Operations Course

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ABSTRACT

The Coast Guard Special Operations Course has experienced a 33% dropout rate in its training program from 2018 to 2024, highlighting the need to identify the underlying factors contributing to trainee success or failure. This mixed-methods study utilized a concurrent triangulation design to examine these factors comprehensively. Quantitative data were collected from 243 respondents who successfully completed the CGSOC training from 2018 until August 2024. The analysis, conducted using Exploratory Factor Analysis, revealed five key dimensions influencing training success: Career Advancement and Personal Motivation, Training Environment and Support, Training Facility and Resource Adequacy, Family Support and Guidance, and Family Concerns and Peer Support. Concurrently, qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews with five participants who did not complete the training, providing additional context and a deeper understanding of the challenges trainees face. The study found that trainees' intrinsic motivation, a supportive training environment, and robust family and peer support are crucial for their success. Conversely, challenges such as homesickness, financial difficulties, and inadequate preparation were identified as major obstacles contributing to attrition. These findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions to optimize training retention and outcomes. The results suggest that fostering mentorship and peer support systems could mitigate the negative impacts of these challenges, thereby improving completion rates. Future research may explore the role of structured peer mentorship and family engagement strategies in high-stress law enforcement training environments.

Keywords: *Coast Guard Special Operations Course (CGSOC), Career Advancement and Personal Motivation, Inadequate Preparation, Peer Support Systems*

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Introduction

Globally, specialized military training programs are recognized for their critical role in producing highly skilled personnel capable of executing complex and demanding operations. The quality and effectiveness of these training programs have far-reaching implications, not only for national security but also for the development of a competent and reliable workforce in various sectors (Bumbuc, 2021). These programs often require a considerable investment of time and resources, making it essential to understand the factors that contribute to their successful completion. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Philippine Coast Guard, where trainees undergo rigorous programs designed to prepare them for the demanding field of maritime operations.

Despite the high stakes and rigorous nature of training, dropout rates remain a pressing

concern for institutions like the Philippine Coast Guard. Recent data from the Coast Guard Special Operations Course (CGSOC) (Table 1) reveal that a significant number of trainees (323 or 33%) fail to complete their programs due to various personal, institutional, and family-related factors. Between 2018 and 2024, records indicate that only a portion of the trainees successfully completed their training, while others withdrew midway, raising questions about the underlying factors influencing these outcomes. Additionally, the CGSOC is a specialized course of the Philippine Coast Guard, designed exclusively for physically fit male personnel to address maritime operational demands. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for ensuring trainee retention and success, as well as for the strategic allocation of institutional resources (Kyröläinen et al., 2018).

Table 1. Cohort of the Coast Guard Special Operations Course

CGSOC Batch	No. of Trainees Convened	No. of Dropouts	No. of Graduates
Class 33-2023	300	66	234
Class 32-2022	123	41	82
Class 31-2022	152	7	145
Class 30-2022	170	90	80
Class 29-2019	86	55	31
Class 28-2018	69	26	43
Class 27-2018	79	38	41
Total	979	323	656

In particular, gaps exist in understanding how factors such as personal motivation, instructional quality, and family engagement contribute to the outcomes of trainees undergoing CGSOC maritime and military training (Sahoo & Mishra, 2018). The related literature often lacks context-specific analyses that integrate qualitative insights with quantitative data, making it difficult to pinpoint why certain trainees succeed while others do not. This gap is especially prominent in the case of CGSOC trainees, where a holistic examination of the interplay between personal, family, and training center-related factors has yet to be fully explored (United States Naval Institute, 2022).

Research has shown that trainees' adaptability and socioeconomic status play a crucial role in training success (Halsen, 2014); thus,

this study is necessary to examine the specific environment of the CGSOC. Through the use of Exploratory Factor Analysis and qualitative interviews, this study identified underlying factors and addressed the gap in understanding the multifaceted experiences of CGSOC trainees. The insights gained can inform the development of targeted strategies to enhance training retention and success, contributing to the broader field of educational psychology and training program management.

