

Developing a Canadian Armed Forces Integrated Institutional Leadership Model A Behavioural Perspective

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Abstract

One of the key leadership concepts in *Leadership in the Canadian Forces, Conceptual Foundations* is leading the institution, which is a leadership function concerned with directly and indirectly shaping the reputation and effectiveness of the organization through formal authority or personal influence. Institutional leadership is evaluated from “a systems perspective of performance and effectiveness”¹ that looks at the leader’s role in achieving mission success because high-ranking Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) leaders and their staff must have an influence on key organizational outcomes, including internal integration, external adaptability, member well-being, and military ethos development. CAF institutional leaders must continuously manage a system of interrelated components (i.e., people, processes, and structure) that impact the organization’s performance and outcomes.

Understanding the human, cultural, social, and organizational impacts of leader behaviours, optimizing the individual and organizational effectiveness both on missions and in the organization, and understanding the relationship between leader behaviours, organizational performance, and mission readiness is important for the CAF. This is a relatively new area of study in the military context, and little evidence-based research exists to build upon.

The purpose of the project reported here is to develop an integrated leadership framework based on relationships between the attributes, capacities, characteristics, and behaviours of CAF leaders and organizational outcomes. Some of the proposed attributes, capacities, characteristics and behaviours include cultural intelligence, environmental sensitivity, decision making and political skills, inspirational communication ability, persuasion/influence capacity, as well as the ability to initiate structure and foster readiness to change. The organizational outcomes are determined by the CAF and include, for example, mission success, internal integration, external adaptability, and member well-being. Member well-being refers to a number of measurable factors, including mental health services use.

The study will use a mixed-methods research approach. The first phase will be qualitative: Interviews will be conducted with between 25 and 35 senior CAF officers (from the rank of major and above) in command positions. The second phase of the study will rely on a 360-degree assessment method to capture the leaders’ opinions on their behaviours and their subordinates’ perceptions. We will also conduct a survey of ($N = 1,000$) senior CAF officers and

¹ *Leadership in the Canadian Forces, Conceptual Foundations*, 2.

three of each of their subordinates ($N = 3,000$). In addition, we plan to seek the opinions of the Minister of National Defence, the Deputy Minister of National Defence, and the Assistant Deputy Minister of National Defence, as well as the opinions of ministers from other departments to bolster the 360 degree feedback. The third phase of the study will use the same research methodology (i.e., 360-degree feedback) with a large sample of senior CAF officer ($N = 600$) and three of each of their subordinates ($N = 1,800$).