

Changing Anxiety into Excitement Is Better Than Calmness in Public Speaking

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Abstract

Individuals often feel anxious when they are about to perform or anticipate an important task to be done, for example prior speaking publicly, or meeting with a supervisor. Anxiety drains working memory, decreases self-confidence and harms performance. Majority of people believe trying to calm down is the best way to cope with anxiety, and individuals believe that this way is the best way to slow down before doing an important task (pre-performance). Early studies found that students faced with situations that cause anxiety (pre-performance anxiety), were more likely to answer that the most appropriate way to deal with anxiety is by calming down. They believe that this way is better than accepting the experience, avoiding situations that cause anxiety, or reappraise anxiety as excitement. The main study of the current research is to test whether stating to myself "I am excited" compared to "I am calm" in situations that are judged to cause anxiety (i.e. speaking in front of the assessment team) is better in terms of persuasion, confident, competenet and reducing anxiety. Using experimental design, researchers found that that individuals who stated "I am excited" had better performance as assessed by the rater during the presentation than those who tried to change their anxiety by stating "I am calm". The practical implication of this research is that saying what we feel will affect what feelings we experience. This method (self-talk) can be used as a way to motivate ourself before undertaking a challenging (or anxiety-provoking) task.

Keywords

Anxiety; excitement;
calmness; public speaking



I. Introduction

Individuals in life must have felt anxiety, especially when they were about to face an important task, such as speaking in public, or meeting an examiner in an oral exam. When this anxiety is experienced before or while performing this important task, this feeling of anxiety can impair performance capacity, deplete working memory capacity, and can reduce self-confidence (Eysenck, Derakshan, Santos, & Calvo, 2007). To anticipate the negative consequences of feeling anxious, individuals generally carry out various emotion regulation strategies to reduce anxiety, and one strategy that is often used is calming down. However, reducing feelings of anxiety is not easy, because high arousal occurs automatically, and suppressing (suppressing) feelings of anxiety or hiding them is usually not as effective as doing cognitive reappraisals (eg, Hofmann, Heering, Sawyer, & Asnaani, 2009).

From various previous studies, it was found that anxiety is a negative, aversive emotion that can reduce performance, while excitement emotion (translated in this study as joy, pleasure) is a positive emotion, pleasant emotion that can increase work method (Cropanzano, & Konovsky, 1993; Jamieson, Mendes, Blackstock, & Schmader, 2010). Although they have different effects on performance, according to Brooks (2014), the experience of these two emotions is almost the same. Both are experienced in anticipation of an event that will occur, characterized by high arousal. Calm is different from anxiety, low arousal is low arousal. Therefore, according to Brooks, the most suitable intervention to reduce anxiety is to look for physiological arousal that is the same level as anxiety (high) and then change cognitive assessments (re-appraisals) of the emotions of anxiety experienced.

One theory which states that this is possible is misattribution of arousal (Schachter & Singer, 1962). According to this theory, individuals can make the mistake of assuming what causes a feeling they experience. For example, when a person experiences physiological arousal that is actually related to fear, individuals may mislabel the feelings they feel as romantic arousal. Why this can happen, according to Schachter and Singer, is because various stimuli that give rise to different feelings actually have (almost) the same physiological symptoms. According to the misattribution of arousal theory, when the source of arousal is unclear, individuals tend to misjudge what makes them feel physiological arousal.

Researchers have different opinions. What if the source of the arousal is actually recognized. For example, when an individual is asked to sing in front of many strangers, or make a presentation, speak in front of a stranger, or face an examiner in an oral exam, can misattribution still be experienced? Can the high-arousal physiological arousal attributed to the individual making a presentation, speaking in front of strangers, facing an examiner in an oral exam, can change its valence to be positive, to become a happy emotion? In other words, can the anxiety experienced be turned into feelings of excitement? The next question is, why is it important to turn feelings of anxiety into excitement?

