

SOCIAL NEUROTICISM IN PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ANXIETY

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Abstract

This article aims to reveal the problem of the emergence and manifestation of social neuroticism in the context of the psychological characteristics of anxiety.

The problem of anxiety is a key one in many psychological studies examining a wide variety of issues related to research in the field of the mental health of the individual. We increasingly understand that we live in the “age of anxiety”. Over the past hundred years, psychologists, philosophers, historians, and other researchers of human nature have been paying increasing attention to the problem of anxiety. It is also worth noting that most researchers tend to consider anxiety as a person's reaction to uncertainty and fear as a signal to a stressor that represents an obvious danger. Thus, we can associate anxiety with general arousal, in particular, with the activation of the sympathetic nervous system, and fear with inhibition of actions and activation of the parasympathetic nervous system. In this study, we presented some important theoretical and methodological approaches for defining anxiety and characterizing social neuroticism. Below, we will present the features of anxiety from the point of view of various psychological theories, which will bring us closer to understanding and characterizing social neuroticism.

Keywords and phrases:

Social neuroticism, anxiety, theoretical approaches, situational anxiety, neurotic needs.

СОЦИАЛЬНЫЙ НЕВРОТИЗМ В ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКАХ ТРЕВОЖНОСТИ

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Аннотация

Данная статья направлена на раскрытие проблемы возникновения и проявления социального невротизма в контексте психологических характеристик тревожности.

Проблема тревожности является ключевой во многих психологических исследованиях, рассматривающих самые разнообразные вопросы, касающиеся исследований в области психического здоровья личности. Мы все больше понимаем, что живем в «век тревожности». За последние сто лет психологи, философы, историки и другие исследователи в области общественных наук все больше внимания уделяют проблеме тревожности. Стоит также отметить, что большинство исследователей склонны рассматривать тревогу как реакцию человека на неопределенность, а страх как сигнал на стрессор, представляющий собой явную опасность. Таким образом, тревожность мы можем связать с общим возбуждением, в частности, с активацией симпатической нервной системы, а страх — с торможением действий и активацией парасимпатической нервной системы. В рамках данного исследования мы представили некоторые теоретические и методологические подходы, которые имеют важное значение как для определения тревожности, так и для характеристики социального невротизма. Ниже мы представим особенности тревожности с точки зрения различных психологических

теорий, что приблизит нас к пониманию и характеристике социального невротизма.

Ключевые слова и фразы:

Социальный невротизм, тревожность, теоретические подходы, ситуативная тревожность, невротические потребности.

**ՍՈՑԻԱԼԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՎՐՈՏԻԶՄԸ ՏԱԳՆԱՊԱՅՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ
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ՌԱՖԵԿ ՊԵՏՐՈՍՅԱՆ

Գիտակրթական միջազգային կենտրոն, Հայաստանի Հանրապետության
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Համառոտագիր

Այս հոդվածը նպատակ ունի բացահայտելու սոցիալական ներոտիկիզմի առաջացման և դրսևորման խնդիրը տազնապայնության հոգերանական բնութագրերի համատերստում:

