

Fear of Negative Evaluation and Social Anxiety in Young Adults

Amna Iqbal¹ and Amna Ajmal²
Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of the brief fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety in young adults. Sample of 230 young adults (110=males, 120=females) was taken from different departments of Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan. The study aimed to check the correlation between fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety and differences in fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety among males and females as well as among undergraduate and post graduate students. Brief fear of negative evaluation scale (Leary, M. R., 1983) and Liebowitz social anxiety scale (Michael R. Liebowitz, 1987) was used. Findings revealed positive correlation between social anxiety and Brief fear of negative evaluation. The study concluded that fear of negative evaluation produce social anxiety in young adults (university students). Independent t test confirmed the significant difference among male, females as well as among undergraduate and post graduate on these two variables. Female students showed more fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety than male students; similarly, undergraduate students showed more social anxiety.

Keywords. Fear, negative evaluation and social anxiety

Fear of negative evaluation in University students is the fear of student's evaluation about one's personality and as a result there is development of social anxiety in young adults. This study looked in to various issues regarding negative evaluation and social phobia like fear of giving presentations in class room, fear of speaking in public, fear of giving viva exam. Student thinks that other people evaluate them negatively that's

¹ M.Phil Scholar, Department of Applied Psychology, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan

² Lecturer, Department of Applied Psychology, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan

what produces social anxiety in them. Trepidation about other's assessments, trouble over their adverse assessments, and expect that other individuals would assess oneself contrarily is dread of negative assessment which leads towards the feelings of embarrassment, inadequacy, inferiority, depression and humiliation. The correlational study was conducted at Huntington University in 2008 by Wayne Stephan, Amber Stephan, & Rosealee Palmer consisted of 786 undergraduate students. They explored that there is a positive straight relationship between dread of negative assessment and perfectionism and fear of negative evaluation was more correlated with the unhealthy form of perfectionism. Choy and McInerney (2001) observed that perfectionist always evaluate their self worth on the basis of their performance. Further Flett, Hewitt, and Greene (2004) observed that perfectionism related to social activities was highly correlated with the social anxiety. So the perfectionism and its elements produce fear of negative evaluation which predicts high levels of social anxiety (Saboonchi and Lundh, 1997).

On the off chance that a man generally turns out to be (unreasonably) on edge in social circumstances, however appears to be more agreeable when they are distant from everyone else, at that point there issue is might be social tension. Social anxiety is fear or feeling of discomfort when person is in the social situation or interaction.

Individuals with social nervousness have a tendency to have more negative sentiments of their own effect and body related manifestations than those without social tension (Edelmann & Baker, 2002). Research conducted by Carleton, McCreary, Norton, and Asmundson in 2006 investigated that fear of negative evaluation is a type of fear which give rise to other form of fear, pathologies and anxieties; social anxiety is one of them.

Individuals with high dread of pessimistic assessment are worried about how they are being judged and seen by other individuals. They generally have a tendency to trust that individuals are assessing them adversely thus they keep away from circumstances in which they may be assessed. Consequently, dread of negative assessment can be identified with worldwide nervousness (Schlenker, 1980). Nancy L. Kocovski and Norman S. Endler (2000) in their studies investigate the connection between self control, social uneasiness and dread of negative appraisal. They watched that dread of negative assessment fill in as an intervene between self support and social tension and self control and social uneasiness. Dread of negative assessment and social tension are

straightforwardly related and found in young adults (university students). Students evaluate themselves on the basis on other's opinions and do not move comfortably in social places which produce social anxiety in them.

The previous researches were aimed to study the impact of fear of negative evaluation on different variables like perfectionism, self regulation, self reinforcement, depression and behavioral response which all predicts the relationship of fear of negative assessment and social nervousness. As dread of negative assessment triggers social uneasiness in this examination the concentration is to explore the relationship of dread of negative assessment and social nervousness and their disparities based on gender and qualification. As university students have to face many situations in which they find themselves evaluated by others and become more anxious so there should be study of fear of negative assessment and social nervousness in them.

Method

Participants

For research purpose sampling was done and the sample of 230 undergraduate and postgraduate students (110=males, 120=females) was taken from different departments of Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan and Islamia University Bahawalpur.

Instruments

The idea of dread of negative assessment was created by Watson and Friend in 1969. In 1983, Leary introduced a concise variant of the dread of negative assessment comprises of twelve unique inquiries on a 5-point Likert Scale (BFNE). Scale scores range from 12 (low FNE) to 60 (high FNE) Leary, M. R. (1983). The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS) is a questionnaire developed by Michael Liebowitz in 1987. The purpose of this questionnaire was to assess the situations of social interactions and performance in which people feels fear and become anxious for the finding of social tension issue. Scale consist of 24 items which are divided in to two subscales, 13 questions relate to performance anxiety and 11 questions relates to different social situations.

