Social Anxiety as a Function of Shyness and Locus of Control

Shreya Nandi[1*], Prince C P[2]

[1] Psychologist, Siliguri, Darjeeling, West Bengal

[2] ASWAS Educational and Charitable Foundations, New Delhi
Email: *shreyanandi19@gmail.com

Abstract: *In adolescence many children experience social anxiety in new social situations where they always try to avoid crowd. They always worry doing something they think is embarrassing such as blushing, sweating or appearing incompetent. They also find it difficult to do things when others are watching because they might feel they are being watched and judged all the time, fear of being criticized or have low self-esteem. Shyness is common which refers to feeling uncomfortable in social situations. If someone feels shy, still can motivate themselves to perform the work required. But someone with social anxiety can affect someone's quality of life. And locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals believe they can control events affecting them. This study was done to investigate how social anxiety correlates with shyness and locus of control among the adolescence. Comparative study was done and the results show that there is correlation between shyness and locus of control but no significant correlation between social anxiety and locus of control.*

Key Words: *Social Anxiety, Shyness and Locus of Control.*

Introduction

Social anxiety is a common type of anxiety disorder where there is an intense persistent fear of being watched and judged by others which can affect work, school and other daily activities. People in social situations have fear in social situations which is so intense that they feel it is beyond their control. For some people it may be in the way of going to work, attending school or doing everyday activities and other people may be able to accomplish these tasks but face anxiety when doing it. It is an unavoidable part of everyday life. Although worries about some of the situations are common in the general population but people with social anxiety worry excessively about them at the time, before and afterwards. There can be several factors which can increase the risk of social anxiety such as negative experiences where

children experience teasing, bullying, rejection or humiliation which may be more prone to social anxiety disorder. There might be other negative events in life such as family conflict, trauma or abuse which may be associated with it. Social anxiety typically starts in the teenage years but meeting someone new, giving a speech in public may trigger symptoms for the first time. Generally, children or people who are shy when facing new situations may be at greater risk. Social anxiety tends to run in families but it can't be completely said it is due to genetics. It might be due to learned behavior also because some people may develop significant anxiety after an unpleasant or embarrassing social situation. There are physical situations which sometimes accompany social anxiety such as blushing, fast heartbeat, trembling, sweating, nausea, dizziness, trouble catching our breath, feeling that our mind has gone blank. It also includes avoiding common situations such as interacting with strangers, attending social gatherings, starting conversations, eating in front of others, making eye contact, going to school or work, entering a room in which people are already seated, returning items to a store.

Shyness can be a means of feeling uncomfortable, nervous, insecure. It is an emotion that affects how a person feels and behave around others because they aren't sure how to act, don't know how others will act or when attention is on them. Depending on the situation and the person these feelings can be mild, medium or strong. Before trying something new they often hesitate and prefer watching first then joining in a group or activity. Situations such as the first day of school, meeting someone new or speaking in front of a group for the first time. Sometimes being quiet and introverted is a sign that someone has a naturally shy personality. But that's not always the same because being quiet is not always the same as being shy. Many adolescents tend to be shyer around adults. Few characteristics which lead to the emergence of shyness are self-consciousness negative self-preoccupation, low self-esteem and fear of judgement and rejection. Shy people believe that people are constantly judging them, they try to avoid new social opportunities which in turn prevents them from improving their social skills. Shyness is driven by both biological and environmental forces. Babies are born with different temperaments and those with an extremely sensitive temperament are more likely to go on to be shy. But supportive, sensitive parenting can stop against developing shyness or social anxiety. During adolescence shyness can raise because teens have to meet new situations from classes to

friendships to puberty. They fear of being embarrassed, rejected or fully known. Parents can encourage teens to think about their fears and help them cope with their behaviors and skills. Culture determines the functional significance of shyness in terms of its relations with adjustment. It is important to examine the mediating role of social processes such as evaluations and responses in peer interactions, in cultural influence on the developmental patterns of shyness.

Shyness can turn into social anxiety if someone avoid worry or analyze social interactions. If someone feels anxious about their shyness, they may develop negative thought patterns about inferiority or incompetence. When a person faces social anxiety or shyness they may go through frustration and discouragement.

