



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Psychology

EMOTION REGULATION, PERCEIVED INTERPERSONAL SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC ANXIETY AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KERALA

KEY WORDS: emotion regulation, perceived interpersonal support, academic anxiety, high school students

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ABSTRACT

The current study focuses on the relationship between emotion regulation, perceived interpersonal support, and academic anxiety among high school students in Kerala. The data was collected from 300 high schools students from three schools in Pathanamthitta District. The tools been administered are Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale-DERS-SF-18 by Victor & Klonsky (2016), The Multi-dimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support by Zimet and Farley (1988), and Academic Anxiety Scale for children (AASC) by Dr. A K Singh and Dr. A Sen Gupta (2018). Correlational research design using quantitative approach has been used. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between emotion regulation, perceived interpersonal support and academic anxiety. There is a significant difference in academic anxiety based on age, gender, birth order and family type.

INTRODUCTION

The growth, changes, nourishments, and developments through experience enable the individual to have a better vision of life and reforming one's own reality of the world. The early adolescence stage of life points us towards the beginning of the academic issues and school-related behaviors or motivation that would usually pave way for inculcating excessive workload and interpersonal relationships (Eccles et al., 1991). The impact of COVID -19 had drastically made a change in the teaching methodologies and curriculum, where the adolescence is exposed to excessive technological usage and lack of sincere dedication towards the much needed education.

Emotion Regulation:

Emotion regulation is defined as the process that influence internal feeling states through avoiding, initiating, inhibiting, maintaining or modulating its form, intensity and duration and also effects emotion-related physiological process, goals, and behavioral concomitants (Eisenberg et al., 2004). It refers to the processes regulating an individual's intrinsic and extrinsic pattern of thought and behaviour to determine how we experience, influence and express our emotion while encountering specific situations. Over the centuries, the fundamental insight in the importance of regulating emotions in varied situations is being represented across major world traditions (Gross, 2014).

The core features of emotion regulation include the activation of a goal, engagement of the processes, and impact on emotion dynamics (Gross, 2014). Thus, both intrinsic emotion regulation and extrinsic emotion regulation plays a prominent role. The adolescent period being the most crucial in terms of development and nourishment, thus also influences the regulation of emotions as the social and personal experiences reforms with time. The relevance of the quality of emotional awareness thus becomes necessary, especially among early adolescence (Roemer et al., 2008). The previous studies indicated that there is a significant relationship between expressive suppression and CGPA, but there was no significant relationship existed between cognitive reappraisal and CGPA (Hafiz, 2015).

Perceived Interpersonal Support:

Perceived interpersonal support is referred as the perception of support that can be a function of the degree of intimacy and affection within one's relationships with friends, family, and significant others, playing an important and positive role in the health and well-being of individuals. An individual being conscious about the existing interpersonal support will be able to see the phase in their life more resourcefully and

support to positive mental health outcomes (Gurung et al., 1997). According to the research done by Raue et al. (2007) and Rowe et al. (2006), elderly people with little interpersonal support has more intention for doing suicide (Duberstein et al., 2004b; Turvey et al., 2002).

An individual perceiving or consciously having awareness on the interpersonal support brings on the concept of perceived interpersonal support, where not only the mere existence of a support matters, rather having a conscious awareness adapts in providing care for the needs and growth of the individual. The earlier studies indicated that social support holds a mediating role between emotional adjustment and psychological well-being (Far & Jahangir, 2018).

