

## MEASURING JOB ANXIETY IN MILITARY ORGANIZATION

Crenguța Mihaela MACOVEI

"Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy, Sibiu, Romania  
mihaela.macovei@gmail.com

**Abstract.** *In this paper, we present the partial results of a study that aims to highlight the link between affectivity and work performance in the military organization. We considered that the anxiety generated by daily activities is an important factor that can affect the performance at work of the military personnel. To measure this type of anxiety we used the Job Anxiety subscale, which is a part of Job Stress Scale developed by Parker & DeCotiis. The Job Anxiety subscale is constructed to exceed the specific features of each occupation or workplace, making it suitable for measuring the level of anxiety in the military environment. Cronbach's coefficient indicates a good internal consistency of the subscale. To test the criterion reliability, we correlated this subscale with a related construct: the anxiety as a trait measured by STAI (State-Trait Anxiety Inventory). The job anxiety correlated significantly positive with anxiety-trait.*

**Keyword:** Job anxiety, military, anxiety-trait

### Introduction

Anxiety is a phenomenon with high functional value because it enables two fundamental adaptive behaviors: avoidance of threat and assessment of risk. It is a deeply human response to the overwhelming multitude of stimuli belonging to the increasingly complex social environment. It is also a core symptom of many psychological and psychiatric disorders; this feature triggers and sustains the interest of scientists for understanding its mechanisms and forms of manifestation.

Workplaces contain a variety of stimuli that may cause anxiety: job demands, conflicts with colleagues and supervisors, excessive workload or work pressure, physical hazards, structural changes, job-related uncertainties, perception of insufficiency etc.

Linden and Muschalla (2007) propose a new clinical concept named

*workplace-related anxieties* which, in their opinion, should be distinguished from conventional anxiety disorders. They identified, in different samples of patients with psychosomatic and cardiac conditions, people who met only the criteria for workplace-related anxiety.

Kittner (apud Muschalla, 2008) proposed a classification of anxieties that occurs typically in the workplace, taking into account two main criteria: the content of anxiety and the object causing anxiety. In this way, four different forms of job-related anxieties were obtained:

- fears concerning existence (loss of job, aging and illness);
- fears concerning achievement (fear of change, responsibility, concurrence, over taxation, even fear of success);
- social anxieties (worries concerning interactions with colleagues and superiors);

- special forms of anxieties generated by the social position of the employee (such as manager-anxieties and gender-related anxieties)

When anxiety symptoms become very intense, they may trigger the most severe form of workplace-related anxiety: the workplace phobia, which B. Muschalla describes as a "classical phobic anxiety reaction concerning the stimulus workplace. It occurs with a panic-like reaction with physiological arousal when thinking of the workplace or approaching. The person shows clear avoidance behaviour towards the workplace. Due to the symptoms, there must be severe subjective suffering and/or impairment in carrying out daily duties at work."(Muschalla 2009, p. 46)

Avram & Cooper (2008) included organizational factors generating anxiety in two main categories:

- a. General factors that can be found in any type of organization
- b. Specific factors of each organization individually.

In the first category, we find the following types of behaviors:

- *Abrasive behaviors* of managers/supervisors (intentional, long-lasting silence, tough short answers, ignoring subordinates, manifesting indifference etc.);
- *Abusive behaviors* of managers/supervisors (insults, humiliation, discrediting, contempt, domination, control, manipulation, shouts, threats etc.)
- *Ambiguous behavior* of leaders, inducing a state of confusion and uncertainty in subordinates because they disregard or override written and unwritten rules of the organization;
- *Negative perceptions of employees* about organizational practices, in particular about those that relate to human resources system or leadership.

In the second category, Maftai & Maftai (2015) lists a number of factors specific to the national defense, public order and national security institutions, which may trigger anxiety symptoms:

- Concerns about job safety and stability;
- Constant concerns over the impact of the current economic situation and budgetary austerity;
- Concerns for identifying viable occupational alternatives after leaving the system
- Perception on inequality of opportunity, external influences (particularly political) and erosion of the career advancement system, phenomena undermining employee confidence in the institution;
- The presence of outdated ideas and principles in exercising of leadership;
- Lack of logistical resources which puts increased pressure on employees to compensate the shortfall;
- Deterioration of society's trust in public institutions, which generates increased pressure on employees in the system.

