



# AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF ANXIETY AS A DETERMINANT OF ADJUSTMENT

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## Abstract:

One purpose of the present study was to examine the effect of anxiety as a trait of personality on adjustment. Sinha anxiety scale along with Mohsin-Shamshad Adaptation of Bell's Adjustment Inventory was utilized as research tools. Sinha anxiety scale was administered to all the respondents (N=480) and their scores were obtained. Then the median value of the scores was calculated. The respondents falling at and above the median were placed in high anxiety group and those falling below it were placed in low anxiety groups. Then Mohsin-Shamshad Adaptation Inventory was administered to the subjects of both the groups and their scores on all the dimensions of adjustment were collected. For the analysis and treatment of the scores t-test, r-test and chi-square test were employed. The results showed significant association of adjustment with anxiety. The high anxiety group of subjects showed poor adjustment as compare to low anxiety group in certain dimension of adjustment.

**Keyword:** anxiety, home, health, social, emotional

## 1.0 Introduction

The present study got an impetus to understand in view of the realization of the gradual weakening of normative structure in Indian societies, or the fast erosion of older values, there is swift replacement by newer values and a general bewilderment. We find growing deterioration in adjustment pattern relating to home, health, society, education, marriage, occupation etc, in different walks and live. We find widespread of symptom of maladjustment resulting into communal disharmony, inter-group conflicts, and national disintegration. So, from this point of view it seems justified to investigate into the antecedents of adjustment/maladjustment in terms of anxiety as personality correlate.

## Adjustment: Concept and Nature:

The term 'adjustment' has been explained in various ways. The biologists thought of adjustment in terms of adaptation. Darwin (1859) in 'The Origin of Species' theorised that only the organisms which are most equipped to adapt to the dangers of the physical environment would survive and this was called as 'The Survival of the Fittest'. But in modern times the term adaptation has been replaced by adjustment which now stands for psychological survival in which the psychologists are more interested, i.e., the subject of their interest is an individual's adjustment to social or interpersonal pressure and not only adaptation to the physical world (Lazarus, 1961). The process of adjustment is more complex than simple biological adaptation which is comparatively a simple process. Therefore, an adaptive behaviour is not identical to an adjustive behaviour. These two types of behaviour have been differentiated on the basis of tension-reductions and its future consequences.

Kaplan (1965) has remarked that people may persist for years in adaptative behaviour which brings immediate rewards but does not contribute to long term satisfaction. They have little tolerance for emotional stress and use any available means to secure relief. The adjusted person, on the other hand, is capable of delaying immediate relief from anxiety in favour of behaviour patterns which comparatively lead to more constructive and lasting rewards. Adjustment has also been defined in terms of normality by educationists and statisticians. This approach to adjustment is based on statistical average and not on value judgment.

Reber (1995) defined anxiety as a vague, unpleasant emotional state with qualities of apprehension, dread, distress and uneasiness. Anxiety is often distinguished from fear, an anxiety state is often objectless whereas fear has a specific object, person, or event to be feared with.

In their study Catalana et al. (1968) conducted two experiments on forty college students, in which levels of manifest anxiety and the presence or absence of verbal approval by experimenters for a correct anticipation were varied. In their attempt, Iwahara & Tauabe (1963), made an investigation to test whether verbal learning is a function of manifest anxiety as well as verbal reinforcement combinations. Sarnoff (1959) found negative correlation between anxiety and academic attainment and adjustment. Mangalam (2000) attempted to examine the effect of caste and socio-economic status (SES) on anxiety. Spence (1959) conducted experiments on high and low anxious subjects. Spielberger (1966) studied the relationship between manifest anxiety and the learning of syllables with different associative values. Farber & Spence (1953) experimented upon two groups of 49 subjects each from the upper and lower 20 percent of scores on the Taylor anxiety scale.

## 2.0 Objective and Hypothesis:

**Objective:** The study aimed at examining the effect of anxiety on adjustment of the respondents. The purpose was to examine the relation of anxiety with adjustment relating to home, health, social and emotional dimensions as well as with overall adjustment.

**Hypothesis:** The high anxiety group of subjects would show more maladjustment pattern, while the lower anxiety group would show better adjustment patterns.

**3.0 Methodology:** This section includes the following:

(i). **Sample:** The incidental cum purposive sample consisting of 480 students was drawn from the student of undergraduate classes of the College of Patna University and Magadh University located in the central area of Patna town. The subjects were in the age group to 14 to 16 years in respect of sex, community, social economic status, area of inhabitation, etc.

(ii) **Research tools:** The following research tools are used in this study:

(a) **Personal Data Sheet:** A Personal Data Sheet prepared by the researcher herself was used for collecting relevant information about the subjects. To be more specific information relating to age, sex, community, inhabitation, religion, and education etc. of the respondents were collected through this PDS.

