

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Army

Aggressiveness and Perceived Marital Quality: The Moderating Role of a Family-Supportive Work Climate

Cabrera, O. A., Bliese, P. D., Hoge, C. W., Castro, C. A., & Messer, S. C. (2010). Aggressiveness and perceived marital quality: The moderating role of a family-supportive work climate. *Military Psychology, 22*(1), 57-67.
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SUMMARY: This study examined the role of a family-supportive work climate and the link between Service members' aggressiveness and their overall marital quality. Family-supportive work climates were found to have a positive influence on marital quality. Future research should examine how to increase family-supportive work climates within the military.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Service members reporting lower levels of aggressiveness also reported higher marital quality.
- Higher perceptions of a family-supportive work climate (averaged across an entire Army company) predicted higher marital quality for individual Service members.
- A high family-supportive work climate was found to buffer against the negative impact of individual aggressiveness on marital quality.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Educate Service members about the link between aggressiveness and marital quality, teaching appropriate coping and communication skills
- Offer informal gatherings for Service members and their families in order to communicate a sense of value in family recreation time
- Provide workshops for Service members and their partners with a focus on increasing skills that create family cohesion and resilience

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to support the development of a family-supportive work climate for Service members
- Encourage the development of programs that educate Service members about work-family balance and the family-centered programs available to them
- Recommend training for professionals who work with military families regarding the demands Service members face and how best to support their families in the midst of those demands

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METHODS

- Soldiers on an installation attended a briefing regarding the study and then chose whether or not to participate in the study. Of the Soldiers present for duty, 69% attended the briefing; of those, 98% chose to participate in the study.
- These Soldiers completed surveys about aggressiveness, marital quality, work climate, and demographics.
- Data were analyzed to determine associations between work climate and marital quality.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 1,604 married male Active Duty Soldiers with an average age of 38 years old.
- The participants were 68% White, 16% Latino, 11% Black, 2% Asian American, and 4% another race.
- The majority (70%) of the participants had at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.

LIMITATIONS

- Data were correlational, so the causal direction of the relationships is unclear.
- This study only included married Active Duty Soldiers from the southeastern United States, so results may not be generalizable to other populations.
- Only Soldier self-report was included in this study; they may have responded in a manner they feel is more socially acceptable.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Replicate the current study to include data from spouses in order to provide more robust assessment of marital quality
- Investigate variables that may alter associations, including combat exposure, Service member gender, branch, and component association
- Assess the impact of specific programs and policies on Service members' sense of a family-supportive work climate

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