

# Review of: "“Same team, different colours”: Examining the association between shared identity and interoperability in multi-agency discussion-based exercises"

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Once and again evaluations of emergency responses identify a weak communication and cooperation between emergency responders of different services. This makes the research of Davidson et al. a relevant and important effort to scholarly help improve joint working. The authors make a plea for taking psychological factors into account in training and guidance of first responders when preparing for interoperability in emergency responses. The study applies triangulation by combining a quantitative and a qualitative method with behavioural analysis. This is a strong element of the approach. Still, there is room for improvement in a few areas. Adding to earlier reviews the focus here will be on limitations and validity of the study.

## *Scope*

Multi-agency working is an issue in many countries. This study would gain rigour by a concise literature review that could cover for instance acute-phase chemical incident mobilization in Sweden (Westman et al., 2021); or cooperation between unaffiliated responders and professional responders and professional rescue forces in Germany (Lorenz et al., 2017).

## *Identity*

Shared identity is a central notion in the article. It would deserve to be well-defined. Now we must find out ourselves as readers what the participants understand as their identity. A scholarly definition is not provided. Such a definition would cover what members of the organization (in this case the combined first responders) find to be the central, distinctive, and enduring characteristics of the organization. This is apparently not what was asked in the exercise.

## *Sample*

In Western Europe including the UK, Police, Fire and Ambulance service have to cope with a large turnover of staff. Still the average “years in service” of the participants is twenty years. They were recruited through pre-existing contact with the

research team. This does not seem a representative sample, even if the position in the hierarchy would have been a sampling criterium.

### *Tendency*

An important characteristic of qualitative research is that convergent as well as divergent insights of participants come to the surface. The authors clarify their essay by many helpful quotes. This makes the paper attractive. The only thing is that all quotes point in the same direction. They seem to be selected just to underpin the hypotheses. Davidson et al. claim that a sense of shared identity between responders is developed during a response. They acknowledge the artificial character of the exercise and propose a live exercise. Wouldn't the evaluation of a real-life incident yield more valid information?