

# Organizational Climate Assessment of the Bulgarian Armed Forces: Implications for the Military Leaders

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## Background

- ❑ **The focus and the goal of the paper:** examination of relationships between **organizational climate dimensions** and service members' **Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization** and **Intention to leave organization** and formulation of recommendations for the BGR political and military leaders at strategic level.
- ❑ **Four representative for the Bulgarian armed forces surveys applying the same methodology** were conducted on the topic of organizational climate assessment during the period 2013-2017. This report presents the results of the latest study in **2017**.
- ❑ The two stage stochastic sample includes **1,655 service members from 59 structures** and military formations of the Ministry of Defence.

## Basic Research tasks:

1. To evaluate the *correlation between organizational climate dimensions* and service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization, and Intention to leave organization (at variables level);
2. To identify *the influence of organizational climate dimensions* on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave organization (at variables level);
3. To identify *the influence of organizational climate dimensions blocks* on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave organization (at aggregate level).

# Organizational Climate Dimensions in the Bulgarian model

## Independent variables

**Organizational policies** (*Image of the institution; Social policy; Career development model*)

**Organizational justice** (Procedural justice and Distribution justice)

**Social psychological climate** (*Relationships with colleagues; Trust in direct superior/commander; Perceived organizational effectiveness of the military unit/structure*)

**Job stress** (*High concentration and overload; "Work-family" conflict*)

**Equal opportunities for professional realization** (*ethnic/gender*)

**Motivation of military personnel** (*Internal and Existential motivation*)

## Dependent variables

**Job satisfaction**

**Commitment to organization**

**Intention to leave organization**

## Hypotheses:

1. The **organizational climate sub-dimensions** included in the Organizational policies' block of dimensions (Image of military institution, Social policy, and Career development model) will have the **most positive impact** on service members' **Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization** and a negative impact on their **Intention to leave organization**.
2. Service members' **Job satisfaction and Commitment to organization** will show a strong **negative impact on their Intention to leave organization**.
3. The organizational climate sub-dimensions included in the **Social psychological climate's** (Relationship with colleagues, Trust in the direct superior/commander, Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation/structure) and **Organizational justice's blocks of dimensions** will have a **significant impact on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization, and Intention to leave organization**, controlling for the influence of the variables included in the Organization Policies' block of dimensions (Image of military institution, Social policy & Career development model).

# Examining the conformation of hypotheses

## *Hypothesis 1.*

1. The first hypothesis was partially confirmed. Data analysis showed that dimensions included in the Organizational policies' block (**Image of military institution, Social policy, and Career development model**) are the strongest positive predictors of service members' Job satisfaction, and the strongest negative predictors of their Intention to leave organization, but not of the Commitment to organization.
2. Regarding **Commitment to organization, the Social psychological climate and Organizational justice** are the most influential predictors.

## *Hypothesis 2.*

In regressions models where the predictive power of the primary organizational climate dimensions is examined, **Job satisfaction really shows the most negative influence on the service members' intention to leave organization ( $r^2=20\%$ ).**

In the hierarchical regression models, **the Organizational policies' block of dimension decline the strong influence of Job satisfaction and  $R^2$  drops to 3%.**

The **Commitment to organization has a significant but weak influence** on the service members' Intention to leave organization.

## ***Hypothesis 3***

The third hypothesis is confirmed only in terms of Commitment to organization. Even when controlling the Organizational policies' block of dimensions, the predictive power of the Social psychological climate and Organizational justice on service members' Job satisfaction and Intention to leave organization is weak.



## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MILITARY LEADERS

First, the **perceived Image of the defence institution** has proved to be an extremely powerful construct with a high predictive power, both in terms of **Job satisfaction** and in **Intention to leave organization**.

The Image of military institution has shown **strong correlations with the Career development model** and its **Social policy**, which are basic policies that affect the working conditions of an institution or organization.

**The perceived Image of the military institution is a constituent element of the attitude of the service members towards their job**, together with such objective characteristics of the organization as a Career development model and Social policy, and at the same time is the central core of their Job satisfaction and Intention to leave organization.