Spoken language is an interaction of two or more, it means that the speaker and listener involved in it. There are types of spoken language formal and informal. Formal is known as the official communication and need prepared before the communication, example of formal communication is social gathering, speech and ceremony. Informal communication doesn't take places true the officially and the context of conversation is stretched in all direction. (Purba, N and Mulyadi, 2020)

This research has at least two advantages. First, in the emotion regulation literature, one of the adaptive strategies is to carry out cognitive reappraisals (Gross, 2008), which is a strategy of cognitive change, by changing an individual's assessment of a situation so that it changes the emotional response experienced. This research will contribute to reappraisals, because previous studies have focused more on changing emotions by doing reappraisals of situations, not internal states, namely the turmoil of feelings experienced. Previous research has focused on reassessing the situation experienced. For example, when someone is anxious to face a team of interviewers, generally appraisals of self (ability) such as, he is not ready, unable, what if he can't answer the interviewer's question?, re-appraisals are done by changing the situation he imagined bad to be more positive, for example, he was interviewed, and even though he couldn't answer, he was accepted, or stated that the interviewer is someone who will explore potential him, he had to explain well who he was, they wouldn't bring him down. This reassessment makes the individual calmer. This research, in fact, does not focus on reassessing the situation at hand, but on reassessing what individuals feel. Because the misattribution theory states that the same physiological symptoms can be judged differently by emotion, the researcher will ask participants to change the labels of the emotions they feel, without changing the physiological symptoms they experience. re-

appraisals are done by changing the situation that he imagined bad to be more positive, for example, he was interviewed, and although he could not answer, he was accepted, or stated that the interviewer was a person who would explore his potential, he must explain well who he is, they will not drop.

The priority of these two studies is to contribute to the explanation of emotional labor. Changing the emotions you feel (from anxious to calm) is not easy and requires more effort. The concept of emotional labor (Morris, & Feldman, 1996), states that in a certain job, individuals are required to display a certain emotion to be displayed because of their position or task. For example, a customer service person is required to display a smiling expression when dealing with customers in providing services. Individuals who have a task or are required to express certain emotions (display rules), will need an effort to display the expected emotions when they do not feel the desired emotions, this situation is called emotional dissonance. that must be expressed occurs, the individual will experience exhaustion. Morris and Feldman,

In this situation, the individual is asked to continue to feel his emotions but is "forced" to display emotions that are actually not natural (genuine), because of the demands of emotional labor. Efforts to display these different emotions require a lot of energy because of the difference in arousal, high is changed to low or vice versa. What if the individual continues to experience the feeling but the feeling changes from a negative valence to a positive one without forcing himself to change the arousal experienced. Brooks' study (2014) found that it is easier to do arousal congruent, namely changing emotions that have high arousal (anxiety) into excitement, different emotions, but have the same arousal (high), than changing anxiety (high arousal) to calm (low arousal).

II. Review of Literature

2.1. Anxiety, Its Meaning and Symptoms

Anxiety is a specific emotion characterized by high arousal, negative valence, uncertainty, and a low sense of control (low sense of control).Raghunathan, & Pham, 1999) or a state of distress and or physiological arousal as a reaction to a stimulus (eg a new situation) and has an undesirable outcome (Brooks and Schweitzer, 2011). Anxiety-stimulating threats can be low (e.g. being approached by strangers or recalling an unpleasant experience) or strong (e.g. failing a test, embarrassment or threats of harm) (Tallis, Eysenck, & Mathews, 1992).

Worry also characterized by uncomfortable and aversive feelings, but have a positive effect on behavior, for example if the individual is anxious because of a situation, the individual can be motivated to anticipate or prepare. According to Norem and Chang (2002) using a defensive pessimism strategy, a strategy that intentionally raises anxiety can actually make a person motivated to do something or generate individual efforts to pursue the goals he wants to achieve. Individuals deliberately set low expectations of success (low expectations) and this strategy actually makes them expend enough energy to reflect on various worst and possible scenarios that will occur.

Diverse previous studies have shown that experiencing feelings of high anxiety before performing a task can interfere with cognitive work and performance, especially if the individual is new or not yet skilled at performing the task. Anxiety limits memory and information processing, because they use up their working memory to process what makes them anxious and ruminating, consciously, and repeatedly focusing attention on the discomfort felt, its causes and consequences of Campbell's symptoms. -Sills, & Barlow, 2007).

Worry also has a negative effect on motivation. Generally, individuals who experience anxiety do risk-aversion or lower self-confidence to perform a task (Han et al., 2007), lower self-efficacy, the individual's belief to perform a task successfully (Bandura, 1997).

2.2. Reassess Anxiety to Calm

Worry tend reduce performance, and therefore anxiety must be managed. Emotion regulation studies have compared the effectiveness of various emotion regulation strategies for managing anxiety. The consensus of all these studies is that reappraisals are the most effective strategy for reducing the effects of state anxiety. Reassessment is defined as a cognitive change that uses an emotion-eliciting situation in a certain way so that it changes the impact of an emotion (Gross & John, 2003). For example, imagine someone loses a lover, he then reassesses this situation as a tragedy, and he feels sad because of it. Having judged the situation as a tragedy, he now looks for new aspects of the situation, such as the freedom he has gained, or the meaning of the circumstances that he experienced, for example there is a lesson from this situation. This makes the individual re-evaluate his sadness, and the emotions that arise can be in the form of pleasure or calm.

