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## **The importance of employee self-esteem on the well-being and productivity of the military organization**

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**Abstract.** The general objective of the paper is to investigate the extent to which the self-esteem of military personnel can influence the well-being and productivity of the military organization. This work is a descriptive, quantitative, comparative, correlational and transversal study. Subjects were examined at one time and the instruments were applied at one stage. This design allows for a quick assessment of self-esteem in relation to the organization and to test its well-being and productivity. It is cost effective and relatively simple to implement. The group of participants selected for this study consists of 60 military personnel of Romanian nationality. The data were collected in the premises of Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base 57. Subjects were randomly selected. Of the 60 military personnel, 8 are female and 52 are male. The instruments used for this research were: Counterproductive Behavior Questionnaire (CWB-C), Organizational Well-Being Scale (UWES) and Organizational Self-Esteem (OBSE). Following the research we can state that in a military environment, where pressure and stress are inevitable, maintaining a state of well-being is crucial. Resilience and effective stress management can contribute to a more resilient and capable military force.

**Keywords:** well-being, self-esteem, productivity, military, organization.

### **Introduction**

The study of the impact of employee self-esteem on the well-being and productivity of the military organization is of significant importance due to its relevance in understanding the well-being of military personnel and the potential impact of self-esteem on the productivity of the military organization.

The motivation behind the choice of theme stems from the significance of organizational self-esteem in developing well-being and productivity within it.

This research theme adds a new perspective to the existing literature and has the potential to generate valuable insights and inform targeted interventions.



The intentions pursued in the theoretical part of the assignment are to establish conceptual clarity, provide a comprehensive literature review, propose or adopt a theoretical framework, formulate hypotheses or research questions, and highlight significance and potential contributions of the study.

The intentions pursued in the applied part of this paper are to describe the methods used for the research, the data collection process, to present the results and findings, to interpret and discuss the implications, to address the limitations and to propose future directions for research.

The methodology used includes sample selection, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, data analysis techniques, interpretation of results, conclusions and recommendations.

The guiding thread of the thesis follows a logical progression from theoretical foundations to empirical investigation, with the ultimate goal of contributing to knowledge, informing practical interventions and enhancing adolescent well-being in different family contexts.

## **1. Introductory approach to the study of self-esteem**

### **1.1. Concept and definitions**

Self-esteem refers to an individual's perception, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors toward themselves. It encompasses the typical human way of approaching and evaluating one's sense of self (García et. al, 1991).

Despite the many definitions of self-esteem that have been proposed, there remains a lack of consensus regarding the fundamental nature of this construct. Certain authors perceive it as a comprehensive assessment of one's individuality on a global scale.

Self-esteem is a concept frequently encountered in everyday life. Self-esteem can be conceptualized as a ratio between achieved achievements and one's initial aspirations or expectations. Based on this fraction, it can be deduced that self-esteem emphasizes the result of self-evaluation of personal performance in areas that are relevant to the individual's ego or self. This involves a consistent emotional assessment that combines acceptance and self-evaluation.

Social psychologists have postulated that it is advantageous to differentiate between two types of self-esteem: global self-esteem, which refers to general evaluation, and self-acceptance, which serves as a foundation for emotional self-expression, and specific self-esteem, complete with evaluation of self in certain domains (Brown & Dutton, 1993).

The problem of clarifying the links between the two types of self-esteem arose in the light of their differentiation. Empirical studies have demonstrated that the meaning of the dual constructs of self-esteem is subject to individual variability (Wolfe & Crocker, 2003).

Self-concept refers to an individual's self-description, uninfluenced by evaluative judgments. Self-esteem is a fundamental element of the cognitive framework of the self and is characterized by various definitions, being regarded as an integral aspect of the self-concept. Self-esteem is a highly researched concept in the field of social psychology, and numerous studies outline its correlation with a wide range of variables. (Curry & Johnson, 1990)

According to psychology experts, it is beneficial to differentiate between explicit and implicit self-esteem. Explicit self-esteem refers to the outcome of conscious affective self-evaluations and self-reports, whereas implicit self-esteem emphasizes unconscious affective self-evaluations and self-reports. Measuring explicit self-esteem can be accomplished through the use of scales, while inferring implicit self-esteem requires an indirect assessment of how it



influences an individual's thoughts and actions. Currently, there is no proven approach or methodology that competently assesses implicit self-esteem. The phenomenon mentioned above is the most prominent, manifested by improvised, non-linguistic emotional and conductive responses.

Researchers have noted a differentiation between an individual's self-perception and self-evaluation, with self-esteem being presented as a crucial measure of an individual's overall health and well-being, despite the absence of a universally accepted definition (Beane & Lipka, 1980).

