Chapter I

INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPT OF ANXIETY
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INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPT OF ANXIETY

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1 Importance of Anxiety

The importance of anxiety as a powerful influence in contemporary life is increasingly recognized and manifestations of current concern with anxiety phenomena are ubiquitously reflected in literature, arts, science and religion as well as in many other facets of our culture. It is found as a central explanatory concept in the contemporary theories of personality and regarded as a principal causative agent for such diverse behavioural consequences as insomnia, immoral and sinful acts, instances of creative self-expression, debilitating psychological and psychosomatic symptoms etc. So Schlesinger (1948) stated, "Anxiety is the official emotion of our age". It is difficult to dispute the contention that, anxiety is 'pervasive psychological phenomenon,' of modern society and the whole world seems literally to drip with it.

1.1.2 Approaches to Anxiety

An understanding of the current conceptualization of anxiety in terms of states and traits had its antecedents in three psychological approaches (1) clinical applied and (2) experimental perspective and the emergence of the third perspective, the personality research perspective. The present investigator's focus is on anxiety as a personality dimension and she has related anxiety with the performance on perceptual motor and cognitive task. So the investigator had to enter the field of experimental psychology.
1.1.3. Experimental View

The experimental personality psychologists tried to relate the personality variable with performance on some tasks. A number of personality variables or dimensions have been tried out relating to performance by a number of psychologists. To quote a few, H.J. Eysenck and M.W. Eysenck have worked on introversion-extraversion and neuroticism, Witkin has worked on field dependence - independence, McClelland has dealt with achievement motivation and Spence and Spielberger have focused their attention on anxiety. Some more studies have been done relating performance to personality dimensions like rigidity, dogmatism, locus of control etc.

The experimental personality research has taken up mainly, the analysis of performance as related to different groups made on the basis of personality traits. In such experimental studies the performance is measured in terms of the total time taken, the number of trials required, or errors made by the subjects. So in such experiments, personality trait has remained as an independent-variable and performance as dependent variable.

1.1.4. Anxiety and Performance

In relating personality with performance, one always cautiously looks at other variables than personality, which are related to performance. One of the important variables is mental ability or intelligence. Intelligence has been closely related to performance on a number of tasks. Hence, it would be extremely necessary from
the experimental point of view to examine the effects of personality and also the ability variable on performance.

1.1.5. **Intelligence and Performance**

When a researcher tries to analyse the effects of intelligence on performance on a variety of tasks, it is commonly observed that the High Intelligent subjects performed better on the complex tasks than their Low Intelligent counterparts. So far as the simple task is concerned, there is no difference between the high intelligent and the low intelligent subjects. While we find such results, it is seen that the experimenter always decides the nature of the task as simple or complex on the basis of his prior experience. It is very likely that the high intelligent subjects may find even a complex task simple. It is highly necessary, therefore, for the researcher to examine the confounding effects of intelligence and the nature of task. This is rarely observed in research while analysing the results.

1.1.6 **Present Research**

In the present research work therefore necessary precautions are taken in preparing the design. Intelligence and anxiety, the organismic variables are taken as independent variables. Two types of task namely the perceptual-motor and cognitive are used as another independent variables. The performance of the high intelligent and the low intelligent groups and high anxious and the low anxious groups on two different tasks namely perceptual motor and cognitive, is
of interest to the present researcher. She has taken due care to see that the perceptual-motor task is a simple task for all subjects whereas the cognitive task is a more difficult than the perceptual-motor for all subjects. It is, therefore, interesting to see how various groups perform in these two different tasks. In this sense the present research work falls in the area of experimental personality research with the effect of intelligence also studied to avoid confounding effects.

