Parenting Style of Socially Anxious and Non- Anxious Students

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The purpose of the present study was to investigate the parenting style of socially anxious university students. A total sample of 500 students (250 male and 250 females) ranging in age from 17to 25 years were selected from different universities. Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale and Measure of Parenting Style were used to assess social anxiety disorder and parenting style of students. It was hypothesized that Social anxiety will be high among female students as compared to male students. Socially anxious students will report overprotective and rejecting it was further assumed that parents of socially anxious students would be more over protective and rejecting as compared to those of non-anxious students. Scores on liebowitz social anxiety scale indicated that female students are more anxious as compared to male students. Findings of the present study supported both the hypotheses.

Keywords: overprotective parenting style, rejecting parenting style, social anxiety disorder, university students

Diana Baumrind (1983) classified the parenting styles used by people to discipline their children in three categories: *authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative*. Authoritarian parents are openly critical of their children and frequently give them instructions on how to behave. Rules are enforced by punishing the children who do not obey them. Such parents do not discuss pros and cons of any issue with their children. . These parents are demanding and directing and expect their children to always agree to parental commands. Permissive parents accept the decisions made by the children and exercise less control on children. The limits are not defined by the parents rather children define their own rules and regulations regarding their activities. Parents are not demanding for high level behavior like authoritative parents. Authoritative parents show their children that they are loved and respected but provide the amount of authority that the child needs (Lahey, 2004). ·

Parents play a very crucial role in the development of our personalities. Parental care responsiveness and warmth constitute a parenting style that has largely been associated with positive outcomes. On the other hand, the parenting style that focuses on parental control and protection is often associated with high levels of trait anxiety and depression (Wood et al.,, 2003). Psychologists believe that extraordinary restrictions as well as care may cause psychological problems and bear negative consequences for development of children's personalities. For example, Anhalt et al. (2008) found that parents of children suffering from social anxiety are often rejecting, over protecting and have no social warmth (Arrindell, Emmelkamp, Monsma, & Brilman, 1983; Arrindell, et al., 1989). A review of literature reveals that people with trait anxiety and depression frequently report that their mothers are overprotective and do not care for them (Parker, 1979), whereas, fathers of people suffering

from anxiety neurosis were found to be less caring and overprotective (Parker, 1981).

Darcy, Davila, and Beck (2005) found that there was a link between social anxiety and preoccupied and fearful attachment styles. They also reported that the students with social anxiety were less assertive, had high level interpersonal tension, used to avoid the conflicting situations, and were not willing to express their emotions and dependence as compared to the students with less social anxiety (Nialsen, 2009).

According to Ozturk and Mutlu (2011) in order to be happy, people need to have active communication with others in the society. In actual practice, there are many students who fail to actively communicate with others due to certain reasons,such as, a person's happiness level, personal well-being level, affection styles and social anxiety. This study was conducted to examine the relationship between personal well-being, affection style, happiness in relationship and social anxiety. The researchers reported that a positive correlation between personal well-being and happiness in relationship. Moreover, the level of social anxiety was higher in fearful, preoccupied and dismissing students as compared to attached students. However, the level of personal wellbeing in socially anxious students was lower.

Liliana (2002) investigated social anxiety symptoms in both genders across social anxiety spectrum and the relationship with other psychopathological features. The sample chosen consisted of 250. The two questionnaires used to gather data were: The Social Anxiety Spectrum Self report (SHY-SR), which discovers the social anxiety spectrum, and the general spectrum measure (GSM), which discovers panic-agoraphobia, temper, obsessive-compulsive, and eating behavior features. The mean total score for SHY-SR was higher in female students as compared to that of male students and gender differences were mainly marked for interpersonal sensitivity field. Similarly, the scores on general spectrum measure were higher for female students as

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compared to male students excluding the manic section. These findings suggests that more symptoms were seen in female students as compared to male students and the social anxiety spectrum profile of both genders was different quantitatively but it was same qualitatively.

According to Shah and Kataria (2010) 19.5% of the respondents comprising a sample of 380 under graduate university students had social anxiety disorder in varied degrees. Furthermore, social anxiety was found to affect the performance at work , social life as well as family life. Besides, social anxiety seem to have significantly affected their quality of life The most commonly occurring fear was performing in front of people. These students also reported several clinical manifestations that had affected their educational, social and interpersonal life.