Տազնապայնության խնդիրը առանցքային է բազմաթիվ հոգերանական ուսումնասիրություններում, որոնք քննում են անձի հոգեկան առողջության ոլորտի հետ կապված տարաբնույթ հարցեր: Մենք ավելի ու ավելի ենք հասկանում, որ ապրում ենք «տազնապայնության դարում»: Վերջին հարյուր տարվա ընթացքում հոգերանները, փիլիսոփաները, պատմաբանները և հասարակագիտական գիտությունների այլ հետազոտողներ ավելի ու ավելի մեծ ուշադրություն են դարձնում տազնապայնության խնդրին: Հարկ է նաև նշել, որ հետազոտողների մեծամասնությունը հակված է տազնապայնությունը դիտել որպես անձի արձագանք անորոշությանը, իսկ վախը որպես ազդանշան սթրեստորի հանդեպ, որն ակնհայտ վտանգ է ներկայացնում: Այսպիսով, տազնապայնությունը կարող ենք կապել ընդհանուր գրգռման, մասնավորապես՝ սիմպաթիկ նյարդային համակարգի ակտիվացման, իսկ վախը՝ գործողությունների արգելակման և պարասիմպաթիկ նյարդային համակարգի ակտիվացման հետ: Այս ուսումնասիրության մեջ մենք ներկայացրել ենք տեսական և մեթոդաբանական մոտեցումներ, որոնք կարևոր են ինչպես տազնապայնությունը սահմանելու, այնպես էլ սոցիալական ներոտիզմը բնութագրելու համար: Ստորև կներկայացնենք տազնապայնության բնութագրերը տարբեր հոգերանական տեսությունների տեսանկյունից, որոնք մեզ ավելի կմոտեցնեն սոցիալական ներոտիկիզմի ըմբռնմանը և բնութագրմանը:

Բանալի բառեր և բառակապակցություններ՝

Սոցիալական ներոտիզմ, տազնապայնություն, տեսական մոտեցումներ, իրավիճակային տազնապայնություն, ներոտիկ կարիքներ:

Introduction

Theoretical studies of social neuroticism are closely related to the psychological characteristics of anxiety. What do we understand by anxiety? According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Modern Armenian Language published by the Hrachya Acharyan Language Institute, the word anxiety is explained as follows:

1. Anxiety, excitement, unrest;
2. The most dangerous, decisive moment of an illness, followed by death or recovery, crisis;
3. Tense: dangerous situation, difficult: difficult situation;
4. Ah, terror, horror;
5. Panic, commotion, confusion;
6. Overproduction of goods that periodically appear in capitalist countries, crisis;
7. A warning signal of impending danger;
8. Orhas, doom;
9. Haste;
10. Sorrow, pain;
11. Danger, disaster;

12. An acute lack of something [1, p. 432].

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines the word anxiety as follows:

1. An uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that is happening at the moment or may happen in the future.

2. Something that causes a feeling of fear and anxiety.

3. A medical condition in which a person feels constant fear and anxiety [3].

Nemov's Psychological Dictionary defines the word anxiety as follows:

Anxiety (in psychoanalysis) is the psychological state of a person that occurs in a dangerous situation. Freud wrote and spoke about three types of anxiety: objective, neurotic, and moral. Objective anxiety occurs under the influence of real threats to a person's psychological well-being. Neurotic anxiety arises from the awareness of the dangers arising from It. Moral anxiety arises from the fear of earning moral condemnation from someone. Moral anxiety is associated with feelings of guilt and shame. The term anxiety is close to the meaning and concept of the word anxiety. However, in the latter case, it is not only a mental state but also a corresponding trait of a person's temperament [13, p. 440].

Theoretical-methodological bases

Fear and anxiety are fundamental aspects of human existence. Anxiety is a state of mind that is directed toward the future and is caused by mental processes that cause worry. When we worry, our minds focus on the future and what could go wrong. This is, in a sense, an adaptive response that helps us prepare for possible future undesirable situations [18, p. 90].

Almost all areas of theoretical psychology - theories of innate biological defenses, stress models, self-awareness, social evaluation, behavior, cognitive abilities, problem-solving, learning, etc. - can be used to describe anxiety [19, pp. 5-7].

Anxiety is a negative mood state, often accompanied by physical symptoms, called physiological tone, characterized by nervousness, apprehension, and gloomy ideas about the future, as well as emotional (fear, sadness, anger) and behavioral (avoidance of anxiety-provoking situations and objects) reactions [7, p. 9].

According to Carol Izgard, fear is considered a basic and independent emotion, and anxiety is a combination of several emotions: sadness, guilt, fear, and shame. He also notes that the combination of interest and fear produces anxiety [6, pp. 1-25].