Objectives

The aim of this study is to explore and contextualize the factors affecting the training experiences of CGSOC trainees. This research seeks to capture a holistic view of trainees' experiences. The goal is to bridge the research

gap by integrating perspectives from both successful and withdrawn trainees, thereby providing a specific understanding of the factors that lead to training success or attrition. The study aims to answer the following specific objectives: 1) to identify the factors affecting the success of trainees in the Coast Guard Special Operations Course (CGSOC); 2) to determine the challenges do CGSOC trainees encounter during the training; 3) to identify the strategies employed to address these challenges; 4) to explore the specific experiences of trainees during the CGSOC that influence their decision to withdraw from the training; and 5) to propose to assist trainees in the Coast Guard Special Operations Course (CGSOC) to succeed.

Methods

The research design employed in this study is the concurrent triangulation design. In this design, both qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously but analyzed separately, allowing the researcher to compare and integrate the findings during the interpretation phase. A total of 243 CGSOC trainees participated in a web-based survey, representing different classes from 2018 to 2024. The sample size was determined using Raosoft with a margin of error of 0.05. For the interview, the researcher selected five participants who withdrew midway through CGSOC training, guided by inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria required that participants must have registered for training between 2018 and May 2024 and must have withdrawn from the training.

A four-point Likert scale web-based survey questionnaire with three sections was administered to 243 CGSOC trainees. The first section covered respondents' demographic profiles, the second contained 43 statements on factors affecting trainees' success, and the third included a checklist of challenges faced during training and strategies used to overcome them.

In addition, five participants who withdrew from CGSOC training were personally interviewed using six semi-structured, open-ended questions. The reliability of both instruments was validated, as seen in the web-based survey questionnaire. Personal-Related Factors ($\alpha = 0.884$), Family-Related Factors ($\alpha = 0.877$), and Training-Center-Related Factors ($\alpha = 0.930$) were all well above the benchmark of 0.7 (Field, 2018), indicating minimal measurement error. Additionally, the researcher developed an interview protocol, which was validated through expert review to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. This process, guided by research experts, reduced ambiguity in the open-ended questions, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the instrument (Turner, 2010).

To analyze the data, responses were tabulated and analyzed using the mean, mode, frequency, and standard deviation. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to determine the factors influencing the training success of CGSOC trainees. EFA helps reveal the underlying structure of a large set of variables by identifying the latent factors that explain patterns of correlation among these variables (Osborne, 2005). Thematic analysis was employed for the interview data, wherein data were identified, analyzed, and patterns (themes) were reported (Clarke, 2006).

Result and Discussion

As shown in Table 2, most CGSOC trainees were between 26 and 30 years old, accounting for 59.7% (145 respondents). The majority of trainees were single, comprising 83.1% (202 out of 234 trainees), and most were college graduates, representing 59.7% (145 out of 234). Regarding years of service, most trainees had between 1 and 5 years of experience, making up 87.2% (212 trainees). In terms of professional rank, 72.4% (176 trainees) held the rank of Coast Guard Seaman 2nd Class.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Respondents of the Study (n=243)

Characteristics	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative Percent
Age			
21 to 25 years old	32	13.2	13.2
26 to 30 years old	145	59.7	72.8

Characteristics	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative Percent
31 to 35 years old	66	27.2	100.0
Civil Status			
Married	41	16.9	16.9
Single	202	83.1	100.0
Educational Attainment			
Under Graduate	72	29.6	29.6
Technical Vocational	26	10.7	40.3
College Degree	145	59.7	100.0
Years in Service			
Less than one year	7	2.9	2.9
1 to 5 years	212	87.2	90.1
6 to 10 years	23	9.5	99.6
11 to 15 years	1	0.4	100.0
Professional Rank			
CG Apprentice Seaman	38	15.6	15.6
CG Ensign	3	1.2	16.9
CG Lieutenant Junior Grade	7	2.9	19.8
CG Petty Officer 2	1	0.4	20.2
CG Petty Officer 3	9	3.7	23.9
CG Seaman 1	9	3.7	27.6
CG Seaman 2	176	72.4	100.0

The Factors Affecting the Success of Trainees in the Coast Guard Special Operations Course (CGSOC)

The analysis also revealed that "Career Advancement and Personal Motivation" was the most significant factor influencing trainees' success, explaining 20.686% of the variance. This highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation, such as career growth and personal development, in completing training programs. Additionally, the "Training Environment and

Support" dimension, which contributed 10.830%, underscores the role of a positive learning environment, instructor guidance, and peer support. Other factors, including "Training Facility and Resource Adequacy," "Family Support and Guidance," and "Family Concerns and Peer Support," also played a role, collectively explaining 58.181% of the variance. Table 3 presents the explained variance of each dimension.

