

# **Is mindfulness related to how long one spends with an organization? A cross-sectional comparison of dispositional mindfulness and time-in-service**

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**Background & Objectives:** Evidence suggests that individual differences in employee mindfulness contributes to the success of an organization. We investigated whether dispositional mindfulness was associated time spent on active duty.

**Methods:** Participants were 233 active and veteran US military service members. Data collected were demographics, and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) - both the overall score and the score for each facet. The study was IRB approved.

**Results:** The average time-in-military service (TIS) was  $15.26 \pm 8.64$  years). Reported TIS was organized into five groups: 1-5 years (19%), 6 - 10 years (16%), 11 - 15 years (14%), 16-20 years (23%), and 20+ years (28%). Age was not significantly correlated with FFMQ.

MANOVA revealed significant group differences on all FFMQ subscale scores, except Observing. Scores on the Describing subscale were significantly lower for those with six to 10 years TIS as compared with those that had 16 to 20 and 20+ years. Non-judging subscale scores were significantly lower for those with one to five years relative to those that had 20+ years. Non-reactivity to inner experience subscale scores were significantly lower for those that had one to five years as compared with those that had 16 to 20 years and 20+ years and significantly lower for those that had six to 10 years TIS as compared with those that had 20+ years. Despite a significant main effect for Acting with Awareness, the post-hoc comparisons were not significant.

**Discussion & Conclusion:** Individual differences in dispositional mindfulness were positively associated with longer time spent in active duty military service, however not all facets of mindfulness were equally sensitive to TIS. TIS is associated with commitment to an organization, and in the military, with performance, as those who are not promoted must leave active duty service, creating a distinct organizational pyramid, with the best performers at the top. These results indicate that either the most mindful individuals rise to the top and remain on active duty longer than less mindful individuals, or that being on active duty creates more mindful individuals.