

# ALIENATION AND INSECURITY AS RELATED TO OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS

D. M. PESTONJEE AND NEYAZ AHMAD

The investigation attempts to determine the pattern of relationship of alienation and security - insecurity with two levels of occupation hierarchy. For the study 100 blue collar workers and 50 supervisors were selected. The measuring tools which include the *Alienation Scale* and *Security - Insecurity Inventory* were administered simultaneously to the two groups. The data obtained indicate a significant difference between the two occupational groups with regard to their alienation and the feeling of security. The blue-collar workers are found to be highly alienated and insecure as compared to the supervisory group.

Dr. D. M. Pestonjee is Reader in Psychology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-5 U.P., and Mr. Neyaz Ahmad is Lecturer in Psychology, S. N. I. College, Azamgarh, U.P.

Personality factors in industry have been considered important in the fields of selection, human relations, industrial tension and attitudes (Blum, 1949; Hoppock, 1935; Smith and Ryan, 1954; Smith, 1955; Pestonjee and Singh, 1972; 1973).

As early as 1919, Greenwood and Woods recognised the role of personality factors in causation of industrial accidents. In recent years Vroom (1964) has postulated an interactional model to study job motivations in which the role of personality variables has been highlighted. However the factors of alienation and security-insecurity have not found their due place in researches of industrial psychology.

The term alienation has been assigned several connotations and used for describing a variety of phenomena. The concept is characterised by powerlessness, normlessness and social isolation. A scale constructed by Dean (1961) to measure these three factors intercorrelated .41 to .67 (N=384). He found a low but statistically significant negative correlation between the three components of alienation and occupational prestige, education, income, and rural background. There is a small positive correlation between alienation and advancing age.

Enrique (1974) presents an existential view of alienation and discusses the types

of alienation and the process of its development.

In the dictionary of social sciences Kurt Lang (1964) defines alienation as "an estrangement or separation between parts and the whole of the personality and significant aspects of the world of experience".

The lexicographic definitions of the term include, 'a transfer of title or a legal conveyance of property to another', 'the state of being alienated', 'a withdrawal or estrangement, as of the heart or affections', and 'delirium, mental derangement, insanity' (Webster, 1975). Another lexicon defines alienation as 'the action of estranging, or state of estrangement', 'the state of being alienated' and 'loss or derangement of mental faculties, insanity'. (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles, 1973).

Seeman (1959) is of the opinion that alienation has five components, namely, powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement.

Security and insecurity constitute very important variables effecting human thinking and behaviour. The concept of security has been characterised by an inherent striving to reduce environmental situations to cause and effect relationships and thus enable the individual to predict

and control these situations. It is further suggested that security is intimately connected with the individual's self-concept (Bovel, 1964).

The needs for security and adequacy grow together. The individual soon learns that failure to meet his biological and psychological needs generally leads to unpleasant outcomes. Feeling of insecurity may have widely different effects on behaviour. Insecurity typically leads to tearfulness, apprehension, and a failure to participate fully in one's world. The more adequate a person feels and the greater his level of competence, the less aware he is of his need for security and the more he may value the exploration of unfamiliar paths and freedom for self-direction (Coleman, 1974).

Security represents a need which is many faceted. It refers to a feeling of social and economic well-being and also to an internal feeling of satisfaction and contentment, the former being termed as 'socio-economic-security' and the latter as 'personal security'. Need for security is, therefore, a combination of the desire for contentment and the desire for being at home with one's environment, and the apprehension over the possible loss of these conditions. Although the two components of the need for security, namely, socio economic security and personal security are interdependent, nevertheless they are also, to some extent mutually exclusive. A financially well-off individual, for instance, may not necessarily enjoy an internal feeling of satisfaction. So also a financially hardpressed individual may not perhaps, always feel psychologically insecure. No inference, therefore, can be drawn about one's security or insecurity only on the basis of his low and high socio-economic status. Unless the two components are equally stressed, the one in the absence of the other will give only an incomplete

view of the need for security (Kureshi, 1975).

