Psychological Well-Being of Canadian Forces Officer Candidates: The Unique Roles of Hardiness and Personality

Alla Skomorovsky, PhD; Kerry A. Sudom, PhD

ABSTRACT  Previous research has found that individual characteristics play an important role in psychological well-being and perception of stress. Although the Five Factor Model of personality has been found to consistently predict psychological well-being in the general population and among military personnel, hardiness has also been found to be a predictor of well-being. This study examined the unique role of hardiness, above that of personality, in the well-being and stress perceptions of Canadian Forces officer candidates undergoing basic training. The results of the study were consistent with those of previous research, suggesting that military hardiness is an important predictor of well-being and stress perceptions. Furthermore, hardiness was related to all domains of psychological well-being and training perceptions when the Five Factor Model of personality was statistically controlled. These findings demonstrate that hardiness and personality constitute 2 different constructs, both of which have significant contributions to well-being.

INTRODUCTION
Research on psychological well-being has focused on the factors that predispose individuals to experience their lives in more positive or more negative ways. Although many researchers have concentrated on biosocial factors, such as age and gender, or contextual factors, such as marital status or employment, these variables account for only a small proportion of the variance in well-being. In addition, despite strong evidence of a link between negative life events and psychological well-being, research has demonstrated that not all individuals who experience a negative life event develop psychological health problems. For example, some military personnel exposed to war-related stressors experience no negative health consequences. Given such findings, researchers have suggested that there may be certain characteristics that buffer these individuals against the negative impact of stressors on psychological health. Awareness of the personality characteristics that can buffer individuals against the negative impact of stress or make them less prone to developing psychological health problems would be especially valuable in the military context because of its potentially stressful demands. Stressors associated with military experiences such as basic training may lead to attrition or decreased psychological health. The ability to predict psychological well-being from personality characteristics, therefore, has important practical implications for military organizations, including reduced costs of selection, reduced attrition, and increased well-being of military personnel.

There is consensus in personality research that, among other individual characteristics, personality plays a major role in psychological well-being. Research assessing the links between personality and well-being has concentrated on the Five Factor Model (FFM) of personality. Strong links have been found between personality and positive mood or overall happiness. For example, extraversion was correlated with positive effect, whereas neuroticism was correlated with negative effect. In addition, conscientiousness and agreeableness were positively correlated with positive affect and negatively correlated with negative affect. Furthermore, in examining overall happiness, personality significantly predicted life satisfaction. Personality styles or tendencies were associated with lower depression levels and better psychological adjustment under stress.

A strong positive link has been found between resilience, measured by faster recovery and fewer symptoms of psychological distress after trauma, and the personality traits of emotional stability, extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to new experiences, and agreeableness. Positive social orientation and good interpersonal skills, which fall under the extraversion and agreeableness domains of the FFM, were also found to be strongly associated with resilience. People higher in agreeableness (more trusting, cooperative, empathic, and warm) were found to be more resilient, possibly because they had a wider social network, which could buffer against stressors. Furthermore, resilient individuals were higher on conscientiousness, especially in the deliberation, self-discipline, and achievement striving domains. It was suggested that individuals high in conscientiousness do not act on impulse but prefer thorough planning and working systematically, which can assist in coping with psychosocial stressors. Consistent with this, it was found that conscientiousness was positively related to recovery after trauma.

Although the FFM of personality has been found to consistently predict variance in psychological well-being in the general population and among military personnel, it is possible that hardiness is associated with well-being beyond the effects of personality. Hardiness refers to a set of personality characteristics comprising three dimensions: (1) commitment (the ability to feel involved in activities of life), (2) control (the belief that one can control or influence events of one’s
When general cognitive ability was statistically controlled. It was hypothesized that both personality and hardiness would have significant and unique contributions to psychological well-being and training perceptions when statistically controlling for personality as defined by the FFM. It has been found that hardiness may not capture all the characteristics that could contribute to resilience, it is one factor that may contribute to a positive response to adversity. However, it is unclear to what extent hardiness is related to well-being of military personnel above and beyond the effects of the FFM of personality.

