

## Positive Character Strengths in Middle-rung Army Officers and Managers in Civilian Sector

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The present study attempts towards comparing the 24 character strengths in leaders in the Indian Army and the Civilian Sector. The middle rung army officers were expected to score higher than the civilian managers on the character strengths of bravery, creativity, perseverance, social intelligence, self regulation, leadership and citizenship. The character strengths were measured using Values-in-action Inventory of Strengths. The mean scores were calculated for all the 24 character strengths in army officers and civilian managers, respectively. t-ratios were computed to identify the significant differences between the army officers and civilian managers on the character strengths. The results revealed that both army officers and civilian managers scored high in all the character strengths, and there were significant differences among army officers and bank managers on 14 out of the 24 character strengths that can be attributed to their disparate work environments and organizational expectations. The results of the present study can be used retrospectively for selection and training purposes in the army and civilian sector.

Army life has huge differences compared to civilian life. Work activities, daily work schedules, education level and daily expectations for members of the military are very different from those in the civilian world. Military personnel form a distinct group with collective action based on shared interests linked to survival in vocation and combat, with purposes and values that are more defined and narrow than within civil society. Compared to civilian work settings, army has peculiar work environment and unique stressors like frequent relocation and extended deployments (Kilmann, Pondy & Slevin, 1976). One needs to be able to depend on colleagues for mutual survival. Decision-making has more life and death consequences than in most civilian professions. Due to the difference in the kind of work, the personality characteristics required for success in the army may be quite different from the ones required for success

in the civilian work sector. For example, Atwater, Penn and Rucker (1991) found that military leaders differ from civilian leaders on a number of personal characteristics like perseverance, inspiration and self confidence. Recently, research in this area has been given a new direction by Positive Psychologists who have taken up an endeavour to study differences in character of army personnel and civilians.

Although character and virtue have been discussed since Aristotle (MacIntyre, 1999), organizational research is just beginning to assess the contribution of virtues and strengths within the realm of leadership. Excellence starts with leaders of good and strong character who engage in the entire process of leadership. Army-men and civilians need to have a strong character to be effective as officers and managers in their work environment respectively. Unfortunately, the assessment of character is presently