Academic Anxiety:

Academic anxiety is a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, distress and worry as a result of school pressures, interfering with concentration and memory which are critical for academic success and can occur in either presence or absence of psychological stress. It can be simply defined as the anxiety which is being developed in a school setting invoking bad impacts on the students (John, 2019). According to Cornell University, academic anxiety is the result of biochemical processes in the body and the brain that make ones' all entire level increase when they occur. The major components of academic anxiety as explained by Cornell University includes worry, emotionality task generated interference, and study skill deficits (Hooda & Saini, 2017). The competition and the constant pressure and comparison from society and environment make them susceptible to lack in regulating their emotional responses and being aware about the interpersonal relationship and support. The previous studies indicated that there exists a negative and significant correlation between academic anxiety and academic achievement (Das, Halder & Mishra, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

The research problem of the present study was to identify whether there is any relationship between emotion regulation, perceived interpersonal support and academic anxiety among high-school students in Kerala. Non-experimental correlational research design using quantitative approach was adopted for the study.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out whether there is a significant relationship between Emotion Regulation and Academic Anxiety among High-School Students in Kerala.
2. To find out whether there is a significant relationship

between Perceived Interpersonal Support and Academic Anxiety among High-School Students in Kerala.

3. To find out whether there is a significant relationship between Emotion Regulation and Perceived Interpersonal Support among High-School Students in Kerala.

4. To find out whether there is a significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students in Kerala based on age.

5. To find out whether there is a significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students in Kerala based on gender.

6. To find out whether there is a significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students based in Kerala on birth order.

7. To find out whether there is a significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students based in Kerala on family type.

Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between Emotion Regulation and Academic Anxiety among High -School Students in Kerala.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between Perceived Interpersonal Support and Academic Anxiety among High-School Students in Kerala.

H₀3: There is no significant relationship between Emotion Regulation and Perceived Interpersonal Support among High-School Students in Kerala.

H₀4: There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students in Kerala based on age.

H₀5: There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students in Kerala based on gender.

H₀6: There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students in Kerala based on birth order.

H₀7: There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students in Kerala based on family type. Sample Distribution

The sample comprised of 300 (146 boys and 154 girls) high school students and was drawn from the Private and Government Schools in Kerala, India. The samples were selected through convenient sampling technique and the data was collected from three schools, Government HSS Thottakonam, Eminence Public School Pandalam, and NSS Boys High School Pandalam. Parental Consent form was given a day before and assent form was given on the day of data collection.

Tools Used

- Socio-Demographic Data Sheet
- Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS-18) by Victor & Klonsky (2016)
- The Multi-Dimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support by Zimet and Farley (1988)
- Academic Anxiety Scale for Children (AASC) by Dr. A K Singh and Dr. A Sen Gupta (2018)

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between Emotion Regulation and Academic Anxiety.

Table 1 shows the correlation between Emotion Regulation and Academic Anxiety among high school students in Kerala

	N	M	SD	R	p
Emotion Regulation	300	55.94	9.61	.22**	.001

Academic Anxiety		12.28	3.52		
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Table 1 reveals that the correlation coefficient of 0.22 indicates a low positive correlation between Difficulty in Emotion Regulation and Academic Anxiety, that is, as academic anxiety increases emotion regulation decreases. As the p value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is a significant relationship between Emotion Regulation and Academic Anxiety. This can be supported by a previous study being done which showed a significant relationship between academic anxiety and emotion regulation (Dobos et al., 2021).

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between Perceived Interpersonal Support and Academic Anxiety.

Table 2 shows correlation between Perceived Interpersonal Support and Academic Anxiety among high school students in Kerala

	N	M	SD	R	p
Perceived Interpersonal Support	300	4.69	1.43	-.71*	.001
Academic Anxiety		12.28	3.52		

Table 2 reveals that the correlation coefficient of -.71 indicates a high negative correlation between Perceived Interpersonal Support and Academic Anxiety, that is, as Academic anxiety increases perceived interpersonal support decreases. As the p value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is a significant relationship between Perceived Interpersonal Support and Academic Anxiety. The findings are consistent with the previous studies which showed a significant relationship between these two variables and a significant negative correlation was found between academic anxiety and Perceived interpersonal support (Dour, H et al, 2004).

H₀3: There is no significant relationship between Perceived Interpersonal Support and Emotion Regulation.