Table 3. The Explained Variance of each Dimensions of the Study

Factors	Explained Variance	Cumulative Explained Variance
Career Advancement and Personal Motivation	20.686	20.686
Training Environment and Support	10.830	31.516
Training Facility and Resource Adequacy	11.047	42.563
Family Support and Guidance	10.641	53.205
Family Concerns and Peer Support	4.976	58.181

Career Advancement and Personal Motivation

This factor, being the most influential dimension, had an explained variance of 20.69%, indicating that it accounts for a significant por-

tion of the variability in trainee responses (Table 4). Items such as "I am motivated to excel in my training in all activities" ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.386$) and "I want to improve my skills to perform well in every activity" ($M = 3.88$, $SD =$

0.330) were strongly associated with this factor, reflecting the high level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among the respondents. With a mean score of 3.80 and a low standard deviation of 0.403, it is evident that trainees

consistently agreed with the statements related to motivation and career aspirations, highlighting a collective commitment to achieving personal and professional growth through the CGSOC training program.

Table 4. Career Advancement and Personal Motivation Factor

Items	Loading	Mean	SD	Description
1. I am motivated to excel in my training in all activities.	0.695	3.819	0.386	Strongly Agree
2. I wish to gain respect from my colleagues.	0.619	3.770	0.422	Strongly Agree
3. I want to finish the training to obtain a promotion.	0.581	3.782	0.461	Strongly Agree
4. I want to finish my training to improve my standing in CGSOF.	0.565	3.856	0.363	Strongly Agree
5. I want my unit to be proud of me.	0.635	3.840	0.368	Strongly Agree
6. I would like to improve my skills so that I can perform well in every activity.	0.641	3.877	0.330	Strongly Agree
7. I want to do my best in whatever I do in my training for personal improvement.	0.586	3.811	0.403	Strongly Agree
8. I want to invest in training for my career path.	0.665	3.716	0.461	Strongly Agree
9. I enjoy training because it hones my skills	0.651	3.712	0.454	Strongly Agree
10. I am confident to finish the training.	0.684	3.852	0.356	Strongly Agree
11. I always prepare myself in every activity.	0.550	3.790	0.408	Strongly Agree
12. My family members inspire by acknowledging my achievements in training.	0.556	3.782	0.424	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean for Factor 1		3.800	0.403	Strongly Agree

The demographic profile of the respondents further supports the emphasis on career advancement and personal motivation as key drivers of training success. The majority of the respondents (59.7%) were between 26 and 30 years old, a stage in their careers where individuals are highly focused on establishing themselves and seeking opportunities for professional development. Additionally, 83.1% of the participants were single, which may indicate fewer familial responsibilities, enabling them to prioritize career-related goals. The high percentage of college graduates (59.7%) among the respondents also suggests that these trainees possess a solid educational

background, which may contribute to their strong intrinsic motivation to excel and advance within the Coast Guard. Moreover, most trainees had relatively short tenures in service, with 87.2% having 1 to 5 years of experience, indicating that they are in the early stages of their professional journey and are likely to view the successful completion of CGSOC training as a pathway to career progression and rank advancement.

Training Environment and Support

This factor played a key role in determining trainees' perceptions of their training experience and overall engagement in the Coast

Guard Special Operations Course (CGSOC). High factor loadings for items such as “Our training instructors are dynamic” ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.572$), “Training colleagues appreciate the opinions of each individual” ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 0.563$), and “Our training center provides assistance to trainees” ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.586$) highlight the significant role that a supportive training environment—characterized by effective instructional methods, strong peer interac-

tions, and institutional support—plays in shaping trainees' attitudes and satisfaction. Additionally, the mean score of 3.556, coupled with a standard deviation of 0.525, suggests that respondents consistently expressed strong agreement with statements regarding the positive impact of their training environment, indicating a cohesive and motivating training setting. Table 5 presents the items loaded in the training environment and support factor.

