

# ANXIETY AND ACTUALIZATION: FURTHER RESEARCH

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In a recent article, Wilkins, Hjelle, and Thompson (1977) argued that unlike the Dabrowski-deGrace hypothesis, self-actualized *Ss* should have lower levels of manifest anxiety than low self-actualized *Ss*. Wilkins et al. demonstrated that this was indeed a preferable hypothesis. The present experiment concerns the relationship of actualization to state and trait anxiety. *Ss* were administered the Personal Orientation Inventory, the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale, and Cattell's measure of state-trait anxiety. The results support the Wilkins et al. reformulation by demonstrating that: (1) high self-actualized *Ss* had lower trait anxiety scores; and (2) high self-actualized *Ss* were susceptible to state anxiety within the limits established by their trait anxiety level.

Working within the framework of Dabrowski's (1972) theory of positive disintegration, deGrace (1974a, 1974b) contends that mental health and anxiety are compatible. His empirical data suggest that high self-actualizing male college students are as high in manifest anxiety as their low self-actualizing peers. However, previous investigations by the principal investigator (Wilkins et al., 1977) question not only the empirical basis for deGrace's conclusions, but also deGrace's formulation of the issue. Rather than the two-fold perceptives offered by deGrace: (1) traditional theories of personality have not emphasized the positive aspects of anxiety; and (2) Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration is different from traditional theories of personality (with reference to anxiety) and can be supported by the theories of several contemporary theorists.

Wilkins has argued that: (1) traditional theories of personality have stressed the positive aspects of anxiety; (2) Dabrowski's theory (à la deGrace) is different from traditional theories of personality (with reference to anxiety), but cannot be supported by those theorists cited by deGrace; and (3) theoretical perspectives on anxiety that emanate from traditional theories and the majority of current theories are conceptually preferable to the position posited by deGrace.

Previous findings (Wilkins et al., 1977) clearly indicate that some reformulation of the deGrace position is required. In our proposed scheme the health-oriented person is one who is relatively free from debilitating or neurotic anxiety. Conversely, such an individual would be susceptible to facilitating forms of anxiety.

It was argued above that self-actualizing people are relatively free from debilitating or trait anxiety, but are susceptible to facilitating or state anxiety as a necessary condition for psychological health and growth. Point one was demonstrated previously (Wilkins et al., 1977); the present study tests point two: that self-actualized people are susceptible to state anxiety, as are nonactualized people.

## METHOD

### *Subjects*

Approximately 31 graduate and undergraduate students served as *Ss*. All were volunteers, and all had complete protocols on all instruments.

### *Procedure and Instruments*

All *Ss* were administered in random sequence the following instruments: (1) The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) (Shostrom, 1966). As Damm (1969) demonstrated the validity of using the I Scale as an index of actualization, only it was used in the data analysis to be presented, as in a previous investigation (Wilkins et al., 1977); (2) as in a previous investigation (Wilkins et al., 1977),

the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale (TMAS) (Taylor, 1953) was employed to assess debilitating anxiety; (3) the State-Trait Anxiety Battery, developed by Cattell (1976), was used to measure facilitating and debilitating anxiety and is the crucial dependent variable in the present experiment. This instrument yields two anxiety scores: (1) Covert anxiety (CA), manifest, trait anxiety; and (2) Overt anxiety (OA) or state anxiety.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Means and standard deviations on each measure are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
MEANS (RAW SCORES) AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR THE HIGH SELF-ACTUALIZED AND LOW SELF-ACTUALIZED GROUPS ON THE PERSONAL ORIENTATION INVENTORY, THE TAYLOR MANIFEST ANXIETY SCALE AND THE STATE-TRAIT ANXIETY BATTERY

	POI		TMAS		Covert		Overt	
	$\bar{X}$	<i>SD</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>SD</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>SD</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>SD</i>
HSA	101.2	6.6	5.0	2.5	12.9	3.2	10.6	3.8
	(N = 15)		(N = 15)		(N = 15)		(N = 15)	
LSA	78.9	7.8	12.2	5.2	18.5	6.8	18.3	7.4
	(N = 15)		(N = 15)		(N = 15)		(N = 15)	

Table 2 presents the relevant correlation between the various measures. It was predicted: (1) high self-actualized Ss would have lower manifest anxiety scores than low self-actualized Ss; and (2) high self-actualized Ss would be susceptible to facilitating anxiety. The pattern of intercorrelations supports these hypotheses,

TABLE 2  
INTERCORRELATIONS AMONG MEASURES OF ANXIETY AND ACTUALIZATION

	POI (I)	TMAS	Covert	Overt
POI (I)	1.0	-.31*	-.15	-.58**
TMAS			.25**	.78**
Covert (c)				.46**

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .001$ .

and, in general, supports the reformulation of self-actualization and anxiety proposed by Wilkins et al. The correlation between manifest anxiety and actualization is approximately of the same magnitude as that found in previous research (TMASXI = .41, Wilkins et al. 1977); TMASXI = .31  $p < .01$  (present study, thereby replicating, in part, Wilkins et al. 1977). Ss who scored high on the actualization measure tended to score low on measures of manifest anxiety (TMASXI = -.31; OAXI = -.58). Actualization scores and state anxiety scores were not correlated significantly. The substantial .78 correlation between TMAS and OA strongly suggests concurrent validity; to a large extent the instruments are measuring the same construct.

In order to establish high and low self-actualizing groups (HSA and LSA, respectively) a median split was done. The mean POI score for the HSA group was 101.2 (*SD* 6.6); and the POI score for the LSA group was 78.9 (*SD* 7.8). There were 15 Ss per group. A *t*-test revealed that the two means were significantly different ( $t = 6.5$ ,  $p < .001$ , 28 *df*).

Differences between HSA and LSA groups on manifest and state anxiety scores were tested by *t*-tests and F-ratio.

Because directional predictions are made, a one-tailed test was used, *df* = 28; *t*-values are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
*t*-VALUES FOR HIGH SELF-ACTUALIZED GROUPS COMPARED TO LOW SELF-ACTUALIZED GROUPS ON EACH OF THE THREE DEPENDENT MEASURES

	TMAS	Covert	Overt
HSA	$t = 2.6 p < .01$	$2.69 p < .01$	$2.65 p < .01$
LSA X	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	$p < .01$

All findings support the theoretical predictions. HSA Ss had lower trait anxiety scores than LSA Ss on both trait measures (TMAS  $\bar{X} = 5$ ;  $\bar{X} = 12.2$ ,  $t = 2.6$ ,  $p < .01$ ; Covert  $\bar{X} = 12.9$ ,  $\bar{X} = 18.5$ ,  $t = 2.69$ ,  $p < .01$ ). While HSA Ss had lower state anxiety scores than their LSA counterparts ( $\bar{X} = 10.6$ ,  $\bar{X} = 18.3$ ,  $p < .01$ ), it is argued that the hypotheses are supported. Because state anxiety is a function of trait or manifest anxiety and the environmental demands, it is unreasonable to assume that the HSA Ss should have as much state anxiety as LSA Ss. Rather, as these results indicate, HSA Ss' state anxiety should be consistent with their trait anxiety and concurrently, LSA Ss' state anxiety should be consistent with their trait anxiety. Because the two experiments conducted by the present investigators were done in different parts of the country (the Northeast in Wilkins et al., 1977, and the Southwest in the current study) additional credence is given to the Wilkins formulation. It also should be noted that the mean ages of the two samples were approximately 10 years apart in the studies; thus, the state-trait distinction with reference to actualization appears to be a consistent psychological phenomenon.

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