Jones, Latreille & Sloane (2011) studied the link between job anxiety, work-related psychological illness and workplace performance and they found the following: job anxiety is positively associated with job demands; anxiety increases with educational attainment, tenure and level of supervisory responsibility and decreases with the level of control over one's own work, perceived management support and job security.

Initially, anxiety affects the individual who begins to manifest dysfunctional and counterproductive behaviors at work. Afterwards, if this situation perpetuates, the consequences will start to propagate throughout the organization, affecting the proper functioning of its internal processes.

## Methodology

In this paper, we present the partial results of a study, which aims to highlight the link between affectivity and work performance in the military. We considered that the anxiety generated by daily activities is an important factor that could affect the performance of military personnel. To measure this type of anxiety we used the Job Anxiety subscale, which is a part of Job Stress Scale developed by Parker & DeCotiis in 1983.

The Job Stress scale consists of 13 items and is designed to measure job stress on two dimensions: time stress - generated by the feeling of being constantly under time pressure – and anxiety – generated by work specific conditions (Fields, 2002).

The Job Anxiety subscale is constructed in such a way that exceeds the specific features of each occupation/job, making it suitable for measuring the level of anxiety in the military. It consists of five items and has a five-point Likert scale for answers from *1 = strong disagreement* to *5 = strong agreement*.

We present in this paper the internal consistency analysis for this subscale. To test the criterion reliability, we correlate this subscale with a related construct: the anxiety as a trait measured by STAI (State-Trait Anxiety Inventory).

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) developed by Spielberger comprises two self-report scales, each scale being composed of 20 items. This scale measures the anxiety- state as a psychological construct distinct from anxiety-trait. Anxiety- state is a transient state, a psychological condition in which a person feels a subjective state of tension, nervousness, agitation, varying in intensity and disappearing over time. Anxiety-trait is a stable disposition of a person, manifested as a characteristic of his/her personality, to respond with a high level of anxiety to those situations perceived as threatening (Spielberger and Reheiser, 2004). The STAI is a self-administering measure with no time limits. Respondents

to T-Anxiety scale are asked to indicate how they generally feel on a four-point scale which indicates the frequency of the anxiety-related feeling and cognitions from *1 = Almost never* to *4 = Almost always*.

We analyzed the responses of 84 Romanian Army officers: 30 women and 54 men. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare job anxiety scores for men and women. There was not a significant difference in the scores for job anxiety of men ( $m = 1.54$ ;  $s.d. = 0.63$ ) and women ( $m = 1.76$ ,  $s.d. = 0.75$ );  $t(82) = -1.39$ ,  $p = 0.16$

## Results

Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.76, indicating a good internal consistency of the subscale.

**Table 2. Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,766	,795	5

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for each of five items.

In table 4, we can see that the correlation between item 5 and the global score is 0.18, which is under the minimum acceptable correlation coefficient. The deletion of this item will increase Cronbach's alpha coefficient from .76 to .82. All the other items significantly correlated with the global score.

In table 3, we presented the correlation matrix as an image of the degree of association between items of the subscale. All the items have positive associations with each other so we can conclude that they are properly constructed. In addition, the value of the correlation coefficients indicates that there is a low degree of similarity between items

In table 5, we can see that the first four items of the subscale are highly correlated with each other. The fifth item correlates with the first, second and fourth item, but the correlation is weak.