Table 3 shows correlation between Emotion Regulation and Perceived Interpersonal Support among high school students in Kerala

	N	M	SD	R	p
Perceived Interpersonal Support	300	4.69	1.43	-.18	.001
Emotion Regulation		55.94	9.61		

Table 3 reveals that the correlation coefficient of -.18 indicates a very low negative correlation between Perceived Interpersonal Support and Difficulty in Emotion Regulation, that is, as perceived interpersonal support increases emotion regulation increases. As the p value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is a significant relationship between Perceived Interpersonal Support and Emotion regulation. The findings are consistent with an earlier study by Therese L. Newton et al (2020).

H₀4: There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students based on Age.

Table 4 shows the means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance in Academic Anxiety based on Age

Age→	13	14	15	F	P		
Variable↓	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Academic Anxiety	11.73	3.57	12.97	3.33	12.13	3.58	3.22* .041

Table 4 reveals that as the p value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is a

significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students based on age. Therefore, an analysis of variance showed that the difference of age on Academic Anxiety was significant, $F(2, 297) = 3.220, p = .041$. This can be supported by a previous study (Milgram, N., & Toubiana, Y, 1999).

H₀5: There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students based on Gender.

Table 5 shows the independent Sample t test for Academic Anxiety based on Gender

Gender\	Male			Female			T	P
Variable↓	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Academic Anxiety	146	11.53	3.87	154	12.99	3.00	-3.63	.001

Table 5 reveals that the females have a higher level of academic anxiety than males. As the p value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected which means that there is a significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students based on gender, $t = -3.631, p = .001$. The findings are consistent with earlier by Chaman Lal Banga (2014) showed that girls had significantly higher mean score of academic anxiety scores than boys.

H₀6: There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students based on Birth Order.

Table 6 shows the means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance in Academic Anxiety based on Birth Order

Birth Order↑	First Born		Second Born		Last Born		Only Child		F	P
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Academic Anxiety	13.4	3.36	10.9	3.68	10.7	2.63	13.9	3.13	19.98	.001

Table 6 reveals that as the p value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is a significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students based on birth order. Therefore, an analysis of variance showed that the difference of birth order on Academic Anxiety was significant, $F(3, 296) = 19.982, p = .001$.

H₀7: There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students based on Family Type.

Table 7 shows the independent Sample t test for Academic Anxiety based on Family Type

Family Type →	Joint Family			Nuclear Family			T	P
Variable ↓	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Academic Anxiety	144	11.85	3.47	156	12.68	3.54	-2.03	.043

Table 7 reveals that the high school students from nuclear family have a higher level of academic anxiety than from joint family. As the p value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected which means that there is a significant difference in academic anxiety among high school students based on family type, $t = -2.036, p = .043$. The results are supported by previous study that had shown that students belonging to nuclear and joint family pattern of groups may differ significantly in academic anxiety (Poonam, K, 2010).

Conclusion

The findings of the study concluded that there was a significant relationship between difficulty in emotion regulation and academic anxiety with a low positive correlation. There was a significant relationship between

perceived interpersonal support and academic anxiety with a high negative correlation. There was a significant relationship between emotion regulation and perceived interpersonal support with a low negative correlation. It has been found that there was a significant difference on academic anxiety based on age, gender, birth order, and family type. There was no significant difference on academic anxiety based on class.

Major Implications

The study will be valuable in directing secondary school counselling and guidance programs to increase and influence emotion regulation, perceived interpersonal support, and academic achievement by reducing academic anxiety. This study may be helpful for educators such as teachers, parents, educationists, and counsellors to take the necessary steps to lessen the severity of academic anxiety. More importance would be given to not just their academics, but also to their emotional regulation and wellbeing which can be attained through proper interpersonal support given by both from the family and educational setups.

Limitations

The data being collected from the samples is from only one particular district in Kerala. The size of the sample is relatively smaller and the scales were administered in a group setup which might lead to discussion of answers. The study was conducted using convenience sampling so it further cannot be generalized to a wider or larger population. The social desirability level could affect or play a major role in altering or affecting the obtained results as the study mainly uses self-report questionnaires.

Acknowledgements

The authors appreciate all those who participated in the research and encouraged and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declared no conflict of interests.

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