

The Center for Research and Outreach

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Multiple
Branches

An Assessment of the Overlap between Morale and Work Engagement in a Nonoperational Military Sample

Ivey, G. W., Blanc, J. R., & Mantler, J. (2014). An assessment of the overlap between morale and work engagement in a nonoperational military sample. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 20* (3), 338-347. doi:10.1037/a0038559

SUMMARY: 1,224 Canadian armed forces completed online surveys to examine the relationship between morale and work engagement. Despite overlap in their meaning, morale and work engagement were predicted by different variables, and had different outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

- Although morale and work-engagement share some similarity in meaning, the two constructs were found to be distinct.
- Morale was predicted by trust in teammates, job significance, and job competence.
- Work engagement was predicted by only trust in teammates and job significance, not job competence.
- Both morale and work engagement predicted willingness to deploy, turnover intentions, and psychological distress.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS

Programs could:

- Offer workshops and trainings highlighting how all military personnel contribute to the mission of the military force
- Consider continued, additional, or specialized job trainings to promote Service members' sense of being competent in their job duties
- Invite Service members to participate in job-centered team building activities

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES

Policies could:

- Allow Service members to apply for other jobs or transfer between jobs, within the limits of the needs of the mission, to promote morale and engagement
- Continue to endorse regular performance reviews and regular feedback
- Consider funding career counseling services to Service members suffering from burnout
- Allocate resources to support activities that strengthen unit cohesion

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METHODS

- 4,435 randomly selected armed forces personnel were sent invitations to complete an online survey.
- Surveys measured morale, work engagement, job competence, trust in teammates, job significance, psychological distress, and turnover intentions.
- Statistical methods were used to examine the relationships between morale and work engagement.

PARTICIPANTS

- 1,224 surveys completed by Canadian armed forces personnel stationed across Canada.
- 85% of the sample were men, 15% were women. Ethnicity was not measured.
- The sample consisted of officers (37%) and noncommissioned personnel (63%) stationed at Navy (20%), Air Force (23%), Army (23%), and other (34%) units.
- 83% of the sample had more than 10 years of military experience (83%), and 60% were between 25 – 44 years old.

LIMITATIONS

- Several of the scales were developed for this study and had not been tested in other contexts.
- Survey sampling procedures may have produced response bias.
- Surveys did not measure ethnicity.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Future research may evaluate the effects of morale and engagement on mental health functioning.
- Future research could examine the relationships between morale and engagement and use of mental health services.
- Future research may study the predictors of job significance and trust in teammates in other domains of functioning.

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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