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PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF SOCIAL NEUROTICISM, ANXIETY, AND SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING

Naira HAKOBYAN^{1,*}  | Rafik PETROSYAN¹ 

¹ International Scientific-Educational Center NAS RA, Yerevan, Armenia

* *Correspondence*

Naira HAKOBYAN, Baghramyan 24d st., Yerevan 0012, Armenia
E-mail: naira.hakobyan@isec.am

Abstract: The problem of social neuroticism is one of the key problems that unites a wide variety of psychological phenomena. Social neuroticism is interconnected with both personal traits and social processes. Often, the phenomenon of social neuroticism is interpreted as a high level of anxiety, a tendency to reduce adaptability and stress resistance, as well as instability and disharmony in social behavior. The phenomenon of social neuroticism is closely related to subjective well-being assessments and is characterized by distortions and negative shades in perceptions of well-being. Over the past century, psychologists, philosophers, and other researchers in the field of anthropology have paid increasing attention to the social manifestations of neuroticism. Not only the importance of the social factors of neuroticism is emphasized, but also the existential significance of this phenomenon, which is becoming more and more characteristic of the subjective well-being perceptions of modern man. To understand the multifaceted manifestations and characterizations of social neuroticism, it is necessary to consider the phenomenon from the perspective of the development of philosophical thought, to uncover both the personal-psychological and external-social factors that form the basis of a person's vital activity, which shape the social perceptions and meanings of neuroticism.

Keywords: social neuroticism, anxiety, subjective well-being, frustration, adaptation, emotionality.

Introduction

Neuroticism is one of the individual psychological characteristics of a person. This phenomenon implies both innate properties and those acquired during a person's life, which in turn determine the main direction of activity.

Neuroticism is a personality trait that is often characterized by emotional instability, high anxiety, low self-esteem, and sometimes autonomic disorders (Khodayarifard & Fatemi, 2013; Quan et al., 2024; Wiebe et al., 2018).

In a broader sense, neuroticism is understood as the inability to regulate one's negative emo-

tions. In turn, negative emotions can arise in cases where people believe that they are not coping with the achievement of their intended goals. Basically, neuroticism is associated with increased emotionality of the individual, which can be stimulated by both individual and social prerequisites (Turiano et al., 2020; Weiss & Deary, 2019; Widiger & Oltmanns, 2017). To characterize the social component of neuroticism, we will present modern trends in the definition of neuroticism.

Elliot and Thrash (2002) found that neuroticism, negative emotionality, and behavioral inhibition are manifested in a phenomenon called by the authors “avoidance temperament”. Also, some studies have found that in many cases, there is a positive dynamic in the development of neuroticism in stress reactions, in many life situations when a person can suffer failure or disappointment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Khan et al., 2021; Li et al., 2023; Maffini & Pham, 2016). Since neuroticism is an indicator of emotional stability, the main empirical components of neuroticism are often indicated by excitability and emotionality. Neuroticism is also closely related to the level of lability, for the diagnosis of which various methods are used.

The method of H. J. Eysenck and S. B. G. Eysenck (1969) diagnoses neuroticism, along with extroversion and introversion, as one of the personality indicators, which determines the level of emotional stability of the individual. Emotional stability is observed, as a rule, in the presence of low neuroticism scores. As an indicator of emotional stability, neuroticism is responsible for the degree of formation of organized behavior of the individual in various stressful situations. In other words, a low degree of neuroticism is accompanied by problem-free adaptation to external, social conditions and the absence of a high level of anxiety and tension. With increased results, neuroticism will be expressed in such indicators as: low degree of adaptation, anxiety, absent-mindedness, nervousness, rapid mood swings, and so on. A little later, G. Eysenck found out that the level of neuroticism, as a social component, directly affects the emergence of habits. With increased emotionality, a person will be more inclined to form some habits.