Self-esteem plays a crucial role in facilitating an individual's ability to understand and engage in interpersonal interactions with a high degree of intelligence. The investigation of self-esteem arose from the concern of Thorndike, who synthesized the exploration of emotional intelligence and introduced this notion to the fields of psychology and sociology (Roco, M., 2011).

Self-esteem is demonstrated by a number of characteristics, including adaptability, assertiveness, emotional intelligence, emotional expression and regulation, interpersonal skills, self-image, self-motivation, social competence, stress management, empathy, happiness, and optimism.

The initial dimension comprises a pair of attributes, namely: adaptability and self-motivation. The dimension of well-being comprises three distinct traits, namely: optimism, happiness and self-image. The sociability dimension includes a triad of traits, such as: emotion management, assertiveness and social skills. The fourth dimension, namely emotionality, comprises four distinct traits: empathy, perception of emotions, expression of emotions and relationships with others. The dimension of self-control, commonly known as the fifth dimension, is operationalized by three key constructs: emotion regulation, impulsivity, and stress management.

## **1.2. Self-esteem related to the organization**

Organizational self-esteem refers to how a person perceives and evaluates himself within his work environment. It is important in professional development and interpersonal relationships at work. A healthy and positive self-esteem can have a significant impact on employee productivity and satisfaction, while low or negative self-esteem can lead to performance issues and workplace stress.

Employees must be aware of their own skills, qualities and competencies in the context of the organization. This self-perception can influence their self-confidence and motivation to achieve their goals.

The self-esteem of a military organization is a crucial aspect of military performance and unit functioning. It involves how members of the armed forces perceive themselves within the military organization and how this influences their attitude, behavior and performance.

Members of a military organization often have a strong identity tied to their military status. This identity can influence how they perceive and relate to the organization. The feeling of being part of a military tradition and assuming specific responsibilities can contribute to a strong self-esteem within the military unit. In military cultures, respect for hierarchy and personal honor are often central values. Members of the military organization can build their self-esteem by living these values and taking responsibility for their tasks.

Professional competence and military skills are often critical factors in developing self-esteem within a military organization. Members of the armed forces must feel confident



in their abilities to perform their duties successfully. Military personnel spend a lot of time in training and training to develop the skills necessary to perform their duties. Military prowess and technical understanding can build self-esteem. (Taylor, 2018)

The relationship with hierarchical superiors and military leaders has a significant impact on self-esteem. An effective military leader must inspire confidence and support the development of his members. Members of a military organization can have strong self-esteem when they perceive that their mission is worthwhile and has a clear purpose. Contributing to national security and the common good can increase self-confidence and personal satisfaction. Because of the rigors and stress associated with military service, it is important to have resources and psychological support for members of the military organization. This support can help manage stress, trauma and maintain self-esteem in service members. (Matthews & Laurence, 2012)

Self-esteem in a military organization is essential to operational effectiveness and the smooth functioning of the unit. This can be influenced by many factors, including military identity, respect, professional skills, and relationship with military leaders. Maintaining healthy self-esteem can contribute to the individual and collective success of the armed forces.

## **2. Well-being and productivity in the organization**

### **2.1. Military organization**

Each institution has a mission, which is essentially the reason for its existence in relation to its partners and the system in general. Through its essential mission, the military organization differentiates itself and individualizes itself compared to other organizations. Also, the army, as a military organization, has a distinct system of structuring, leadership and hierarchy, with activity carried out in accordance with state legislation, military regulations, orders and directives issued by commanders and chiefs.

The fundamental mission of the military organization consists in the unconditional fulfillment of the constitutional missions and those resulting from the respective state's status as a member of a political-military alliance. Essentially, this mission defines the role and position of the military organization within the rule of law. (Zaharia, 2014)

Military organizations have a well-defined hierarchical structure. This begins with the supreme commander, who may be the head of state (eg the president) or a military leader (such as an army general). Below the supreme commander, there is a hierarchy of commanders and officers of different ranks, each with specific responsibilities.

Military organizations are involved in planning and conducting military operations, including in times of war or to respond to crises or threats. Planning includes strategies, tactics and assessment of available resources. One of the main missions of military organizations is national defense. This involves protecting the national territory, citizens and national interests against any external or internal threats (Michael, 2006).

### **2.2. Productivity in organizations. Counterproductive behaviors.**

The literature describing the determinants of military personnel productivity provides empirical insight into how individual experience, training, and skills affect personal and unit performance. Productivity in military organizations is of crucial importance to achieving objectives and maintaining efficiency within them.