Hypotheses
1. Social anxiety will be high among female students as compared to male students.
2. Parents of socially anxious students are more overprotective and rejecting as compared to those of non-anxious students.

Method

Sample
A sample comprising of 500 students ranging in age from 17to 25 years, including an equal number of male (n=250) and female (n=250) from MSc (1st to final year) were randomly selected from various colleges and universities of Nowshehra, Swabi and Peshawar

Instruments

In- Depth clinical Interview was conducted for each student in order to gather relevant information regarding personal information, educational background, nature of problems they face, frequency and duration of the problem experience and the information regarding presence of any psychopathology.

Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (1987) was developed by Michael Liebowitz in order to evaluate the patients suffering from social anxiety disorder in terms of their performance in society as well as social interaction with other people. This scale consists of 24 items which show the possible range of the social anxiety severity rating. There are four subscales which provide the following score: *Performance fears; performance avoidance; social fear; and social avoidance.* The Liebowitz social anxiety scale is valid, reliable and treatment sensitive measure for social anxiety disorder (Michael Liebowitz1987).

Measure of parental style (1997) was developed by Parker and Rousseos to overcome shortcomings on the parental bond instrument. The MOPS is a self-assessment tool to measure perceived parenting styles across the following three measures; indifference, abuse and over control. The alpha reliability of this measure is .82 and has excellent face validity (Parker and Roussos 1997).

Procedure
Permission was taken from different universities of Swabi, Nowshehra and Peshawar. 500 students including 250 males and 250 females were randomly selected. from 1st year to final year of MSc. Rapport was developed with the students and they were asked to fill consent form in order to ensure their willingness to participate in the process.

After getting informed consent, clinical interview was conducted in order to gather personal information, educational background, nature of problem they face, interval and strength of the problem and the information regarding any psychopathology. In the next step, Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale was administered on them. The students, who scored from 55 to 80, were further assessed with the symptom checklist of social anxiety disorder derived from DSM IV in order to screen them for social anxiety disorder. Those students who scored less than 55 was excluded and those who scored greater than 55 were included for further investigation.

In the second phase, the impact of social anxiety disorder on perceived parenting style of socially anxious students was investigated through Measure of Parental Style (MOPS).

In the third phase of the study, Measure of parental style was administered on non-anxious students in an individual setting to get relevant information about their perceived parenting style.

Results

The purpose of this research was to study Parenting style of socially anxious and non anxious university students. The researcher empirically examined the relationship of social anxiety disorder with over control and rejecting parenting style. The results are presented in the following tables:

Table 1

Gender distribution of Non anxious and anxious students (N=500)

	Non Anxious (N= 212)	Anxious (N= 288)	Total
Male	125 (50%)	125 (50%)	250
Female	87 (34.8%)	163 (65.2%)	250

$\chi^2_{(1)} = 11.825;$** p<.01

Table 1 shows the frequencies of male and female students comprising anxious and non anxious groups. Our data show that female students are more anxious than male students as 65.2% of female students reported anxiety whereas only 50% male students were classified as anxious. Chi-Square value shows that the gender difference frequency is statistically significant (p<.01).

Table 2

Mean difference and t- value showing significance of difference between anxious and non anxious students on Over Control Parenting Style sub scale of Measure of Parenting Style (N=500)

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Non – Anxious	213	3.75	2.594	
				8.824***
Anxious	287	6.05	3.042	

***p<.001; df=498

Table 2 shows that anxious students scored higher on Over Control Parenting Style as compared to non anxious students. These finding suggests that over anxious students come from families where parents exercise strict discipline.

Table 3

Mean difference and t- value showing significance of difference between anxious and non anxious students on Rejecting Parenting Style sub scale of Measure of Parenting Style (N=500)

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Non – Anxious	213	1.16	1.891	
				9.905***
Anxious	287	3.44	2.928	

***p<.001; df=498

Table 3 shows that anxious students scored higher rejecting parenting style as compared to non anxious students. These results show that anxious students perceived their parents as more rejecting than accepting.

Discussion

The present study examined the parenting style of socially anxious university students. The overall results indicate a significant difference between socially anxious male and female students', vis-a-vis their parenting style used to discipline the children.. These findings supported our first hypothesis, that is, female students seem to be higher on Liebotwitz Social anxiety as compared to male students (Table 1).