Knowing an individual’s personality has long been considered an important issue in the military environment. Certain personality characteristics have been found to predict favorable outcomes in military settings. Specifically, the FFM was predictive of training and job performance in the military. The FFM, especially neuroticism, predicted training performance among Canadian Forces (CF) recruits and personality in psychological well-being in the military. As well, emotional instability had a negative impact on adjustment to military life, interfering with occupational functioning. Researchers in the resiliency domain have suggested using the FFM to cluster individuals into resilient and vulnerable subgroups. As a result of these implications of individual characteristics, researchers have recommended using a personality measure in the selection of military personnel. Studies have demonstrated that conscientiousness, extraversion, openness to new experiences, agreeableness, and neuroticism are important traits in any work setting, and specifically in a military work environment. However, hardiness may be at least as important as the FFM of personality for psychological well-being in the military work environment.

AIM

The aim of this study was to examine the roles of hardiness and personality in psychological well-being and perceptions of training among CF officer candidates. In particular, the study examined the unique contribution of hardiness to psychological well-being and perceptions of training when statistically controlling for personality as defined by the FFM. It was hypothesized that both personality and hardiness would have significant and unique contributions to psychological well-being and training perceptions and that hardiness would be associated with well-being and training perceptions above and beyond the effects of the FFM.

METHODS

Participants and Procedure

Questionnaires were administered to 200 officer candidates undergoing basic officer training in Saint-Jean, Quebec, in 2009. The questionnaires were administered in a classroom format in multiple sessions within the first few weeks of basic training. There were 154 (77.0%) males and 37 (18.5%) females and 9 (4.5%) with missing gender information. The participants were informed that the data would be anonymous, were for research purposes only (to assess differences in personality and coping with stress), and would have no impact on their military careers.

Measures

Personality Inventory

The Trait-Self Descriptive Personality Inventory is a pencil-and-paper measure of the FFM based on the full version of the TSD that was developed for the CF. The Trait-Self Descriptive Personality Inventory has five subscales representing five factors of personality. Each subscale is composed of 15 items, both adjectives and statements. The scores on each subscale range from 1 (extremely uncharacteristic of me) to 7 (extremely characteristic of me). The reverse-coded items were recoded before the responses were averaged to create a score for each subscale. The internal reliability was high (Cronbach’s alphas: neuroticism = 0.91, extraversion = 0.91, openness to new experiences = 0.86, agreeableness = 0.89, and conscientiousness = 0.89).

Military Hardiness

The military hardiness scale was adapted from an 18-item scale that was developed to assess personality differences among US Army soldiers. This scale consists of 3 military-specific subscales: commitment, challenge, and control. In the version of the scale adapted for the CF, military-specific commitment is composed of 7 items and reflects a strong identity with the military and commitment to CF missions (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.79). Military-specific challenge includes 5 items and reflects the degree to which the individual exerts personal resources in response to occupational demands (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.74). Finally, military-specific control includes 6 items and reflects perception of control and personal influence over training performance (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.71). The items were reworded to make the statements more relevant for basic training.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction was assessed with the Satisfaction with Life Scale, a 5-item measure that asks respondents to rate their global life satisfaction (e.g., “I am satisfied with my life”). The responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction with
life (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.75). The items were summed to obtain an overall life satisfaction score.

Psychological Health

The 12-item abbreviated version of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)\(^43\) was used to measure psychological health symptoms. This measure asks whether participants have recently experienced events such as loss of sleep due to worry or ability to concentrate on whatever they are doing. One item assessing loneliness was added to the scale. Responses were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from “not at all” (1) to “much more than usual” (4). Ratings on some items were recoded so that high scores indicated more positive psychological well-being, and the mean rating across all 13 items was used as the overall scale score. In this study, the reliability coefficient was considerably lower than in previous research (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.54). However, given that the reliability was moderate and no deleted item yielded a better overall reliability, all 13 items were used for the analyses.

Training Satisfaction and Stress Perception

Training satisfaction was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Scale.\(^44\) The items that assess job satisfaction were reworded to assess satisfaction with military recruit training. Satisfaction was measured using 3 widely recognized dimensions: degree of satisfaction with the work itself, degree of satisfaction with coworkers, and degree of satisfaction with supervision. The satisfaction items asked the following questions: “All in all, how satisfied are you with the training you have just finished?”; “All in all, how satisfied are you with the other military personnel you were on the training with?”; and “All in all, how satisfied are you with the supervision?” Ratings were made on a 5-point scale ranging from “very unsatisfied” (1) to “very satisfied” (5). The scores for the 3 questions were averaged to obtain a score for overall training satisfaction (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.64). An additional question was added to assess the extent to which the training was stressful for the individual: “All in all, how stressful has the training you have just completed been for you?” The rating for this question was made on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not stressful at all) to 5 (very stressful).

