Selection Test Anxiety: Is There a Happy Medium?

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BACKGROUND

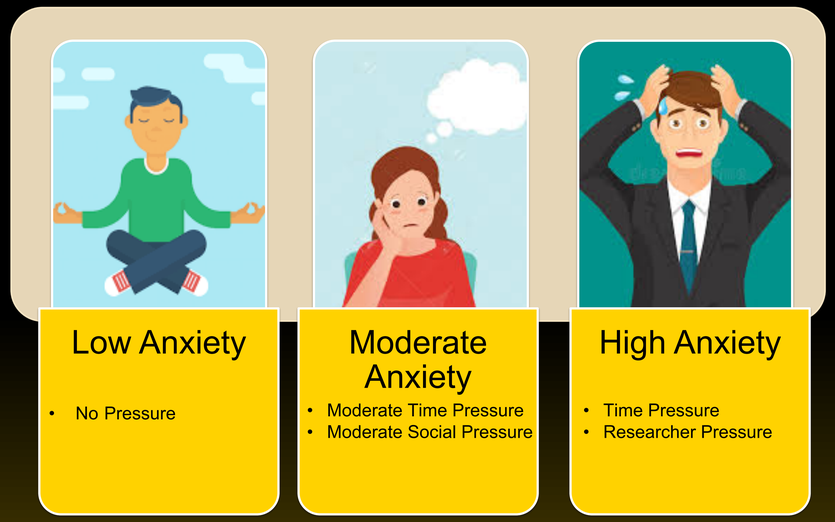
- Past research examining the relationship between applicant reactions to selection tests and selection test performance has largely consisted of correlational studies built around linear models.
- Some studies, however, have proposed that there is a curvilinear relationship between test reactions and performance that is in the shape of an inverse U, suggesting that moderate levels of anxiety produce optimal performance.
- This has seldom been tested in an experimental design.
- The Resource Allocation Model may help to explain how different levels of anxiety can help or hurt performance through two concepts: Self-regulatory Processing and Off-task Cognition.

HYPOTHESES

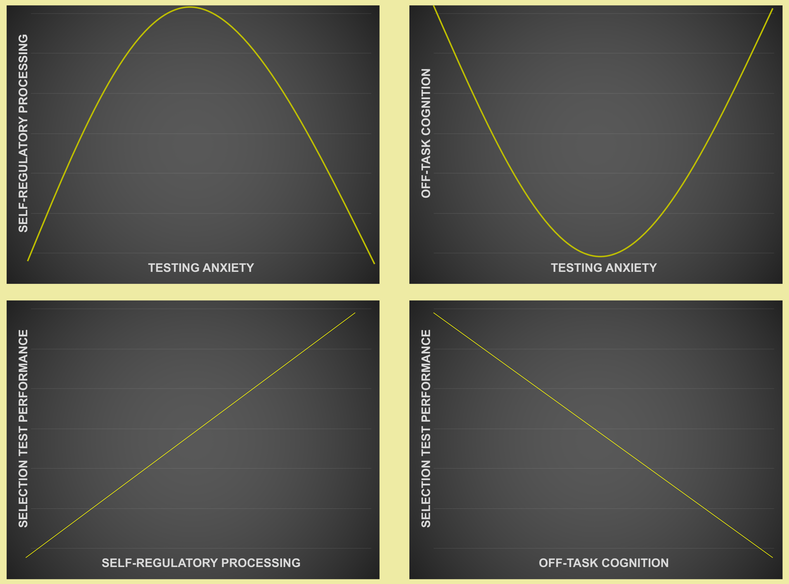
Hypothesis 1: There will be a curvilinear relationship between selection test anxiety and selection test performance in the shape of an inverse U.

Hypothesis 2: Self-regulatory processing will mediate the curvilinear relationship between selection test anxiety and selection test performance.

Hypothesis 3: Off-task cognition will mediate the curvilinear relationship between selection test anxiety and selection test performance.



THE MODEL



PROCEDURE

1. Participants will complete an initial online survey measuring dispositional test-anxiety.

2. Participants will then be randomly assigned to one of three anxiety conditions before beginning the selection test.

> **High anxiety**: Time pressure and social pressure

> **Moderate anxiety**: Moderate time pressure and moderate social pressure

> **Low anxiety:** No pressure

3. Participants will complete a logical reasoning task that is designed to be easy to complete but take varying amounts of time depending on concentration. (They will believe this is a selection test for a paid follow-up study).

4. Following test completion, participant state test-anxiety, self-regulatory processing, and off-task cognition will be measured via an online survey.

RESULTS