

SOCIAL ANXIETY, SOCIAL FUNCTIONING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN YOUNG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Social anxiety is a severe condition caused by an intense fear to look ashamed in performance or social settings.

Objective: To investigate the influence of social anxiety on the social functioning and psychological well-being of young adults.

Methodology: The current study was conducted on 385 young adults (49.7 % young females) through a cross-sectional study design. The data was collected from different universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The social anxiety of the young adults was measured through Social Anxiety Questionnaire (Caballo et al., 2012), social functioning was measured through Social Functioning Questionnaire (Tyrer et al., 2005), and psychological well-being was measured through Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff, 1989).

Results: The study reflected that social anxiety is the negative predictor of social functioning and psychological well-being.

Conclusion: The current research reflected that social anxiety is related to distress, obsession, and irritation. Future research can be planned on the intervention plans to treat anxiety-related concerns.

Keywords: Social anxiety, social functioning, psychological well-being, young adults

INTRODUCTION

Social anxiety is a severe condition caused by an intense fear to look ashamed in performance or social settings. Social anxiety usually affects the normal routine of people, their academic functioning, social activities and relationships (Eden et al., 2020). The most common difficulty of the individual who suffers from social anxiety is fear that is excessive and unreasonable. It has been inferred that inadequate social skills keep the person away from interacting with others, but in social anxiety, negative thoughts prevent the individual from interacting with others and avoidance of situations (Wagner, 2016). Due to not participating in social activities, public speaking, meeting with unfamiliar people and social conversations, individuals with social anxiety appear to be uninterested in social relationships (Murad, 2020). The National Co-morbidity survey reflected youth experience 30% fear of public speaking, 13% fear of talking to strangers, 10% to go to the party and 4.6% to eat and drink in public places among youth (Kessler et al., 1994). Houben et al., (2015) stated that psychological well-being represents goodness, benefits, welfare, flourishing, happiness, interest, utility, advantage, thriving, value and quality of life. On the other hand, social functioning is the common phrase that is used to evade the person's competency to perform socially described roles such as worker, partner, pupil, family members, and friends (Kimhy et al., 2016).

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Lindner et al. (2016) stated that social anxiety is an impairment of the quality of life that indexes avoidance of social situations and anxious distress situations. The overall purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of social anxiety on two major dimensions of quality of life including social functioning and psychological well-being.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the impact of social anxiety on social functioning and psychological well-being of young adults
2. To investigate the relationship between social functioning and psychological well-being of young adults
3. To determine the predictive role of social anxiety on social functioning and psychological well-being.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. Social anxiety is negatively correlated to the social functioning and psychological well-being of young adults.
2. Social functioning is positively correlated to the psychological well-being of young adults.
3. Social anxiety is the negative predictor of social functioning and psychological well-being in young adults.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 385 young adults, 18-23 age range has been collected from different universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, including the National University of Modern Languages, Islamic International University, Preston University, Riphah International University, and Arid Agriculture University. Social anxiety questionnaire Social Anxiety Questionnaire (Caballo et al., 2012) was used to measure social anxiety that is based on 30 items. The alpha reliability of the overall scale was .93 and of subscales was in the range of .75 to .92. Social Functioning Questionnaire (Tyrer et al., 2005) was used to measure social functioning that is based on 8 items. Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff, 1989) was used to measure psychological well-being which has 18 items. The alpha reliability of the scale was from 0.86 to 0.93. Written and informed consent was taken from the participants for the present research.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

SPSS 25 has been used in the study. The study data has been analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics

Variables	f (%)	Mean (SD)
Age		21.05 (1.60)
Gender		
Male Young Adults	192 (49.7)	
Female Young Adults	193 (50.3)	
Education		
BS	269 (69.7)	
Master	116 (30.1)	
Departments		
Sciences	150 (38.9)	
Humanities	235 (61.1)	

f = Frequency, %= percentage

The above table showed the descriptive statistics of the demographic variables of the study.