RESULTS

The goal of this study was to examine the unique contribution of military hardiness in psychological well-being and training perceptions among CF officer candidates, over and above that of personality. It was hypothesized that personality would be associated with psychological well-being, as has been found in previous studies and that hardiness would be associated with unique variance in psychological well-being over and above the variance accounted for by personality. To assess this hypothesis, a set of hierarchical regression analyses were conducted, wherein the outcomes of interest (life satisfaction, psychological health symptoms, training satisfaction, and training stress) were regressed onto the 5 personality subscales in the first step, followed by the 3 hardiness subscales in the second step.

Examination of the Pearson correlations demonstrated that 4 of the 5 subscales of personality (neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) were significantly correlated with the hardiness subscales (Table I). Most of the coefficients demonstrated minor correlations between the variables, whereas agreeableness and conscientiousness had moderate correlations with hardiness subscales. Although there appears to be some overlap between the FFM of personality and hardiness concepts, the strength of the correlations suggests that personality and hardiness are distinct concepts that could be used in an additive model to predict psychological well-being.

Life Satisfaction

Military hardiness explained additional variance in life satisfaction over and above that already accounted for by personality, \(R^2 = 0.035, F(3, 184) = 2.81, p < 0.05\) (Table II). The neuroticism subscale of personality and the commitment subscale of hardiness were unique correlates of life satisfaction when the other personality and hardiness subscales were statistically controlled. While neuroticism was negatively correlated with life satisfaction scores, hardiness was positively correlated with the scores. Although both personality and hardiness were independently correlated with life satisfaction,

### TABLE I. Correlations between Personality and Hardiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Total Military Hardiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>−0.17**</td>
<td>−0.07</td>
<td>−0.24**</td>
<td>−0.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>0.15*</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>−0.10</td>
<td>−0.10</td>
<td>−0.04</td>
<td>−0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>0.32***</td>
<td>0.39***</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>0.28***</td>
<td>0.26***</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
<td>0.30***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Military Hardiness</td>
<td>0.89***</td>
<td>0.78***</td>
<td>0.81***</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.001.

### TABLE II. Role of Military Hardiness and Personality in Life Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pearson r</th>
<th>(\hat{\beta})</th>
<th>(R^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1. Personality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.197***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>−0.36***</td>
<td>−0.25**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>0.28***</td>
<td>−0.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>−0.13*</td>
<td>−0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>0.25***</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2. Military Hardiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.035*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>0.32***</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>0.17**</td>
<td>−0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.21**</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.001.
the proportion of additional variance explained by hardness was small, suggesting that personality was the primary factor associated with life satisfaction among officer candidates.

**Psychological Health**

Military hardiness explained additional variance in psychological health symptoms over and above that already accounted for by personality, \( R^2 = 0.101, F(3, 183) = 10.27, p < 0.001 \) (Table III). The neuroticism subscale of personality and the commitment and control subscales of hardiness were unique correlates of health symptoms when the other personality and hardness subscales were statistically controlled. While neuroticism was negatively correlated with psychological well-being, commitment and control were positively correlated with well-being. Both personality and hardiness were independently associated with psychological health symptoms, suggesting that they are equally important factors associated with well-being.

**Training Satisfaction**

Military hardiness explained additional variance in training satisfaction over and above that already accounted for by personality, \( R^2 = 0.127, F(3, 184) = 11.44, p < 0.001 \) (Table IV). The neuroticism and agreeableness subscales of personality and the commitment subscale of hardiness were unique correlates of training satisfaction when the other personality and hardness subscales were statistically controlled. While neuroticism was negatively correlated with training satisfaction, agreeableness and commitment were positively correlated with training satisfaction. Both personality and hardiness were independently associated with training satisfaction symptoms, suggesting that they are equally important factors associated with training satisfaction.

**DISCUSSION**

Although most researchers examining psychological well-being among military personnel have concentrated on the FFM of personality, there has been growing evidence of the importance of hardness in well-being. Although hardness could be an equally good or better predictor of the psychological well-being of military personnel, no research has been conducted examining the unique contribution of hardness over personality. Therefore, the contributions of both the FFMs of personality and military hardness to the well-being and stress perceptions of officer candidates were assessed in this study. It was hypothesized that both personality and hardness would explain a significant amount of variance in psychological well-being and perceptions of training and that hardness...

