# Research Proposal: The Relationship between extraversion and social anxiety

## Introduction

Personality traits are able to reflect a person’s characteristics, patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Personality traits suggest consistency and stability. Trait psychology is sustained by the idea that people are different based on where they stand on a set of basic trait dimensions that persist over time and along different situations. A variable is something that, in an experiment, can be changed or varied. Things such as characteristics or values are considered variables. Generally, variables are used in psychology research to determine if changes to one thing will call cause changes to another. Variables often play a major role in psychology. Extraversion is one amongst the five personality traits of the Big Five personality theory indicating how outgoing and social a person is. People that are high in extraversion often seek social stimulation and opportunities to engage with other individuals. These people are often described as being full of life, energy and positivity. Amongst a group of people, extraverts are more likely to talk often and assert themselves. For people who have social anxiety, common social interactions can cause irrational anxiety, fear and self-consciousness and embarrassment. The symptoms of social anxiety may include excessive fear of situations where an individual could potentially be judged, worry about embarrassment or humiliation or concern about offending someone. A recent study looked at the personality traits of patients with social anxiety. According to this study (Tomas Furmark, Uppsala University, 2020), personality is strongly intertwined with the diagnosis of social anxiety (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/04/200429144925.htm>). After having 265 individuals fill out comprehensive personality instruments (NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) and Karolinska Scales of Personality, known as KSP, they found a common pattern in the personality of the individuals which were segregated into three categories. One of these categories, which had the highest percentage of results and also consisted of individuals with unstable-open social anxiety, were anxious while having normal levels of extraversion. Looking at another study relating to extraversion (McCrae & Costa, 1987), the main feature of extraversion is still up for debate but this study implies that sociability is the main feature. Sociability is a notion used by historians to apprehend different forms of social relationships, in particular interpersonal bonds that are initiated either consciously or unconsciously in a given context (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/sociability>). This context is usually a social interaction or encounter.

This investigation is aimed to look at the correlation and connection between social anxiety and extraversion. The experiment will be sustained by the idea of having a possible relation between the personality trait, extraversion, and the variable, social anxiety. By conducting this research, there will be a clear line indicating how this personality trait and variable relate to each other. To test this, the experiment will be non-scientific.

It is hypothesised that 18-20-year-old females and 18-20-year-old males who suffer from social anxiety will score lower on the Eyseneck Personality Questionnaie (EPQ) on extraversion scales than 18-20 year old females and 18-20 year old males who don’t suffer from social anxiety but also complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire will give three score in the end, one of the scores is the ‘E’ score which is out of 24 and measures how much of an extrovert an individual is.

## Methods

* **Participants:** The group of participants will consist of 50 18-20-year-old females and 50 18-20-year-old males who suffer from social anxiety and will be placed into one group while the second group will consist of 50 18-20-year-old females and 50 18-20-year-old males who don’t suffer from social anxiety.
* **Materials:** In order to conduct the experiment, the following materials will be essential:
  + A pen (blue or black)
  + A booklet of the Eyseneck Personality Questionnaire
* **Procedure:** 
  + Firstly, the control group is to be gathered through volunteer sampling which will be published at a range of different universities and events in Perth. After gathering the desired amount of 18-20-year-old male and females, they will complete a test to assess whether or not they suffer from social anxiety as well as providing proof of age.
  + The participants will be given a consent form in which they have 2 weeks to have reviewed and signed.
  + After having singed and returned this consent form, a week from then [which will be written on the form], the participants will meet the researcher at a specific location at a given time.
  + The location will have 2 rooms. One for the extroverts with social anxiety and the other for extroverts who do not have social anxiety. In this room both groups will be given 10 minutes to socialise. For these 10 minutes the participants will not be aware of the fact that they are meant to socialise, but will rather be under the impression that, I, the researcher is just running late and unorganised.
  + The participants will then be introduced to the study in further detail.
  + The participants will be handed their questionnaire having found a blue or black pen on their desk.
  + The scores and results will then be calculated having allowed the participants to go home.
* **Extraneous variables:**
  + Other or existing mental illnesses
  + Prior knowledge of the research (demand characteristics)
* **Controlled Variables:**
  + The day the questionnaire is completed [for both control groups]
  + The state/conditions of the room they complete the questionnaire in

## Data

The data collected for this research will be subjective. Because the research aims to analyse the conditions of the participants; looking at the quality of their feelings, perceptions and concerns through the Eyseneck Personality Questionnaire. An advantage of subjective data is that it is usually a low in cost and burden form of data collection for both the participant and the researcher. Meanwhile, a weakness is that it is not accurate for capturing low-intensity and unstructured activity. The data that is collected will also be measured as quantitative data. As the research will gather the level of extroversion as well as reviewing the answers provided by the participants in the questionnaire. This data collection method has both advantages and disadvantages. One of these advantages is that having qualitative data allows the researcher to focus more on the frequency and how common the patterns and results are. On the other hand, a disadvantage is that the researcher is unable to look at the results in more detail and find more reason behind the scores of the participants. After the participants have complete their questionnaire, their level of extraversion will be calculated and concluded. Their score will be out of 24. The higher the participants score, the more extroverted they are. The results will then be put onto a table as seen below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| INITIALS OF EXTROVERTS WITH SOCIAL ANXIETY | LEVEL OF EXTROVERSION (X/24) | INITIALS OF EXTROVERTS WITHOUT SOCIAL ANXIETY | LEVEL OF EXTRAVERSION (X/24) |
| EK | X (level of extraversion from 0-24) | BF | X |
| MF | X | DK | X |
| LJ | X | SK | X |
| SW | X | TP | X |
| PF | X | MM | X |
| AZ | X | SA | X |
| IG | X | WA | X |

+43 more participant results

## Ethical Considerations

Like any research, this research will require the researcher to consider a number of ethics. In order for the research to be considered ethical, the researcher must consider the following:

* Informed consent: This is essential as the participants should be aware of the fact that they are being included in a research. The participants are also going to be given an adequate amount of detail that will ensure that they are aware of the experiment but also blocking the chance of any bias. Thus, participants will be provided with a consent form that is mandatory in order to partake in the research.
* Confidentiality: It is important to ensure that participants’ information is being kept confidential; hence why the results table will only include their initials.
* Withdrawal rights: All participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any point in time. This can be before, during or even after the questionnaire is completed.

## Reliability and Validity

This research is not going to ensure reliability as the participants will only complete the questionnaire once. This research will not demonstrate the extent to which the result can be duplicated if the research was to be repeated under the same conditions. On the other hand, the research ensures validity as the research and the results measure what they aim to measure. To establish validity, the researcher is to check how well the results correspond to established or previous theories as well as other measures of the same or a similar concept. This data collection method is founded on the theory of Eyseneck as the questionnaire that the participants are completing is designed by himself.

## Conclusion

Although the research looks at the clear correlation between extraversion and social anxiety, there can be a number of limitations found within this. The limitations of this research are the absence of reliability. This research does not ensure the same patterns if repeated under the same conditions. Thus, this research may not be used as a future reference or a publication for another study. The research also could have included more participants as it would help prevent having extreme or biased individuals. Regardless of this, the research may still potentially be used to look at how extroverts may be affected by variables such as social anxiety. Other researchers are able to use this experiment to examine the relationship between the personality trait and variable; how they may influence or affect each other in certain context. This study may also help with any researchers who plan on using the Eyseneck Personality Questionnaire as a tool to measure any other personality traits in which are included in the questionnaire.

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