Over the years, military forces have always sought to improve processes and optimize resources to adapt to changes in their operating environment. Strategic planning and effective



coordination of resources play an important role in maintaining productivity in the military organization. Regular training, team exercises and proper training of military personnel increases productivity along with efficiency of military operations. At the same time, the effective leadership of military commanders contributes significantly to the productivity of military personnel, who must be able to motivate, make quick decisions and manage resources with flexibility to ensure success in operations (Kavanagh, 2005).

On the other hand, counterproductive behavior is an important part of work performance and a risk to both the individual and the organization. Despite the disciplined and restrictive structure of military organizations, counterproductive behaviors can also occur that can affect functioning and effectiveness. In military organizations the main counterproductive behaviors are: internal sabotage (revealing secret information, intentional destruction of equipment, undermining authority), interpersonal conflict (affects team cohesion and morale), substance abuse, harassment, neglect of duties. To prevent and manage counterproductive behaviors, military organizations implement strict discipline measures, continuing education, and psychological support programs for their members. Maintaining a healthy organizational climate and promoting ethical values contributes to preventing these behaviors and maintaining organizational integrity (Williams, 2017).

### **2.3. Well-being in organizations.**

Psychological well-being represents individuals' satisfaction with their own lives, mental health, happiness, hope and positive self-perception (Ryff, 1989). Wellness in the military organization is vital to the success of military operations and the health of service members and their families. We conceptualize well-being as multidimensional and define it as a continuous process of integrating dimensions (level of happiness, meaning and/or satisfaction) in the three domains of work, life and work-life (S. Bowles, 2017). Well-being can be influenced by many factors, including working conditions, interpersonal relationships, leaders and support provided to team members. In military environments, the work schedule can be demanding, and rest and recovery times are crucial to prevent physical and mental exhaustion. On the other hand, an important role in well-being in the military organization is the provision of mental health services and access to psychological counseling because trauma, anxiety or even burn-out can seriously affect well-being. Work-related stress is a significant determinant of psychological well-being, but more relevant are the nature of the stressors faced by military personnel and the factors that may explain the relationship between work-related stress and well-being (Reizer, 2023). In addition to these listed aspects, communication plays a very important role in the well-being of the military due to the fact that accurate and accessible information can reduce uncertainty and contribute to a more stable work environment. Appreciation of individual or team efforts and results can significantly contribute to the satisfaction and well-being of organizational members.

In general, maintaining well-being in a military organization involves a holistic approach covering social, occupational, health and work environment aspects (V Williamson, 2018).





### **3. Research methodology**

#### **3.1. Research objectives and methodology**

##### **3.1.1. The type of research**

This work is a descriptive, quantitative, comparative, correlational and transversal study. Subjects were examined at one time and the instruments were applied at one stage.

It is a descriptive study because the variables were not manipulated and the actual state of the statistical community is described, the connections between the variables are investigated, the hypotheses are verified, generalizations, principles and theories that reflect universal value are enhanced.

The present study is a quantitative one because self-esteem, counterproductive behaviors and well-being are quantitative variables that are expressed in numerical data.

It is correlational research, because within it the relationship between self-esteem and counterproductive behaviors, and the relationship between self-esteem and well-being was identified.

It is a cross-sectional research, because the tools were applied at a specific, unique moment.

##### **3.1.2. Research objectives**

The general objective of the paper is to investigate the extent to which the self-esteem of military personnel can influence the well-being and productivity of the military organization.

The specific objectives of the work are the following:

- Measuring the level of self-esteem of military personnel
- Measuring the level of well-being of military personnel
- Measuring counterproductive behaviors of military personnel
- Identifying the relationship between self-esteem of military personnel and organizational well-being.
- Identifying the relationship between self-esteem of military personnel and their counterproductive behaviors.

##### **3.1.3. Participating population**

The group of participants selected for this study consists of 60 military personnel of Romanian nationality. The data were collected in the premises of Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base 57. Subjects were randomly selected. Of the 60 military personnel, 8 are female and 52 are male.

##### **3.1.4. Ethical aspects**

Each participant was trained in accordance with ethical standards in the field of psychology. The subjects understood that I guaranteed them the confidentiality of what was discussed and gave their consent regarding the use of the obtained results.

Study participants were informed of the nature and purpose of the research and of any anticipated disadvantages of participation. Participants were informed in a way that allowed them to fully understand the concepts discussed and were told that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. Confidentiality of the subjects is ensured by the use of a code consisting of letters and numbers for identification.



The questionnaires used are well-established instruments that have previously been tested and validated on the Romanian population. The questions for this study are precise and the answers are selected in an objective manner.