Table 5. Items that Comprise the Training Environment and Support Factor

Items	Loading	Mean	SD	Description
1. I would like to come up a project in our training center that will be useful for the next trainees.	0.512	3.712	0.454	Strongly Agree
2. I believe challenges in training hone my skills.	0.706	3.757	0.430	Strongly Agree
3. My family members show considerable support in anything I do with my training.	0.526	3.646	0.496	Strongly Agree
4. Our training center empowers me to engage in our physical exercises.	0.526	3.626	0.493	Strongly Agree
5. The topography is suitable to train.	0.681	3.395	0.568	Strongly Agree
6. Training instructors are accommodating.	0.695	3.481	0.563	Strongly Agree
7. Training colleagues appreciated the opinions of each individual.	0.750	3.514	0.563	Strongly Agree
8. My fellow-trainees are very helpful in training.	0.659	3.588	0.526	Strongly Agree
9. Our training instructors are dynamic.	0.784	3.420	0.572	Strongly Agree
10. Our training center provides assistance to trainees which makes me feel optimistic.	0.712	3.416	0.586	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean for Factor 2		3.556	0.525	Strongly Agree

The demographic profile of the respondents reinforces the importance of a well-structured training environment. The majority of the trainees (59.7%) were between 26 and 30 years old, a group generally in the early to mid-stage of their careers and highly motivated to establish themselves professionally. Additionally, 83.1% of the participants were single, suggesting that they might rely heavily on the training center and their peers for social support during the program. The fact that 87.2% of the respondents had 1 to 5 years of service indicates that most trainees were still relatively

new to the Coast Guard, making the training environment a critical factor in their integration and professional development. Furthermore, with 72.4% holding the rank of Coast Guard Seaman 2, these trainees likely viewed the CGSOC as a stepping stone for advancement, making institutional support systems such as instructor guidance and peer collaboration essential for their success.

Training Facility and Resource Adequacy

The highest factor loading was observed for items such as “We use modern diving

equipment to ensure that we are fully equipped to meet our training goals” ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.675$) and “The diving equipment is maintained properly” ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.582$). The overall mean score of 3.34, with a standard deviation of 0.62, suggests that while trainees generally agreed that the training facilities and

resources were adequate, there may still be room for improvement. These findings highlight the importance of providing comprehensive and well-maintained facilities to support training outcomes. Table 6 presents the items that comprise the training facility and resource adequacy factor.

Table 6. Items that Comprise the Training Facility and Resource Adequacy Factor

	Items	Loading	Mean	SD	Description
1.	Our training center is equipped with comprehensive facilities (barracks, classroom, pool, open water training sites)	0.537	3.037	0.718	Agree
2.	Training center promotes collaborative learning culture.	0.397	3.514	0.548	Strongly Agree
3.	The atmosphere in our training center is enjoyable.	0.359	3.358	0.552	Strongly Agree
4.	The diving equipment is maintained properly.	0.641	3.551	0.582	Strongly Agree
5.	The weather is good in our training center.	0.667	3.329	0.635	Strongly Agree
6.	We use modern diving equipment to ensure that we are fully equipped in meeting our training goals.	0.754	3.239	0.675	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean for Factor 3			3.338	0.618	Strongly Agree

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that most trainees are in the early stages of their careers, with 59.7% aged 26 to 30 years and 87.2% having 1 to 5 years of service experience. This demographic composition suggests that these trainees are relatively new to the organization and likely place significant value on high-quality training resources to build a strong foundation for their future careers. Additionally, 83.1% of the trainees are single, which may suggest that they can dedicate more time and focus to the rigorous training requirements. The fact that 72.4% of respondents held the rank of Coast Guard Seaman 2, a relatively low-ranking position, implies that they view the training as a crucial stepping stone for career advancement. Therefore, a well-resourced training center equipped with modern facilities and fostering collaborative learning opportunities is essential for

maintaining trainee engagement and motivation.

Family Support and Guidance

The highest-loading item in this factor was “I always share my problems with my family” ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.807$), followed by “My family members urge me to seek help from my instructors if I am having problems with my training” ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.769$). This indicates that family guidance and open communication significantly impact how trainees navigate training challenges. The overall mean score of 3.19, with a standard deviation of 0.73, suggests that while trainees generally agreed that family support plays a role in their training success, its influence is moderate compared to other factors such as peer or institutional support. Table 7 presents the items that loaded onto the family support and guidance factor.