Within psychology, locus of control is considered to be an important aspect of personality which was developed by Jullian Rotter in the 1950s. Locus of control refers to an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of events in his/her life. It's a concept that refers to how strongly people believe they have control over the situations and experiences that affect their lives. Generally, locus of control depends upon internal and external locus of control because no one doesn't have 100% both of it. Instead, most people lie somewhere between the internal and external locus of control. The characteristics of locus of control is the feeling of confidence in the face of challenges, tend to be physically healthier, reporting being happier and more independent, tends to be less influenced by the opinions of other people. And the characteristics of external locus of control includes blaming outside forces for their circumstances, frequently feeling hopeless or powerless in the face of difficult situations, not believing that they can change their situation through their own hard work.

The locus of control is related to personality orientation. Social psychologists have begun to study the majority locus of control in various cultures and the factors that influence it. It has been found that quiet often the people of any given culture look at fate or self-control in a generally collective manner. Like individualistic cultures it generally signifies an internal locus of control where they may be the masters of their own fate whereas collectivistic culture demonstrates an external locus of control. They accept that things are out of their hands and don't rely upon individual as a whole.

Shyness can turn into social anxiety if it causes someone to routinely avoid, worry or analyze social interactions. If someone feels anxious about their shyness, they may develop negative thought patterns (about inferiority or incompetence) which can rely upon internal or external locus of control.

Social anxiety is related to over estimating the negative aspects of social interactions and underestimating the positive aspects. One theory about social anxiety is that patterns of thoughts and beliefs play an important role in social anxiety and targeting these thoughts and beliefs can be a helpful way to treat it. According to the cognitive theory, individuals with social anxiety tend to overestimate the level of threat in social situations, underestimate their ability to handle social situations, expect negative outcomes from interactions. But, the theory of shyness concerns about disapproval and perceived deficits in interpersonal skills along with reduced self-esteems which are critical factors associated with shyness. Whereas the development of locus of control is described along with Rotter's social learning theory where future expectancies for specific or related events are strengthened through reinforcement are to be related to the extent to which they attribute outcomes to their own actions. Thus, attitudes, beliefs and expectancies associated with an individual's locus of control are suggested to develop, be reinforced and strengthen through their interactions with others, the environment, individual differences.

Review of Literature

Teenagers with social anxiety disorder tend to exhibit fear and anxiety when exposed to some of the social situations or performances. If the teenagers are at the center of attention, their anxiety is induced and sometimes they to try to exit from the situations. People with social anxiety worry excessively before, during and after experiencing the situations because of the fear or worry that they might say or act something embarrassing or humiliating such as, looking anxious, disrupting normal life, looking incompetent, shaking, sweating and blushing. As a result, the performance of the individual declines. At school, social anxiety disorder impairs their learning and at home, the quality of life and social relationship is impacted negatively because of the disruption of normal life (Beidel et al, 2007)

Majority of the teenagers with social anxiety tend to misuse drugs and alcohol so as to alleviate depression and also reduce their anxiety. Due to

such misuses, they experience educational underachievement. Later, they might experience in being employed.

1. Social Anxiety

In a study of threatening faces and social anxiety by Soren Rislov Staugaard it was stated that a threatening facial expression is a potent social sign of hostility or dominance. During the past 20 years, photographs of threatening faces have been included as stimuli in studies with socially anxious participants, based on the hypothesis that a threatening face is most noticeable to people with fears of social interaction or negative evaluation. A threatening facial expression can be a sign of disapproval which might function as an anxiety-provoking cue in people for whom the approval might be very important. It has been suggested that angry faces are challenges to dominance contest (e.g., Ohman, 1986) which is also relevant socially anxious individuals, who view themselves as less dominant than others (Alden and Taylor, 2004), and will often interact with others in a submissive way.

Anxiety is a multifaceted response to threatening situations. It is characterized by cognitive apprehension, neurophysiological arousal, and a subjective experience of tension or nervousness. People may experience anxiety for a wide variety of reasons, but factor analyses of anxiety and fear inventories consistently obtain solutions that include a at least one category of "social" or "interpersonal" anxieties (e.g., Bates, 1971; Endler, Hunt and Rosenwein, 1962). Empirical studies dealing with social anxiety can be split into three general categories. First, many researchers have been interested in social anxiety as an interpersonal phenomenon in its own right. Everyone experiences social anxiety at least occasionally. When they do, people not only suffer from tension but behave in ways that often interfere with social interaction. When people are nervous, it might indicate of their inner arousal (e.g., trembling, fidgeting), avoidance of other people and disruption of other ongoing behaviors (e.g., disfluent speech, difficult concentration). As a result, anxiety is a liability in social relations, because people who are nervous may become less socially effective. Secondly while most research has been directed towards understanding social anxiety and its impact on interpersonal behavior, other researchers have been interested in social anxiety in the process of studying these phenomena. For example, the construct of social anxiety has been used in studies of topics such as evaluation, apprehension, impression

management, self-consciousness, self-efficacy, conformity. This research has demonstrated that feelings of social inadequacy and concerns about other's evaluations play a central role in many psychological phenomena (Jones, Cheek and Briggs, 1986; Leary, 1983d).