#### 3.1.5. The tools used

The instruments used for this research were: Counterproductive Behavior Questionnaire (CWB-C), Organizational Well-Being Scale (UWES) and Organizational Self-Esteem (OBSE).

Counterproductive behavior at work was measured using the Counterproductive Behavior Questionnaire (CWB-C). This questionnaire consists of 10 items that assess those acts that harm or are intended to harm the organization. At the same time, these counterproductive behaviors can also be directed towards individuals who are part of the organization, such as aggression (physical or verbal), sabotage and withdrawal. The 10-item short form has 5 organization-focused items and 5 person-focused items. Scoring is done using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (daily) (Spector, 2017).

The Organizational Well-Being Scale (UWES) assesses levels of energy and mental resilience at work, along with feelings of meaning, inspiration, pride, challenge and focus at work. These are aligned with three dimensions of work engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Scoring is done on a 7-point Likert scale, 0 (never) and 6 (daily) (Schaufeli, 2006).

Organizational self-esteem (OSSE) is defined as "the degree to which an individual believes himself to be capable, meaningful, and worthy as a member of the organization." It represents a specialized form of self-esteem that captures the feeling of being a valuable and effective member of an organization. Thus, OBSE naturally differs from generalized or global self-esteem (GSE), which is instead conceptualized as the general self-evaluation of an individual, generally, as a person, without specifically referring to any particular domain of life. Organizational research has proven the importance of OBSE in predicting employee attitude, behavior and health. Scoring on a 5-point Likert scale with response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Lorenzo Filosa, 2022).

#### 3.1.6. Research design

Research design plays a crucial role in collecting relevant data and answering research questions. The design must be robust, ethical and aligned with the objectives of the study.

The design used in this study is cross-sectional. This design involves collecting data at a specific point in time.

This design allows for a quick assessment of self-esteem in relation to the organization and to test its well-being and productivity. It is cost effective and relatively simple to implement.

The cross-sectional design does not capture changes over time and cannot establish causality. It may not account for potential confounding variables, and results may be influenced by individual and environmental factors beyond the study's control.





### 3.2. Presentation and interpretation of results

#### 3.2.1. Research results

**Hypothesis 1:** As a first step we will find out the normality of the distribution, then we will decide what type of method we will use to find a concrete statistical answer.

Table 1. Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistical	df	Sig.	Statistical	df	Sig.
The score obtained on the self-esteem questionnaire	.186	60	.000	.900	60	.000
The score obtained on the well-being questionnaire	.170	60	.000	.919	60	.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

We checked the normality of the score distribution by applying the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, where, as we can see in Table 1. we obtained the Sig value. of 0.000 < 0.05, from which we find that the distribution of scores is non-normal. Therefore, we will apply a non-parametric method.

Table 2. Calculation of the Spearman correlation coefficient

			The score obtained on the self-esteem questionnaire	The score obtained on the well-being questionnaire
Spearman's rho	The score obtained on the self-esteem questionnaire	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	.838 **
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	60	60
	The score obtained on the well-being questionnaire	Correlation Coefficient	.838 **	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	60	60

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

We can see in Table 2., the value of Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000 obtained, which is less than 0.01, resulting in the fact that there is a statistically significant correlation. We also obtained a statistically significant Spearman correlation coefficient = 0.838 at p = 0.000. Considering these results, we can observe a high positive correlation between the levels of self-esteem and well-being of military personnel.

**Hypothesis 2:** As a first step we will find out the normality of the distribution, then we will decide what type of method we will use to find out a concrete statistical answer.

Table 3. Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistical	df	Sig.	Statistical	df	Sig.
The score obtained on the self-esteem questionnaire	.186	60	.000	.900	60	.000
The score obtained on the questionnaire of counterproductive behaviors	.223	60	.000	.856	60	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



We checked the normality of the score distribution by applying the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, where we obtained, according to Table 3., Sig. < 0.05. According to the result, we found the non-normality of the score distribution. As a result, we calculated the Spearman correlation coefficient.

Table 4. Calculation of the Spearman correlation coefficient

			Correlations		
			The score obtained on the self-esteem questionnaire	The score obtained on the questionnaire of counterproductive behaviors	
Spearman's rho	The score obtained on the self-esteem questionnaire	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	-.447 **	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	
			N	60	60
	The score obtained on the questionnaire of counterproductive behaviors	Correlation Coefficient	-.447 **	1,000	
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.		
		N	60	60	

We can see in Table 4. the value of Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000 obtained, which is less than 0.01, resulting in the fact that there is a statistically significant correlation. We also obtained a Spearman correlation coefficient = - 0.447 statistically significant at p = 0.000. Considering these results, we can observe a negative correlation between the level of self-esteem and the level of counterproductive behaviors of the military organization.

