Research Paper   **Education**

Positive Thinking : A Powerful Tool to Reduce Social Anxiety of Under Graduate Students

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ABSTRACT

Experience of anxiety is a universe phenomena and is accepted as part of learning process. There is little thought given to the impact of social anxiety. Social anxiety in learning situations can inhibit students participation and impair the quality student life. Anxiety is an apprehensive tendency tends to obstruct the self confidence, initiative and self esteem. Removal or reduction of these emotional disturbances is essential for learners. Emotional management may be an attempt to reduce anxious feelings. Many of the researchers suggested that by converting negativity into positivity, anxiety state could be reduced. This study is an attempt to develop a programme to reduce social anxiety of UG students. The researcher developed positive thinking programme which consists physical therapy (Yoga Practices), meditation, Alfa music, conversion practices counseling and self evaluation. To judge the effectiveness of the programme, pre-test, post-test single group design was used. The experiment has been conducted on a sample of 60 students studying first year Arts class having IQ 90 to 100. For conducting the study social anxiety scale prepared by S.C.Joshi was used as pre and post test. Mean, S.D. and ' t ' ratio techniques were used to analyze data. The research findings showed that the programme was effective for girls only. For boys and girls, this programme was highly effective to reduce anxieties in the areas of interaction with students and staff, fear of criticism and feelings of shame. Conclusively it was stated that an effective positive thinking programme could help college student to reduce their problems related to social anxiety.

Keywords : Adolescent, Social Anxiety, Positive Thinking Program

Introduction
Students studying in first year classes are of adolescent age. The psychology of adolescents who is no longer child but not yet adult, is an important area in the study of human behavior. The study of emotional phenomenon of the adolescent students is equally important as the studies in cognitive and affective states of the adolescent pupils. The emotional phenomena, as Cole and Hall (1970) observed, can be grouped into three categories ; aggressive, inhibitory and joyous states. The inhibitory states are fear worry, anxiety sorrow, regret, depression, disgust, embarrassment , apprehension, tension etc. Fear, anxiety and dreads are more destructive or distorting feelings with permicious effects on the individuals.

Literature Review
A review of epidemiological studies in Western hemisphere populations has estimated the lifetime prevalence of social anxiety to range between 7 and 13 per cent depending on the diagnostic threshold used (Furmark, 2002). Within universities, Russell and Shaw (2009) in the UK and Tillfors and Furmark (2007) in Sweden have documented clinically significant levels of social anxiety in 10 and 16 per cent of students respectively. Social anxiety often coexists with other mental health issues (Merikangas & Angst, 1995). It is evident in 20 per cent of cases of adult depression (Ohayon & Schatzberg, 2010) and is associated with alcohol and cannabis dependence (Buckner et al., 2008). Meta-analyses indicate that, for people suffering from persistent social anxiety, the quality of life and psychosocial functioning is significantly impaired (Olatunji et al., 2007). If untreated, only one third of individuals attain remission from social anxiety within 10 years (Keller, 2006), suggesting that identification and early intervention will be beneficial to individuals, families and the public purse.

In our surveys of over 1500 students at two universities,

self-selecting participants reported frequent anxiety in learning situations that involved interacting with students and staff (Russell, 2008a; Topham, 2009). They described intense anxiety and embarrassment, physical symptoms (e.g. sweating, blushing), self-consciousness, fear of criticism, cognitive and behavioral impairment (e.g. forgetting, stuttering) and a tendency to dwell on past performance. Students habitually avoided public situations such as lectures, seminars and project groups by being absent or through non-participation. Their accounts are consistent with others (e.g. via Social Anxiety UK: www.social-anxiety.org.uk) and with DSM? diagnostic criteria for social anxiety disorder.

Socially anxious students miss out on learning opportunities by avoiding interaction, physically or psychologically. Attention to academic information may be distracted by an excessive focus on their anxieties (Clark & Wells, 1995), while the ability to monitor and modify communication with colleagues and tutors may be distorted by fears of negative evaluation (Rapee & Heimberg, 1997).

Statement of the Problem
The researcher designed his research problem as

" Positive Thinking : A Powerful Tool to Reduce Social Anxiety of Under Graduate Students."

Key Words :
1. Adolescent
A young person who has undergone puberty but who has not reached full maturity a teenager. In present study students studying in First year Arts classes of graduate colleges were considered as adolescent students.

2. Social Anxiety

Social anxiety arises in real or imagined social situations where people are motivated to make a desired impression on other but doubt that they will do so. Instead they worried about comments on their appearance, performance or personality. Such concerns are common and reflect our innate sensitivity to other people (Purdon et at 2001). These anxieties became problematic when individuals seriously doubt their ability to please friends or impress colleagues. As a result they may develop a marked and persistent fear of social performance situation which tend to be avoided or endured with extreem distress. This is social anxiety.

