

Raising Resilient Children Through Thoughtful Parenting

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Introduction

Parenting is defined as the process of raising children and ensuring their safety and well-being so that they can grow into healthy adults. From infancy to adulthood, parenting encourages and supports a child's physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and cognitive growth (Trautner, 2017). Parents are very important in the upbringing of their children, as well as in the surroundings, rules, and boundaries they establish. Sometimes the child's minds suffer as a result of the strict regulations and limitations (Hurst et al., 2013).

Children's achievement comes from their parents. When the child's parents have faith in them, it is when they feel most secure. With such great self-esteem, they provide individuals the assurance to advance in society (Kagan, 2009; Zhang et al., 2014). Parents give their children advice on how to solve difficulties when they arise. According to psychological studies, parents who support their children's emotional expression have happier children (McKee et al., 2019). Young adults suffer less depression and anxiety when their parents encourage emotional expressiveness. Supporting emotional expression is a key component of good parenting (Havigerová et al., 2013).

The early years have drawn a lot of attention as a crucial period for child development and as a starting point for interventions aimed at enhancing the quality of life for children, both in terms of cognitive and social growth. Early investment yields significant rewards in the future (Trautner, 2017). While parenting can be challenging in the early years, many parents find it difficult to handle the challenges that arise throughout adolescence (Morrison et al., 2013).

Parenting Styles

Parenting styles are a collection of traits and attitudes towards children that are passed on to them and, when combined, create an emotional environment in which the parents' behaviors are reflected (Darling & Steinberg, 2005). The terms authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles were introduced in order to differentiate typical (she used the word "normal") parenting styles (Baumrind, 1971). It was proposed that parents who practice authoritarianism attempt to mold, regulate, and assess their children's conduct according to a rigid set of rules. On the other hand, permissive parents are kinder, less strict, and give their children more freedom. An authoritative parenting approach lies in the middle of the two extremes.

Authoritarian Parenting Style

There are numerous parenting styles: Authoritarian, Authoritative, Uninvolved and Permissive. Parents who have very high expectations for their children and exhibit only a little involvement in their affairs are referred to as authoritarians. Authoritarian parents show no interest in their children, which causes the child to worry that if they don't live up to their expectations, they won't be good enough in their parents' eyes and will be labeled a loser by society.

Authoritative Parenting Style

The second type is known as authoritative, and parents belonging to this group take an equal interest in their children's lives, even if it means putting in more effort. The fact that someone believes in them gives the child a sense of security and pride. It makes them feel independent. Instead of just dismissing the child's demands, they respond to them equally, take an interest in them, and occasionally correct them if they make a mistake (Pearson, 2013). In spite of their efforts to make their parents feel secure and proud of them in society, children always want their parents to be proud of them. As a result of witnessing this, the child begins to worry about society's and parents' high expectations. However, these children are in some ways weaker since they can't take rejection (Duman & Margolin, 2007).

Uninvolved Parenting Style

The third type of parenting style is the uninvolved parenting style, in which parents show the least interest in their children's lives. The children will become spoiled and rebellious as a result of this parenting style. Giving the child too many opportunities without establishing any boundaries will lead to the child believing that everything is possible (Bhatia, 2012; Bi et al., 2018). Additionally, society will play a part since the company of friends has a big impact on someone's image in society.

Permissive Parenting Style

The permissive parenting style refers to a group of parents who place less demand on their children while being highly receptive to their needs. To keep their children motivated, they adopt friendly behavior (Guo, 2014). This group of parents gave their child the freedom to make decisions. These groups' children depend on their parents because their parents have provided them with many facilities (Pamela, 2013).

The fear of social circumstances and interaction, which can inevitably trigger feelings of inferiority, judgment, and self-consciousness, is known as social anxiety (Jefferson, 2001). If someone typically experiences anxiety in social settings but appears unaffected by it when alone, social anxiety could be the cause.

However, the number has increased drastically in recent years. Numerous people across the world have reported experiencing social anxiety symptoms in their lives (Herbert et al., 2010). Even those who routinely and with experience speak in public can be affected by social anxiety. However, in the worst scenario, it may completely prevent the victim from speaking or even asking questions in public (Brandsma, 2010).

An individual worries so much about appearing anxious that you become anxious themselves. Many of the physical symptoms of both types of social phobia are similar in those who experience them (Shear & Beidel, 2012). Their heart may race; they may get severe dry mouth, and may perspire a lot. A panic attack may result from these physical signs and feelings of fear. This is a brief time period that typically lasts a few minutes (Connor et al., 2009).

Family background, past experiences and childhood traits have been associated with the onset of social anxiety (Stein, 2005).

Cognitive styles (CS) are the enduring individual differences in how people perceive, evaluate, and interpret the world. It explains how an individual thinks, perceives, organizes, solves problems, makes decisions, and remembers information or their preferred method of using that information to solve difficulties (Zhang & Sternberg, 2005). It is not related with intelligence, but it greatly affects how well someone learns.

Individual variations in the cognitive process are referred to as cognitive styles, such as field independent style and field dependent style, reflective style and impulsive style, and analytic style (Keith, 2013).

Individuals who are field dependent possess certain social abilities that field-independent individuals do not exhibit as much. However, those who are independent in their profession are more skilled at organizing and cognitive analysis (Donald et al., 2009).

Literature Review

Perceived Parenting Styles

The parenting styles have been identified as a core reason for the child's participation in society. However, parents might also play a role for the manifestation of social anxiety traits in their child. If the child's basic requirements, such as emotional support, are not met by the parents, the child will eventually fail. Giving their child a sense of assurance and security ought to be their responsibility (Arsalan, 2018). In terms of parent-adolescent conflict intensity, children of authoritarian and negligent parents reported higher levels than children of indulgent parents (Higuera, 2018).

According to a study, success in academics was significantly correlated with an authoritarian parenting style. Additionally, research revealed a significant relationship between a firm's parenting

style, an authoritarian parenting style, academic achievement, and the career paths of the students (Higuera, 2018; Zahra et al., 2016). Another study suggested that authoritative parenting style has a greater impact on students' academic achievement. Academic achievement of the students was positively correlated with the father's parenting style and less strongly correlated with the mother's parenting style. However, there is a strong association between parenting and academic achievement (Tanvir et al., 2016). Adolescents with authoritarian parenting styles had lower levels of abilities and self-confidence while using coping techniques (Darling, 1999).

Findings from another study showed that the female children perceived parenting style as more caring and exhibited more warmth than other children; whereas, the older male children firmly felt that parenting style was more rejecting as compared to the other children (Someya et al., 2008).