The aim of the present investigation is:

1. To compare the performance of the high and low anxious subjects on perceptual-motor and cognitive task.

2. To see the effects of intelligence on the performance of these two groups on both the tasks.

3. To see whether anxiety/intelligence individually or jointly affect performance on both or the specific task.

1.2. Concept of Anxiety

To paraphrase what Ebbinghaus said about psychology as a whole, the study of anxiety has a long past but only a short history. The term anxiety itself is derived from the Latin 'anxious'. Its English usage can be traced to at least the seventeenth century, when it meant much the same as it does today, namely a state of agitation or depression with feelings of distress in the precortical region. However, unlike other everyday emotional concepts adopted by psychology (e.g. anger, fear), anxiety has not been widely used in the vernacular.
This is important to note for too often, psychologists blame conceptual difficulties on the use of the terms adopted from ordinary language. Anyhow, the current popularity of the concept of anxiety among educated laymen is probably an outgrowth of philosophical and psychological speculative rather than vice versa.

1.2.1. Freud's View

It is generally agreed that Sigmund Freud was the first individual who presented a comprehensive view of the nature of anxiety. In 1894, he conceptualized anxiety neurosis as a discrete clinical syndrome to be differentiated from neurasthenia and subsequently came to regard anxiety as the fundamental problem in all neurotic symptom formation. He distinguished between three types of anxiety, (1) objective, (2) moral and (3) neurotic. Objective anxiety, which was regarded by Freud as synonymous with fear, involved a complex internal reaction to anticipated injury or harm from some external danger. A real danger situation existed in the external world, was consciously perceived as threatening, and this perception of danger evoked an anxiety reaction. With objective anxiety, the intensity of anxiety reaction was proportional to magnitude of the external danger that evoked it. The sequence of events in objective anxiety is given in the figure 1.1.

Neurotic anxiety differed from objective anxiety in that the source of danger that evoked this reaction was internal and this source was not consciously perceived because it had been repressed.
Figure 1.1 Objective anxiety
Neurotic anxiety, according to Freud, was experienced by everyone to some extent from time to time, but when manifested in pathological amounts, it defined the clinical syndrome anxiety neurosis. Neurotic anxiety involves the following sequence of events as shown in figure 1.2. In his early formulations, Freud theorized that anxiety resulted from the discharge of repressed sexual energy which he called libido. Moral anxiety was described as if the ego joins the forces with the id while neglecting the proscriptions of the superego, the stern superego will rent its wrath on the ego in the form of guilt.

1.2.2. Post Freudian Search for Anxiety

Other personality theorists have joined the search for anxiety phenomena. According to May (1950), anxiety was the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value which the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality. For Sullivan (1953), anxiety was an intensely unpleasant state of tension arising from experiencing disapproval in interpersonal relations. McReynolds (1956, 1960) attributes anxiety to a failure in assimilating percepts. Jung (1959, 1960) believes that anxiety is the individual's reaction to the invasion of his conscious mind by irrational forces and images from the collective unconscious. Goldstein (1964) state that anxiety is the context of an organism-environment relationship. Anxiety emerges whenever the person comes in contact with his possible worlds and the new challenges and inadequacies posed by him. Fromm-Reichman (1966) view that anxiety has close affinity to loneliness.

1.2.3 Anxiety as a Drive

In contrast to the clinical applied perspective that viewed anxiety as resulting from perceived danger (e.g. Freud, Rogers, Goldstein) the emphasis of the experimental perspective during this
Figure 1.2 Neurotic anxiety
is called personality research perspective, emphasized the identification and measurement of (1) personality dispositions, (2) factors that influence stress reactions and (3) particular anxiety states. Cattell and Scheier (1958, 1961) on the basis of factor analytic studies labelled two different types of anxiety concepts as trait anxiety and state anxiety. The trait anxiety factor was interpreted as measuring stable individual differences in a unitary, relatively permanent personality characteristic. The state anxiety factor was based on a pattern of variables that covaried over occasions of measurement, defining a transitory state.

Spielberger (1966) taking the cue from earlier studies (Cattell and Scheier, 1961) has developed a trait-state conception of anxiety. He indicates that a comprehensive view of anxiety requires clarification of the relationship among anxiety concepts: (1) anxiety as a state, (2) anxiety as a complex process that involves stress or threat and (3) anxiety as a personality trait. Spielberger (1972) defines state anxiety as follows:

"A-state is conceptualized as a condition of the human being that is characterized by subjective, consciously perceived feelings of tension and heightened autonomic nervous activity (Spielberger, 1970).... it may be conceived as a complex, relatively unique emotional condition which may vary in intensity and fluctuate over time".

