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Impact of Self-Efficacy on Social Anxiety among Young Female Adults

Saloni Sikka¹¹Psychology, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India.Primary Contact : sikkasaloni94@gmail.com

Abstract

Social anxiety can have adverse effects on the life of young adults in every domain. It can hinder their capability to uphold and make new connections with people. On the other hand, self-efficacy is related to the level of competence in various situations people encounter. The research aimed to study the relationship of Self-Efficacy and Social Anxiety among young adults. Standardised tools were used to measure self-efficacy and social anxiety among young adults. A total sample of 40 females was collected between the ages of 18-25 years. The results of the study found that higher the self-efficacy in an individual i.e., the belief in their ability to accomplish a task, lower is their social anxiety. This implies that accomplishment of tasks and goals instils confidence and makes a person outgoing. In addition to reducing a person's social anxiety, completing their duties makes them more confident and they do not hesitate to speak or behave in a community setting.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Social Anxiety, Females, Young Adults

Introduction

"Self-belief does not necessarily ensure success, but self-disbelief assuredly spawns failure." College students between the ages of 18 and 25 are going through a period of evolution in their respective lives, where each one encounters numerous variations. Young girls at this age come across persistent changes that are essential for them to find out their distinctive paths

in different spheres of life. They are undergoing the process of transitioning from adolescence to adulthood. It is the age where a lot of hormonal changes take place as well. During the years of adolescence, there is lack of self-efficacy in general. However, this is not prevalent in every individual. Young adults, who are appreciated in their family, are outgoing, score well in their high school and universities tend to be high on self-efficacy. Family and home environment plays a major role in developing self-efficacy.

Due to low self-efficacy an individual feels incompetent, does not believe in his/her abilities or feels that he/she lacks certain abilities that are needed to accomplish certain tasks or life goals. This creates a feeling of shame, restlessness, helplessness, loss of confidence and low motivation to do something. Due to low self-efficacy an individual is unable to set goals for themselves as they fear that they wouldn't be able to achieve them.

Young girls, because of fear of negative evaluation, tend to avoid social interactions and events. Childhood traumas also play a major role in increased social anxiety. Social anxiety does not allow the young adults to indulge or involve in any social activities or relationships. Teenagers that suffer from social anxiety are very conscious about themselves and frequently have a very negative self - perception regarding their physical, emotional, and intellectual abilities.

Young adults with high symptoms of social anxiety are at increased risk of developing a variety of disabling psychiatric disorders. Social anxiety is a spectrum condition. Close relationships are linked to better moods, yet socially anxious people have smaller networks of confidants and spend fewer hours with their close relationships. Socially nervous people appear to gain more from the company of their closest friends, with lower levels of adverse mood, anxiety, and depression, even while higher levels of social anxiety are linked to a general worsening of mood. On the other hand, social anxiety levels varied independently of duration spent with close companions, co-workers, and strangers (Hur et al., 2019).

Self-Efficacy

According to Albert Bandura (1977), "Self -efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments." According to Akhtar (2008), "Self-Efficacy is the belief we have in our own abilities, specifically our ability to meet the challenges ahead of us and complete a task successfully."

Self-Efficacy is defined as the composite of important successes and failures that are attributed to the self (Shelton, 1990).

People may concurrently have strong self-efficacy for certain tasks and poor self-efficacy for others. This is because self-efficacy tends to be task specific. Self-efficacy is typically easier to build as compared to self-confidence or self-esteem because it is more focused and limited than the other two variables. Also, self-efficacy is a considerably more accurate predictor of a person's performance than either self-confidence or self-esteem (Heslin & Klehe, 2006). Since self-efficacy is linked to several positive outcomes, particularly in the domains of physical and mental health, it has emerged as a key variable in social psychological

research. It is also found to be significantly consistent with accomplishment, independence, and mastery (Gecas, 1989).