Both these personality variables, namely, alienation and security-insecurity can be important aspects of the worker's life and need to be probed.

Industrial psychologists have believed for a long time that occupational levels can affect attitudinal variables (Singh and Srivastava, 1975; Gurin, Veroff and Feld, 1960; Kornhauser, 1965). The worker meets management face to face through his first-line supervisor. His position has been described in a number of ways. He is the key man in production; he is a man who always feels that he has more responsibility than authority; he is the pivotal factor in human relations; he is accepted neither by the management nor by the worker (Gilmer, 1961).

The present study is probably the first of its type where an attempt is made to ascertain if first-line supervisors differ from rank and file workers on such dimensions of personality as alienation and security-insecurity.

### *Hypotheses*

1. The supervisory personnel will be less alienated than rank and file workers.
2. The supervisory personnel will be less insecure than rank and file workers.

### *Methodology*

This study was conducted at one of the largest diesel locomotive manufacturing units situated in northern India. The sample has been drawn from Engine Shop of the Plant. The total number of subjects studied in the present investigation are 150 which include 100 workers and 50 first-line supervisors.

Since this study entails measurement

of such personality variables as alienation and security-insecurity two standardised measuring devices have been used.

The *Alienation Scale (A-Scale)* was developed and standardized by Dutt and Kureshi (1976). It is a 21-item, Likert type Scale. Each statement has four response alternatives, namely, *always, mostly, sometimes* and *never*. Its factor analyses has revealed the following five factors: *Despair, Disillusionment, Psychological Vacuum, Unstructured Universe* and *Narcissism*.

The original *Security-Insecurity Inventory* developed by Maslow has been adapted by Ansari (1964) in the Indian context. This 75-item inventory has three response categories for each item, namely, *yes, no* and *undecided*. The reliability of the inventory was determined by the split-half method. The reliability coefficient was found to be .90, .89, and .92 respectively in three studies. The validity of the inventory was determined by comparing S-I scores of the subject who were found to score above  $Q_3$ , below  $Q_1$  and in between  $Q_3$  and  $Q_1$  on a measure of self-acceptance. It was found that the mean S-I scores of subjects falling in between  $Q_3$  and  $Q_1$  on the dimension of self-acceptance differed significant from both extreme groups, i.e.,  $Q_1$  and  $Q_3$  groups (Ahmadi, 1966).

Results obtained with the help of *A-Scale* and the *S-I Inventory* have been statistically treated in terms of the mean the median and the S.D. For testing the significance of difference the non-parametric Kolmogorov - Smirnov test has been applied. This test is sensitive to "any kind of difference in the distribution from which the two samples were drawn-differences in location (central tendency), in dispersion, in skewness, etc." (Siegel, 1956).

*Results*

Results of the present investigation are

recorded in the following tables (Table I-IV):

TABLE I  
ALIENATION SCORES

	N	Mean	Median	S.D.
Workers	100	51.75	51.62	5.95
Supervisors	50	47.1	45.57	6.95

TABLE II  
SECURITY - INSECURITY SCORES

	N	Mean	Median	S.D.
Workers	100	37.15	38.02	10.25
Supervisors	50	33.00	34.12	8.05

TABLE III  
KOLMOGOROV - SMIRNOV TEST FOR DIFFERENCES ON ALIENATION SCALE

	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69
	1	11	36	69	89	99	100
Workers	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	4	22	36	41	47	49	50
Supervisors	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69
Workers	.01	.11	.36	.69	.89	.99	1
Supervisors	.08	.44	.72	.82	.94	.98	1
D	.07	.33	.36	.13	.05	.01	0

$D = .36$

$\chi^2 = 4 D^2 \frac{n_1 \times n_2}{n_1 + n_2}$

$= 4(.36)^2 \frac{100 \times 50}{100 + 50}$

$\chi^2 = 17.28$  (p. < .001)