2. Shyness

Shyness is a specific social phenomenon which comes under the umbrella of social withdrawal (Rubin and Asendorpf, 1993b). In the empirical literature describing social competency deficits is one of the most discussed behavioral difficulties in childhood social withdrawal (Rubin and Asendorpf, 1993b). Social withdrawal is an aspect of several DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) disorders such as social phobia and avoidant personality disorder. The term social withdrawal has been used interchangeably with terms such as shyness, social isolation, sociometric neglect, social reticence and inhibition (Rubin and Asendorpf, 1993a). Within the context of social withdrawal, shyness is distinguished from other forms of peer separation because of its derivation from social evaluative apprehension (Rubin and Asendorpf, 1993b). Further more, shyness is differentiated from social disinterest due to shy children's desire and motivation to interact with others (Coplan et al. 2004).

Shyness more explicitly can be understood in the context of its relationship to the clinical diagnoses of social phobia and avoidant personality disorder. Rapee and Heimberg (1997) described a continuum of social evaluative fear that encompasses each of these problems. Shyness can be characterized as the low to middle range, social phobia as the middle to high range, and avoidant personality disorder as the high to extreme range of this social anxiety continuum. Those in support of the continuum hypotheses believe that these constructs share several features and are qualitatively different problems (Heiser, Turner, Beideland Roberson- Nay, 2009).

3. Relation Between Social Anxiety and Shyness

Shyness represents the least clinical form of social anxiety and is not a formal DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) diagnosis. It shares many symptoms with social phobia and avoidant personality disorder. It has been estimated that only 5 to 10% of the population consider themselves to never be shy and over 50% label them as shy people (Zimbardo and Henderson, 2000). Asendorpf (1990) described shy children as possessing the desire to interact with others, but inhibited by a persistent fear of negative outcomes. Shy

children experience anxiety in social situations, particularly when they feel themselves holding back of social or interpersonal behavior stemming from fear of interpersonal evaluation (Leary, 1986). Shyness affects children cognitively (i.e., increased cortisol levels in new situations), and behaviorally (i.e., avoidance of eye contact) (Cheek and Melchior, 1990).

4. Locus of Control

In a study of locus of control and academic achievement by Maureen J Findley, Harris M Cooper, it revealed that more internal beliefs are associated with greater academic achievement where the characteristics of the participants, nature of the locus of control and academic achievement measures were taken as mediators of the relation. The relation was more substantial among males than among females. Stronger effects were associated with specific LOC measures and standardized achievement or intelligence tests than with teacher grades (Psyc. INFO Database Record © 2016 APA, all rights reserved).

5. Relation Between Social Anxiety and Locus of Control

In a study of the interrelationship of social anxiety with anxiety, locus of control, depression ways of coping and ego strength by Robin-Marie Shepherd, Robert J Edelman among university students investigated that there were high scores in social anxiety which were related to high scores on measures of anxiety and depression, external locus of control. While the results are relational rather than being predictive of casualty. Research suggests that there has been an increase in the use of mental health services amongst university students.

In a study where the relationships between negative events, locus of control, social support and psychological adjustment in early adolescent sample was examined were the potential stress-buffering effects of social support and the conjunctive effects of social support and locus of control were upon adjustment. Family support was positively related to adjustment in several domains whereas school support was only related to school competence. After examining the buffering hypothesis suggested that both family and school served to moderate the relationship between negative events and school competence.