There are three broad categories of diagnosable anxiety disorders, all of which are treatable:

- Anxiety: specific phobias, social anxiety disorder, panic disorder, agoraphobia, and generalized anxiety disorder

- Obsessive-compulsive and related disorders

- Traumatic and stress-related disorders [7, p. 13].

The founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud [16, p. 13], was the first to include the problem of anxiety in the context of science, even though other thinkers, such as Kierkegaard, were aware of the importance of the problem of anxiety and presented it in their works. Freud considered anxiety to be a fundamental problem, without a deep understanding of it is impossible to understand emotional and psychological disorders. In one of his later articles on this topic, Freud wrote that anxiety is "the fundamental phenomenon and the central problem of neurosis." According to Freud, the human organism has an innate ability to experience anxiety, this ability is part of the instinct of self-preservation, which emerged in the process of evolution. Freud believed that the source of anxiety is birth trauma and castration fear. The accompanying effect, anxiety, is the reproduction of a very important emotional experience from the past and repetition [11, pp. 120-121].

In the 1890s, he first suggested that the anxiety of many of his neurotic patients was the result of an inappropriate discharge of libido energy [16, pp. 24-26]. However, 30 years later, he revised his theory and concluded that anxiety is an ego function that enables the individual to respond adaptively to threatening situations [21, p. 127].

The clinical picture of anxiety neurosis includes the following symptoms:

1. General irritability.

2. Anxious expectations.

3. Anxiety attack (panic attack).
 4. There are rudimentary anxiety attacks and anxiety attack equivalents.
 5. Night fear anxiety attack, which is usually associated with anxiety, shortness of breath, profuse sweating, etc.
 6. "Dizziness" occupies an exceptional position in the group of symptoms of anxiety neurosis.
 7. based on chronic anxiety (anxious anticipation), two groups of typical phobias are distinguished: with general physiological threats, and the second with movement.
 8. In the case of neurosis anxiety, the activity of the digestive system undergoes several characteristic changes, such as nausea vomiting, and diarrhea, which can cause errors in diagnosis.
 9. Paresthesias, which can accompany dizziness or anxiety attacks.
 10. Many of the symptoms listed, which accompany or replace an anxiety attack, also occur in a chronic form. In this case, they are less noticeable, since the accompanying feeling of anxiety is less pronounced than during an anxiety attack [16, pp. 28-34].
- Ego defense mechanisms protect a person from the rising feeling of anxiety. They are:
- Repression. Freud considered repression as the primary defense of the Ego. He believed that repressed thoughts and impulses do not lose their activity in the unconscious and do not break through to consciousness, constantly spending psychic energy [4, pp. 321-339].
- Projection. When a person attributes his unacceptable thoughts, feelings and behavior, motives, ideas to other people [16, p. 268].
- Displacement. The manifestation of the instinctual impulse is redirected from a more threatening object or person to a less threatening one [21, p. 130].
- Rationalization. Helps to distort reality through false arguments, thereby maintaining self-esteem [9, p. 151].
- Reactive formation. Sometimes the ego can protect itself from forbidden stimuli by taking an opposite direction in behavior and thoughts. This is done in a two-stage process: first, the unacceptable stimulus is suppressed, and then the opposite one appears on the conscious level [21, p. 131].
- Regression. A method of relieving anxiety, characterized by a return to childhood models of behavior, which are safer and more pleasant [15, p. 315-333].
- Sublimation. It is considered the only healthy, constructive strategy. Instinctive energy is channeled into other channels of expression that are acceptable to society [21, p. 132].
- Denial. When a person refuses to acknowledge that an unpleasant event has occurred [21, p. 133].
- When the defense becomes too powerful, it begins to dominate the ego and reduces its mobility and adaptability. Finally, if the defense cannot be sustained, the ego "will have no point of retreat and support and will be taken over by anxiety." [14, 94].
- Carl Gustav Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and founder of analytical psychology [17, pp. 88-90], considered anxiety to be "the fear of the power of the collective unconscious" that continues to exist at the irrational level of the individual.
- Alfred Adler, the founder of personality psychology [8, p. 139], approaches the problem of anxiety in terms of the central concept of feelings of inferiority. To understand Adler's ideas about anxiety, it is necessary to examine his concept of inferiority. According to his theory, every person is born with a state of biological inferiority and insecurity, and civilization is the result of humanity's efforts to compensate for this feeling of inferiority [5, p. 130].
- Adler saw the essence of neurosis in the contradiction between the feeling of inferiority and the desire for self-assertion, the thirst for power. In the neurotic state, he saw a feeling of weakness and helplessness, which he presented as the "inferiority complex." "Yes, but." [5, p. 23].
- Rollo May puts forward his own point of view on this issue, where he says that he would go further and say that it is connected with the nature of the parent's "love" for the child. If their "love" is essentially a desire to use the child for personal gain, then the child will identify with strength or, conversely, with weakness [11, p. 131].
- Thus, the neurotic feeling of inferiority (anxiety) is the driving force behind the formation of a neurotic character [2, p. xvi]. Adler says "Only when we realize our belonging to one hu-