TABLE IV

KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST FOR DIFFERENCES ON SECURITY - INSECURITY INVENTORY

	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59
Workers	$\frac{00}{100}$	$\frac{4}{100}$	$\frac{14}{100}$	$\frac{28}{100}$	$\frac{38}{100}$	$\frac{55}{100}$	$\frac{73}{100}$	$\frac{86}{100}$	$\frac{99}{100}$	$\frac{100}{100}$
Supervisors	$\frac{1}{50}$	$\frac{4}{50}$	$\frac{8}{50}$	$\frac{16}{50}$	$\frac{23}{50}$	$\frac{39}{50}$	$\frac{49}{50}$	$\frac{50}{50}$	$\frac{50}{50}$	$\frac{50}{50}$
	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59
Workers	.00	.04	.14	.28	.38	.55	.73	.86	.99	1
Supervisors	.02	.08	.16	.32	.46	.78	.98	1	1	1
D	.02	.04	.02	.04	.08	.13	.25	.14	.01	0

$$D = .25$$

$$x^2 = 4D^2 \frac{n_1 \times n_2}{n_1 + n_2}$$

$$= 4 (.25)^2 \frac{100 \times 50}{100 + 50}$$

$$x^2 = 8.33 \quad (p < .02)$$

### Discussion

The present investigation was directed to determine the relative levels of alienation and security-insecurity in case of two levels of industrial personnel. It was hypothesised that the supervisory personnel will be lower on measures of alienation as well as insecurity. Results contained in Table I clearly indicate that the mean alienation score of the rank and file workers ( $X = 51.75$ ) is larger than the mean alienation score of the supervisors ( $X = 47.1$ ). The median also indicates a similar trend. From Table-III we observe that the differences between the two sets of scores are highly significant ( $X^2 = 17.28$ ;  $p < .001$ ). This indicates that the differences are in the expected

direction and also highly significant. Our first hypothesis is, therefore, fully confirmed.

It has also been found that the supervisory group is more secure in relation to the workers. The mean security-insecurity score for the supervisory group is 33.00 whereas it is 37.15 for the rank and file workers (Table-II). The comparative median positions also indicate a higher score for the workers. On testing for significance of difference (Table IV) we find that there are statistically significant differences between the two sets of scores ( $x^2 = 8.33$ ;  $p < .02$ ). This tends to confirm the second hypothesis.

Our results very clearly establish that occupational hierarchy is an important determinant of alienation as also security. Tietz and Woods (1970) had recognised the role of Socio-cultural factors present in individual clinical circumstances for a therapy to be effective. In a recent study by Biggs, Bamhart and Bakkenist (1975) it was observed that social characteristics of the offices relate to staff job satisfaction.

These authors further report that the social characteristics of the offices and of the department as a whole were related to job alienation. Since it is a matter of common knowledge that workers and supervisors perceive organizational and social characteristics of their work environment differently it can be assumed that the psychological returns from their jobs also differ. These psychological returns are linked with alienation and feelings of security. Dean (1961) had established in his study that occupational prestige, education, and income are three of the most important factors related with alienation ( $r = .41$  to  $.67$ ). Incidentally, these three factors also generally distinguish the rank and file workers from supervisory personnel. The supervisors are more educated, earn better and by virtue of a higher position in the job hierarchy they also command a higher occupational prestige.

### Conclusions

1. Occupational hierarchy is a factor which is vitally connected with alienation and feelings of security-insecurity in case of industrial personnel.
2. Education, earnings and occupational prestige affect the personality variables of alienation and security-insecurity.
3. To motivate the rank and file workers it is necessary to lower their levels of alienation and also insecurity. This can be achieved by (i) raising their levels of competence through training, (ii) raising their incomes and providing a sense of equity, and (iii) inculcating in them a sense of personal worth. All this requires that the work environment should encourage to create a sense of identification specially in case of the rank and file workers.