(b) **Mohsin-Shamshad Adaptation:**

For measuring adjustment of the respondents Mohsin-Shamshad Adaptation of Bell's Adjustment Inventory (1987) was used. After assessing the social desirability of the items of Bell's Adjustment Inventory, various steps involved in the test construction were followed by Jehan,k. which were applied by Hussain (1987).126 items of the modified Hindi version of Bell's Adjustment Inventory were analyzed by adapting different techniques of item analysis, number of items in Bell's Adjustment Inventory (English Version), Hindi adaptation (Hussain, 1969).The correlation between adjustment scores on home dimension, health dimension and emotional dimension was found negative and insignificant. Mohsin-Shamshad Adaptation Inventory was also validated using contrasted group norms and diagnosed neurotics from different mental hospitals and clinics.

Instructions for answering the questions are given on the front cover of the test booklet and the procedures for test administration are simple. The testee are requested to go through instructions and do accordingly. The Inventory has

no time limit. However, it takes 35 to 40 minutes. The testee are asked to fill in their name, date, class and make all other necessary entries. They are asked not to read the question unless asked for. Before the test begins it is to be ensured that the instructions have been understood by the testes. The Inventory can be used both as a group test and as an individual test, as necessary.

The Inventory is scored simply by counting the number of responses marked in each area of adjustment. The responses to which the score is to be given are mentioned in the Manual of the Inventory. High Score indicates poor adjustment and low score indicates better adjustment.

### (c) Sinha Anxiety Scale:

Anxiety Scale constructed and standardized by D. Sinha (1980) was used for measuring the anxiety level of the subjects. This scale consists of 100 items. Each Item has two alternative answers 'Yes' or 'No'. The testee is required to go through the instructions given at the top of the scale. They are asked to read each item carefully and decide which alternative answers suit him more and to put a tick mark against that alternative answer. So the scoring is made as per the manual. The answer showing the presence of anxiety is given one score and answer showing the absence of anxiety is given zero. So, the maximum score can be 100 and the minimum zero. The split half reliability is 0.92 and the test-retest reliability is 0.85. The scale is also highly valid. It is 0.62 against Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale.

**(iii) Procedures:** The procedure of the administration of the test/scales consisted of different phases. Scoring was made as per the manual of the concerned test or scale. The research tools were administered to the respondents in 20 phases, each phase consisted of one session. In the session Personal Data Sheet (PDS), Mohsin- Shamshad Adaptation of Bell's Adjustment Inventory, Sinha manifest Anxiety Scale were administered to the respondents. One day prior to the actual administration of the tests or scales a formal permission for engaging the student was sought from the head of the institution. The date and time for the purpose was fixed. The researcher reached the place in time and established a rapport with the respondents by talking with them. When they were ready to co-operate with her the personal data sheet was given to them with a request to fill in the blanks. Then Mohsin-Shamshad adaptation inventory was given to them. They were requested to go through the instructions given on the cover page of the inventory and to do accordingly. In the end Sinha Manifest Anxiety Scale was given to them and they were requested to read the given instructions and to do accordingly. In the likewise manner in the remaining phases data were collected from all the respondents (N=480).

**(iv) Data analysis:** The following statistical devices were found suitable for the analysis and treatment of the data:

- (a) Critical ratio test (t-test) was used to examine the significance of the two groups, each relating to anxiety in terms of adjustment.
- (b) Scatter Diagram method of Product moment correlation was employed to examine the relationship of anxiety with adjustment patterns.
- (c)  $X^2$ (Chi-square) test was also used as an additional device.

Using t-test the effect of the independent variable anxiety on the dependent variables (adjustment) was examined. Using the r-test the relationship of this independent variable under reference with adjustment was ascertained. Similarly,  $X^2$  test was employed an association of this independent variable with the adjustment was examined. Keeping in view, the nature of the obtained data, it was decided to analyse the data according to the following scheme:

1. Comparison between the high and low anxiety groups of subjects in terms of adjustment.
2. Correlation between anxiety and adjustment irrespective of other factors.

**5.0 Results and Discussion:** This section deals with the results showing the effect of independent variable anxiety under study on the dependent variable adjustment. On the other hand, adjustment with its four dimensions - home, health, social and emotional dimensions besides over all adjustment, was treated as dependent variable.

**(i) Anxiety as a determinant of adjustment:**

One purpose of the present study was to examine the effect of anxiety as a trait of personality on adjustment. Anxiety scale by Sinha was administered to all the respondents (N=480) and their scores were obtained. Then the median value of the scores was calculated. The respondents falling at and above the median were placed in high anxiety group and those falling below it were placed in low anxiety groups. Then Mohsin-Shamshad Adaptation Inventory was administered to the subjects of both the groups and their scores on all the dimensions of adjustment were collected. For the analysis and treatment of the scores t-test was used. The results thus obtained were recorded in table 1.01 given below:

The results contained in table-1.01 showed insignificant effect of anxiety on all the dimensions of adjustment including overall adjustment except health dimensions. There was no significant difference between High and low anxiety groups in respect of home adjustment ( $t=1.37$ ,  $df=478$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), social adjustment ( $t=0.17$ ,  $df=478$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), emotional adjustment ( $t=0.25$ ,  $df=478$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), and even in total adjustment ( $t=0.37$ ,  $df=478$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). However, in respect of health adjustment the high anxiety group was found poorly adjusted as compared to the low anxiety group ( $t=4.65$ ,  $df=478$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). Thus, the third hypothesis as mentioned in the second chapter of the present endeavour was rejected in respect of all the dimensions of adjustment including total adjustment but excluding health dimensions. The finding might be interpreted in terms of more intolerance of ambiguity and insecurity and poor self-concept on the part of the high anxious subjects (Singh, 2000; Khan and Miya, 2000).