Procedure

The correlational research method was used as there are two variables present. Demographic sheet was administered on sample of 230 students. General instructions were given to the respondents regarding the purpose and time of task. They were requested to fill the data sheet after reading the guidelines given and begin reacting. Data was analyzed through SPSS.

Results

Table 1

Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Dread of Negative Assessment and Social Tension

Variables	BFNE	LSA
BFNE		.29**
LSA		

Note: BFNE= Brief fear of negative evaluation; LSA= Liebowitz social anxiety

Table 2

Social Anxiety a Predictor of Fear of Negative Evaluation

Predictors	B	SD	Beta	T	p
Constant	32.23	6.62		4.88	0.001
BFNE	0.89	0.19	0.29	4.65	0.001

*Note: BFNE= Brief fear of negative evaluation; $R^2 = .087$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.83$, ($F(1,228) = 21.694$, $p < 0.001$) * $p < 0.001$*

Table 2 shows regression analysis shows that there is a significant relationship between fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety, $t = 4.88$, p -value 0.001, $p < 0.05$. Which is also consistent with the previous research, dread of negative assessment is accepted to advance the improvement and articulation of more broad feelings of trepidation, nervousness, and psychopathologies. (Reiss & McNally, 1985).

Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviation, t and p value of Perceived Fear of Negative Evaluation in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students.

Group	N	M	SD	SE _M	t	P	Cohen's d
Male	110	32	7.01	0.66	-2.23	0.02	0.29
Female	120	34	6.56	0.59			

Note: df=228 95% CI -3.76, -0.23

Table 4

Mean, Standard Deviation and p value of Perceive Social Anxiety between Male and Female Students.

Group	N	M	SD	SE _M	t	P	Cohen's d
Male	110	58.29	6.92	0.65	-5.17	.001	0.68
Female	120	63.27	7.62	0.69			

Note: df=227 95% CI= -6.86, -3.09

Table 4 shows that female students shows high level of social anxiety than male students.

Table 5

Mean, standard deviation and p value of perceive social anxiety undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Group	N	M	SD	SE _M	t	P	Cohen's d
UG	129	64.10	7.95	0.7	14.23	.001	1.91
PG	101	50.10	6.64	0.66			

Note: UG= Undergraduate students; PG=Postgraduate students, df=228, 95% CI 12.10, 15.89

Table 5 shows that undergraduate students have high level of social anxiety than postgraduate students.

Discussion

As hypothesized brief fear of negative assessment produce social nervousness in university students analysis shows that there is positive correlation between them, $r=0.001$, $p<0.05$. Which is consistent with the previous research “people with social anxiety have more tendency to produce negative feelings about their affect and bodily symptoms” (Edelmann & Baker, 2002) and “fear of negative evaluation is a hallmark feature of social anxiety disorders (Rapee, R. M., & Heimberg, R. G. (1997).”

Female students have more fear of negative evaluation than male students. Analysis of this hypothesis shows that there is a significant difference between value of fear of negative evaluation in male and female students. ”Girls are more worried about what others are thinking or judging about their behavior and particularly about negative evaluations of their peer group (La Greca & Lopez, 1998), than are boys. Girls may also able to internalize their problems more effectively than boys, which may make them more sensitive towards negative evaluations (La Greca& Lopez, 1998).” As male students are more social and accept the social situation more comfortably than females they have less social anxiety than female students which is reliable with past research "Social tension issue is deliver in early existence of a person which may proceeds into adulthood, and is more typical in females. (Kessler, Berglund, Demler, Jin, & Walters, 2005; Wittchen et al., 1999).

Conclusions

On basis of discussion the finding suggest that dread of negative assessment deliver social tension in university students. Both male and female student indicates dread of negative assessment and social uneasiness.

Limitations and suggestions

Limited data was available on brief fear of negative assessment and social uneasiness. Sample was only restricted on young adults (university students) so, sampling technique is not best to representative for whole population. The represented sample should be increased for getting more reliable and valid results. The idea of dread of negative evaluation and

social nervousness is exceptionally wide, more work ought to be done on it to investigate all the more profoundly. New analysts can investigate their ideas in more profundity with new varieties. Other variables can also give more accurate results and information. In future the study should be conducted with interviews as well as scale.