The nature and causes of the formation of

neuroticism have been studied by many specialists in the field of psychology. As a cause of the development of neuroticism, Z. Freud identified the limitations of natural human desires, such as sexual and aggressive instincts, which contribute to the satisfaction and discharge of the psyche (Freud, 1927). This position became the basis for the philosophical understanding of neuroticism as an individual psychological phenomenon that manifests itself under the pressure of social norms and attitudes. The definition of neuroticism, in essence, expresses a comprehensive understanding of the mental health of an individual, which is a kind of symbiosis of internal individual and external social processes of personality formation. Thus, the suppression of natural human drives, according to Freud, can be caused by the influence of education, social pressure and condemnation. A person can feel internal discomfort for a long time, which can be hidden under the external appearance of well-being. A person begins to feel dissatisfaction with himself, a subjective perception of unhappiness arises. A negative emotional attitude gradually also affects the relationship of the individual with others. It is no coincidence that Freud attributed the phenomenon of neuroticism to obsessive religiosity, which became widespread in the form of the term “individual religiosity” - a kind of symbiosis of intra- and extra-personal needs and fears. From this point of view, the modern understanding of social neuroticism borders on the definition of a feeling of extreme dependence (Otto, 1937) and anxiety. The religious interpretation of neuroticism has become an expression of the frustration of any need of the individual.

Z. Freud's (1927) position was soon developed in various theoretical and philosophical approaches. A. Adler (2012) expressed the opinion that the suppression of social needs of the individual is a prerequisite for the development of neuroticism. However, the author considered social limitations of needs on a par with the limitations of biological needs. One of the examples of the suppression of social needs, Adler called the limitation of the need for dominance, which can be expressed not only at the communicative and adaptive levels, but also at the individual-psychological level, expressed in an inferiority complex and low self-esteem. Along with the development of an inferiority

complex, there is a need for self-expression and self-realization, which is accompanied by pronounced vulnerability, aggressiveness and a low assessment of subjective well-being, which ultimately increases the level of neuroticism. The social component of the phenomenon of neuroticism was emphasized by F. Perls (1942/1992), who identified social conditions that limit the individual as the main factor in the development of neuroticism, which are norms and stereotypes of behavior in conjunction with the suppression of one's desires and needs. These negative social factors, according to the author, can lead to a negative transformation of the emotional life of the individual and the assessment of well-being.

The social side of neuroticism from the point of view of social restrictions was also studied by K. Horney (1950). The author noted that social stereotypes of behavior, according to which women are the most vulnerable in modern society, suppress their self-esteem and force them to act according to the regulations and social norms, where the main rights and freedoms are reserved for men. As a result of "limited" socialization, negative emotional states, mood swings, and low assessment of subjective well-being can often be diagnosed among women. These stress factors, as a rule, lead to an increase in the level of neuroticism, expressed in a low level of professional activity, difficulties in family communication, low self-esteem, low degree of subjective wellbeing, etc..

Social Neuroticism and Anxiety

As already mentioned above, philosophical and theoretical interpretations of neuroticism come down to certain formulations of personality anxiety. Neuroticism in many psychological studies is defined as a permanent personality state, characterized by a stable tendency to experience negative emotions: fear and anxiety. Many philosophers have also compared personality neuroticism to anxiety. Viktor Frankl (1959) saw the relationship between neuroticism and anxiety in the following way, saying that phobias and obsessive-compulsive neuroses are partly due to attempts to avoid a situation that causes anxiety.

Philosophers who analyzed topics such as

anxiety and neuroticism usually did not seek to create abstract systems; they were more interested in the existential conflicts and crises that accompany human life. In modern studies, there is also a tendency to consider the neuroticism of a person against the background of anxiety and to evaluate these two phenomena as interconnected in a single existential context.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1957) drew attention to anxiety as a permanent state characteristic of human existence. Anxiety is caused by the need for choice, the lack of justification, and responsibility. As Sartre noted, the feeling of anxiety can free us from boredom, can sharpen our perception, it creates tension on which human existence is based. The presence of anxiety in a person's feelings shows that the person is alive continues the struggle to find solutions in difficult situations. Sartre identified the absence of anxiety with the end of the person's self-expression, when the person no longer copes with the difficult situation in any way. Among the negative psychological phenomena resulting from the absence of anxiety, the posthumous emphasized nervous tension, disorders, depression, etc.