Parenting Styles and Social Anxiety

Perceived parenting style has been linked with social anxiety in numerous studies. The relationship between anxiety and parenting styles was investigated in a study of adolescents from low socioeconomic backgrounds, where a strong positive correlation between an authoritarian parenting style and social avoidance, distress in new situations, and overall social anxiety was demonstrated (Cederlund, 2013). In addition, there was a strong negative connection between overall social anxiety and authoritarian parenting (Rapheal & Varghese, 2017).

Research has also highlighted that other parenting behaviors, like criticism, might arouse anxiety (Budinger et al., 2014; Sweeney & Wilson, 2023; Peng et al., 2021). A longitudinal research revealed that baseline observations of parental overprotection were highly associated with anxiety disorders, while neither rejection nor a lack of warmth were associated with mood disorders (Beesdo et al., 2010).

The family system is essential in contributing to the social anxiety symptoms among individuals. Significant risk factors for anxiety and depression were living in a joint family and utilizing maladaptive coping mechanisms. On the other hand, the main protective factors were the family's ability to offer support, discuss issues, and help with decision-making, as well as the spouse's support (Nazir et al., 2022).

Some studies have also been carried out on perceived parenting styles and social anxiety by Pakistani researchers. One study showed that girls experience more social anxiety as compared to boys, and that the authoritarian and uninvolved parenting styles of the mother and father were the important predictors for social anxiety (Rana et al., 2013). Findings from another study revealed a weak but statistically non-significant negative correlation between social anxiety and perceived parental authority (Yousaf, 2014).

Parenting Styles and Cognitive Styles

Some work has also been done to investigate the association between parenting styles and cognitive styles. Research looked into the issue of game addiction, hostility, and parenting practices among college students, where the results indicated that there is no relationship between parenting style and game addiction; however, aggression and parenting styles, as well as aggression and game addiction, were significantly correlated (Suhail, 2022).

Findings from another study indicated a positive correlation between the extraversion personality trait and all aspects of emotional intelligence (such as interpersonal skills, emotional self-regulation, and emotional self-awareness, as well as cognitive styles (object, spatial and verbal cognitive style) (Naz et al., 2019).

Social Anxiety

Along with the parenting styles, the biggest psychological issue impacting children and adults is social anxiety, which not only has an effect on an individual's ability to communicate every day but also has an impact on their mental health. Social anxiety (SA) is a characteristic of everyday human experience that is brought on by a strong desire to avoid being judged by others in social situations (Morrison & Heimerg, 2013). Social anxiety is frequently confused with shyness, but is surprisingly different from it.

Social anxiety is more common in women, and this difference becomes more noticeable during adolescence (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Men are more likely than women to seek therapy for social anxiety, despite the fact that women are more prone to suffer from this illness. According to some research, women with social anxiety are less likely than men to be employed, and they are also less likely to work full-time (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Age is another important demographic variable in which social anxiety has been studied in previous research. Social anxiety is most common in the early to middle adolescent years (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Another study revealed that anxiety and depressive symptoms were positively correlated with marital status or being married (Nicolini et al., 2021).

Other than age, social anxiety has also been studied in the marital status of individuals. Further research revealed that participants who were single had higher chances of fitting the diagnostic criteria for anxiety disorders. They also showed increased fear and avoidance in social contact and performance situations (Trevor et al., 2015).

Social anxiety has also been found to be linked with the individual's employment status. One study suggested that compared to people with depression and generalized anxiety, who had negligible effects on employment, people with social anxiety were more than twice as likely to be jobless (Westly, 2011). However, with therapies, social anxiety can be reduced. According to Moitra,

psychotherapy helps lessen social anxiety, but early detection is essential (Moitra, 2010).

Moreover, the family environment directly impacts one's social anxiety. Studies have also shown that middle-aged female children who experienced physical abuse and neglect do not experience social anxiety (Ozgen, 2017; Van Dijke et al., 2011). It was determined that male middle and only children who experienced emotional and physical abuse also experienced social anxiety (Eksi et al., 2016; Ozgen, 2017). In addition to the middle and female participants, the middle and only children of the male gender are also subjected to emotional neglect, depending on the birth order (Güler & Hazer, 2022; Ozgen, 2017). It was further found that there was physical abuse committed against the middle children of both genders (Güler & Hazer, 2022).

In previous studies, social anxiety was also studied in the family systems. According to one research, smaller families can still teach their children good values, but they might not be able to help them get ready for more adult responsibilities like making adjustments, showing kindness, and understanding, so on and so forth (Raza et al., 2020). Another study suggested that kids in nuclear family system don't get to socialize with other family members; children in nuclear families may grow up socially anxious (Lodhi et al., 2021). Children from divorced households showed relatively higher levels of social anxiety and inconsistent academic performance than children from intact families (Schick, 2006).

Additionally, literature further showed researches on social anxiety being linked with the child's birth order. It is found that the absence of a sibling relationship contributes to loneliness and antisocial behaviours (Gupta, 2022). Research agrees that these effects continue into adulthood, resulting in difficulties interacting with fellows, hypersensitivity to criticism as adults, and poor social skills in only children (Goisis, 2023). Children, who encounter bullying, teasing, rejection, or humiliation may be more susceptible to social anxiety disorder. Negative life events, such as abuse, trauma, or family conflict, may also be linked to social anxiety (Lewis, 2021). By the age of 11, the relationship between parents and the socioeconomic status of the family has a greater influence on the cognitive development of only children than whether they have siblings or not (Ghlionn, 2024).

Studies have also shown the impact educational institutes have on the social anxiety of students. Students at private medical universities reported much higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression than those at public universities (Sharma et al., 2023). Another study revealed that students at private universities reported greater anxiety as compared to students of public universities (Muhammad et al., 2021).

According to the cognitive theory of social anxiety, social anxiety is associated with an overestimation of the negative and an underestimation of the positive aspects of social interactions (Huppert et. al, 2003).

Social Anxiety and Parenting Styles

Social anxiety is a significant factor linked with a variety of factors such as parenting styles. The role of genetics cannot be overlooked. However, there are other factors that affect children's social anxiety, such as information processing, parental modeling and upbringing, and family functioning (Bögels et al., 2011; Hettema et al., 2005).

Modern research suggested that social anxiety may result from a combination of environmental and biological factors, while the exact reason is unknown (Higuera, 2018). Children who experience a clear self-concept and higher self-esteem grow up to be well-adjusted and mentally healthy adults (Mann, 2004).

