***The Role of a Virtual Community in Improving*** ***Belonging and Engagement among Career Military Women***

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Dr. Orly Ganany-Dagan, PhD, studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University. Her publications focus on new communities, the community connection between the collective and the individual, the social periphery of Israel, social generations, inclusion, and gender. She employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods and applies different perspectives to examine these subjects. Dr. Ganany-Dagan is a researcher and lecturer at Tel-Hai College.

Ms. Michal Leizerovitch holds a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree from Bar-Ilan University and a second master’s degree in management development from the College of Management. She specializes in the development, leadership, and introduction of systemwide strategic processes in the military, including intelligence units, as well as processes of organizational development in the third sector. Ms. Leizerovitch has conducted organizational research in academic frameworks and the army. She is currently responsible for development in the field of social resilience at Mahut Israel, an NGO for community crisis treatment in Israel and other countries.

**Abstract**

This qualitative study examines the role of *Wonder Women*, an informal virtual community of practice (VCoP), in fostering a sense of belonging and engagement among career women in the Israeli military. Using interviews and focus groups with 16 community members, the study reveals that the community provides a supportive space for women to share experiences, cope with challenges, and develop strategies for navigating the gender-related barriers they face in a male-dominated organization. The community's discourse dynamics contribute to bridging the expectation and gender gaps experienced by female soldiers, empowering them, and driving organizational change. The findings underscore the potential of informal virtual communities to serve as catalysts for promoting inclusion, well-being, and gender equality within the military. The study recommends that military organizations recognize and support such communities as valuable resources for fostering a more efficient organizational culture.

**Keywords:** Virtual Community of Practice – VCoP, women soldiers, organizational sense of belonging, gendered work engagement, military

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