Table 7. Items that Comprise the Family Support and Guidance Factor

Items	Loading	Mean	SD	Description
1. My family members encourage me to devote more time to my training.	0.498	3.412	0.619	Strongly Agree
2. I always share my problems to my	0.842	3.099	0.807	Agree
3. My family members urge me to seek help from my instructors if I am having problems with my training.	0.760	3.058	0.769	Agree
Mean		3.189	0.732	Agree

The demographic profile of the respondents highlights the relevance of the identified factor, “Family Support and Guidance,” to the trainees’ backgrounds and personal circumstances. The majority of trainees (59.7%) were aged 26 to 30 years, and 83.1% were single, suggesting that they may still have strong emotional and practical connections with their families, who serve as primary support systems during stressful situations. Additionally, most trainees (87.2%) had 1 to 5 years of service experience, indicating that they are still in the early stages of their professional journey and may require significant encouragement from family members to sustain their motivation and resilience during challenging training periods. Furthermore, the fact that a considerable number of trainees held lower ranks (72.4% Coast Guard Seaman 2) underscores the importance of external support, as these individuals may lack the institutional experience or mentorship that higher-ranking personnel typically receive.

Family Concerns and Peer Support

The highest factor loading was observed for the item “My family is hesitant about my training due to concerns about being apart for an extended period” ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.790$), suggesting that family apprehensions play a notable role in shaping trainees’ perspectives and experiences during training. This was followed by items highlighting peer camaraderie (“Camaraderie helps us to improve our performance” with $M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.459$) and family concerns about safety (“My family is concerned about my safety during the training” with $M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.515$). The overall mean score of 3.457, with a standard deviation of 0.588, suggests that respondents generally agreed that both family-related concerns and positive peer interactions influence their training experience. These findings indicate the need to address both family and peer dynamics in training environments. Table 8 presents the items that loaded under the Family Concerns and Peer Support factor.

Table 8. Items that Comprise the Family Concerns and Peer Support Factor

Items	Loading	Mean	SD	Description
1. My family are concerned about my safety during the training.	0.382	3.728	0.515	Strongly Agree
2. Camaraderie helps us to improve our performance.	0.314	3.700	0.459	Strongly Agree
3. My family is hesitant about my training due to concerns about being apart for an extended period.	0.736	2.942	0.790	Agree
Mean		3.457	0.588	Strongly Agree

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that the factor “Family Concerns and Peer Support” is highly relevant given the

trainees’ backgrounds and circumstances. The majority of trainees (59.7%) are between 26

and 30 years old, and 83.1% are single, suggesting that family remains a primary source of emotional and social support. Additionally, 87.2% of the respondents have only 1 to 5 years of service experience, indicating that they are relatively new to the organization and may still be navigating the emotional complexities of balancing familial expectations with professional demands. Moreover, 72.4% of the respondents hold the rank of Coast Guard Seaman 2, one of the lower ranks, implying that these individuals may lack substantial institutional support. As a result, family and peer relationships play a crucial role in their emotional well-being and overall motivation to persist in training.

The Challenges do CGSOC Trainees Encountered During the Training

The challenges encountered by Coast Guard Special Operations Course (CGSOC) trainees, as shown in Table 9, reveal a broad spectrum of issues, primarily centered on emotional and finan-

cial stressors. Homesickness was the most frequently reported challenge, with 243 respondents identifying it as a significant emotional hurdle. This finding aligns with O'Neal and Lavner (2021), who emphasize that separation from family can lead to heightened anxiety and emotional distress during training. Financial difficulties were the second most common challenge, cited by 208 trainees, supporting the findings of Booth-Kewley et al. (2014), who suggested that financial instability negatively impacts trainees' concentration and performance.

Additionally, trainees reported difficulties in balancing family responsibilities with training demands (81 responses) and enduring harsh weather conditions (76 responses), highlighting the multifaceted nature of stress in high-intensity training environments (Rose et al., 2020). Language and cultural barriers (46 responses) further complicated the adaptation process, underscoring the importance of culturally sensitive support mechanisms in such contexts (Cohen et al., 2016).