Uninvolved parenting is also associated with social anxiety. Uninvolved parenting is when the parent completely withdraws from the child's life, and permissive parenting is where the child is allowed too much freedom and insufficient supervision, which can also cause their fair share of issues as they grow up (Cherry, 2023). Research showed that middle-aged female children who experienced physical abuse and neglect do not have social anxiety; however, it was also determined that male middle and only children who experienced emotional and physical maltreatment also experienced social anxiety (Hazer & Guler, 2022).

An overprotective parenting style is another type of parenting style which is linked with a higher incidence of social anxiety in kids (Cederlund, 2013). As a result, even when they leave their parents' child-rearing techniques behind, the child lacks a sense of independent control and is not effectively taught how to handle high-pressure situations they may encounter in the future (Loukas, 2009; Xu, 2017).

Additionally, no relationship was found between adolescent social concerns and parental sociability – parents' propensity for social engagement and how frequently they engage in it (Fisak & Mann, 2010). The study examined how a person's social anxiety was influenced by their feelings of shame, modeling, and sociability. The elements of shame and adolescent social anxiety were found to be significantly correlated, and parental communication regarding shame and instilling a child's fear of other people's opinions can increase that child's risk of social anxiety development. It was also shown that parental modeling of socially anxious behaviors, in which the adolescent would pick up the caregivers' nervous tendencies, was significantly related to the onset of social anxiety (Loukas, 2009). It was also claimed that socially anxious individuals who looked at their early years saw themselves as being more socially isolated and having a greater concern for what other people thought due to verbal parental communication (Bruce et al., 2005).

Some research on social anxiety and parenting styles has also been conducted in Pakistan (Jabeen et al., 2013; Rizvi & Najam, 2015). One study suggested that social anxiety was linked to authoritarian parenting and low self-esteem. It was established that there is a negative correlation between social anxiety and permissive parenting (Yousaf, 2015).

Study has also suggested that students had greater social anxiety, and that females had significantly lower levels than males (Hassan & Ali, 2014). According to the study's findings, participants' levels of social anxiety were inversely related with their levels of self-esteem (Shamma, 2015). Furthermore, research has suggested that social anxiety is quite prevalent among university students and has a major negative impact on quality of life (Hajure & Abdu, 2020).

The psychological development of the child is considered crucial for their quality of future life. The importance of psychological development on the child's upbringing and environment has been highlighted by various theories.

Social Anxiety and Cognitive Styles

Along with parenting and social anxiety, the child's cognition also plays an integral part. A study revealed that increased social anxiety was linked to lower social cognitive ability. Social anxiety and emotion recognition were not found to be significantly correlated (Pearcey, 2020).

According to a few studies, individual biological and psychological variations have an impact on how people perceive things, including events, objects, sights, sounds, and feelings (Bransford et al., 2000; Greene et al., 2001). Therefore, each person may have a distinct impression of an identical thing or event when they meet it. There is little doubt that exposing infants and young children to a variety of experiences forms their personalities, determines who they are, and affects how they perceive the world (Sternberg, 1997).

Cognitive Styles

Cognitive style refers to the way people process information from their surroundings and the thought processes they use to build a base of knowledge about the world they live in. It is the distinctive way that an individual perceives, thinks, remembers, and solves problems (Bransford et al., 2009).

According to an Adaptation-Innovation theory, a person's favored approach of problem-solving can be categorized along a continuum that runs from high adaptation to high innovation (Kirton, 2003).

He suggested that some people tend to favor the adaptive approach, and these people are called as 'adaptors'; however, other innovators naturally favor the opposite approach to problem-solving. Adaptors make use of what is available to employ tried-and-tested approaches to solve issues. Whereas, innovators use cutting-edge technologies to address issues by seeing beyond what is available (Kirton, 2003). According to Kirton, innovators would rather do things differently in an effort to break free from preexisting paradigms, whereas adaptors would rather perform well within a particular framework.

Cognitive Styles and Parenting Styles

Some work has also been done to find out the association between cognitive factors and parenting styles. Another study on parenting styles, depression, and attachment patterns was carried out, whose findings indicated a significant, negative relationship between parents' authoritative parenting style and students' depression. A negative relationship was also found between students' depression and parents' secure and ambivalent attachment styles (Ebrahimi et al., 2017).

Cognitive styles and parenting styles have also been linked with the internet. The usage of the internet has grown significantly in recent years, raising serious concerns about Internet addiction or problematic use. Problematic Internet Use (PIU) is a multidimensional concept made up of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral symptoms linked to excessive Internet use that makes it difficult to manage daily life (Caplan, 2005; Ceyhan, 2008; Davis, 2001). Additionally, authoritative and permissive parenting styles moderated the relationship between sensation seeking and cognitively dysfunctional behavior (Zhang et al., 2014).

Maladaptive cognition also mediated the relationship between anxiety, depression and authoritarian parenting style. One research study showed that anxiety and depression levels were higher in those who rated their parents as being more abusive and negligent, and that this link was mediated by dysfunctional cognitive style (McGinnet et al., 2005). The finding of one study suggested that the firstborns' tendency to easily identify with and obey their parents was the greatest (Skinner, 2010).

Another research demonstrated that University students' academic achievement was impacted by cognitive style, Gender does not affect cognitive style, and compared to intuitive cognitive style, systematic cognitive style is more achievement-oriented (Behera, 2022).

Cognitive Styles and Social Anxiety

Understanding the crucial role of cognitive factors in the etiology, escalation, and treatment of social anxiety has attracted a lot of attention in recent years. The majority of research on cognition to date has concentrated on proximal or concurrent cognitions like interpretative biases or automatic thoughts (Ledley, Fresco, & Heimberg, 2009). As a result, less is known about distal cognitive antecedents (like unfavorable beliefs or schemas and negative cognitive styles) that lead to subsequent vulnerability to such cognitions (David, 2008). It would be beneficial to comprehend these vulnerability elements better. If the links between vulnerability variables are better understood, the cognitive mechanisms behind the initiation and persistence of social anxiety symptoms may also be understood (Ledley et al., 2006).

It is unnecessary to reiterate the importance of understanding parental and cognitive styles for the group of university students in advancing the overall learning process, decision-making, guidance and counseling (Amin et al., 2023). Cognitive styles are a part of every person from birth, and parenting

styles play the most significant role in a child's growth and development (Sohail, 2022). Negative thoughts may be difficult to regulate for people with social anxiety (Nolen et al., 2008; Penney & Abbott, 2014). Another study conducted on medical students showed a positive correlation between social anxiety and a negative cognitive style (Perveen et al., 2016).