Second, the three factors examined - the Image of military institution, the Career development model, and Social policy explain 64% of the variation in the dependant variable measuring service members' Job satisfaction. Service members' Job satisfaction is an extremely important, because of all others variables, it is most closely related to their Intention to leave organization.

At the moment one of the main problems facing the BAF is the incompleteness of staff and turnover of trained personnel.

**The practical conclusion to be drawn is that the negative perceived Image of the military organization, the poor Career development model, and the insufficient Social policy cannot be compensated by any other factors.**

**Third**, Commitment to organization is the second dependent variable, which, to a lesser but significant degree, is related to the service members' Intention to leave organization. This dependant variable is predominantly predicted by the Social psychological climate' and Organizational justice's blocks of dimensions.

Thus, the positive Social psychological climate and high Organizational justice could, to a lesser extent, offset the inadequate status of the Organizational policies by enhancing Commitment to organization and hence minimize the service members' Intention to leave organization.

**Fourth**, the Intention to leave organization not only mediated, through Job satisfaction, but also directly (in the regression models where it is a dependent variable) is influenced to the highest degree by the Organizational Policies' block of dimensions.

This result again demonstrates their key role in overcoming the problem of leaving the military.

It is also important to emphasize that in the regression model, where the independent influence of the variables is studied, the “Work-family” conflict and External motivation (pay, bonuses, awards) appear as a trigger mechanism, and the high Internal motivation (interest in work per se and in the military profession) is to some extent a deterrent to leaving the service.

***Fifth***, it is necessary to draw the attention of the military leaders to strict observance of fairness in the application of procedures and the distribution of awards in accordance with individual contributions. Contrary to expectations, the dimensions associated with perceived Organizational justice proved to be a factor with a stronger influence on the organizational climate than the dimensions included in the Social psychological climate's block of dimensions. The two types of justice, independently or in combination, show effects of influence on the three baseline variables, which means that it is imperative to observe their precise application in the daily work of military formations and structures. The fair application of procedures and the distribution of resources in accordance with merit of everyone is an important factor for higher service members'.

**Sixth, the stressors** (with the exception of “Work-family” conflict) and gender and ethnic inequalities in the military environment play a weaker role in predicting service members’ Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave the military, compared to initial expectations.

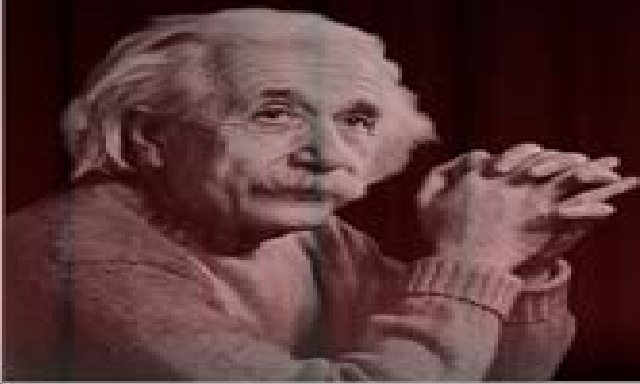
They do not participate as factors with significant influence in any of the predictive models, although they show certain correlations with the dependent variables.

In other words, High concentration and overload at work, Role conflict, gender and ethnic inequality do not appear as predictive factors of the service members’ Intention to leave organization.

**Seventh**, overall, the explored explanatory effects of the developed and tested model suggest that **the most important variables** relevant to diagnostics and interventions to improve the organizational climate in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria **are the perceived Image of military institution, the Career development model, the Social policy and the Procedural and Distributive justice.**

Certain significant influences manifest also the “Work-family” conflict, Internal motivation for service, Relationships with colleagues and the Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation/structure.

*"It is characteristic of the military mentality that nonhuman factors (atom bombs, strategic bases, weapons of all sorts, the possession of raw materials, etc) are held essential, while the human being, his desires, and thoughts - in short, the psychological factors - are considered as unimportant and secondary... The individual is degraded...to "human materiel."*



*Albert Einstein*

Shayari Unplugged

**Questions?**