Another concept that must be related to A-state is anxiety as a personality trait. In contrast to the transitory fluctuating nature
of A-state reactions, trait anxiety (A-trait) refers to relatively stable individual differences in anxiety proneness (Spielberger et al 1966; Spielberger, et al 1970). Trait anxiety can also be conceptualized in terms of the specific tendency to perceive the world in a certain way. Trait anxiety can be defined as follows: (Spielberger et al 1970):

"Trait-anxiety indicates difference in the strength of a latent disposition to manifest a certain type of reaction. It must also be regarded as reflecting individual differences in the frequency and intensity, with which A-states have been manifested in the past and the differences in the probability that such A-trait reactions will be experienced in the future (Spielberger, 1972)."

1.2.5. Interactionism

Most personologists (e.g. Cattell, 1946, 1950, Cattell and Scheier 1961; McClelland 1951 and Murray 1938) and clinicians (Rappaport, Gill and Schafer, 1945) have assumed that personality variables are the major source of behavioural variance and are expressed in relatively consistent manner across different situations. While social psychologists and sociologists (Cooley 1902, Mead 1934) have suggested that situational factors are more important than individual differences as sources of behavioral variance.

The Spielberger, Endler and Hunt's concepts and measures of anxiety, emphasize the situation-person interactions. The state-trait and person-situation mode of response concepts do prescribe situational measurement.
In the basis tenets of the Spielberger (1966) state-trait theory of anxiety, Spielberger suggested that A-trait represents amongst other things, individual differences in anxiety proneness and A-state refers to the condition of the individual for certain situations in which anxiety states will be experienced. Subsequent research conducted by Hodges (1968), Spielberger et al (1970) and others take into consideration the situational variable through a comparison or the effects of two classes of threat stimuli; ego threat and physical danger. This represented, in effect, a 'person-by-situation' approach to the assessment of A-state response, and as such appears to encompass the methodological formulations of Endler, Hunt (1966, 1968, 1969) interaction model.

Endler's Interaction Model (1975, 1980) of anxiety emphasizes the multidimensionality of anxiety in determining reactions to stress. Several theorists (e.g. Raush 1979) suggest that we should examine person X situation systems and Argyle (1977) has proposed that we should examine the generative rules of social interaction rather than concentrating on content. Endler's model is schematically presented in the figure 1.3

Spielberger's trait-state anxiety theory entails an interaction between person variables (A-trait) and situational variables (stress); however, the measurement instruments developed by Spielberger and his colleagues (Spielberger, Gorsuch and Lushen 1970) to assess anxiety focus on ego-threatening anxiety to the exclusion of other dimensions.
The Person by Situation Model of Anxiety

Endler's (1975, 1980) interaction model of anxiety emphasizes the multidimensionality of anxiety in determining reactions to stress. The interaction model of anxiety is schematically presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1.3
Endler, Hunt, Rosenstein (1962) factor analyzed the situations of the S R. Inventory of Anxiousness. They found three situational factors: interpersonal threat, physical danger and ambiguous threat. Later work done by Endler and his colleagues support the contention that anxiety, both state and trait is multidimensional (Endler-Magnusson 1976; Endler-Magnusson, Ekehamer and Okada 1976; Endler-Okada 1974).

There is a considerable evidence that state and trait anxiety should each be conceptualized as multidimensional constructs. There are two basic components of state anxiety: (1) The autonomic responses related to sympathetic nervous system arousal, such as sweaty palms, rapid heart rate, dry mouth etc; (2) Cognitive responses consist of self-generative ruminative cognitions focusing on inadequacies and potential failures (Endler 1982; Endler et al 1989, Heimberg, Ganster, Dodge and Becker 1987).

The interactional model of personality suggests that the assessment of an individual's predisposition (such as trait anxiety) must be made with specific reference to the situational context. The interactional model questions the usefulness of global assessment of individual differences and advocates the personality variables such as anxiety from the perspective of the person-in-context (Edwards and Endler, 1985).