

Personality Factors and Perceived Parental Authority as Predictors of Social Anxiety in Girls

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to explore the predictors of social anxiety (introversion and parental authority) in girls. It was hypothesized that introversion and authoritarian parental style are predictors of Social Anxiety. A sample of 100 students (100 girls) selected from different schools. The age of the participants ranged from 15-18 years. For data collection Social Interaction Anxiety Scale, Parental Authority Questionnaire, and Personality Big-Five was used together with demographic sheet. The results indicated that social anxiety has negative correlation with perceived parental authority but not statistically significant. Further, no significant relationship was found among personality factors and social anxiety. Agreeableness and openness correlated positively with social anxiety. Social anxiety negatively correlated permissive type of parenting style. However, Pessimistic and Authoritative parenting styles both predict social anxiety among adolescents.

Keywords: Personality Factor, Perceived Parental Authority, Social Anxiety

1. Introduction

Everyone at some point in time has experienced anxiety during some social or performance situation. Social Anxiety is the psychological condition a person experiences due to the fear of making an embarrassing impression, and in male dominated societies it is experienced more by girls than boys. The ways females are perceived and evaluated by others generate social anxiety in them. (Azuma, Kashiwagi, & Hess, 1981). Parenting is a complex activity that involves bringing up the child from the birth to adulthood. Parents are responsible for taking care of child's biological as well as emotional needs. They are supposed to provide nourishment, safety, love and support to the child. Parents play a significant role in the physical and emotional development of the child. If this role is not fulfilled it may lead to gaps in child's personality and development. Parenting style is determined by the way the parents respond to the child's needs and demands, the way they discipline the child and their impact on child's later development. The most influential work on parenting styles was done by Baumrind in 1980 (Shaimberg, 1988).

Many researches focusing on the consequences of authoritarian parenting found that it leads to aggressive behavior and externalizing and internalizing disorders. Harsh parental practices have often been associated with delinquent behaviors. Similarly permissive parenting was found to be associated with delinquency, emotional problems, misconduct and alcohol abuse. Literature has indicated that authoritarian and permissive parenting have been associated with negative child outcomes in the West but Asian culture such a relationship has not been observed frequently. (Farrington 1995; Hart, Dewolf, Wozniak and Burtsbas, 1992; Rubin Stewart, & Chen, 1994; Wasserman, Miller, Pineer, & Jaramillo, 1996).

1.1 Hypothesis

- i. There would be significant relationship between personality factor and social anxiety.
- ii. The personality factor would be a significant predicting factor for social anxiety.
- iii. Authoritarian Style of parenting would be a significant predicting factor for social anxiety.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Sample

The sample for this study consisted of 100 participants i.e. 100 girls. The age of the participants ranged from 15-18 years, it included students. The inclusion criteria for the study retained participant belonging to middle class families.

1.2.2 Tools for Data Collection

The participants will be contacted and interviewed on following valid and reliable scales: The Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS) to measure social anxiety; the Social Anxiety Scale (SIAS) was developed and published by Mattick and Clarke in 1998. The SIAS is twenty item measures on which respondents rate their experience on social situations associated with social anxiety and social phobia DSM-IV TR criteria. Experiences are rated on a 5 point scale from 0 (characteristic of me) to 4 (extremely characteristic of me). A total score of 60 is possible with cutoffs of 34 or more indicative of social phobia (specific situations of irritation social fears with avoidance and impairment) and 43 or more indicative of social anxiety (generalized irritation fears across numerous social situations with avoidance and impairment).

Big Five Questionnaire to indicate personality factors developed by John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. in 1999 consisted of 44-item inventory that measures an individual on the Big Five Factors (dimensions) of personality each of the factors is then further divided into personality facets.

Parenting Authority Scale developed by John R. Buri (1971) which includes permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parental authority prototypes to indicate the perception of respondents about their parental authority. It consisted of 30 items per parent 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) and yields permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parental authority scores for both parents father and mother.

1.2.3 Procedure

A list of schools was taken from the website. Government and private Schools of Faisalabad were included in the sample. After the selection of the schools, the concerning authorities (Principals, and Vice Principals) contacted by the researcher, to get the permission and support for data collection from their schools. They were assured of confidentiality and also briefed about purpose of research.

Participants were approached on the basis of their availability in different schools. The participants were informed of their participation rights and were explained the purpose of this study. After the voluntary participation was ensured, they were then administered questionnaires along with the informed consent form.

1.2.4 Statistical Analysis

After data was collected, the data was entered in Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 for analysis. Demographic characteristics were calculated, Pearson's correlation was applied. Multiple regression analysis conducted to identify factor of personality and parenting styles as the predictor of social anxiety.