For measuring social anxiety five different areas had been selected: interaction with students and staff, fear of criticism, cognitive and behavioral impairment (forgetting), dwell on past performance and feelings of shame.

3. Positive Thinking
Positive thinking is simply a matter of learning to think more positively and to express your thoughts in terms that convey your ability to reach life goals and feel successful. Positive thinking substitutes helpful self talk for negative. We all have these automatic thoughts that run through our heads every day. The more one can substitute positive thinking for negative self criticism. The more positive feeling will emerge.

4. Positive Thinking Programme
A programme for changing negative thinking into positive was developed. This programme consists of six aspects-physical therapy (Yoga Practices), meditation, Alfa music, conversion practice, counseling and self evaluation diary. For having practice of each aspect proper time was allotted and whole program was lasting in one hour.

Objectives :
The researcher set the following specific objectives for the study.
1. To construct positive thinking programme for adolescent students.
2. To study the effectiveness of the positive thinking programme on social anxiety of adolescent students with reference to sex.
3. To study the effect of positive thinking programme on different areas of social anxiety of adolescent students.

Design of the study
The study employed experimental research to carry out the investigation. In this pre-test post-test single group design was used to find the effect of positive thinking programme on anxiety of adolescent students.

Sample
For conducting experiment, the researcher selected 60 students of G.D. Modi Arts College, Palanpur studying in first year classes having IQ 90 to 110 to get average intelligent students.

Collection of Data
The social anxiety scale (SAS) prepared by S.C.Joshi was administered on the group and area wise scoring of social anxiety was done. after getting the pre-test scores of social anxiety, the researcher employed one hour positive thinking program for three weeks continually. Yoga and meditation practices were common for all the days but Alfa music, conversion practice, counseling and content for diary writing had been changed every day to get varying situational responses. After the treatment was over, SAS was again administered in the form of post-test. The test answer sheets were scored as per the scoring key.

Analysis of Data
The collected data were classified, tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis using mean, S.D. and ' t ' ratio.

Tools Used
The researcher used two standardized tests to measure IQ,

and anxiety of the students.

1. General mental ability test prepared by M.S.Joshi was used to measure general intelligence.
2. Social anxiety scale prepared by S.C.Joshi was used measure social anxiety of adolescent students.

Result and Discussion
To see the effect of positive thinking program, pre-test post-test scores were classified, tabulated, and mean, S.D. and ' t ' values were calculated. Results are depicted in table-1.

Table – 1
Statistical Analysis of Pre-Test, Post-Test scores of Social Anxiety
scale of Adolescent Students (N = 60)

	Particulars	N	Pre - Test		Post - Test		' t '
			Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Value
Total Social Anxiety	Boys	30	100.40	11.64	99.74	12.36	0.11
	Girls	30	115.60	13.78	105.76	12.48	2.90 *
	Total	60	117.50	14.29	111.82	14.65	2.15 *
Area of Social Anxiety	Interaction with students and staff	60	22.40	4.63	19.05	5.01	3.81 *
	Fear of Criticism	60	23.25	4.65	18.75	3.13	6.25 *
	Cognitive and Behavioral Impairment	60	21.35	4.23	20.05	4.37	1.64
	Dwell on Past Performance	60	24.76	3.62	23.80	3.23	1.52
	Feelings of Shame	60	23.90	4.57	20.75	3.14	4.38 *

* Significant at .01 Level

Observation of table 1 shows that ' t ' value of pretest, post test scores of boys is not significant, but ' t ' value of girls is significant of 05 level. That indicates that positive thinking program is effective for girls and it reduces the social anxiety of girls. So far sources of social anxiety are concerned, positive thinking programme could not reduce the anxieties of adolescent students related to cognitive and behavioral impairment and dwell on past performance. The programme is highly effective to reduce the anxieties of the students related to interaction with students and staff, fear of criticism and feelings of shame. The results of the study indicate that positive thinking programme helps the girls in reducing complexities of the social anxieties. Adolescent boys either ignore their anxieties or positive thinking programme might not have attracted their attention. As there are different sources of social anxieties, the positive thinking programme have positive and significant impact on adolescent students and be able to reduce anxieties in the areas of interaction with students and staff, fear of criticism and feelings of shame. Failure of the programme in other areas of social anxiety gives an indication that adolescent students might not be having cognitive impairment fear and feel relaxation by indulging themselves in to past performances.

The findings of the research have resemblance with the work of Kathleen Romito (2010). He revealed that positive thinking can help to prevent or control anxiety, the researcher took different variables of positive thinking in comparision to the variables taken by Davies (2009)- self esteem explanatory style and trait hope. Davies study indicates that variables of positive thinking have unique effects on emotional wellbeing in early adolescent. The difference in variables might be the measure cause of ineffectiveness of positive thinking programme in some sources of social anxiety.

Conclusively it can be stated that an effective positive thinking programme or techniques can help individuals specially adolescents to reduce their problems related to depression, feeling of shame and presentation.

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