Research has indicated that there may be differences in the level of self-efficacy based on age and gender. Artistico and Cervone (2003), hypothesised that the significance of problems to younger and older individuals would influence differences in self-efficacy beliefs and problem-solving ability across age groups. Results indicated that young adults showed higher self-efficacy beliefs as compared to old adults on everyday problems significant to the young adults. However, in the old adult problem domain, it was seen that the self-efficacy beliefs of older adults were more than that of young adults.

Social Anxiety

According to Leary (1982), social anxiety is anxiety that results from the prospect or presence of personal evaluation as well as fear of social failure and criticism. According to Cassano et al., (2003) social anxiety disorder is defined by the core feature of excessive fear of embarrassment, which is often accompanied by avoidance of social or public situations. According to Kagan et al., (1988) behavioural inhibition is present in a child when she responds to new and unfamiliar situations by a large amount of sympathetic arousal and withdrawal.

In a study by Mick and Telch (1998) the findings do not bear out the claim that a history of behavioural inhibition in childhood is linked to anxiety symptoms more generally. This conclusion is backed by the fact that neither the generalised anxiety group nor the non-anxious control group participants were more likely to report childhood behavioural inhibition. Conversely, the findings lend some credence to the specificity of a link between social anxiety and behavioural inhibition: In comparison to participants reporting only generalised anxiety or participants reporting neither social nor generalised anxiety, respondents disclosing present impairment due to social anxiety, whether either alone in combination with generalised anxiety, reported significantly more childhood behavioural inhibition.

Methodology

Purpose

The research aimed to study the relationship of Self-Efficacy and Social Anxiety among young female adults.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant relationship between self-efficacy and social anxiety among young adults.

Sample

The questionnaires were administered to a total of 40 young girls between the age group 18-25.

Measures

The following standardised tests and tools were used:

- **General Self- Efficacy Scale (GSE):** The questionnaire was developed by Schwarzer & Jerusalem (1995). It is a self-report measure of self-efficacy. The scale has 10 items. The scale has items including, 'If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want' and 'Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations'. The score is obtained by summing all the items, the scores lie between 10-40. High score indicates high self-efficacy and vice versa. The items are scored on a Likert scale ranging from 'Not at all true' to 'exactly true'. General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) has an internal reliability which is equal to Cronbach's alpha between .76 and .90.
- **Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS):** The questionnaire was developed by Liebowitz (1987). The scale has 24 items measuring performance (fear and avoidance) and social interaction (fear and avoidance). 13 items in the scale are related to performance and 11 items are related to social circumstances. The scale has items including, 'Talking face to face with someone you don't know very well' and 'Expressing disagreement or disapproval to someone you don't know very well'. The item responses range from 'none' to 'severe'. A score above 95 indicates very severe anxiety. Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS) has a high internal validity.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through Google forms. Each participant was thanked for their cooperation. Standardised psychological tests were administered to the participants.

Results

Table 1*N, Mean, and Standard Deviation*

	Self-Eff- icacy	Performa-nce Fear	Performance Avoidance	Social Interaction Fear	Social Interaction Avoidance	Total Social Anxiety
N	41	41	41	41	41	41
Mean	29.1	14.0	15.4	9.93	11.4	50.8
Standar d deviatio n	5.17	5.06	6.71	6.16	5.63	20.4

Table 2*Correlation of variables*

	Self-Efficacy	Performance Fear	Performance Avoidance	Social Interaction Fear	Social Interaction Avoidance	Total Social Anxiety
Self-Efficacy	—					
Performance Fear	-0.665 ***	—				
Performance Avoidance	-0.516 ***	0.738 ***	—			
Social Interaction Fear	-0.565 ***	0.770 ***	0.530 ***	—		

Social	-0.553 ***	0.585 ***	0.621 ***	0.747 ***	—
Interaction					
Avoidance					
Total Social	-0.659 ***	0.887 ***	0.845 ***	0.875 ***	0.85 ***
Anxiety					3

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion of Results

The main objective of this study was to gather better information about the relationship between self-efficacy and social anxiety. The results found out that there is significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and social anxiety. The Social Anxiety Scale had 4 sub-dimensions including Performance Fear, Performance Avoidance, Social Interaction Fear and Social Interaction Avoidance.