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**TABLE III.** Role of Military Hardiness and Personality in Psychological Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1. Personality</th>
<th>Pearson r</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>-0.52***</td>
<td>-0.45***</td>
<td>0.296***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>0.26***</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<td>Openness</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>0.27***</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2. Military Hardiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.101***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>0.37***</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.44***</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < 0.05. * * p < 0.01. * * * p < 0.001. * * * * p < 0.000. * * * * * p < 0.000. * * * * * p < 0.000. * * * * * p < 0.000.

**TABLE IV.** Role of Military Hardiness and Personality in Training Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1. Personality</th>
<th>Pearson r</th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
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<td>-0.23**</td>
<td>0.189***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>0.16*</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>0.35***</td>
<td>0.32***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2. Military Hardiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.127***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>0.46***</td>
<td>0.31***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>0.30***</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.40***</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

* \( p < 0.05. * * p < 0.01. * * * p < 0.001. * * * p < 0.000. * * * * p < 0.000. * * * * p < 0.000. * * * * p < 0.000. * * * * p < 0.000. * * * * p < 0.000.

**TABLE V.** Role of Military Hardiness and Personality in Training Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1. Personality</th>
<th>Pearson r</th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>0.35***</td>
<td>0.36***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>-0.17**</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
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<td>-0.05</td>
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<td>Agreeableness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2. Military Hardiness</td>
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<td>0.041*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < 0.05. * * p < 0.01. * * * p < 0.001. * * * p < 0.000. * * * p < 0.000. * * * p < 0.000. * * * p < 0.000. * * * p < 0.000. * * * p < 0.000. * * * p < 0.000.

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would account for additional variance in these outcomes above and beyond the FFM. Consistent with the hypothesis, it was found that both personality and hardiness played significant and independent roles in the psychological well-being of CF officer candidates. Hardiness played a significant role in all domains of psychological well-being and training perceptions when personality was controlled. Given the smaller proportion of variance explained by hardiness in life satisfaction and training stress, personality may be a more important predictor in these domains. However, hardiness explained a substantial proportion of variance in both psychological health symptoms and training satisfaction when personality was controlled, suggesting that both hardiness and the FFM of personality are equally important concepts to consider when examining the psychological well-being and stress perceptions of military candidates.

There is a great deal of evidence in the scientific literature for the role of hardiness in psychological well-being. Consistent with previous findings, hardiness had a stronger correlation with psychological well-being than non-hardy individuals. Furthermore, hardiness is associated with desired outcomes in military settings, including better psychological well-being and job performance. Military jobs are more physically and psychologically demanding than most civilian jobs, in that they involve such adverse conditions as fear, sensory overload, sensory deprivation, constantly changing environments, and exposure to climatic changes. These demanding and adverse conditions require military personnel to be psychologically resilient and to have good psychological health. In fact, poor psychological health was found to play a critical role in turnover within the first 6 months of military service in the United States. Similarly, poor psychological health predicted basic training attrition among non-commissioned member (NCM) candidates in the CF. Therefore, knowing the individual characteristics that predict desired outcomes (such as psychological well-being and retention/attrition decisions of recruits) is vital for military organizations.

It is important to note that personality (specifically, neuroticism) remained significantly correlated with psychological well-being among officer candidates when hardiness was statistically controlled. The important role of neuroticism in the psychological well-being of CF candidates is consistent with previous research. As well, the commitment and control domains of hardiness were found to explain additional variance in the psychological well-being of officer candidates, over and above that explained by personality. Although no research has been conducted to examine the relative roles of hardiness and the full FFM of personality, these results are inconsistent, with some previous research showing that the link between hardiness and psychological well-being became nonsignificant when neuroticism was statistically controlled. By contrast, this study demonstrates that both personality and military hardiness play significant and independent roles in the psychological well-being of officer candidates.

Consistent with previous research, hardiness was associated with the FFM personality traits. Interestingly, in contrast to previous findings, hardiness had a stronger correlation with conscientiousness and agreeableness than with neuroticism. It is possible that the commitment domain of hardiness overlaps with both the agreeableness scale and the sense of duty aspect of conscientiousness. Although the correlation between hardiness and agreeableness was not expected, it has been suggested that individuals higher in commitment (but low in challenge and control) would be closely involved with people and that their sense of meaning would be determined by their interactions with others, which is a characteristic of highly agreeable individuals. This finding was also consistent with a previous study, which also found that hardiness had the highest correlation with conscientiousness.

