

Social Anxiety in Youth: Does Self - Esteem Matter

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Abstract

Background: Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) is one of the most prevalent mental diseases in the world, especially among college students. SAD interferes with other psychological problems such as low self-esteem which can lead to emotional issues and have a detrimental impact on a variety of areas including academic success, professional growth, and interpersonal relationships.

Objectives: To find out the relationship between students' social anxiety and their self-esteem.

Methods: The correlation study was conducted on 378 college students who were selected by simple random sampling method to select colleges within Diyala university and then used stratified simple sampling to select study participants in each college.

Results: The result show highly significant relationship (reverse relationship) between self-esteem and social anxiety among university students at p-value=0.001 respectively.

Conclusion: The study concluded that high a significant relationship (reverse relationship) between self-esteem and social anxiety among the students. That means when one increase other one decrease. Recommended: Taking into account students' psychological and social requirements because they are so important to their future success, encouraging pupils with low self-esteem to engage in social activities, group projects, and other social engagements in order to help them develop a positive self-image.

Keywords: Social anxiety disorder • Youth

Introduction

Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) One of the most prevalent mental diseases, encompasses both social phobia and traditional forms of social anxiety. People with social anxiety feel fear and anxiousness in social performance and interpersonal communication situations, which has a significant negative impact on a variety of aspects of their lives. Moreover, Social anxiety increases the risk of developing major depressive disorder and has a high comorbidity rate with other mental disorders. social anxiety is the third most prevalent mental illness in the world, develops when a person must connect with others as needed. typically starts in the early to mid-teens, but it can also start in younger children or adults and includes fear, anxiety, and avoidance that interferes with daily tasks, such as working or attending university, as well as other activities [1-6].

According to Bogels, social anxiety is the continuous worry that a person may behave shamefully or exhibit anxiety symptoms in one or more performance settings in which they are with unknown individuals. Moreover, research show that younger people are more likely to have social anxiety than older adults; rates of prevalence are around 10% by the end of adolescence, and 90% of instances start by age 23.

Self-esteem has a direct impact on psychological health and determines a person's personality. Self-esteem has long been a major source of anxiety for psychologists as a vital issue in anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

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Therefore, having poor self-esteem will complicate it for someone to adjust to their communication environment, make them more sensitive to rejection from others, and raise their social anxiety. As a result, social anxiety and self-esteem are substantially associated [7]. According to scientific research, college students with poor self-esteem responded to challenging tasks with higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol and were more prone to experience unpleasant emotions and mental health issues [8], also had harmful consequences on students' pleasure as well as their academic success and motivation.

The importance of the study lies in shedding light on this segment of university students they are the chosen elite for building and reconstructing society, and they are the aspired hope for all developed societies that aim for development., due to the frequent incidence of this disease and the psychological disorders they may suffer from that may affect the extent of their acceptance of society and the extent of their ability to control their emotions due to their disturbed psychological states [9]. He cannot communicate in society and resorts to introversion, fear of confrontation and distance from others, with a tendency to loneliness. The variables of the study are social anxiety and self-esteem among the central variables in psychological studies. Social anxiety is considered one of the most important diseases that appear in the current era, which has received great attention from the researchers in the study achievement and motivation [10].

Globally, there are little study examine relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem among college student. In addition, in Iraq not fond study to examine this topic, for this reason, the current study, in this way, filled this gap by examining the relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem among college students in Diyala government in Iraq. Based on these gaps, the researcher decided to conduct this study to assess the following objectives. The aim of the study to find out the relationship between student's self-esteem and their social anxiety [11-16].

Methods

Study design

Correlational descriptive study, this type of design comprises the gathering

of information on the existence or amount of one or more variables of interest through application of questionnaire (demographic characteristic, social anxiety scale (22 items) and Self-esteem scale (10 items)).

Study sitting

This study was conducted at university of Diyala in Iraq.

Study sample

The sample of this study comprised students in university of Diyala. The minimum sample size is 378 participants according to the target population 21284 university student's and margin of errors 5% and confidence level 95%.

Study instrument

The data for this study were collected using questionnaire (see appendix) which consist three parts

- Socio-demographic characteristics' included age, gender, marital status, economic status of family, with whom do you live, type of college, educational level, educational level of mother, job of mother, educational level of father, job of father
- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
- Leibowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS).