Rationale

Teens with social anxiety have an excessive fear of social situations such as school, parties, activities and more. They may avoid social situations or have a fear of embarrassment. They might be worried about saying something because it might sound silly to others or blushing from nervousness due to which they might find this to be disruptive for their life, trying to harm relationships with friends and loved, even hampering careers. Avoiding such situations cannot help for a long term. Due to such situations, they feel extremely self-conscious and fear of being embarrassed, making mistakes or looking foolish which is a mark of shyness because extreme shyness can interfere with socializing. It can prevent someone from taking advantage of opportunities or trying new things. Feelings of shyness can be mild, medium or intense-depending on the situation and person. Shy people can learn to manage their shyness so that it doesn't interfere with what they enjoy doing. They try warming up to new people and situations. They try to develop their friendliness and confidence. But some people can have extreme shyness which can be hard to conquer. When the shy feelings is too strong people prevent interaction, participating in class and socializing. It can also affect a person's self-confidence and self-esteem. Facing such situations, the locus of control can also influence how to respond the events that happened and motivates to take action because it not only can influence how to respond to the events that happen in our life but also motivates them to take actions. If they believe that they hold the key to their fate then they are more likely to change their situation when needed.

Hypothesis

1. Social anxiety and shyness will have a significant relationship.

2. Social anxiety and internal locus of control will have a significant relationship.

3. Social anxiety and external locus of control will have a significant relationship.

Sample

The sample consisted of 150 students from the adolescent group both males and females from the Auxilium Convent School, Siliguri, West Bengal.

Tools and Test

Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS), Shyness Scale (SS) and The Locus of Control Scale (LCS).

Research Design and Statistical Analyses

The study is a quantitative study. It is a correlational design to assess the association of shyness and locus of control on social anxiety and the influence of these factors in social anxiety. After reviewing descriptive statistics, statistical analyses were conducted on the data collected. To test the relation of shyness and locus of control on social anxiety, Pearson's Correlation was conducted.

Discussion of the Study

Hypothesis 1: To determine the relation between shyness and locus of control

After developing an initial research, it was found that it was an alternate hypothesis because there is a relationship between both the variables i.e. social anxiety and shyness. For the conduction of it 150 students as a sample was taken including both males and females. Based on the statistical test the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.01 (1%) level. The estimated Pearson's correlation between social anxiety and shyness is 0.233. Hence, the result supports the initial hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: To determine the relation between social anxiety and internal locus of control

For the conduction of it 150 students as a sample was taken including both males and females but after examining it was found that 117 students came under internal locus of control. The estimated Pearson's correlation between social anxiety and internal locus of control is 0.029. Hence, both the variables don't correlate with each other as they aren't significant. As the population was less, might be for this it couldn't support to be significant.

Hypothesis 3: To determine the relation between social anxiety and external locus of control

To understand it 150 students were taken including both males and females but after conducting the test it found that 33 students came under external locus of control. The estimated Pearson's correlation between social anxiety and external locus of control is 0.334. Hence, both the variables don't correlate

with each other as they aren't significant. As the population was too less, comparatively in other hypothesis, due to which it couldn't help to be significant.

Implication of the Study

The social implication of this research was to study the relation between social anxiety and shyness; social anxiety and locus of control. As we can say that social anxiety is more than shyness because it is a fear that does not go away easily and can affect everyday activities, self-confidence, social life. Occasionally many people worry about social situations but a person with social anxiety feels overly worried from before, during and after it. And locus of control helps us to show how people strongly believe that they have control over the situations and experiences that can affect their lives. It depends upon how people are managing themselves whether internally or externally. If it is internal forces then they try to be more independent. They be better at resisting social pressure to obey because they feel responsible for their actions. So, as the social pressure comes within them, from there the anxiety arises within themselves because in everyday life they try to be more cautious and wants to be independent too. And if it is externally, they tend to be more easily persuaded, socially influenced. They do not think much about everything due to which it can lead to less anxiety issues.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of the study should be viewed within the context of its limitations. So, the limitations of the study were that the questionnaires that the participants received to fill was a self-report measure. The research analysis done was completely based on assuming that the participants might have answered in a socially acceptable manner too which might result in a bias manner in the research. Because there might be several issues among them as they might think that people will get to know about them and later might judge them too. Next, the strength of the sample could have been a bit more which could have helped to give better significance between social anxiety and locus of control.

Conclusion

In contrast to everyday nervousness some adolescents go through fear, anxiety, avoidance, feeling of being judged. It's a crucial stage of their life

where they go through many situations whether it be physiologically or psychologically. They need a proper guidance or support where they can share anything they think or want to tell. Some children who are socially anxious might feel socially awkward or feel shy about meeting someone new whereas others who do not feel anxious will be cool or feel casual about it. And when internal locus of control comes the anxiousness increases because the individuals perceive that they have control over their own actions, try to take their own decisions i.e., they try to be independent but when there is an external locus of control they try to blame others, do not analyze the situations so they will likely experience less anxiety.

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