Within the realm of cognitive style, Riskind proposed another cognitive style known as looming cognitive style (Riskind et al., 2005). The looming cognitive style (LCS) is one type of cognitive style which is distinguished by a specific cognitive phenomenology and a tendency to create mental scenarios of threats and levels of increasing danger (Riskind, 2005). It has been discovered through research that the LCS serves as a danger schema and is associated with worry and anxiety but not depression (Riskind & Williams, 2006).

Parenting Styles, Social Anxiety and Cognitive Styles

Some studies have been conducted on these variables in Pakistan. Findings of one study indicated a moderately significant relationship between paternal permissiveness and social anxiety; however, no relationship was found in the case of maternal permissiveness (Ijaz & Mehmood, 2009).

In addition to this, another study suggested that a mother's authoritative parenting style significantly improved a child's ability to regulate emotions. Similar to how authoritative parenting from the father had a significant positive impact, permissive parenting from the father had a major negative impact on emotion regulation (Jabeen et al., 2013). Findings from another research indicated that secondary school students from authoritarian parenting also have greater self-regulatory learning and a higher academic achievement orientation compared to children from authoritarian parenting (Hassan et al., 2022).

Findings from the other study suggested that truancy patterns moderated the relationship between parental styles and social adjustment subscales (Tahira & Jami, 2021). In line with previous research, it has been shown that fathers' authoritarian style is associated with depression, behavioural problems, and emotional problems. However, the authoritarian parenting style of mothers is associated with emotional and behavioural problems as well as anxiety and depression (Nikoogoftar & Sara, 2015).

Moreover, there is a positive correlation between salary and turnover intention as well as between salary and analytical cognitive type and turnover intention. The analytical cognitive style acted as a moderator between salary satisfaction and turnover intention (Mughal et al., 2016).

Rationale of the Study

In recent years, it has been found that childhood has an effect on one's adulthood; their early experiences shape their belief about themselves, other individuals and the world (Egger & Angold,

2006). Therefore, they learn rules to protect their self-belief as it may make them vulnerable. In doing this, they form dysfunctional behaviours, which then can lead to mental health problems such as social anxiety (Egger & Emdy, 2011). University students often experience high levels of social anxiety and mental health challenges. This study will contribute to filling a gap in perceived parenting styles, university students' social anxiety and cognitive styles, particularly in Pakistan. Understanding how parenting styles influence social anxiety and the effect of cognitive styles as mediators can help develop more effective strategies, such as guiding parents and educators in supporting university students.

On the basis of the available literature, it was also noted that the studies have been largely targeting the variables i.e. parenting styles, social anxiety and cognitive styles separately in children, adolescents, and young adults (Cheruvu & DP, 2023; Chong et al., 2020; Festa & Ginsburg, 2011; Soysa & Weiss, 2014; Zeevi & Lavenda, 2023). Separate research have been conducted globally that determined the correlation between perceived parenting styles, social anxiety and cognitive styles; however, these variables have not been studied altogether in a single research with the mediating role of cognitive styles (Mughal et al., 2016; Riskind & Williams, 2006).

Through modern researches, it was also found that the role of cognitive styles has been investigated by many researches as an independent variable as well as an outcome variable (Dogan et al., 2015; Sahni, 2020; Sarah, 2010; Someya, 2001; Yadav et al., 2021). Few researches have also explored cognitive style as a moderating variable (Hoogeboom Et al., 2008; Peckham & Lopez, 2009, Zeevi & Lavenda, 2023). Therefore, taking cognitive styles as a mediating variable in the present study will add depth to the research domain.

Moreover, numerous researches studies have been conducted on field dependent style, field independent style, rumination cognitive style and negative cognitive style (Agarwal, 2009; Behera, 2022; Onyekuru, 2015; Rood et al., 2012; Shi, 2011). However, very limited work has been done on cognitive styles consisting of dimensions of knowing, planning and creating (Bouckennooghe et al., 2016; Simuth & Schuller, 2014). Hence, these dimensions of cognitive styles were unique which called for significant attention and exploration.

Furthermore, there has been scarce amount of literature to find the existing variables in university students worldwide (Cherry, 2020), as well as in Pakistani context (Kayani et al., 2022); thus, the research theme was unique to the domain, and demands significant attention to provide valuable insights into the well-being of university students.

Additionally, with relevance to the already conducted researches, it was identified that demographic aspects of the university students was not explored. This research will play an important role to identify these demographic differences among university students which is a much-needed aspect that should be studied.

Findings from this research could influence policies and practices in educational sector such as molding the learning strategies for students and granting leaves to the students suffering from

mental health conditions; thus, leading to a more supportive and mentally healthy learning environment. This research will also have the potential to make a meaningful impact on the well-being and success of university students and enhance our understanding of the complex factors contributing to social anxiety through publication of this research. Moreover, the study will provide scientific evidence for creating and promoting healthy parenting styles, which will then lessen the social anxiety among students.

Objectives of the Study

To determine a correlation between perceived parenting styles, social anxiety and cognitive styles among university students

To examine the mediating relationship of cognitive styles on perceived parenting styles and social anxiety among university students

To assess the demographic differences on social anxiety in university students

Hypotheses of the Study

Authoritative parenting style have a negative relationship with social anxiety among university students

Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have a positive relationship with social anxiety among university students

Cognitive styles mediate the relationship between perceived parenting styles and social anxiety among university students

Social anxiety and cognitive styles have a negative relationship among university students

Middle child has more social anxiety as compared to other birth orders in university students

Females have higher level of social anxiety as compared to males among university students

Unemployed people have more social anxiety as compared to employed people among university students

Single university students have more social anxiety than married university students

Nuclear family system has more social anxiety as compared to joint family system in university students

Theoretical Framework

Young and his colleagues conducted an extensive research upon the overall personality development in the individual. Therefore, they presented the Schema theory. Schema theory was developed as a potential explanation for the relationship between early life events, innate temperament, and adult psychosocial or personological outcomes (Young et al., 2003). The theory is formed on the five basic emotional needs, which are as follows:

Young and his colleagues stated that the satisfaction or frustration of these demands can be caused by the interaction of early experiences (nurture) and inborn temperament (nature).