<b>Table 2. Item Statistics</b>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
<b>Item 1.</b> I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job	1,83	1,128	84
<b>Item 2.</b> My job gets to me more than it should	1,89	1,141	84
<b>Item 3.</b> There are lots of times when my job drives me right up the wall	1,42	,680	84
<b>Item 4.</b> Sometimes when I think about my job I get a tight feeling in my chest	1,20	,533	84
<b>Item 5.</b> I feel guilty when I take time off from the job	1,79	1,098	84

**Table 3. Inter-Item Correlation Matrix**

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5
Item 1	1,000	,791	,657	,458	,243
Item 2	,791	1,000	,679	,353	,241
Item 3	,657	,679	1,000	,562	,121
Item 4	,458	,353	,562	1,000	,260
Item 5	,243	,241	,121	,260	1,000

**Table 4. Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Item 1	6.16	5.388	.714	.642	.600
Item 2	6.12	5.146	.764	.722	.574
Item 3	6.50	7.187	.667	.636	.657
Item 4	6.74	8.730	.425	.301	.738
Item 5	6.17	7.877	.180	.084	.828

**Table 5. Item – Item Correlations**

		Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5
Item 1	Pearson Correlation	1	<b>,791**</b>	<b>,657**</b>	<b>,458**</b>	<b>,243*</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<b>,000</b>	<b>,000</b>	<b>,000</b>	<b>,026</b>
	N	84	84	84	84	84
Item 2	Pearson Correlation	<b>,791**</b>	1	<b>,679**</b>	<b>,353**</b>	<b>,241*</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>,000</b>		<b>,000</b>	<b>,001</b>	<b>,027</b>
	N	84	84	84	84	84
Item 3	Pearson Correlation	<b>,657**</b>	<b>,679**</b>	1	<b>,562**</b>	,121
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>,000</b>	<b>,000</b>		<b>,000</b>	,273
	N	84	84	84	84	84
Item 4	Pearson Correlation	<b>,458**</b>	<b>,353**</b>	<b>,562**</b>	1	<b>,260*</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>,000</b>	<b>,001</b>	<b>,000</b>		<b>,017</b>
	N	84	84	84	84	84
Item 5	Pearson Correlation	,243*	,241*	,121	,260*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,026	,027	,273	,017	
	N	84	84	84	84	84

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

To test the criterion reliability, we correlated the scores of this subscale with a related construct: the anxiety as a trait measured by STAI (State-Trait Anxiety Inventory). The job anxiety correlated significantly positive with anxiety-trait (Table 6)

**Table 6. Correlation between job anxiety score and STAI score**

		STAI score
Job anxiety score	Pearson Correlation	,613**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
	N	84

In the modern personality models, anxiety as a trait is a part of a personality dimension called *emotional stability* as opposed to the older term *neuroticism*. Perkins & Corr bring into discussion, in an article written in 2014, the results of a research conducted by Eliot Slater during the World War II. Slater studied 2,000 British Army soldiers with the psychiatric diagnosis of *neuroticism*: a personality profile characterized by proneness to experiencing negative emotions (anxiety, depression, hysteria and hypochondria). He concluded that those soldiers who have a neurotic personality profile combined with a low level of general intelligence present a higher risk of psychological breakdown. In contrast, soldiers with a neurotic personality and an adequate level of intelligence or soldiers who were emotionally stable but had a low level of intelligence were less prone to psychological breakdowns.

Perkins & Corr (2006) studied the combined effects of cognitive ability and

neuroticism on military performance in two separate samples (Naval and Army). They started from the idea that the level of performance in military officer selection is a good predictor of operational performance. In their study, neuroticism and performance ratings were negatively correlated only in the case of individuals with low cognitive abilities; in more cognitively able individuals such correlation do not occur. The authors describe a “stress intolerant” profile characterized by low cognitive ability and high levels of neuroticism; individuals with such a profile are less suited to stressful occupations and environments such as the military.

### Conclusion

The Job Anxiety subscale has a good internal consistency and its items are properly constructed. There is a low degree of similarity between items. The first four items of the subscale are highly correlated with each other and significantly correlated with the global score.

The correlation coefficient between the fifth item and the global score is under the minimum acceptable. The deletion of this item increases Cronbach’s alpha coefficient from .76 to .82. The fifth item correlates with the first, second and fourth item, but the correlation is weak. Consequently, we consider that the fifth item - *I feel guilty when I take time off from the job* - should be removed from the scale.

In conclusion, we consider that the four items version of this subscale is an appropriate instrument to measure job anxiety in the military domain.

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