Diverse Studies have shown that revaluing negative emotions is better than suppressing them. Suppression is the individual hiding his feelings or the individual wearing a 'mask' so that others cannot see the feelings he or she is experiencing. Suppression can actually strengthen hidden negative emotions, while reappraisal can decrease the emotions they feel (experience of emotion) and their expression (expressed of emotion).

Previous studies have focused on reducing anxiety by reassessing emotional calm (calmness). The study of Hofman et al (2009) for example, shows that reassessing anxiety to calm is more effective than suppressing or accepting anxiety to reduce physiological arousal (eg heart rate) and subjective experiences of anxiety.

2.3. Reassess Anxiety Becomes Excitement

Anxiety is characterized by negative appraisals, uncertainty, and lack of control, while excitement is characterized by positive appraisals and optimism (McConnell, Bill, Dember, & Grasha, 1993). Individuals who experience anxiety tend to pay attention to the possibility of negative outcomes in the future and believe that these outcomes may occur (Lerner & Keltner, 2001). This belief makes anxious individuals have low self-confidence, tend to avoid risk (risk averse) than individuals who experience neutral emotions. On the other hand, individuals who experience excitement tend to focus on the possibility of positive future outcomes, and believe that these outcomes can be achieved (Jamieson et al., 2010; Schnall, Roper, & Fessler, 2010).

Although they have different effects on cognition, motivation and performance, the physiological symptoms of anxiety and excitement are the same, namely high arousal and marked by increased heart rate. Reassessing anxiety to calm, requires a physiological change from high arousal to low arousal, cognitive change from negative to positive valence. Meanwhile, if anxiety is converted into excitement, only a change in cognitive valence is needed, because these two emotions have the same arousal (arousal congruent). Therefore, for reappraisal to be effective, there is no need for low anxiety to increase excitement, and researchers suspect that this congruence can affect cognitive and performance.

2.4. Hypothesis:

- a. Reappraising pre-performance anxiety as excitement vs. calmness when speaking in public. Individuals who reassess their experienced anxiety emotions as excitement will perform better than those who engage in calmness strategies.
- b. Re-appreciation situation different from reappraising the internal state in reducing anxiety. Researchers suspect that reappraising internal state is better than reappraising situation.

2.5. Roadmap Study

- a. Research activities that have been carried out have changed the physiological state (body) to change the emotions experienced.
- b. Researching the role of emotion and non-verbal language in students.
- c. It will be followed by participants with different and specific characteristics in the emotional reassessment.
- d. Outcomes are submitted at national meetings, published in reputable national journals and are copyrighted.

III. Research Methods

This study uses an experimental approach, because one of the variables in this study will be manipulated. The form of manipulation is to reassess what is felt. The effect of this manipulation will be seen its effect on the dependent variable. There are two variables in this study, the independent variable is the reappraisal of anxiety to excitement and the dependent variable is performance in public presentations. The independent variable: reappraise the emotion is changing the assessment that is felt when experiencing high arousals, namely anxiety becomes calm or excited (excited) by stating within oneself the words "I am calm", for the calmness group and the sentence "I am excited" for excited group. The dependent variable is the assessment of two raters who assess 2-3 minutes of presentation from blind participants with manipulations given to participants.

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1. Pilot Study

The results of the pilot study showed that firstly, making presentations in front of a large crowd/raters between 2-3 raters were reported consistently to cause anxiety, the interrater reliability score was high ($r = 0.866$, $p = 0.000$). Second, the best way that participants reported to calm themselves or calm others was to calm themselves down (calm down) before doing a task that caused anxiety (pre-performance anxiety). Participants reported that the best way to deal with anxiety was "try to stay calm and relaxed" ($n = 25$ people), while the option "try to feel happy rather than anxious" ($n = 3$ people). Other participants reported accepting anxiety ($n = 2$ people), avoiding anxiety ($n = 6$ people) and other responses ($n = 2$ people).