1.3 Results

Table No 1

Demographics characteristics of samples

Variables	f(%)
Grade	
Metric	65 (65)
Intermediate	35 (35)
Socio-economic Status	
Below Average	35 (35)
Average	30 (30)
Above Average	35 (35)

Table no 2 shows the demographic characteristics of sample.

Table No 2

Correlation Table

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. SA	-	.01*	.11	-.04*	.03*	.09	.10	.11	.07
2. OPEN		-	.10	.24	.15	.42	.11	.08	.01*
3. CONS			-	.23	.32	.26	-.02*	-.10	.07
4. EXT				-	.12	.32	.01*	.11	.10
5. AGRE					-	.03*	.00*	-.25	.00*
6. NEUR						-	-.11	.08	.01*
7. AUTH							-	.09	.06
8. AUTHN								-	.54
9. PER									-

Note; SA= Social Anxiety, OPEN= openness, CONS= conscientiousness, EXT= extraversion, AGRE= agreeableness, NEUR= neuroticism, AUTH= Authoritarian, AUTHN= Authoritative, PER= Permissive

The above table depicts that extraversion; agreeableness and openness correlate positively with Social Anxiety. Negative correlation has also been seen between Extraversion and Authoritarian type of parenting while conscientiousness correlates negatively with Authoritarian Parenting. Agreeableness also correlates positively with neuroticism, pessimism and Authoritarian Parenting. Moreover, neuroticism and Permissive Parenting correlate positively with each other.

Table No 3
Regression analysis for variables predicting social anxiety in Male Adolescents (N= 100).

Variables	B	Standardized B
Personality Factor		
Extraversion	-.270	.395
Agreeableness	.248	.307
Conscientiousness	.257	.307
Neuroticism	.321	.296
Openness	-.102	.316
Parenting Style		
Authoritarian	.040	.317
Authoritative	.485	.328
Pessimism	.098	.212

The above table implies that out of all the variables included in the analysis only one personality factor i.e. Openness shows a significant predictive effect for Social Anxiety.

Moreover, Pessimistic and Authoritarian Parenting Styles both predict Social Anxiety among adolescents included in the sample. The rest did not show significant predictive relationship with Social Anxiety.

1.4 Discussion

This study investigates the predictors of social anxiety in girls. It was hypothesized that authoritarian parenting style and introversion. Introverts would be more likely to have higher social anxiety than extraverts. Researchers have shown that two parenting styles (authoritarian and permission) are more likely to have a negative impact a child's mental health.

Introversion is a predictor for social anxiety is a significant predictor but not usually significant. Girls who experience social anxiety are often concerned that in feared situations or environments they may be judged as anxious, 'crazy', stupid, inarticulate, or otherwise inadequate. Moreover, they often fear that in these situations or environments they may exhibit noticeable physical symptoms of anxiety (i.e., trembling hands, shaking voice, sweating, muscle tension, and blushing, etc.), which may generate or confirm such negative evaluations. Introversion is likely to be a difficult personality and lifestyle for students (Henjum, 2001). It has been proposed that introversion in students is seen as a maladaptive behavioral pattern, rather than as a normal personality trait. Although many positive traits have been associated with introverts, such as being self-sufficient, hard-working, introspective, sensitive, and analytical, being called an introvert may not be seen as complimentary in today's society. Introverted individuals may be seen by others as lacking the sociability prized in our society, and thus, introverts may doubt their normalcy as they have difficulties "fitting in", as well as experience subtle rejection by peers, parents, and teachers. Introverted people are more inclined to keep their feelings to themselves and deal with issues alone, although they are generally quite sympathetic to the feelings of other people. Social relationships for introverts, often labeled as shy, start with less depth than social relationships developed with more outgoing individuals. Introverts may give off the impression that they do not want to receive attention from other individuals. It has been well-established in the literature that social anxiety shares a strong relationship with introversion. In fact, at times, researchers have had difficulty separating these two constructs. However, researchers have devoted less attention to explaining how and why social anxiety and introversion are related, such as why introverts may be more susceptible to social anxiety.

Moreover, authoritarian parenting style is a predictor for social anxiety but not significant reason might be because of social desirability on the part of the subjects/ participants. Mothers and fathers play quite different roles in parenting. In Pakistani cultures, mothers are typically seen as warmer and less controlling, supporting the popular saying "strict father, kind mother" (Ho, 1987). Bhatnagar, writes "the father is expected to play the role of an authoritative, responsible for discipline, while the mother is the real head of the family to whom children turn for economic, physical and emotional support".

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