**(ii) Application of correlation method:**

Scatter Diagram method of Product moment correlation was also employed to verify the results based on t-test. In view of the nature of the data this method of correlation was found suitable and appropriate here.

**Table 1.01**

Dimensions of adjustment	Anxiety	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	P
Home	High	175	12.78	7.11	0.54	1.37	478	<0.05
	Low	305	11.85	7.10	0.41			
Health	High	175	12.10	7.29	0.55	4.65	478	<0.01
	Low	305	8.94	6.25	0.36			
Social	High	175	9.49	6.22	0.47	0.17	478	<0.05
	Low	305	9.39	6.19	0.35			
Emotional	High	175	11.88	7.61	0.57	0.25	478	<0.05
	Low	305	12.10	6.40	0.37			
Total	High	175	40.13	14.15	1.07	0.37	478	<0.05
	Low	305	39.65	12.81	0.73			

**(iii) Relation between Anxiety and adjustment:**

It was attempted to examine the relation between adjustment as a dependent variable and anxiety as an independent variable. Mohsin-Shamshad adaptation inventory was administered to 480 respondents and their scores on different dimensions were obtained. The same respondents were administered Manifest Anxiety Scale by Sinha and their scores were obtained. The co-efficient of correlation between the two sets of scores was calculated and the findings were recorded in table 1.02 given below:

**Table 1.02**

Variables	N	r	df	P
Home adjustment vs Anxiety	480	-0.111	478	<0.05
Health adjustment vs Anxiety	480	+0.113	478	<0.05
Social adjustment vs Anxiety	480	-0.109	478	<0.05
Emotional adjustment vs Anxiety	480	0.045	478	<0.05
Overall adjustment vs Anxiety	480	-0.109	478	<0.05

The results recorded in table-1.02 showed largely negative correlation between adjustment and anxiety. It means the greater the anxiety as a trait of personality, the poorer the adjustment and vice-versa. Anxiety was found significantly and negatively correlated with home adjustment ( $r = -0.456$ ,  $df=478$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), with social adjustment ( $r = -0.109$ ,  $df=478$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) and even with overall adjustment ( $r = -0.456$ ,  $df=478$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). However, anxiety was found positively related with health adjustment ( $r = 0.113$ ,  $df=478$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) and unrelated emotional adjustment ( $r = 0.045$ ,  $df=478$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). Thus, the third hypothesis stated in the second section of the present study was partly confirmed. It was hypothesized that anxiety as an independent variable and adjustment as dependent variable would be found negatively correlated, which was retained in respect of home adjustment, social adjustment and total adjustment, and it was rejected in respect of health adjustment and emotional adjustment. It appears that as compared to the other personality traits anxiety bears a more complex relation with patterns of adjustment. The finding might be interpreted on the ground that those high on anxiety traits tend to dictate over others which in turn leads to frustration resulting into poor adjustment as compared to those low or moderate on anxiety trait. This finding is in agreement with the finding based on t-test (Table-1.01).

**(iii) Application of Chi-square test:**

Chi-square test was used as an additional test to examine the effect of all the independent variable under study on the sole dependent variable under reference. However overall adjustment of the respondents was taken into account as dependent variable. The subjects ( $N=480$ ) belonging to the high anxiety group ( $N=305$ ) and the low anxiety group ( $N=175$ ) were further divided into the high adjustment group and the low adjustment group on the basis of their scores obtained on Mohsin-Shamshad Adaptation of Bell's Adjustment Inventory, in which higher score is indicative of poor adjustment and lower score is indicative of better adjustment. It should be noted that here only the overall adjustment was taken into consideration. Median score on the overall adjustment was taken as the cut mark. Those falling at and above the median were placed in high adjustment group and those falling below it were placed in low adjustment group. Percentage of the respondents falling into the high adjustment group and the low adjustment group was calculated. Chi-square test was employed to examine the significance of difference in their percentages.

**Table 1.03****Showing the association of adjustment with anxiety**

Level of Overall adjustment	Subjects		X <sup>2</sup>	df	P
	High anxiety group N=305	Low anxiety group N=175			
High	101 (33%)	96(55%)	9.82	1	<0.01
Low	204 (67%)	79 (45%)			

The results displayed in table-1.03 showed significant association of adjustment with anxiety. The high anxiety group showed poor adjustment or maladjustment, while the low anxiety group showed better adjustment ( $\chi^2=9.82$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). The finding is consistent with the finding based on r- test (table-1.02).

**6.0 Conclusion:**

In the light of the results obtained on the basis of analysis of data the following conclusion was drawn:

The high anxiety group of subjects showed poor adjustment as compare to low anxiety group in certain dimension of adjustment.

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