Anxiety, from a philosophical point of view, appears when a person realizes the existential danger of existence. This, as we will see, is similar to Kierkegaard's (1992) idea that anxiety is "the fear of nothingness." Philosophical interpretations of anxiety generally boil down to attempts to make sense of life. Usually, the threat of the meaninglessness of life is perceived as a threat to the Self (Goldstein, 1971). But when a person accepts this anxiety the challenge, when he sees the threat of the meaninglessness of existence and resists this threat, he feels his own I more strongly. This sharpens the perception of the person, which is directed towards himself, towards his own being, which is different from the world of non-existence or the world of objects. And if anxiety arises during the person's resistance to the threat of meaninglessness, then social neuroticism appears as a result of this resistance, which manifests itself through frustration in the meaning of life and a negative transformation of the I-concept.

In the works of Benedict Spinoza (2002), we see that it is possible to overcome fear through reason. Spinoza considered fear to be a purely subjective matter, an expression of a person's

mental state or attitude. He contrasts fear with hope; according to his thought, both phenomena characterize a person in doubt. Fear is a “uncertain torment” associated with the thought that something unpleasant will happen to us, while hope is a “uncertain pleasure” associated with the thought that our desire will be fulfilled. He argues that fear cannot exist without hope and vice versa.

Sometimes Spinoza comes very close to the problem of anxiety, for example, when he contrasts fear with hope. The simultaneous presence of a feeling of fear and hope, which persists in a person for a certain time, is one of the aspects of the psychic conflict that many psychologists characterize as anxiety.

S. Kierkegaard is one of the largest representatives of the irrationalist trend that developed in 19th-century philosophy. Kierkegaard, like Freud, realized the need to distinguish between fear and anxiety, finding that fear is a reaction to a specific danger, while anxiety is to an unknown and unspecified danger.

S. Kierkegaard believed that anxiety is our “best teacher”. He believed that anxiety arises when new opportunities appear for a person.

In Kierkegaard’s central idea presented is the relationship between anxiety and freedom. Kierkegaard is convinced that “anxiety can always be understood only in its connection with human freedom.” He notes that anxiety is the state of a person who has come face to face with his freedom. He even claims that anxiety is “the possibility of freedom.” Every time a person imagines possibilities, anxiety arises at the same time. And anxiety inevitably arises in situations where it is necessary to confront the external world. It is in this sense that many authors began to distinguish between anxiety and neuroticism. The first concept is interpreted in the context of Kierkegaard’s concept of confrontation, and neuroticism, on the contrary, with the absence of confrontation. According to Kierkegaard (1992), anxiety is always accompanied by a feeling of guilt, since both are associated with the realization of possibilities and the higher the creative potential of a person, the more capable he is of feeling anxiety and guilt. Neuroticism, on the contrary, is accompanied by a stable psychological state of the person, which is characterized by a decrease or weakening of the

ability to cope, realize opportunities, and creative potential. In other words, although the concept of neuroticism perhaps includes a psychological assessment of anxiety, negative feelings, nevertheless, the psychological foundations of the emergence of neuroticism and anxiety are different. The key point of this difference is explained by the degree of a person’s resistance to the external world, challenges, and threats. The weaker a person’s resistance to the external challenges of life, the more and more social neuroticism is expressed, and anxiety ceases to be a guiding factor in the realization of life’s “possibilities” and is manifested only in the stably expressed neurotic personal qualities of a person (Hanifah & Nugraha, 2022).

Heidegger, speaking about the anxieties of a person, also distinguishes some aspects of anxiety, calling them fear and horror in the interpretation of the latter concept, emphasizing the function of overcoming life’s difficulties and obstacles. For both Heidegger and existentialists, the experience of anxiety not only frees a person from immobile conformism but also reveals his essence as a person responsible for existence, capable of decisive action.