Pilot study This proves that the public speaking stimulus is a stimulus that can evoke anxiety, and secondly, it shows that generally the response that is considered capable of reducing anxiety is telling oneself or others to remain calm (calmness) rather than excitement (excitement). The conclusion of this pilot study shows that 90% of participants believe that the best way to manage pre-performance anxiety is to "try to stay calm" (assessing anxiety to calm down), and only 10% of participants believe that reassessing anxiety into enthusiasm is beneficial for reducing anxiety.

4.2. Test the Hypothesis

This study compares the effect of anxiety reappraisals to be calm and excitement (excitement) on performance in public presentations. According to preliminary studies, public speaking can lead to anxiety. The hypothesis tested is that compared to calming down, participants who assess the anxiety they experience as a sign that they are excited will be judged by the rater team as calmer, persuasive - able to convince others, confident, and competent - mastering the presentation material.

The results of the independent t-test showed that the ratings of the level of persuasion, confidence, speaker competence were significantly different between groups. This supports the hypothesis which states that participants who stated "I am excited" before making a presentation were judged to be able to be invited to become group members ($t = 4.137$, $p = 0.000$); more confident in making presentations ($t = 13.310$, $p = 0.000$); did not appear anxious ($t = -5.247$, $p = 0.000$) was rated as more master of the material ($t = 3.076$, $p = 0.004$) and more able to convince the assessment team ($t = 3.435$, $p = 0.002$) than participants who stated "I am calm". There was no difference to the rater's assessment of whether the material presented was acceptable or not ($t = 0.506$, $p = 0.616$). The complete test results can be seen in the table.

The task of making a presentation in the hope of the team caused participants to feel very anxious. Compared to reassessing an anxiety-provoking situation by stating "I am calm", by stating "I am excited", assessing anxiety with I am excited is better.

The belief that when experiencing anxiety the best way is to calm yourself down. However, research results suggest that a more effective way is to reassess what is perceived as passion. It is suspected that the mechanism that occurred was because the participants stated that they were excited to increase their subjective experienced spirit and affect their performance in making presentations. Second, this happens because of the mind-set. "spirit" triggers "opportunity" priming, and this priming affects participants' cognitive and performance.

Table 1. Intergroup t-test results

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Speakers can be selected	4.137	31	0.000	1.61985	0.39159	0.82119	2.41851
	4069	23,207	0.000	1.61985	0.39809	0.79676	2.44295
Confident speaker	13,310	31	0.000	2.92978	.22012	2.48085	3.37871
	13,594	22,282	0.000	2.92978	.21552	2.48314	3.37642
The speaker looks worried	-5,247	31	0.000	-1.18051	.22497	-1.63934	-.72169
	-5,184	25,804	0.000	-1.18051	.22774	-1.64881	-.71222
The material presented is reasonable	0.506	31	0.616	.15294	.30225	-.46350	.76938
	0.509	30,715	0.615	.15294	.30076	-.46069	.76657
The speaker mastered the material well	3.076	31	0.004	1.15441	.37528	.38903	1.91980
	3.096	30,373	0.004	1.15441	.37288	.39328	1.91554
The speaker is able to convince others	3.435	31	0.002	1.21324	.35316	.49297	1.93350
	3,433	30,786	0.002	1.21324	.35339	.49230	1.93417

These findings make several contributions to the regulation of emotion and anxiety in particular. The first is motivational self-talk. This research shows that what we say to ourselves when we are anxious affects performance. Second, these findings strengthen the theory of misrepresenting emotion. Previous studies have found that insincere emotional displays are different from genuine expressions. Attempts to display insincere emotions lead to emotional labor, which has several negative effects on the individual. However, identifying anxiety as enthusiasm turns out to have a different effect. Deliberate attempts to display passionate emotions actually increase feelings of enthusiasm and performance. According to researchers, emotional labor will only occur in arousal incongruent conditions. For example, changing sadness (low) into happiness (high arousal). Anxiety and excitement are two arousal congruent states. This study focuses on congruent conditions in high arousal. Further studies are needed to test whether this situation also applies to low arousal conditions.

V. Conclusion

Individuals who reassess anxiety with enthusiasm have better performance (values being more confident, more master of the material, and able to convince others, so that they are easier to accept in the group) than those who reassess anxiety with "I'm calm".

The suggestions For further researchers are as follow:

- a. Testing whether this situation also applies to conditions of low emotional arousal
- b. Test the difference that occurs from the spoken word. Will the word "I'm excited" be different from the "excited!" or "Cheer up!"
- c. The practical implication of this research is that saying what we feel will affect what feelings we experience. This method (self-talk) can be used as a way to motivate oneself before undertaking a challenging (anxiety) task.

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