

To Study the Anxiety Level and Self-Concept among Army Personnel

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Abstract: *Anxiety means the nervousness, unpleasant state of inner feelings. Anxiety, worry and stress are all a part of most people's life today. Simply experiencing anxiety does not mean that person needs some help but excessive anxiety leads to anxiety disorders. Army personnel face unique risks in service and may lead to anxiety and due to increase in anxiety level this leads to low self concept among them. The aim of present research was to study the anxiety level and self concept of army personnel posted at Baramula, Doda, Kargil and Leh-laddak regions of J&K. The data consisted of 80 army personnel of age group of 20 to 39 years with educational qualifications as +2 to graduation. Two tools were used as Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test and self-concept questionnaire. The obtained results revealed that there lies significant difference between high and low anxiety groups on all the dimensions of self-concept questionnaire.*

Keywords: Anxiety, Self-concept, Army personnel

1. Introduction

Anxiety is a general term for several disorders that cause nervousness, fear apprehension and worrying. These disorders affect how we feel and behave, and they can manifest real physical symptoms. Mild anxiety is vague and unsettling, while severe anxiety can be extremely debilitating, having a serious impact on daily life. People often experience a general state of worry or fear before confronting something challenging such as a test, examination, recital or interview. These feelings are easily justified and considered normal. Anxiety is considered a problem when symptoms interfere with a person's ability to sleep or otherwise function. Generally speaking, anxiety occurs when a reaction is out of proportion with what might be normally expected in a situation. People with anxiety disorders present a variety of physical symptoms in addition to non-physical symptoms that characterize the disorders such as excessive, unrealistic worrying. Many of these symptoms are similar to those exhibited by a person suffering general illness, heart attack or stroke and this tends to further increase anxiety. There are certain physical symptoms like trembling, churning stomach, headache, backache, heart palpitations, numbness or "pins and needles" in arms, hands or legs, restlessness trouble concentrating irritability, muscle tension, staying asleep etc. Anxiety may be caused by environmental factors, medical factors, genetics, brain chemistry, substance abuse, or a combination of these. Usually anxiety is a response to outside forces, but it is possible that we make ourselves anxious with "negative self-talk" – a habit of always telling ourselves the worst will happen.

Lenvis defines anxiety as "an unpleasant emotion experienced as dread, scare, alarm, fright, harrow or panic" (1970:63). The army personnel post at J&K, experience physical symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances, and sleeplessness, as a result,

they become anxious and irritable. Under these situations the anxious army personnel develops some desire to avoid decisions, problems or changes at work. Army person's resistance to stress is a product of many different factors, including the persons' physical health, mental health, and social support. The adoption or maintenance of health-promoting behaviors such as physical exercise, proper diet, adequate rest and restraint from excessive consumption of alcohol and caffeine, should be encouraged. Military training exercises are designed to be stimulating combat conditions; however, soldiers may not be adequately prepared to deal with anxieties. Good communication between and among soldiers and leaders is crucial to prevent anxiety. Military leaders can reduce the role conflict and role ambiguity by developing clear job descriptions and involving subordinates in the development of meaningful and achievable personal and unit goals. In the Indian Army, unfortunately occupation related anxiety, and associated hazards are increasing day by day. Various statistical surveys show that the prevalence of stress and anxiety among Army personnel have been causing many harmful impacts on the society, which is a warning that cannot be ignored, "Every third day a soldier commits suicide and every tenth day another is killed by a colleague running amok. The growing stress level results in mental illness, resulting in suicide and killing of fellow soldiers have caused an alarm among army forces. (Tribune News, 2007)

Self concept is self-evaluation or self-perception and it represents the sum of an individual's beliefs about his or her own attributes. Self concept is the values and beliefs as well as attitudes and opinions the individual has of himself. Self-concept reflects how an adolescent evaluates himself or herself in domains in which he/she considers success important.

The army persons can have positive self-concept in some domains like controlling terrorism, establishing peace and comfort for the mass and can have negative self concept

about frequent deployment from one place to another place without giving sufficient time, the working hours, getting, leaves and challans sanctioned in time, attitude of superiors etc. and this negative self-concept in army persons has been associated with depression, anxiety and stress etc.

The military setting exhibits certain stereotypes of military traits as high internal locus of control and low emotional stability. Furthermore, the military needs committed service member who is strongly attached to his or her military service and to his or her unit as an organization (Gade, 2003). For all this the military must have high self-concept, because self-concept does not appear to be instinctive, but it is a social product developed through experience, it possesses relatively boundless potential for development and actualization.

For the army self-concept requires consistency, stability and tends to resist change. If self-concept changed readily, the individual would lack a consistent and dependable personality.

Every individual exists in a constantly changing world of experience of which he is the center. It is his basic tendency and striving to know and understand himself as well as his environment. He reacts to his environment as he experiences and perceived it. Due to constant interaction with his environment, gradually the form of his 'self' is differentiated and developed. In this process, an integrated, organized and unique self-structure comes out. All this behavior is directed towards actualizing, presenting and enhancing this self-structure. That part of self-structure which the individual perceives as a set of specific and relatively stable self-characteristics formulate his self-concept.

On the basis of the above discussions the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Level of anxiety affects army personnel's self-concept.
2. High anxiety among army personnel causes the significant reduction of self-concept.
3. Anxiety relates positively with self-concept.

2. Methodology

2.1 Sample

The sample for the present research study the sample was confined from Baramula, Doda, Kargil and Leh-laddak regions of J&K. The data consisted of 80 army personnel of age group of 20 to 39 years with educational qualifications as +2 to graduation level.