The schema theory presents a comprehensive framework to understand the role of different factors such as early life events, innate temperament, and adult psychosocial or personological outcomes upon student's secure attachments to others, their autonomy, competence, and sense of identity; freedom to express valid needs and emotions; spontaneity and play; and realistic limits and self-control and also develop an insight into cognitive style and social anxiety. This theory will help to better explain how the cognitive styles (knowing, planning and creating) will mediate the effect of perceived parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) on social anxiety in my study. In short, schema theory will serve as a guiding map into the university students' cognitive styles which will aid in identifying the effect of perceived parenting styles on their social anxiety. It will also allow them to reason about unfamiliar learning situations and interpret these situations in terms of their generalized knowledge, and promote the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Method

Research Design

The current study was based upon the quantitative approach, which is used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations (Bhandari, 2020; Cengage, 2010; Fleetwood, 2023; LoBiondo et al., 2010; Mertens, 2010). The study utilized the correlational (cross-sectional) research design to determine the effect of perceived parenting styles on social anxiety.

Locale

The locale of the present study was different public and private universities of Islamabad city. These universities included: Air University, PIEAS, Muslim Youth University, International Islamic University, Quaid e Azam University, COMSATS and Riphah University.

Sample

The study sample of the current research was public and private university students from different departments. These universities included: Air University, PIEAS, Muslim Youth University, International Islamic University, Qauid e Azam University, COMSATS and Riphah University. Size of the sample was calculated through Tabachnick and Fidell formula. The screened sample size was 536 which included 256 males and 280 females. Further, the current research sample included students from various ages and education level. Convenient sampling method was used to gather the data.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria of the study were:

Students between 18-26 years of age

Students enrolled in BS and MS degree programs

Students whose parents lived together and,

Students lived with their parents as well.

Exclusion Criteria

The exclusion criteria of the study were:

Students whose fathers lived abroad

Students whose mother/father/both had done second marriage

Students who had any kind of physical disability

Operational Definitions

Perceived Parenting Styles

The term 'Perceived Parenting Style' is defined as the perception of the children about their parent's behaviour (Divya & Manikandan, 2013). It is based on 3 types of parenting styles: Authoritative, Authoritarian and Permissive.

Authoritative Style. Includes open communication between parent and child, providing clear guidelines, encouragement, and expectation upon the adolescents, providing lots of nurturing and

love, spending time together, and providing right direction, encouraging in taking decisions.

Authoritarian Style. Includes high standards, discipline, comparison between friends, criticizing while doing things, and providing punishment when rules are not obeyed, little comfort and affection, restriction, not providing solution to problems.

Permissive Style. Few limits imposed, little or no expectation for their children, view children as friends, spend less time with children, no rule or guideline for children, inconsistent and undemanding, allow the child to regulate his or her own activities.

Social Anxiety

The term 'Social Anxiety' is defined as a range of avoidance behaviors, physiological symptoms (e.g. racing heart, sweating, trembling) and social fears (e.g. talking to a stranger or peer, going to a party) (Connor et al., 2000). It is measured by the Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) (Connor et al., 2000).

Cognitive Styles

The term 'Cognitive style' is defined as an individual preference in perceiving and processing information (Cools & Broeck, 2007). It consists of 3 dimensions: Knowing, Planning and Creating.

Knowing. Knowing style emphasizes logic, objectivity, and precision.

Planning. Planning style emphasizes structure, control, and routines.

Creating. Creating style emphasizes subjectivity, impulsivity, and openness to possibilities.

Instruments

Following instruments were used in the study:

General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg & Williams, 1988)

General Health Questionnaire was developed by (Goldberg & Williams, 1988). This questionnaire was used in the following research as a screening tool to rule out any mental health conditions among university students. It consists of 12 items that are divided into 3 subscales: Social Dysfunction (items 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, & 12), Anxiety and Depression (items 2, 5, 6, & 9) and Loss of Confidence (items 10 & 11). The respondents made use of the given four-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 3 (0 = Not at all, 1 = No more than usual, 2 = Rather more than usual, 3 = Much more than usual). Moreover, 6 items of the screening tool are positively worded (items 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 & 12) and 6 items are negatively worded (items 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, & 11). Positively worded items are reverse scored. The screening tool's score

ranges from 0-36, with higher score demonstrating worse mental health. All the three subscales are scored separately. A cutoff value of 12 was found to distinguish between adults with and without mental health condition. Additionally, the screening tool's internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) is .84 with an adult population.

The Perceived Parenting Style Scale (Divya & Manikandan, 2013)

The Perceived Parenting Style Scale was developed by (Divya & Manikandan, 2013). This scale was used in the following research as a scale to measure perceived parenting style of the subject. It consists of 30 items in total that are divided into 3 subscales: Authoritative (items 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, & 28), Authoritarian (items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, & 29) and Permissive (items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, & 30). The respondents made use of the given five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). All the three perceived parenting styles are scored separately. Moreover, the authoritative style has an alpha coefficient of .79, authoritarian .81 and permissive .86.

The Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN, Connor et al., 2000)

The Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) was developed by (Connor et al., 2000). It is a brief 17-item screening tool designed to assess fear, avoidance, and physiological symptoms of anxiety associated with social anxiety. Responses are based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 to 4 (0 = Not at All, 1 = A little bit, 2 = Somewhat, 3 = Very much and 4 = Extremely). Scores for the SPIN can range from 0 to 68, with higher scores reflecting greater social phobia symptomatology. Three subscales evaluate Fear (e.g., fear of being embarrassed), Avoidance (e.g., avoidance of going to parties), and Physiological (e.g., blushing) symptoms associated with social phobia. A cutoff value of 19 was found to distinguish between adults with and without social anxiety disorder. The scale's internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) is .89 with an adult population.

Cognitive Style Indicator (Cools & Broeck, 2007)

The Cognitive Style Indicator was developed by (Cools & Broeck, 2007). This scale was used in the following research as a measure to assess information processing. It has 18 items in total that are divided into 3 subscales: Knowing (items 2, 8, 13 & 15), Planning (items 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 16 & 18) and Creating (items 1, 4, 5, 7, 11, 14 & 17). Each subscale will be scored separately. The respondents will make use of the given five-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = Typifies me totally not, 2 = Typifies me rather not, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Typifies me rather well, 5 = typifies me totally). Moreover, the knowing style has an alpha coefficient of .76, planning .85 and creating .79.

Procedure

Firstly, the universities of Islamabad were selected for data collection based upon the convenience of the researcher. A permission letter was issued by the Air University administration, which was given to the administrations of the selected universities. University students were approached through various academic departments and their informed consent was taken. The students, who gave the consent to participate in the study, were given the scales. These scales were filled through face-to-face contact at the academic departments, library and cafeterias. For queries, students were encouraged to contact the study researcher on the provided email address. Participants were then screened on the basis of the General Health Questionnaire and the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the research.