### 3.3. Discussions

#### 3.3.1. Hypothesis 1

The military is part of a tight-knit community based on camaraderie and solidarity. A sense of belonging to a group can strengthen self-esteem by providing emotional and social support. Engaging in tasks with clear goals and meaning can improve self-esteem. When service members perceive that what they do has a positive impact on their community or country, they can feel valued and appreciated. Military personnel also often benefit from psychological support programs and resources. These services can help manage stress and trauma, having a positive impact on self-esteem and well-being. We searched in the specialized literature for explanations regarding the result of the first hypothesis of our research regarding the relationship between self-esteem and the well-being of military personnel. David E. Rohall, Olena Prokopenko, Morten G. Ender, and Michael D. Matthews conducted a study on the relationships between personal self-esteem, collective self-esteem, and well-being in 3054 cadets from the Reserve Officer Training Corps ( ROTC) and US military academies conducted between 2002 and 2009. This study concluded that those who have a positive attitude toward the military report higher levels of personal self-esteem, with self-esteem being positively correlated with welfare of military cadets (Rohall et al., nd).

#### 3.3.2. Hypothesis 2

Self-esteem refers to a person's overall assessment and perception of their own worth and competence. Military personnel are often subjected to extreme stress factors that can lead to depression and anxiety, these problems being directly related to a less favorable self-evaluation. These states of restlessness, generated on a background of mistrust, cause the



manifestation of behaviors that can become counterproductive. Sometimes people wisely resort to certain behaviors that can bring them trouble. The study of counterproductive workplace behavior has gained momentum in the organizational literature because of its relationship to workplace performance, the costs it may incur to the organization, and the harm it may cause to people. There are certain situations where a negative correlation between self-esteem and counterproductive behaviors can be observed among the military. I inquired about the second hypothesis regarding the relationship between self-esteem and counterproductive behaviors of military personnel.

Christopher E. Whelpley and Michael A. Mcdaniel conducted a study on the relationship between self-esteem and counterproductive behaviors using 21 correlations with a total N= 5,135. In this study, it was concluded that those who have a higher self-esteem have a lower level of counterproductive behaviors within the organization (Mcdaniel Christopher, 2016). At the same time, Jennifer S. Tucker, Cynthia D Mohr, Amy Adler, Robert R. Sinclair conducted a study regarding stress, self-esteem and counterproductive behaviors in the military organization. 1,701 soldiers representing 10 units in the garrison (Germany and Italy) took part in this study, and following this study it was concluded that stress and low self-esteem can lead to counterproductive behaviors among military personnel.(Tucker, Mohr, Adler, & R., 2019).

### **Conclusions, implications, recommendations and limitations**

The present research investigated the importance of the employee's self-esteem on the well-being and productivity of the military organization on a sample of 60 military personnel of Romanian nationality, the data being collected in the premises of the 57 Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base. The general objective of the paper is to investigate the extent to which the self-esteem of military personnel can influence the well-being and productivity of the military organization.

Following the research we can state that in a military environment, where pressure and stress are inevitable, maintaining a state of well-being is crucial. Resilience and effective stress management can contribute to a more resilient and capable military force. Self-esteem also plays an important role by developing mutual trust and automatically creating good team cohesion. For the military organization to be part of performance, each of its members must have part of motivation, support and especially psychological support.

Promoting well-being, self-esteem and preventing counterproductive behaviors within the military organization involves complex approaches adapted to the specifics of this environment. It is recommended to implement resources to develop resilience among staff, including stress management techniques and mindfulness. At the same time, mutual respect, help and understanding must be promoted to prevent counterproductive behaviors such as harassment and discrimination. Peer reviews are important to monitor members' well-being and identify potential problems or trends in counterproductive behaviors and create rapid and personalized interventions. Recognition of individual efforts and achievements plays an important role in building self-esteem and reducing the risk of counterproductive behaviors. Effective recognition systems can motivate staff and encourage a culture of performance.

In conclusion, managing well-being, promoting self-esteem, and preventing counterproductive behaviors are critical issues within a military organization. Addressing these issues effectively can help create a healthy work environment that maximizes team performance and cohesion.



On another note, like any scientific research, it had its limitations. In this research, the disproportion between the number of female and male participants may affect the generalizability of the results to the entire population. Being cross-sectional research may not provide insight into changes over time or cause-effect relationships, adding limits to the interpretation of results.

These results can serve as a basis for developing specific strategies and programs aimed at improving self-esteem and well-being within military communities.

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