Tools: Two tests were used as:

1. Self-concept questionnaire by Dr. Raj Kumar Saraswat was used to measure the self-concept of the participants. The test consists of 40 items and it provides six separate dimensions of self-concept, viz., physical, social, intellectual, moral, educational and temperamental. Each dimension contains eight items. Each item is provided with five alternatives. It also gives a total self-concept score. The reliability was found to be 0.91 for the total self-concept measure.

2. Sinha's comprehensive anxiety test by A.K.P Sinha and L.N.K Sinha was used to measure the level of anxiety. This test contains 100 items. The reliability was 0.92 for the total test.

2.2 Procedure

The course of procedure for this research was duly planned before the data collection could be started. The anxiety scale was administered and instructions were made clear and it was made sure that the subjects had no doubts. The subjects were given enough time to give their responses. When the subjects had completed, the response sheets were collected from them and finally self-concept questionnaire was administered. After all this the scoring was done and Mean, SD and t-values were calculated.

Dimension	Code No	High	SD	Low	SD	MD	t-ratio
Physical	A	32.6	3.8	25.8	3.64	6.8	6.459**
Social	B	22.05	3.79	31.35	4.37	9.3	4.77**
Temperamental	C	32.25	4.023	24.75	4.06	7.5	5.725**
Educational	D	24.7	4.04	33.3	4.14	8.6	6.515**
Moral	E	24.15	3.84	31.9	4.58	7.75	5.87**
Intellectual	F	22.8	2.48	26.85	4.73	4.05	3.38**

All the t-values are significant at 0.01 levels. $t = 2.64$ for 78 df.

3. Discussion

The obtained results as shown in Table No. 1, revealed that anxiety is commonly seen among army personnel. When the researcher compared the high and low groups, it was found that both the groups were significantly different on all the dimensions of self-concept. This shows that anxiety level directly influence the self-concept of army personnel.

In the present study self-concept is taken as dependent variable. So far as the physical self-concept is concerned, it is evident from the table that there lie significant differences (t -value = 6.459 & mean difference = 6.8) between high and low groups. This shows that high anxiety influence individuals' self-concept. The reason may be that frequent deployment creates fatigue, headaches, and sleeplessness and become anxious and irritable. Mission requirements sometimes mandate increased work hours. However, military personnel should receive time off to recover when mission requirements abate.

The t -value of social dimension was again significant at 0.01 level, whereas, the mean value of high anxiety group was quite lower than the high anxiety group. This shows that under the influence of anxiety the high anxiety group shows lower self-concept. Everybody wants to develop upward and actualize himself. Due to strict job hierarchy the army personnel cannot take decisions at their own. There may be political pressure and other reasons. If these are not adequately and sufficiently present in one's job, then most likely these may inversely influence the fulfillment of influencing social self-concept of army personnel. The army personnel are experiencing the deficiencies of these areas and hence, their social self-concept is influenced. We know that army personnel are the key players to maintain peace

and harmony in the society but efficient working is most likely to dependent on their self-concept.

There is significant difference on temperamental dimension of self-concept among high anxiety group and low anxiety group of army personnel. The t-value (5.725) obtained, was found significant at 0.01 level. It may be because manifestations of chronic combat reaction include depression, paranoia, decreased tolerance for frustration excessive complaining, withdrawal from social interaction, sleep disturbances, weight loss and abuse of alcohol and drugs. This all may be seen in high anxiety groups where the self-concept is at its minimum level. These can easily loose their temper towards the stimulus in the environment.

Mean scores on temperamental domain of the high anxiety group of army personnel obtained 32.25 and SD = 4.023 while the low anxiety group obtained 24.75 and SD= 4.06. The t-value was found significant at 0.01 level (5.725), this shows that high anxiety group can loose their temper more easily without having the real awareness of the situation. It means they show difference in their characteristics emotional and arousal responses to various stimuli and in their tendency to approach withdraw or attend to various situations (Rothbart, Derryberry, & Hershey, 2000). The environmental or job stress can be seen in army personnel of this group having their temperament as fearfulness, irritability and frustration, anxiety level, and attention persistence. Persons who are fearful in many situations have been labeled behaviorally inhibited. This trait has a significant heritable component (Kagan, 2003), and when it is stable, it is a risk factor for the development of anxiety disorders later in life (Fox et al., 2005; Kagan, 2003). Such hurdles can be overcome, when proper environment to the army personnel is provided and have some efforts in the positive development of their self-concept. On the other hand the low group did not show such behavior as they have well developed positive self-concept and have awareness about their duties and assignments.

The level of educational level affects the self-concept of the high and low groups. When the researcher studied the data then it was found that maximum of the high anxiety group of army personnel had educational qualifications of +2 level. The mean high anxiety group was 24.7 and SD=4.14, while mean of low anxiety group was 33.3 and SD = 4.04. This shows that low anxiety group army personnel showed better self-concept. It may be because they are qualified having good education, have the ability to act purposefully think rationally and deal the environment/situations effectively. This develops their coping style and they can be ready to face the adverse situation in a positive way by using their self-concept.

The moral domain was again found significant at 0.01 level where the t-value was 5.87 and mean and SD of high and low groups were high (mean = 24.15; SD = 4.58); Low (mean 31.9; SD= 3.84). The low anxiety group is better on moral values. They use their self-concept and can understand the right and wrong aspects of the environment make proper decisions. These people may have had greater opportunity to learn that moral dilemmas are not always resolvable by reference to a set of inclusive moral rules

contained in conscience and that they often have to devise their own solutions.

Finally, the intellectual domain was, too found significant at 0.01 level where the mean & SD of both groups were high: mean = 22.8, SD= 4.7; low- mean=26.85 and SD=2.48, where the t-value was 3.38. Intellectual level of army personnel with positive self-concept has an effective influence on releasing anxiety related to armed force occupations.

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