Table 9. Challenges Faced by the CGSOC Trainees and the Corresponding Mode of Responses

Challenges Encountered During CGSOC Training	Mode
1. Homesickness	243
2. Financial Challenges	208
3. Difficulty in managing time between training and family responsibilities	81
4. There are times the weather is very hot that I cannot endure it.	76
5. Cultural Shock (Language Shock, Environmental Shock	46
6. I am pressured doing activities or exercises.	34
7. Social Barrier (Bullying, Discrimination, etc.,)	26
8. Language Difficulties, (Execution of English and using proper sentence become a hindrance.)	24
9. Absence of parental support	14
10. Divorce or separation of parents	12
11. Difficulty understanding the lectures or activities because instructional style is different from other training center	9
12. Health condition	2
13. Exercise	2
14. Negative attitude	1
15. Difficulty in evolution on water	1
16. Drowsiness, body pain and heavy	1
17. Difficult or struggle to perform proper exercise during motivation phase and activities because of previous injuries.	1
18. Unexpected illness during training	1
19. Difficulty in managing financial support for family	1
20. Unexpected illness during training	1
21. We need a more patient during training	1

Challenges Encountered During CGSOC Training	Mode
22. Lack of Barracks and Equipment	1

The Strategies Employed to Address the Challenges

The strategies employed by CGSOC trainees to manage these challenges, as detailed in Table 10, highlight the critical role of emotional, social, and spiritual support mechanisms. Spiritual practices, such as prayer and maintaining a devotional life (207 responses), were the most frequently cited strategies, underscoring the importance of spiritual resilience as a coping mechanism in high-pressure environments (Kelty & Segal, 2018; Vogel-Walcutt et al., 2018).

Additionally, trainees commonly used strategies such as focusing their time and attention on activities (163 responses), getting together with fellow trainees (151 responses), fostering camaraderie (115 responses), and seeking guidance from instructors (145 responses). These findings indicate that social cohesion and mentorship are vital in mitigating the psychological impact of rigorous training (Cohen et al., 2016). Furthermore, these strategies align with O'Neal and Lavner (2021), who argue that social support networks are indispensable for maintaining trainee morale and enhancing resilience in stressful contexts.

Table 10. Strategies Employed by CGSOC Trainees to Address the Challenges they faced and the Corresponding Mode of Responses

Strategies Used to Address the Challenges Encountered	Mode
1. Fostering camaraderie with other fellow trainees in the training center	115
2. Prayer and devotional life	207
3. Focus my time and attention on activities	163
4. Getting together with my fellow trainees	151
5. Seek advice from the training instructors	145
6. Sharing meals with my fellow trainees	137
7. Seek help from my instructors and fellow trainees	129
8. Call/chat with family/friends when I feel homesickness	126
9. Providing time for social activities with fellow trainees and/or friends	120
10. Practice ahead of time	116
11. I explore methods to help me feel relax during physical exercises in our training center	102
12. Observing	2
13. Listening to the advices of instructors to improve my skills	1
14. Seek help from my classmates regarding financial problems	1
15. To take out loans from people and get paid back when bonus is released	1
16. Be responsible and vigilant	1
17. Always stay positive and motivated	1
18. Sometimes you need to rest and never been quit	1

The Specific Experiences of Trainees During the CGSOC that Influence Their Decision to Withdraw from the Training

In this section, five participants who withdrew midway through training from different CGSOC classes were personally interviewed by the researcher. Each interview session was recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were then analyzed, and statements were

grouped to formulate codes and themes, based solely on the participants' responses. Based on the analyzed codes and significant statements, three major themes emerged, reflecting the specific experiences and perceptions of trainees in the Coast Guard Special Operations Course (CGSOC) that led them to withdraw from training. Each theme is derived from a set of related categories encapsulating various

factors that influenced trainees' success and challenges in completing the program. The three themes are: (a) physical and mental preparedness, (b) Family Influence and Emotional Stability, and (c) Institutional and Environmental Challenges.

Physical and Mental Preparedness

The theme of Physical and Mental Preparedness reflects trainees' focus on their physical and psychological readiness before joining the Coast Guard Special Operations Course (CGSOC). It highlights the importance of personal fitness, the consequences of insufficient preparation, and the psychological burden associated with falling behind peers. This theme is supported by three primary categories: Personal Conditioning, Lack of Preparation, and Self-Evaluative Concerns. Trainees emphasized the need for high levels of physical fitness and mental toughness to meet the demanding training requirements, noting that inadequacies in these areas often led to attrition.