Our results, according to Table 2, found out that there is a significant negative correlation between Self-Efficacy and Social Anxiety ($r = -0.659$, $p < 0.001$). Table 2 showed that there was a significant negative relationship between performance fear and self-efficacy ($r = -0.665$, $p < 0.001$). Dempsey and Comeau (2019) conducted a study on young musicians and obtained a strong negative relationship between performance anxiety and self-efficacy.

There is also a negative correlation between Performance Avoidance and Self-Efficacy ($r = -0.516$, $p < 0.001$). According to Table 2 there is a significant negative correlation between Social Interaction Fear and Self-Efficacy ($r = -0.565$, $p < 0.005$). There is also a significant negative correlation between Social Integration Avoidance and Self-Efficacy ($r = -0.553$, $p < 0.005$).

Overall, the research supports the idea that there is a negative correlation between self-efficacy and anxiety. Higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with lower levels of anxiety, and self-efficacy may even play a protective role against the development of anxiety disorders. Studies have shown that self-efficacy can buffer the negative effects of performance fear on performance. A study by Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) found that self-efficacy moderated the relationship between performance fear and academic performance, such that individuals with higher self-efficacy were less affected by performance fear. Studies have consistently found

that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with lower levels of performance avoidance. A study by Chemers et al. (2001) found that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy were less likely to avoid academic tasks than those with low self-efficacy.

Studies have consistently found that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with lower levels of social interaction fear. For example, a study by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) found that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy reported less social anxiety in a variety of social situations than those with low self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can buffer the negative effects of social interaction avoidance on social functioning. For example, a study by Lundh and Ost (2017) found that self-efficacy moderated the relationship between social avoidance and social functioning, such that individuals with higher self-efficacy were less affected by social avoidance.

Conclusion

Social anxiety could have an adverse effect on the life of young girls in every aspect whereas self-efficacy was related to the level of competence in each situation. The research aimed to study the relationship of self-efficacy and social anxiety among young girls. Standardised tools were used to measure self-efficacy and social anxiety among young girls. A total sample of 40 females was collected in the age 18-25 years. The results of the study found that higher was the self-efficacy in an individual i. e., belief in their ability to accomplish a task, lower was the social anxiety. This implied that accomplishment of tasks and goals instilled confidence and made a person outgoing. In addition to reducing a person's social anxiety, completing the duties made them more confident and prouder of themselves, so they did not hesitate to speak or behave in a community setting.

Recommendations

Self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of completing duties and overcoming obstacles. Encouraging young adults to set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, pertinent, and time-bound) goals that are attainable enables them to concentrate on the task at hand and feel a sense of accomplishment when their objectives are met.

For young individuals to feel confident in their abilities, they require positive feedback. Young adults can increase their sense of self-efficacy by acquiring new skills and mastering tasks. A development mindset is the belief that one's abilities can be enhanced through hard

work and perseverance thus young adults must learn to view obstacles as learning and growth opportunities, rather than as obstacles to be avoided.

Social anxiety is a prevalent mental disorder that can cause significant distress in social settings. Seeking professional assistance is the first stage in addressing social anxiety. A professional in mental health can provide an accurate diagnosis and make treatment recommendations. Learning relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and meditation can aid in alleviating the physical manifestations of anxiety. Regular exercise has been shown to decrease anxiety and enhance mood. Regular exercise can aid in the management of social anxiety.

Caffeine and alcohol can exacerbate anxiety symptoms. Research has shown that reducing or avoiding the consumption of these substances helps reduce social anxiety. Connecting with others provides a source of social support and alleviates feelings of isolation. Overcoming social anxiety requires perseverance and time. It is possible to reduce anxiety and increase social confidence with perseverance and a willingness to seek assistance.

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