Although some researchers have suggested that hardiness is simply the inverse of neuroticism or negative affectivity, the evidence suggests otherwise. Although significant correlations were found between hardiness and some of the personality traits (especially, conscientiousness), the strengths of the coefficients ranged between low and moderate. Furthermore, hardiness was uniquely related to psychological well-being over and above the FFM of personality. This evidence suggests that hardiness and personality constitute two different constructs, both of which have significant and independent contributions to psychological well-being, and therefore, both should be used in psychological well-being research.

Roles of Personality and Hardiness in Selection and Training

Hardiness is relevant to military occupations due to the inherently stressful demands on personnel. Assessing hardiness among military applicants may reduce attrition rates associated with stressful military training and reduce psychological health problems among military personnel, especially following deployment. In addition, it may be beneficial to provide hardiness training to CF candidates during basic training. It has been noted in previous research that psychological hardiness can be learned. Empirical data have demonstrated that a training program can increase the level of individual hardiness. Several sessions of hardiness training may not only increase hardiness but also reduce attrition and improve performance and psychological well-being. It was suggested that hardiness training would increase the motivation to succeed in military training and would reduce attrition and buffer against training stress. Consistent with this, researchers have suggested that hardiness training or mental readiness training should be provided in military organizations to enhance readiness. For example, military leaders can demonstrate to their personnel how to foster a hardy approach to military life and work by demonstrating commitment, control, and challenge. If such trainings were given early in a military member’s career, it might decrease the risk of psychological health problems following other military stressors, such as deployment. Hardy attitudes enhanced through training could...
provide individuals with the courage and motivation to deal with stressful situations, thereby improving psychological health.

LIMITATIONS
First, it is important to note that methodological constraints of the current study may negatively impact the generalizability of the results. In an ideal research situation, all military applicants would be hired and assessed (but not screened out) with both the FFM and hardiness measures. This would allow for the examination of the personality profile of all applicants. In this study, given that personality and hardiness data were available only for individuals who passed the Canadian Forces Aptitude Test and structured interview, the individuals were partly preselected on both cognitive abilities and some aspects of personality. In addition, this study only included officer candidates. Given that previous research has demonstrated some significant differences in both personality and psychological well-being between officers and NCMs, the results of this study cannot be generalized to NCMs.

Second, it is important to consider that personality was measured during basic officer training. Although personality is considered to be stable by most researchers, it is possible that stressful events have an effect on individual’s personality. Given that military training is very structured and is based on compliance with the rules, some personality traits might have been temporarily elevated, given the priming effect of the training. Consistent with this suggestion, it has previously been found that neuroticism decreases and conscientiousness increases during basic military training. Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that hardiness can change in response to stressors. Therefore, for future research, it is important to examine personality and hardiness data of CF candidates before basic training.

The survey was cross-sectional in design. As a result, caution must be made in making causal attributions of the ability of personality and hardiness to predict well-being and perceptions of training stress. It is only with longitudinal research that the ability of individual characteristics to predict psychological health outcomes can be determined. Collecting baseline information on personality and hardiness and examining these in relation to later outcomes, such as well-being at the end of the basic training period, would be of benefit in future research. Furthermore, it is likely that all the factors associated with well-being and perceptions of stress have not been captured. For example, other factors such as traumatic experiences earlier in life may impact individuals’ ability to adapt to stressors.

Finally, because of the low number of females in this study, gender comparisons were not possible. Previous research suggests that there are significant personality differences between men and women. For example, it was found that women demonstrated higher scores on neuroticism, whereas men demonstrated higher scores on extraversion. Furthermore, gender differences in hardiness have been found, in that hardiness buffers the impact of life stressors for men but not for women, suggesting that hardiness is expressed differently in men and women. Therefore, future research should examine gender differences in the links between personality, hardiness, and psychological well-being.

CONCLUSIONS
The main goal of this study was to examine the unique role of hardiness, over and above the FFM of personality, in the psychological well-being and training perceptions of officer candidates undergoing basic training. Consistent with the predictions, both personality and military hardiness explained significant and unique proportions of variance in the outcomes, and hardiness predicted additional variance above that accounted for by personality. Neuroticism and hardiness (especially commitment and control) played the main roles in officer candidates’ psychological well-being. The results of the study were consistent with previous research, suggesting that using personality and hardiness measures to select recruits into the military may benefit both the individual and the organization. Consideration of individual characteristics may be a useful approach for selecting psychologically fit applicants and enhancing the psychological well-being of current military personnel.

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REFERENCES
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