Trainees underscored the importance of personal conditioning, with one stating, "You should be physically fit before entering training to avoid sickness" (Trainee 4), while another highlighted the role of mental resilience, saying, "It's the self-discipline as well as the self-motivation" (Trainee 5). However, many struggled with inadequate preparation, as reflected in remarks like, "My body was not fully prepared, which caused me to quit" (Trainee 3) and "I am obese, sir; I was unable to prepare. Lack of sleep and intense exercise affected my body" (Trainee 4), illustrating the impact of physical unpreparedness on training outcomes. Additionally, trainees experienced significant psychological strain when unable to meet physical demands, as noted in the statement, "This is the challenge for me, that I cannot keep up with my fellow trainee" (Trainee 1), highlighting how a lack of preparation negatively affected their self-esteem and performance.

This theme reinforces that both physical and mental preparedness are critical to successfully completing CGSOC training. Findings suggest that trainees lacking these aspects struggle to meet training demands and may develop low self-esteem, negatively affecting

overall performance. These insights align with the quantitative findings on the dimension of Career Advancement and Personal Motivation, where inadequate preparation was linked to lower motivation levels. Literature supports the need for structured pre-training programs to mitigate such issues (Sahoo & Mishra, 2018). Enhancing initial fitness and psychological resilience assessments could reduce dropout rates and improve trainee success.

Family Influence and Emotional Stability

The theme Family Influence and Emotional Stability addresses the impact of family dynamics—both positive and negative—on trainees' emotional well-being and training outcomes. It includes three primary categories: Family Support, Family-Related Obstacles, and Family Contact. Trainees' narratives reveal that emotional support from family members can motivate them to persevere, while unresolved family issues and lack of communication can serve as significant distractions, affecting their mental focus and determination to complete the training.

Trainees emphasized the significance of family support in maintaining their motivation during training, as seen in statements like, "My family was fully supportive when I entered training" (Trainee 3) and "They are so supportive of me that the financial services I need are also provided for me" (Trainee 1). However, unresolved family issues posed psychological challenges, exemplified by remarks such as, "I left my live-in partner after she had a miscarriage" (Trainee 2) and "When it comes to other matters, between me and my father, we were not okay with each other when I started training" (Trainee 1). These conflicts negatively impacted the trainees' focus and overall well-being. Additionally, maintaining family contact was essential for emotional stability, as reflected in the statement, "My worries were gone because I could communicate outside, and I found out that they are okay" (Trainee 2), underscoring the importance of communication in alleviating stress and maintaining morale during the rigorous training period.

This theme suggests that a supportive family environment can serve as a powerful moti-

vational force, while the absence of communication or unresolved familial issues can lead to emotional distress and poor performance. The findings align with the quantitative dimension of Family Support and Guidance, indicating that family support is essential in high-stress training contexts (Kelty & Segal, 2018). Structured communication policies, as suggested by O'Neal and Lavner (2021), can help mitigate these challenges, enabling trainees to focus more effectively on their training.

Institutional and Environmental Challenges

The theme of Institutional and Environmental Challenges captures the impact of external training factors on trainee performance and morale. It is supported by categories such as Inadequate Facilities and Equipment, Secluded Training Center, and Severe Physical Training. Trainees pointed out that logistical issues, geographical isolation, and demanding physical regimens contribute significantly to stress and negatively influence training efficiency and outcomes.

Trainees reported that inadequate facilities and equipment posed significant challenges during their training. One trainee expressed frustration over having to wait for equipment to become available, which delayed activities: "The equipment is inadequate; you need to wait to finish the other trainee to proceed to the next activities" (Trainee 2). Similarly, another trainee remarked that limited resources extended the duration of training sessions: "Maybe the lack of equipment, sir, which slowed down the activities" (Trainee 5). In addition to resource limitations, the geographic isolation of the training center contributed to feelings of homesickness, as highlighted by one respondent's statement: "The location is far away, and you will not be able to get here for a few hours in case of emergencies" (Trainee 2). Compounding these issues was the physically demanding nature of the program, which one trainee described succinctly: "We know that the number one difficulty is physical training" (Trainee 1). These concerns collectively underscore the impact of inadequate logistical and environmental support on trainees' performance and morale.

This theme suggests that addressing logistical and environmental challenges is essential for maintaining a conducive training environment. The findings triangulate with the quantitative dimension of Training Facility and Resource Adequacy, indicating that inadequate resources can demotivate trainees and hinder performance. Research by Vogel-Walcutt, Fiorella, and Malone (2018) highlights that enhancing training facilities and equipment adequacy can significantly improve training satisfaction and outcomes.