In this study, we found that out of 250 male students 50 percent were anxious while out of 250 female students 65.2 percent were found to be anxious which clearly shows that the number female students suffering from social anxiety is higher. Conradt (1999) also reported similar findings. He showed that there were more females who were detected with social anxiety disorder and the severity of their disorder kept on increasing with age. The strength of social fear was higher among females as compared to social anxiety. Social anxiety is also found among patients with depressive somatoform, and substance use disorders. According to the present findings it has been found that generalized social anxiety disorder which is a sub type of social anxiety disorder is more among female students. These findings are an line with earlier researches. A review of literature shows that there is a positive correlation between DSM IV social anxiety among adults and adolescents and those of occurrences,

weaknesses and patterns of co-ombordity between generalized and non-generalized social anxious people. It was also seen that the occurrence of life time social anxiety in females is higher than males. In females the percentage is 9.5 whereas in males it is 4.9 percent. the patients of social anxiety report an early onset, more persistent signs and symptoms, more severe damages, more co-morbidity, higher cure rates and indicated that their parents were suffering from the same disorder as compared to those of non-generalized social anxiety (Wittchen and Kessler 1999).

Stein and colleagues (2000) studied how the social anxiety affects the lifestyle, the functioning of life, and the person's level of satisfaction. They also suggested that depression is a very common condition seen in the people suffering from social anxiety. They studied all the factors mentioned in accordance with the age, sex and social status and class. They presented that females were more likely to suffer from social anxiety and it was also noticed that level of social anxiety was significantly higher among the age group of 15 to 24 years.

Keeping in view the above mentioned facts, there are certain factors and reasons which cause social anxiety disorder in females as compared to those of males. In our culture, males are dominated and they receive special care and attention from the parents. They are preferred in families and on the other hand, females do not achieve such attention. This is the major factor which affects the personality and psychology of females. This leads to social anxiety disorder and as a result, females remain unable to show their abilities and even feel uncomfortable in social gatherings. Similarly there is another major issue in our society is that, when the female students leave for the universities they have to face obstacles in the form of pressure from families, male dominant society factors, lack of due respect, because of these factors female are very much conscious regarding their image and any mishap in the university or college may bring bad name for them. So, all these factors are playing an important role in the growth of social anxiety disorder among female students.

The result of the study yield consistent relationship between social anxiety disorder and parenting style which is in accordance with the second hypothesis. That is "Socially anxious students will report overprotective and rejecting parenting style as compared to nonanxious students" (Table 2 and 3). The results also reveal the fact that the scores of socially anxious students are very high of parenting style scale than those of non-anxious students. These findings are in accordance with the research done in past. Bogels, Oosten and, Smulders (2000) explored whether the students who are more anxious are of the view that their parents are very protective, rejecting and do not show warmth to their children. They also tend to emphasize that parent's opinions are always right and there is a lack of social activities from the parents. The parents do not encourage social interactions. They also investigated whether the parents of socially anxious students believe that these practices are right and they themselves are socially anxious and have fears of interacting with others. It was seen that this affects the

children and develops social anxiety among them. The children who were overprotected by their mothers were found to be more socially anxious. In additions, the mothers who themselves were socially anxious had socially anxious children. Caster (1999) investigated what children think about the parenting styles of their parents, family environment and the effects on children's social anxiety. The children who were socially anxious reported that their parents have very few social interactions, gave importance to their own opinions, thought that they are shy and not good performers and were socially inactive as compared to those with lower levels of social anxiety.

As far as the parents' opinions are concerned regarding the parenting styles, the views were almost same of both parents of socially anxious and non-socially anxious children.

The findings of the present study as well as literature review, reveals that unnecessary restriction in the form instructions/dictations of parents in every field and sphere of life, cause social anxiety disorder among children. However children of those parents, who have the normal and mediocre attitude, do not face such type of psychological disorder. Similarly the social anxiety disorder is found more in the children who are usually criticized by their parents. This has also been found comparatively higher in the children of those parents who are preoccupied others opinion regarding their children. Furthermore the parents who do not pay proper attention and are careless and ignore their children, they will have to suffer a lot from social anxiety disorder.

Conclusion

To conclude, social anxiety seems higher among female students. They largely perceived their parenting style as overprotective and rejecting. Thus the results of the present study and the feedback of the students supported the assumptions that social anxiety will be high among female students as compared to male students. Furthermore, socially anxious students perceived their parenting style as overprotective and rejecting as compared to non-anxious students.

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