The procedure mainly consisted of two phases. Phase 1 was the screening phase where the participants were screened on the basis of General Health Questionnaire and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Phase 2 was the data collection phase. Initially, the data was collected more from females than males. However, to have approximately the same number of participants from both the groups, more data was collected from males.

Ethical Consideration

In ethical consideration, the privacy of the participants was taken care of and their personal information remained completely confidential. The participants were given the full right to withdraw from the study at any point if it caused any kind of inconvenience to them. To seek their permission, a consent form was provided which clearly explained the objectives of the study. The identity of the participants remained anonymous. The permission was sought from the participants and their physical or emotional safety was ensured before and during the research.

Results

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants at Baseline

Baseline Demographics	n	M	SD	%
Gender	256			47.8
Male	280			52.2
Female				

Age	15	22.72	2.17	2.8
18	33			6.2
19	50			9.3
20	59			11
21	61			11.4
22	113			21.1
23	85			15.9
24	69			12.9
25	43			8
26	5			.9
27	3			.6
28				
Religion	534			99.6
Islam				
Marital Status	479			89.4
Single	57			10.6
Married				
Family System	365			68.1
Nuclear	171			31.9
Joint				
Birth Order	19			3.5
Only child	153			28.5
First born	257			47.9
Middle child	107			20
Last born				
Degree Program	238			44.4
BS	193			36
MS	105			19.6
Other				
Department	75			14
Engineering	227			42.4
Non-Engineering	117			21.8
Humanities	117			21.9
Medical				

Educational Institute	271			50.6
Public	265			49.4
Private				
Job Status	142			26.5
Employed	394			73.5
Unemployed				

Note. $N = 536$

Table 2

Psychometric Properties for General Health Questionnaire, Perceived Parenting Styles, Social Anxiety and Cognitive Styles with their subscales

Scale	k	M	SD	Range		Cronbach's α
				Actual	Potential	
General Health Questionnaire	12	6.35	2.27	1-12	0-36	.73
Social Dysfunction	6	2.97	1.68	0-7	0-18	.81
Anxiety and Depression	4	2.29	1.31	0-6	0-12	.89
Loss of Confidence	2	1.09	.82	0-4	0-6	.71
Perceived Parenting Styles						
Authoritative	10	36.26	7.77	13-50	10-50	.86
Authoritarian	10	24.16	7.15	13-47	10-50	.79
Permissive	10	24.89	6.87	10-47	10-50	.73
Social Anxiety	17	27.99	14.49	0-63	0-68	.92
Cognitive Styles						
Knowing	4	13.97	3.57	5-20	4-20	.79

Planning	7	25.38	5.28	9-35	7-35	.83
Creating	7	23.89	4.87	10-34	7-35	.75

Note: k = No. of Items, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Cronbach's α = Reliability of the scales

The impact of Perceived Parenting Styles on Social Anxiety among University Students: Mediating Role of Cognitive Styles had four scales (General Health Questionnaire, Perceived Parenting Style Scale, Social Phobia Inventory and Cognitive Style Indicator). The screening tool General Health Questionnaire had three subscales: Social Dysfunction, Anxiety and Depression and lastly, Loss of Confidence. The Perceived parenting Styles had three subscales: Authoritative, Authoritarian and Permissive; whereas, Cognitive Styles had three subscales as well: Knowing, Planning and Creating.

All the four scales and their subscales were found to be reliable after running the reliability test. The reliability for General Health Questionnaire was found to be $\alpha = .73$, for Perceived Parenting Styles (Authoritative $\alpha = .86$, Authoritarian $\alpha = .79$ and Permissive $\alpha = .73$), for Social Anxiety $\alpha = .92$, and for Cognitive Styles (Knowing $\alpha = .79$, Planning $\alpha = .83$ and Creating $\alpha = .75$).

Analysis: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (see Table 3)

Hypotheses:

Authoritative parenting style have a negative relationship with social anxiety among university students

Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have a positive relationship with social anxiety among university students

Social anxiety and cognitive styles have a negative relationship among university students

Table 3

Correlation Matrix of Scales of Perceived Parenting Styles, Social Anxiety and Cognitive Styles (N=536)

	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Authoritative	-	-	-				
2	Authoritarian	-.39**	.54**					
3	Permissive	-.22**						

4	Social Anxiety	-.11*	.35**	.20**	-			
5	Knowing	.33**	.15**	.22**	-.04	-		
6	Planning	.42**	.09*	.09*	-.04	.80**	-	-
7	Creating	.31**	.13**	.19**	.01	.80**	.74**	

Note: **p<0.01 (two-tailed).

The results of Pearson product moment correlation showed the subscales of perceived parenting style i.e. authoritarian and permissive were significantly positively associated with social anxiety and cognitive styles. However, the authoritative parenting style was found to be significantly negatively associated with social anxiety. Additionally, social anxiety was found to be non-significantly associated with cognitive styles subscales among university students.

Analysis: Mediation

Hypothesis:

Cognitive styles mediate the relationship between perceived parenting styles and social anxiety among university students

Table 4

Standardized Estimates of Direct Effects through Cognitive Styles between Perceived Parenting Styles and Social Anxiety in University Students (N=536)

	Knowing		Planning		Creating		Social Anxiety	
Variables	β	S.E	β	S.E	β	S.E	β	S.E
Authoritative	.326***	.019	.419***	.027	.299***	.026	-.121*	.088
Authoritarian	.139***	.021	.083	.032	.127*	.029	.372***	.082
Permissive	.182***	.023	.071	.035	.174***	.032	.271***	.096
Knowing	-		-		-		-.006	.028
Planning	-		-		-		-.009	.031
Creating	-		-		-		.020	.024

R^2_{AE}	.137	.185	.110	.047
R^2_{AN}	.051	.019	.038	.167
R^2_{PE}	.062	.016	.049	.096
F_{AE}	16.802***	24.001***	13.089***	3.223*
F_{AN}	5.743***	2.044	4.217*	13.219***
F_{PE}	6.948***	1.773	5.436***	6.972***

Note: * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$, R^2 = R-squared, F = F Ratio

The results presented that perceived parenting styles i.e. authoritative, authoritarian and permissive were found to be significantly positively related with knowing and creating cognitive styles. Authoritative parenting style was also found to be significantly positively related with planning cognitive style. However, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were found to be non-significantly related with planning cognitive style. Further, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were found to be positively related with social anxiety; whereas, authoritative was found to be significantly negatively related with social anxiety. In addition, knowing, planning and creating cognitive styles were found to be non-significantly related with social anxiety among university students.