The three qualitative themes—Physical and Mental Preparedness, Family Influence and Emotional Stability, and Institutional and Environmental Challenges—provide nuanced insights into the factors influencing CGSOC trainees. These themes support and extend the quantitative findings by highlighting specific areas for improvement to reduce attrition and enhance training outcomes. The results suggest that enhancing physical and mental preparation, strengthening family support systems, and upgrading training facilities and resources are crucial strategies for improving trainee retention and success.

Conclusion

This study identified the key factors influencing the success or failure of trainees in completing the Coast Guard Special Operations Course (CGSOC) and examined the challenges they face during training. The findings from the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) revealed five critical dimensions affecting trainee success: Career Advancement and Personal Motivation, Training Environment and Support, Training Facility and Resource Adequacy, Family Support and Guidance, and Family Concerns and Peer Support. Among these, Career Advancement and Personal Motivation emerged as the most influential factor, accounting for the highest explained variance (20.686). This highlights the crucial role of personal and professional aspirations in sustaining trainees' perseverance and commitment to completing the program. Recognizing these factors can help training administrators and policymakers develop targeted strategies to enhance trainee support, improve training conditions, and ultimately reduce attrition rates.

Additionally, this study examined the challenges faced by CGSOC trainees and the strategies they employed to overcome them. The findings revealed that homesickness and financial challenges were the most prevalent issues, significantly impacting trainees' emotional well-being and focus during training. Qualitative data supported these results, highlighting the emotional strain caused by being away from family and the financial burden of supporting dependents. Trainees also faced culture shock, difficulties in managing family responsibilities, and social barriers. To cope with these challenges, they relied on camaraderie with fellow trainees, prayer and devotion, increased focus on activities, socializing, and seeking support from instructors and peers. Understanding these challenges and coping mechanisms can help training administrators develop targeted support systems to enhance trainees' well-being and improve overall training retention.

Lastly, the qualitative findings identified three key themes influencing trainees' decisions to withdraw from CGSOC training: Physical and Mental Preparedness, Family Influence and Emotional Stability, and Institutional and Environmental Challenges. The analysis revealed that physical readiness and mental resilience are essential for enduring the program's rigorous demands, with physically unprepared trainees experiencing higher dropout rates. Family influence played a dual role, providing support while also contributing to emotional distress, especially for those with unresolved personal matters. Moreover, institutional and environmental factors, such as training facilities and geographic isolation, significantly affected trainee morale and performance. These insights underscore the importance of enhancing physical and mental preparation programs, strengthening family support mechanisms, and improving institutional resources to reduce attrition and ensure trainee success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for curriculum design, implementation, policymaking, institutional administration, trainees, instructors, and future research endeavors:

- 1) For trainees: Trainees should engage in physical and mental preparation before starting CGSOC training to enhance their endurance and resilience. Developing time management, stress reduction techniques, and goal-setting skills can help them balance personal and professional responsibilities effectively.
- 2) For curriculum design considerations: It is recommended to incorporate a structured pre-training conditioning program focused on physical and mental readiness to reduce dropout rates. Additionally, including modules on stress management and emotional resilience can better prepare trainees for the rigors of training.
- 3) For curriculum implementation: This study recommends establishing a regular feedback mechanism to assess trainee needs and adjust training activities accordingly. Facilitating structured peer mentoring and family engagement programs can provide emotional support and improve trainee retention.
- 4) For policymaking: It is recommended to establish structured communication policies that allow trainees to stay connected with their families. Revising financial assistance schemes can help address economic challenges that hinder training performance. Additionally, implementing mental health support services and providing access to counseling would enhance trainees' psychological well-being.
- 5) For institutional administration: Upgrading training facilities and resources is essential to ensure that the institution meets modern standards. It is further recommended to regularly evaluate and update equipment, barracks, and training materials. Providing continuous professional development for instructors can also enhance their capacity to support trainees effectively.
- 6) For instructors: Instructors should receive training in mentorship and guidance to better support trainees facing emotional and psychological challenges. Learning active listening, psychological first aid, and empathetic communication can help instructors identify stressors early and provide meaningful support.

- 7) For future research endeavors: Future studies may conduct longitudinal research to assess the long-term impact of training interventions. Comparative research across different training centers can help identify best practices in training design and implementation. Additionally, future research should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of family support programs and financial aid in improving trainee outcomes.

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