### REFERENCES

- Ansari, A. : *Adaptation of Maslow's Security-Insecurity : A Preliminary Report*, (unpublished), Deptt. of Psychology, A.M.U. Aligarh. 1964
- Ahmadi, A. : *A study of Self Acceptance in Relation to Feeling of Security-insecurvy and Adjustment* (unpublished dissertation), Deptt. of Psychology, A.M.U., Aligarh. 1966
- Blum, M. L. : *Industrial Psychology and Its Social Foundation*, New York: Harper. 1949
- Bovel, J. C. : "Security as a Motivation of Human Behaviour". *Archives of General Psychiatry*, Vol. 10(2), 105-108. 1964
- Biggs, D. A., Barnhart, W. and Bakkenist N. : "Job Attitudes of Student Personnel Workers and Their Work Situations". *Journal of College Student Personnel*, Vol. 16(2), 114-118. 1975
- Coleman, J. C. : *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, Bombay: Taraporevala. 1974
- Dean, D. G. : "Alienation: Its Meaning and Measurement", *American Sociological Review*, 26, 753-758. 1961
- Dutt, M. and Kureshi, A. : "Towards Developing an Alienation Scale — A factor Analytic Approach". Proceedings of the 64th Session of the Indian Congress Association (Part III). 1976
- Enrique, P. : "Alienation and Mental Illness", (Span) *Revista de Psiquiatria Psicologica Medica*. Vol. 10(5) 277-285. 1974
- Greenwood, M. and Woods, H. M. : "The Incidence of Industrial Accidents upon Individuals with Special Reference to Multiple Accidents", *Fatigue Research Board Report No. 4*. 1919

- Gurin, G. Veroff, J. and Feld, S. : *American View Their Mental Health*. New York: McGraw Hill. 1960
- Gilmer, B. V. H. : *Industrial Psychology*, New York: McGraw Hill. 1961
- Hoppock, R., : *Job Satisfaction*, New York: Harper. 1935
- Kornhauser, A. W., : *Mental Health of the Industrial Workers*, New York: Wiley. 1965
- Kureshi, A. : *Adolescent Fantasy*, Calcutta: Minerva. 1975
- Lang, K. : "Alienation". In J. Gould and W. Kolb (Eds.) *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, New York: Free Press. 1964
- Pestonjee, D. M. and Singh A. P. : 'Authoritarianism and Job-Satisfaction of Supervisors in a Steel Industry'. *Journal of Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 9, No. (2). 54-57. 1972
- Pestonjee, D. M. and Singh, A. P. : "Morale of First-Level Supervisors", *The Indian Journal of Social Work*. Vol. XXXIV, No. 3 189-193. 1973
- Smith, P. C. and Ryan, T. A. : *Psychology of Industrial Behavior*, New York: McGraw-Hill. 1954
- Smith H. C. : *Psychology of Industrial Behavior*, New York: McGraw-Hill. 1955
- Seeman, M. : "On the Meaning of Alienation" *American Sociological Review*, 24, 786. 1959
- Siegel, S. : *Non-parametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences*, McGraw-Hill/Kogakusha, Tokyo. 1956
- Singh, A. P. and Srivastava, A. K. : "Occupational Level and Job Satisfaction", *Journal of Psychological Research*. 20, 2, 56-59. 1975
- Tietz, W. and Woods S. M. : "Alienation: A clinical View from Multi-Disciplinary Vantage Points", *American J. of Psychotherapy*. Vol. 25 (2) 296-307. 1970
- The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles. Oxford University Press Vol. 1. A — Markworthy 1973.
- Vroom, V. H. : *Work and Motivation*, New York, Wiley. 1964
- Webster, N. : Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged, Second Edition, William Collins + World Publishing Co., Inc. New York, 1975