$$\beta = .326***$$

Authoritative Parenting Style

Knowing

$$\beta = -.006$$

$$\beta = .419***$$

$$.33***$$

$$\beta = -.121*$$

$$\beta = -.009$$

Planning

$$\beta = .139***$$

$$\beta = .083$$

Authoritarian Parenting Style

Social Anxiety

Creating

$$\beta = .372^{***}$$

$$\beta = .271^{***}$$

$$\beta = .071$$

$$\beta = .127^*$$

$$\beta = .020$$

Permissive Parenting Style

$$\beta = .182^{***}$$

$$\beta = .299^{***}$$

$$\beta = .174^{***}$$

Analysis: One-Way Independent Measures ANOVA (See Table 8)

Hypothesis:

Middle child has more social anxiety as compared to other birth orders in university students

Table 8

Comparison of Birth Order on Social Anxiety (N=536)

Variable	Only Child		First Born		Middle Child		Last Born		<i>F</i> (3,532)	<i>p</i>	Eta Square
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Social Anxiety	37.74	18.69	26.93	15.12	29.67	14.72	23.73	10.34	7.63	.000	.041

Note. ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed), *F* = *F* Ratio, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was found to be assumed (as $F = 11.19$, $p > .05$). The results of One-Way Independent Measures ANOVA showed that there were significant differences of social anxiety across different birth orders, with medium effect size. For further pair wise

comparisons, post-hoc (Hochberg's) was carried out.

The results of pair-wise comparison showed that the pair of only child and first born was significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which indicated that social anxiety was greater in only child as compared to the first born. Furthermore, the pair of only child and middle born was also significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which depicted that social anxiety was greater in only child as compared to the middle born. Additionally, the pair of only child and last born was also significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which showed that social anxiety was greater in only child as compared to the last born. Moreover, the pair of middle child and last born was also significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which showed that social anxiety was greater in middle born as compared to the last born.

However, the pair of first born and middle child was non-significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which showed that both the birth orders had equal social anxiety. In addition to this, the pair of first born and last born was also non-significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which showed that both the birth orders had equal social anxiety.

Conclusively, only child had the greater social anxiety as compared to first born, middle born, and last born.

Analysis: One-Way Independent Measures ANOVA (See Table 9)

Hypothesis:

BS students have more social anxiety as compared to other degree programs in university students

Table 9

Comparison of Degree Programs on Social Anxiety (N=536)

Variable	BS (n=238)		MS (n=193)		Other (n=105)		F(2,533)	p	Eta Square
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Social Anxiety	28.51	13.56	29.53	13.44	23.95	17.52	5.41	.005	.02

Note. p=.05, F= F Ratio, M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was not found to be assumed (as F=5.41, p=.05). However, the results of One-Way Independent Measures ANOVA showed that there were no significant

differences of social anxiety across different degree programs, with small effect size.

Analysis: Independent Samples t-Test (See Table 10)

Hypothesis:

Females have higher level of social anxiety as compared to males among university students

Table 10

Comparison of Gender on Social Anxiety (N=536)

Variable	Males		Females		<i>t</i> (534)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Social Anxiety	28.60	15.54	27.43	13.47	.93	.001	.08

Note. * $p < .05$ (one-tailed), M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was found to be assumed ($F=10.7$, $p > .05$). The results of Independent Samples t-test showed that statistically significant gender differences were found in terms of social anxiety, which depicted that males had higher level of social anxiety as compared to females, with small effect size.

Analysis: Independent Samples t-Test (See Table 11)

Hypothesis:

Unemployed people have more social anxiety as compared to employed people among university students

Table 11

Comparison of Job Status on Social Anxiety (N=536)

Variable	Employed		Unemployed		<i>t</i> (534)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Social Anxiety	28.43	18.25	27.83	12.91	.42	.000	.04

Note. * $p < .05$ (one-tailed), M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was found to be assumed ($F=43.57$, $p > .05$). The results of Independent Samples t-test showed that statistically significant job status differences were found in terms of social anxiety, which depicted that employed people had higher level of social anxiety as compared to unemployed people, with small effect size.

Analysis: Independent Samples t-Test (See Table 12)

Hypothesis:

Single university students have more social anxiety than married university students

Table 12

Comparison of Marital Status on Social Anxiety (N=536)

Variable	Single		Married		$t(534)$	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Social Anxiety	28.69	14.73	22.05	10.76	3.29	.001	.51

Note. * $p < .05$ (one-tailed), M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was found to be assumed ($F=10.31$, $p > .05$). The results of Independent Samples t-test showed that statistically significant marital status differences were found in terms of social anxiety, which depicted that single people had higher level of social anxiety as compared to married people, with medium effect size.

Analysis: Independent Samples t-Test (See Table 13)

Hypothesis:

Private university students have more social anxiety than public university students

Table 13

Comparison of Educational Institutes on Social Anxiety (N=536)

Variable	Public	Private	$t(534)$	p	Cohen's d

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Social Anxiety	28.59	14.87	27.37	14.11	.97	.33	.08

Note. $p > .05$ (one-tailed), *M*=Mean, *SD*=Standard Deviation

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was found to be assumed ($F = .72$, $p > .05$). The results of Independent Samples t-test showed that non-significant educational institute differences were found in terms of social anxiety, with small effect size.

Analysis: Independent Samples t-Test (See Table 14)

Hypothesis:

Nuclear family system has more social anxiety as compared to joint family system in university students

Table 14

Comparison of Family Systems on Social Anxiety (N=536)

Variable	Nuclear		Joint		<i>t</i> (534)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Social Anxiety	27.82	14.39	28.21	14.92	3.29	.78	.03

Note. $p > .05$ (one-tailed), *M*=Mean, *SD*=Standard Deviation

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was found to be assumed ($F = 1.08$, $p > .05$). The results of Independent Samples t-test showed that non-significant family system differences were found in terms of social anxiety, with small effect size.

Discussion

The study aimed at exploring the impact of perceived parenting styles on social anxiety among university students, by taking their cognitive styles as a mediator which explained the relationship between perceived parenting style and social anxiety. A strong parent-child bond is essential for a child's healthy development (Bhatia, 2012; Hurst et al., 2013; Kazdin, 2006).). However, social anxiety

becomes a significant concern among adults in relation to their perceived parenting experiences. It does not only impact individual's ability to communicate on a daily basis but also affects their mental health (Morrison & Heimerg, 2013). Therefore, the current research endeavors to fulfill the gap by explaining the mediating role of cognitive style in the association of perceived parenting style and social anxiety among university students.