Social Neuroticism and Subjective Wellbeing

Philosophical definitions of life situations that entail negative emotional states have gradually moved into the field of psychology, which studies the psychological health of the individual. The scientific interests of psychologists and psychotherapists, which previously focused on certain mental phenomena, have gradually begun to transform into more comprehensive theoretical approaches. And, accordingly, psychological science has been enriched with intra- and interdisciplinary complex studies (Alexandrova & Fabian, 2022; Lauinger, 2021; Sirgy, 2018). Psychological phenomena of neuroticism and anxiety have begun to be studied in the context of psychological well-being and health of people. The growth of scientific interest in this issue increased in the second half of the 20th century. Certain psychological criteria of health were developed. This subsequently led to the emergence of a number of studies of various aspects of psychological health, and in particular, psychological well-being.

The theoretical and philosophical basis for defining the phenomenon of psychological well-being was laid by the American psychologist N. Bradburn (1965). He defined this phenomenon as a balance between two sets of emotions accumulated throughout life, positive and negative. For such a definition of psychological wellbeing, in some way, the philosophical understanding of anxiety as a driving force for self-realization of the individual served as the basis. The dual interpretation of this phenomenon allowed understanding psychological well-being from the point of view of a comprehensive, positive, and negative study of emotions. Further understanding of the phenomenon of psychological well-being was facilitated by the works of W. Tov and E. Diener (2007), who introduced the concept of “subjective wellbeing”. Subjective wellbeing, according to the author, consists of three main components: satisfaction, a set of pleasant emotions (pleasant affect), and a set of unpleasant emotions (unpleasant affect). Despite the similarity of interpretations of the structure of psychological well-being and the structure of subjective well-being, W. Tov and E. Diener still do not consider them as direct analogues. He believes that subjective well-being is only a component of psychological well-being, noting that additional characteristics need to be introduced to describe the latter. Another author who contributed to the study of psychological well-being was the American researcher C. Ryff (1989). Based on the research of N. Bradburn, she developed her structure of well-being. C. Ryff identified six main components of psychological wellbeing: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental management, purpose in life, and personal growth.

Many researchers have noted the variable nature of subjective wellbeing, the level of which was determined not only by the degree of satisfaction with life or personal growth, but also by the degree of expression of social neuroticism and anxiety (Mallillin et al., 2021; Shanionov & Beskova, 2018; Sirgy, 2018). Many researchers have noted the variable nature of subjective wellbeing, the level of which was determined not only by the degree of satisfaction with life or personal growth, but also by the degree of expression of social neuroticism and anxiety (Hakobyan et al., 2022; Alexandrova & Fabian, 2022; Hakobyan et al., 2023). In other words,

subjective well-being was assessed from the standpoint of the individual's readiness to withstand and overcome life's difficulties, which is manifested in a decrease in the level of social neuroticism and anxiety.

Thus, neuroticism significantly affects the health of the individual and becomes a risk factor for personality maladjustment, as well as the formation of addictive or antisocial behavior.

Conclusion

Philosophical interpretations of social neuroticism, anxiety, and subjective well-being revealed certain tendencies in the definitions of these phenomena. The phenomenon of anxiety is understood in two ways: with positive and negative emotional direction.

- ✓ Anxiety is presented as:
 - a guiding factor in the realization of life's “possibilities”,
 - a reaction to an unknown and unspecified danger.
 - a “sense” of freedom.
- ✓ The phenomenon of social neuroticism is a relatively new concept. In philosophical and psychological studies of neuroticism, the following social components of the phenomenon under study can be distinguished, namely:
 - priority of external events in the formation or change of behavior,
 - overestimation of the significance of appearance,
 - low self-esteem,
 - low assessment of subjective wellbeing,
 - communication difficulties.
- ✓ Subjective wellbeing is
 - satisfaction,
 - sets of pleasant and unpleasant emotions,
 - degree of social neuroticism and anxiety.

Expressed individual psychological symptoms of neuroticism, such as increased anxiety, emotional instability, and decreased emotional intelligence, imply the use of psycho-correction methods to restore mental balance and improve the quality of life. In the course of psychotherapeutic work, it is necessary to pay attention to solving the problems of tension and regulating emotions. Corrective work is carried out with an

emphasis on the formation of a positive worldview and the development of an adequate response to environmental stimuli. In other words, the correction of an increased level of neuroticism involves emphasizing the social component of neuroticism and activating socially significant models of behavior and thinking in order to increase the adaptive capabilities of the human psyche.

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