Reference

- Albano, A.M. & Detweiler, M.F. (2001) *The Developmental and Clinical Impact of Social Anxiety and Social Phobia in Children and Adolescents*. In Hofmann, S.G. and DiBartolo, P.M. (eds). *From Social Anxiety to Social Phobia: Multiple Perspectives*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Andrews, F (1991). *Measures of Personality and Social Psychological Attitudes*. San Diego, CA: Gulf Professional Publishing.
- Boundless. "Correlational Research." Boundless Psychology. Boundless, 22 Sep. 2014. Retrieved 10 Dec. 2014
- Chen, V., & Drummond, P. D. (2008). Fear of negative evaluation augments negative affect and somatic symptoms in social-evaluative situations. *Cognition and Emotion*: 22(1), 21-43.
- Child Development*, Vol. 66, No.6 (Dec 1995) "Role of Social Withdrawal, Social Anxiety, and Locus of Control"
- Collins, K.A., Westra, H.A., Dozois, D.J.A., Stewart, S. H. (2005). The validity of the brief version of the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale. *Journal of anxiety disorders*: 19: 345-359
- de Jong PJ, Sportel BE, de Hullu E, Nauta MH (March 2012). "Co-occurrence of social anxiety and depression symptoms in adolescence: differential links with implicit and explicit self-esteem?". *Psychological Medicine* 42 (3): 475–84. doi:10.1017/S0033291711001358.PMID 21798114
- Den, J.A. (1997). "Social Phobia". *British Medical Journal* 315 (7111): 796–800.
- Fresco, D.M., Coles, M.E., Heimberg, R.G., Liebowitz, M.R., Hami, S., Stein, M.B., Goetz, D. (2001). The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale: a comparison of the psychometric properties of self-report and clinician-administered formats. *Psychological Medicine*, 31(1), 1025-1035.
- Garcia-Lopez, L. J. (2013). "Tratando...trastorno de ansiedad social/Treating...social anxiety disorder". Madrid: Piramide.

- Goldin, P.R., Ziv, M., Jazaieri, H., Hahn K., Heimberg, R. (2013, October). Impact of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Social Anxiety Disorder on the Neural Dynamics of Cognitive Reappraisal of Negative Self-beliefs, *JAMA Psychiatry*, 2013;70(10):1048-1056.
- Harold Leitenberg (1990) "Handbook of Social and Evaluation Anxiety", ISBN 0-306-43438-5
- Hayes, Steven. "State of the ACT Evidence". *ContextualPsychology.org*.
- Jacobs, Andrew M. "Social Anxiety Disorder and Social Phobia". Retrieved 14 November 2012
- La Greca, A. M., & Lopez, N. (1998). Social anxiety among adolescents: Linkages with peer relations and friendships. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 26, 83–94.
- Leary, M (1983). "A Brief Version of the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale". *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 9 (3): 371–75. doi:10.1177/0146167283093007. Retrieved 13 November 2012.
- Leary, M. R. (1983). A brief version of the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 9, 371-375.
- Liebowitz MR. Social Phobia. *Mod Probl Pharmacopsychiatry* 1987;22:141-173.
- Liebowitz. "Test for Social Anxiety Disorder." Test for Social Anxiety Disorder. Columbia University Medical Center, n.d. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
- Mayo clinic: Social anxiety disorder (social phobia)
- Mennin, D. S., Fresco, D. M., Heimberg, R. G., Schneier, F. R., Davies, S. O., & Liebowitz, M. R. (2002). Screening for social anxiety disorder in the clinical setting: using the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale. *Journal of anxiety disorders*, 16(6), 661-673.
- Rapee, R. M., & Heimberg, R. G. (1997). A cognitive-behavioral model of anxiety in social phobia. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 35, 741–756.
- Reiss, S., & McNally, R. J. (1985). The expectancy model of fear. In: S. Reiss, & R. R. Bootzin (Eds.), *Theoretical issues in behaviour therapy* (pp. 107–121). New York: Academic Press.
- Rytwinski NK, Fresco DM, Heimberg RG, et al. Screening for social anxiety disorder with the self-report version of the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale. *Depression and Anxiety*.
- Rytwinski, N. K.; Fresco, D. M.; Heimberg, R. G.; Coles, M. E.; Liebowitz, M. R.; Cissell, S.; Stein, M. B.; Hofmann, S. G. (2009). "Screening

- for social anxiety disorder with the self-report version of the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale". *Depression and Anxiety* 26 (1): 34–38. doi:10.1002/da.20503. PMID 18781659
- Stein, M. B., Jang, K. L., & Livesley, W. J. (2002). Heritability of social anxiety-related concerns and personality characteristics: a twin study. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 190, 219–224.
- The Kim Foundation (2012). *Mental Disorders in America National Institute of Mental Health*, The Kim Foundation
- Watson, D; R Friend (1969). "Measurement of Social-evaluative Anxiety". *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 33 (4): 448–57. doi:10.1037/h0027806)
- WebMD Anxiety & Panic Disorders Health Center: Social Anxiety Disorder
- Weeks, J. W., Heimberg, R. G., Fresco, D. M., Hart, T. A., Turk, C. L., Schneider, F. R., Liebowitz, M. R. (2005). Empirical Validation and Psychometric Evaluation of the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale in Patients with Social Anxiety Disorder. *Psychological Assessment*, 17, 179-190.
- Wittchen, H.-U., Stein, M. B., & Kessler, R. C. (1999). Social fears and social phobia in a community sample of adolescents and young adults: Prevalence, risk factors and co-morbidity. *Psychological Medicine*, 29, 309-323.
- Yates, Daniel S.; David S. Moore; Daren S. Starnes (2008). *The Practice of Statistics, 3rd Ed.* Freeman. ISBN 978-0-7167-7309-2.