man family will we be able to live without anxiety.” [5, p. 203].

Karen Horney, who is classified as one of the founders of neo-Freudian German and American psychology [20, p. 158], noted the importance of childhood in human emotional development and linked it to the pathological conditions of life in a child’s family, where he does not feel safe, loved, and valued. As a result, the child develops a “base anxiety”, a feeling of his helplessness in the face of a hostile world, which he tries to alleviate by developing such defensive strategies as the desire for love, the desire for power or alienation. And since these strategies are incompatible, they are doomed to failure, since they create a vicious circle, because how we want to alleviate the anxiety, on the contrary, intensifies it [20, p. 8].

From Horney’s point of view, if the child’s desire for love and attachment is not satisfied by adults, the child feels unloved, lonely, unnecessary, and helpless in the cold and hostile world around him and experiences anxiety. Anxiety develops in him, which turns into a stable personality quality. To overcome the anxiety that has arisen, Horney distinguishes three possible ways: when the child tries to earn the love and approval of adults, when he tries to force adults, if not to love, then to be wary of oneself, and when isolated from others. However, these options are not effective and lead to the formation of neurotic personalities, whether submissive, aggressive, or isolated [20, p. 31].

Horney offers a list of needs that are seen as a solution to the problem of broken relationships. She calls these needs “neurotic” because they represent an irrational solution to the problem [20, p. 155-157].

Each of these groups represents a basic orientation towards others and oneself. In the difference between these orientations, Horney finds the basis of internal conflict. Normal and neurotic conflicts differ in their degree. From her point of view, we are endowed with the potential for development, and the desire for self-improvement, and this is the fundamental aspiration of man. Horney also notes that “man by his nature strives for self-actualization, and his value system grows from this potential.” Horney emphasizes that for personal development, one must follow one’s desires, feelings, and thoughts. To overcome anxiety, a person must learn to do just that. Therefore, the work of the psychotherapist should be aimed at helping the client understand himself [20, p. 312].

The ideas of Harry Sullivan, an American psychotherapist, and psychiatrist [8, p. 164] regarding anxiety are based on his theory of personality as an interpersonal phenomenon. In his opinion, personality develops during the infant’s relationships with significant people around him.

He also shows that areas marked by anxiety can become areas of growth and development if the individual can overcome anxiety constructively through psychotherapy or close relationships with another person. [11, p. 319].

Sullivan also notes that the interrelationship between emotional health and anxiety plays an important role: anxiety limits growth and narrows the boundaries of consciousness, reducing the period of full life. Emotional health is directly proportional to the degree of consciousness [11, p. 142].