Data collection

The researcher reassured participants that their data would be kept secure

and secret. Participants in the sample were also informed that their names would remain confidential. According to the researcher, the participants were also informed that their identification would stay private during the study's initiation, publication, and/or after publishing. All participants gave the researcher permission to record their replies, which are then stored for data analysis. The data collection started from November 1, 2022 till March 1, 2023.

Statistical analysis

The data were analyzed and interpreted through use of the application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26.0.

Result

Tables 1 and 2 indicates that more than half of university students are associated with high self-esteem as seen among 57.1% of them (M ± SD= 30.82 ± 3.884).

Table 3 illustrates that 43.2% of the students are associated with mild social anxiety level (M ± SD= 29.43 ± 16.837) and 16.1% are associated with moderate level of social anxiety.

Table 4 exhibits that there is high significant relationship (reverse relationship) between self-esteem and social anxiety among the students as seen with high significant reverse correlation at p-value=0.001 respectively.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics

List	Characteristics	F	%	
1	Age M ± SD= 20.5 ± 2	18 year– less than 21 year	202	53.4
		21 year– less than 24 year	144	38.1
		24 year– less than 27 year	32	8.5
		Total	378	100
2	Gender	Male	135	35.7
		Female	243	64.3
		Total	378	100
3	Residency	Urban	297	78.6
		Rural	81	21.4
		Total	378	100
4	Marital status	Unmarried	342	90.4
		Married	34	9
		Divorced	1	0.3
		Widowed/er	1	0.3
		Total	378	100
5	Living with	Both parent	275	72.8
		One parent	42	11.1
		Student's apartment	40	10.5
		Husband's/wife's family	21	5.6
		Total	378	100
6	College specialty	Scientific	259	68.5
		Humanity	119	31.5
		Total	378	100
7	Academic stage	First	166	67
		Second	67	17.7
		Third	76	20.1
		Fourth	40	10.6
		Fifth	29	7.6
		Total	378	100
8	Monthly income (Iraqi Dinar)	Less than 300000	106	28
		300000 – 600000	119	31.5
		601000 – 900000	79	20.9
		901000 – 1200000	22	5.8
		1201000 – 1500000	27	7.1
		More than 1500000	25	6.7
		Total	378	100

f: Frequency, %: Percentage, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation

Table 2. Assessment of self-esteem levels among university students

Self-Esteem	F	%	M	SD
Low	5	1.3	30.82	3.884
Normal	157	41.5		
High	216	57.1		
Total	378	100		

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

M: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation for total score

Low= 10–20, Normal= 20.1–30, High= 30.1–40

Table 3. Assessment the levels of social anxiety among university students.

Social anxiety	F	%	M	SD
Not clinical	143	37.7	29.43	16.837
Mild	163	43.2		
Moderate	61	16.1		
Severe	11	2.9		
Total	378	100		

f: Frequency, %: Percentage: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation

Not clinical=0–22, Mild= 22.1–44, Moderate= 44.1–66, Severe= 66.1–88

Table 4. Correlation between self-esteem and social anxiety among university students (N=378)

Scales	Spearman correlation	P-Value
Self-Esteem	-0.344	0.001
Social Anxiety		

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

The data analysis finding showed the distribution of the sample according to socio-demographic characteristics, which revealed that the mean age of study sample was 20.5 years ± 2 years. This finding was consistent with Suleiman. According to a study that examined the prevalence of social anxiety disorder among medical students which found mean of age was 21.4 years ± 1 years. Another study conducted by Hassan, were founded (98%) of study sample were 21 years-30 years old.

The present study's findings show that about 35.7% of participants were male, and 64.3% were female. This result agrees with Ali, A female participant was selected for this study (82.1%) in order to evaluate social anxiety among nursing students at Hawler medical university in Erbil city. No consistent with Desalegn, 72% of male and 28% of female who participated in the study to examine social anxiety and related characteristics among university students in Ethiopia were male.