Table 2

Psychometric properties of the major study variables (N=385)

Variables	No. of Items	a	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range	
							UL	LL
Social Anxiety Questionnaire	30	.93	85.26	2.08	.133	-.04	139	39
Social Functioning	8	.75	8.92	4.32	.28	-.18	22	1
Psychological well-being	18	.88	66.85	1.59	-.38	.77	102	22

UL=Upper Limit. LL=Lower Limit, M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviations

The above table showed the psychometric properties of the study variables. The scales showed good alpha reliability and the values of skewness and kurtosis were within the range.

Table 3

No.	Scales	I.	II.	III.
I.	Social Anxiety	-		
II.	Social Functioning	-.50**		
III.	Psychological well-being	-.74**	.62**	

Correlation Matrix of Study Variables (N=385)

*Note: **p<0.01*

The above table showed that social anxiety has a significant negative relationship with social functioning ($r=-.50^{**}$) as well as social anxiety has a negative relationship with psychological wellbeing ($r= -.74^{**}$). The study reflected that social functioning and psychological well-being have a significant positive correlation ($r=.62^{**}$).

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Psychological Well-being, and Social Functioning from Social Anxiety (N=385)

Variables	Social Functioning	Psychological Well-being
	β	β
Social Anxiety	-.10	-.57
ΔR^2	.25	.55
F	126.74***	472.39***

*Note: ***=p=.001*

A significant regression equation was found to predict the social functioning and psychological well-being of young adults. 10% change in social functioning is due to social anxiety as well as 55% change in psychological well-being is due to social anxiety.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the research was to evaluate social anxiety among young adults concerning two major dimensions of quality of life including social functioning and psychological well-being. Social anxiety is initiated due to intense fear of social settings. The present study reflected that social anxiety has a significant negative relationship with psychological well-being. The outcomes of the current research have been supported by the study of Eden et al.

(2020) stated social anxiety is related to poor school performance, lack of satisfaction, increased dropout rate, low job status and dissatisfaction with leisure activities.

The study showed that social anxiety was negatively correlated to social functioning. When a person faces problems while speaking in public or to people in authority then his social functioning is declined. The young adults experiencing anxiety to interact with the opposite sex cannot perform better in social settings. Due to this, their social functioning may decline that in turn affect their performance in the educational institutes supported by the study by Luo and Hancock (2020).

The study has highlighted that social anxiety is a crucial factor that may affect different life dimensions. The student's psychological well-being become distorted, and they become away from intrapersonal or interpersonal relationships. The study results can be taken as a basis to bring positive changes in young adults by controlling their anxiety levels. The study results may provide new ground to the educational institutes as they initiated seminars where the confidence of the students becomes boosted by giving them various responsibilities. Due to the varied responsibilities, the shy attitude of the students is controlled which may, in turn, stop their anxiousness in various social and performance settings.

The study provides awareness to the young adults that their social anxiety highly affects their psychological well-being and moves them towards psychological distress. Due to such practices, their social functioning becomes distorted. The information about social anxiety may help the students, and they can use coping strategies to deal with it. The strengthening point of the study is that it has been focused on the normal population as many studies that worked on social anxiety have taken clinically diagnosed patients with social anxiety disorder. The present research has an open new path for research as it showed that normal healthy people also face social anxiety in various social settings that need to be tackled. These issues are in the large form of healthy people especially students hinder their social functioning and psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

In short, the current study is informative as it focuses on young adults and included vast research supporting literature that has enhanced the effectiveness of the study. This research can be used to bring cognizance among young adults about the harsh impacts of social anxiety. They can bring positive changes in their life by controlling the severe impact of social anxiety on their functioning in various social endeavours and also on their psychological health.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The limitation of the study is the small age group of young adults, but future studies can include the vast age group including young- adults, middle adults, and older adults. The study recommends intervention plans that would be specially arranged for the young adults who move towards their professional and practical life.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in the study.

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