Rollo May, a prominent American psychologist and psychotherapist, theorist of existential psychology [17, p. 640], 1950 published his work “The Meaning of Anxiety”, in which he argued that the driving force of human behavior in most cases is a feeling of fear or anxiety, which appears in him every time he feels a sense of uncertainty, insecurity, and fragility. The inability to recognize death helps to temporarily get rid of anxiety or the fear of non-existence. But death is an inevitable part of our lives, and sooner or later everyone will have to face it [17, p. 646].

May defines anxiety as “the subjective state of a person who understands that his existence can be destroyed, that he can be reduced to “nothingness” [11, p. 174].

He believed that anxiety “can take different forms, manifest itself in different degrees of intensity since it is a person’s basic reaction to a threat to his existence or to some value that he associates with his existence.” [12, p. 33].

Neurotic anxiety: May defined neurotic anxiety as “a disproportionate response to threat, which produces depression and other types of intrapsychic conflict and various types of con-

trolled blocking-off of actions and concepts.” Neurotic anxiety visits us if the values we question are dogmas, the rejection of which would lead to the loss of meaning in our existence [12, pp. 33-35].

Guilt: The feeling of anxiety increases when we are faced with the task of realizing our potential. When we deny opportunities, when we fail to properly recognize the needs of our fellow human beings, or when we ignore our dependence on the world around us, guilt increases [17, p. 647].

Thus, according to Rollo May’s theory, anxiety is a fear that is expressed by a threat to some values that an individual considers important for his personality.

Research methods

This methodology allows us to make the first and essential clarifications regarding the level of anxiety present in the individual under study, whether it is situational or permanent, that is, personal. The results of the methodology concern not only the psychodynamic peculiarities of the personality but also the general question of the relationship between the parameters of the individual’s reactivity and activity, temperament, and character. This testing method is a detailed subjective characterization of the personality [10, p. 16].

Results

The results obtained using the Spielberger-Khanin Situational Anxiety Scale are presented below.

The lowest overall (n=100) score for situational anxiety was 18 points, and the highest score was 66 points, with an average score of 36 points.

- In the group of adolescents aged 13-18 (n=25), the lowest score was 22 points, and the highest score was 64 points, with an average score of 39 points.

- In the group of young people under 35 (n=25), the lowest score was 16 points, and the highest score was 61 points, with an average score of 34 points.

- In the group of adults aged 36-60 (n=25), the lowest score was 217 points, and the highest score was 58 points, with an average score of 30 points.

- In the elderly group of people over 60 years of age (n=25), the lowest index was 24 points, and the highest index was 66 points, the average index was 38 points.

When assessing situational anxiety (n=100), we obtained the following percentages:

- Low anxiety levels were 4.1% of adolescents, 4.2% of young people, 4.7% of adults, and 3.6% of elderly people;

- Medium anxiety levels were 28.4% of adolescents, 14.3% of young people, 14.0% of adults, and 18.4% of elderly people;

- High anxiety levels were 7.6% of adolescents, 6.4% of young people, 6.9% of adults, and 9.2% of elderly people.

Situational anxiety scores were compared with personal anxiety scores, which showed a relatively higher level of situational anxiety than personal anxiety scores in almost all groups.

Conclusions

Within the framework of this research, we have presented theoretical and methodological approaches that have made a valuable contribution to the process of characterizing and studying social neuroticism and, in general, to the field of studying the emergence of the phenomenon of social neuroticism. The phenomenon of social neuroticism is considered through the methodological development of situational anxiety, which is aimed at diagnosing the level of anxiety under external, social influences and identifying the features of its manifestation in different age groups. In the next stages of the research, it is planned to supplement the methodological developments of the diagnosis of social neuroticism with the presentation of a psych diagnostic toolkit of other characteristics of the phenomenon under study. The results of the study showed a certain dynamic of indicators of situational anxiety. In particular, some increase in anxiety is observed in the group of adolescents and elderly people. These results suggest that the characteristic of social neuroticism has certain age differences associated with the peculiarities of interaction with the social environment of people of different ages.

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