Regarding residency, 78.6% of students are reported they are resident in urban and remaining are resident in rural. This result supported by Zan and Khudhair. The study sample (86.7%) is from an urban residential region to determine how social anxiety affects nursing college students' self-esteem. This outcome might be explained by the fact that students who live in urban areas are more likely to complete their education than those who do so in rural areas, as well as the fact that urban areas have higher population densities than rural areas do.

Concerning marital status, that majority of students are still unmarried as seen among 90.4% and only 9% of students are married that consisted with study conducted by Fadhil and Fadhel their founded only 13.7% of student were married. Due to the fact that in Iraqi cultures, marriage is typically arranged after completing collage and obtaining a career.

Regarding living arrangement, the result show 72.8% of students reported that they are living with both parent at their own house. This result consistent with Zan and Khudhair 54% of the study group, according to the research, are members of their immediate family and supported by Nakie in Northwest Ethiopia, among high school student, in 2021 to determine the incidence of social anxiety and its contributing factors. According to reports, 682(77.9%) children are raised by both parents.

Regarding college specialty, clarifies that 68.5 of students are studying at scientific colleges while 31.5% of them are studying at humanity colleges that consisted with study conducted in Jordan to investigate the impact of depression and anxiety on college students' academic performance, more than half of study sample attended scientific institutions.

In this study show the academic stage for students reports that 67% of students are from first stage, 20.1% from third stage, 17.7% from second stage, 10.6% from fourth stage, and only 7.6% from fifth stage. This result supported by Ahmed to look at the incidence of social anxiety disorder and contributing factors among educational science for the academic year 2016-2017. Reports that 53.9% of student fourth year, 18.2% of student second year, 20.2% of student third year, and 53.9% of student first year, regarding monthly income, 31.5% of students reported not satisfied monthly income of 300000 Iraqi–600000 Iraqi. This result consistent with Yücens and Üzer (2018), their findings indicate that the study samples socioeconomic position is low in half. Another research that was done in Irbil to evaluate social anxiety in nursing students revealed that the majority of the study sample was from a low-income background. About the self-esteem level that more than half of university students are associated with high self-esteem as seen among 57.1% of them (M ± SD= 30.82 ± 3.884). This result supported by Monojit and Suparna to determine the level of self-esteem among college students in the Bankura district with respect to different demographic factors, such as gender and caste, that students, the overall rate of prevalence of self-esteem was found to be -65.71% students having high level [17].

In this result show 43.2% of the students are associated with mild social anxiety level (M ± SD= 29.43 ± 16.837) and 16.1% are associated with moderate level of social anxiety. This result agrees with Alkhalifah. The prevalence of social phobia in this study ranged from mild to severe, with 7.9% of the participants reporting no social phobia, 29% reporting mild or moderate social phobia, 24.3% reporting moderate or severe social phobia, and 19.1% reporting extremely severe social anxiety. Other study supported this result by Ali [18]. The prevalence of mild social anxiety is 25.7%, moderate social anxiety is 19.9%, and severe social anxiety is just 8.1% among the sample.

In this result exhibits that there is high significant relationship (reverse relationship) between self-esteem and social anxiety among the students as seen with high significant reverse correlation at p-value=0.001 respectively. This result supported by Roshan [19-22] The study's objective is to assess the relationship between young adults with social anxiety disorder and low self-esteem. The group with poor self-esteem had the highest prevalence of social anxiety disorder (n=20), which was discovered to be statistically significant (p<0.001). For those with normal or high self-esteem, the prevalence of social anxiety disorder was lowest (n=32) and supported by He (2022). Significantly, self-esteem and social anxiety are negatively correlated. (r = -0.17, p < 0:01) [23-29].

Conclusion

Researcher designed to determine the extent to which self-esteem influences the onset and progression of social anxiety disorder. The findings supported the hypothesis that was developed during the research involving self-esteem and social concerns. Thus, as evidenced by a highly significant reverse correlation with a p-value of 0.001 respectively, self-esteem and social anxiety among students are closely associated. In order to stop social anxiety from developing, it is crucial to maintain a good level of self-esteem.

Recommendation

Giving students social anxiety exams at various ages to treat social anxiety concerns in their early phases, providing incoming students with workshops and seminars at the start of each academic year helps them feel less stressed and anxious while also boosting their self-esteem.

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