

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Multiple
Branches

Influences of Job Search Self-Efficacy of Spouses of Enlisted Military Personnel

Trougakos, J. P., Green, S. G., Bull, R. A., MacDermid, S. M., & Weiss, H. M. (2007). Influences of job search self-efficacy of spouses of enlisted military personnel. *Human Performance*, 20(4), 391-413. doi:10.1080/08959280701522114

SUMMARY: The influence of employment status, family characteristics, child care conflict, and employment assistance programs on job search self-efficacy was examined in spouses of enlisted military personnel. Annual income and financial situation positively influenced job search self-efficacy. Childcare conflict negatively influenced job search self-efficacy.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Spouses who used employment assistance programs reported higher levels of job search self-efficacy than those spouses who did not use employment assistance programs.
- Spouses who were employed had higher job search self-efficacy compared to those who were unemployed.
- Childcare conflict was associated with lower levels of job search self-efficacy, even after controlling for individual and family characteristics.
- Spouses' annual income and perceptions of the family's financial situation influenced job search self-efficacy, with less income and poorer perceptions of the financial situation related to less job search self-efficacy.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Provide classes for spouses of Service members to assist them in finding fulfilling employment
- Collaborate with childcare programs to offer spouses flexibility in utilization of childcare for interviews and other job-search related activities
- Disseminate information about the resources and services available to help military spouses find employment

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to support employment programs for military spouses
- Continue to support military subsidized childcare for military families, particularly when military spouses are seeking suitable employment
- Encourage collaboration with DoD programs and employers to help with job placement for military spouses

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METHODS

- The data were derived from the DoD 1997 survey of spouses of enlisted personnel which sent surveys to a selected sample of 23,162 spouses of Active Duty enlisted (E5 or below in rank) members.
- Spouses completed measures of job search self-efficacy, childcare conflict, and employment status. They also answered questions about personal and military characteristics and the use of employment services.
- Of the returned surveys, civilian spouses married to an Active Duty Service member who was currently employed or searching for employment were selected for the current study.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants included 6,411 spouses of Active Duty military personnel.
- The majority of the sample were female (94%), who were on average 27 years old.
- No other demographic or military variables were presented.

LIMITATIONS

- The measure of job search self-efficacy was abbreviated compared to what is typically used; results may not be comparable to other research.
- Demographic data about the sample were incompletely reported, making it difficult to draw conclusions from the results.
- Results may not generalize to other non-military spouses or populations.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Explore the nature of underemployment in relation to job search self-efficacy and other variables and outcomes
- Use a longitudinal model to examine the dynamic nature of the relationship between job search self-efficacy and the independent variables
- Examine the effectiveness of military programs aimed at helping spouses with employment

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