In order to understand this, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between perceived parenting styles, social anxiety and cognitive styles. The findings indicate that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were found to be significantly positively associated with social anxiety. The existing literature supports the findings where a study showed that parenting attitudes was significantly related to the social anxiety. It indicates that adolescents pick up the care givers anxious and nervous tendencies through modeling and observation (Loukas, 2009). This can be explained by the assumption that children of Pakistan acquire and learn behaviours more quickly when they see, rather than when they hear. Hence, when their parents' behaviour and attitude has elements of social anxiety, fear and nervousness, they adopt them very easily which ultimately starts showing in their day-to-day activities and encounters of social situations.

Findings suggest that authoritarian and permissive were significantly positively associated with social anxiety and cognitive styles. This is supported by the previous researches that the authoritarian parents show no interest in their children, which causes the child to worry. This fear can lead to social anxiety in the child (Trautner, 2017). Children may experience worry at not carrying out their tasks exactly as their parents desired. They lessen their social interaction and put more effort into winning in every situation (Hurst et al., 2013). Moreover, the permissive parenting style demonstrated a significant correlation with social anxiety (Budinger et al., 2014; Sweeney & Wilson, 2023). This is perhaps explained by the assumption that the parents' neglecting behaviour causes the feelings of inferiority and low self-concept among children. This belief leads them to develop a personality where they perceive themselves as worthless, eventually leading to low self esteem and developing anxiety in social situations.

Additionally, the study also found significant negative association of the authoritative parenting style with social anxiety. The results are supported by a research which suggested that children who experience clear self-concept and higher self-esteem grow up to be well-adjusted and mentally healthy adults (Mann, 2004). This is possible because of healthy authoritative parenting techniques like enforcing clear boundaries, having high expectations for how the parent wants the child to behave (Pamela, 2022).

Findings further depicted a significant positive association of perceived parenting styles and its subtypes i.e. authoritative, authoritarian and permissive with cognitive styles among university students. These findings are consistent with the existing literature which depicts that there is a substantial correlation between high levels of resilience with both systematic-cognitive style and emotional warmth (Mehak et al., 2019).

Moreover, social anxiety was found to be non-significantly associated with cognitive styles among university students. This can be due to the assumption of the university students' different personality styles and their contextual experiences. However, this finding is contradictory with the literature which revealed that increased social anxiety was linked to lower social cognitive ability (Pearcey, 2020).

Additionally, it was hypothesized that cognitive styles will mediate the relationship between perceived parenting styles and social anxiety among university students. The results presented that perceived parenting styles i.e. authoritative, authoritarian and permissive were found to be significantly positively related with knowing and creating cognitive styles. Authoritative parenting style was also found to be significantly positively related with planning cognitive style. However, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were found to be non-significantly related with planning cognitive style. Further, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were found to be positively related with social anxiety; whereas, authoritative was found to be significantly negatively related with social anxiety. In addition, knowing, planning and creating cognitive styles were found to be non-significantly related with social anxiety among university students. This is perhaps explained by the assumption that in Pakistan, the better parenting styles of the parents will be, the better will be the students' cognitive style and the least will be their social anxiety.

The current findings are also consistent with the existing literature that anxiety and depression levels were higher in those who rated their parents as being more abusive and negligent, and that this link was mediated by dysfunctional cognitive style (McGinnet et al., 2005). Another study was found to have a significant impact on the selection of learning strategies, including the affective strategies of anxiety reduction and self-encouragement, the memory techniques of grouping and imagery, the cognitive strategies of practicing, analyzing, and summarizing, the compensation strategies of guessing, the metacognitive strategies of planning, paying attention, and self-evaluation (Shi, 2011).

However, parenting practices and the onset of social anxiety may be influenced by cultural norms and values in Pakistan in ways unrelated to cognitive styles. For instance, social norms and cultural expectations can have a significant impact on how social anxiety develops and is treated, possibly overshadowing cognitive styles. Social norms and role expectations that are culturally specific are closely linked to parenting styles and social anxiety (Hoffmann, 2010). The onset, experience, pattern of social anxiety, and treatment of social anxiety are all significantly influenced by culture (Kleinman, 2008).

In some cultural situations, there may be a stronger direct association between parenting styles and social anxiety. Cognitive styles may play a less prominent role in mediating this relationship if parenting styles in Pakistan have a particularly significant influence on social anxiety. Numerous researches have demonstrated a relationship between social anxiety and parental rejection and excessive control in teenagers (Eksi et al., 2020; Giaouzi & Giovazolias, 2015; Mousavi et al., 2016; Spokas & Heimberg, 2009; Akbay & Guduz, 2020).

In the Pakistani society, the nuances of social anxiety, parenting styles and cognitive styles may not be accurately captured by the instruments and methods used to measure them. The results could be impacted by social desirability bias and cultural variations in self-reporting (Holtgraves, 2004).

Moreover, social anxiety and parenting styles can both be impacted by socioeconomic factors. Social anxiety in Pakistan may be shaped more by socio-environmental factors and economic pressures than by cognitive styles (Tasmia et al., 2021).

In Pakistan, the importance of joint families and the community may act as a buffer against social anxiety, which could lessen the impact of cognitive styles on the relationship between the two (Sahar & Munawwar, 2017).

Additionally, there are a lot of types of cognitive styles including field dependent, field independent, rumination cognitive styles etc; hence, the knowing, planning and creating cognitive styles cannot be used to determine the social anxiety among the university students as we have a collectivist culture. A community that values the group over the individual is said to have a collectivist culture. Personality traits and attributes such as cohesion, harmony, duty, interdependence, achieving group goals, and avoiding conflicts are highly valued in collectivist culture. Therefore, there must be something else driving this phenomenon. The existing literature also supports this argument that social anxiety is caused by the negative experiences such as negative emotions, past experiences, family history and childhood traits (Ther, 2007). Researches also suggested that genetics, emotion regulation and self-esteem are some of the important factors that link perceived parenting styles and social anxiety (Bogels et al., 2011; Hettema et al., 2007; Mann, 2004).

While explaining the difference with reference to demographic variables, the study aimed to better understanding of the effect of birth order on social anxiety. It was hypothesized that middle child will have more social anxiety as compared to other birth orders in university students. The results implied that there were significant differences of social anxiety across different birth orders, with medium effect size. Hence, the stated hypothesis was accepted. For further pair wise comparisons, post-hoc (Hochberg's) was carried out.

The results of pair-wise comparison showed that the pair of only child and first born was significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which indicated that social anxiety was greater in only child as compared to the first born. This is supported by a study which revealed that compared to firstborn children, the only children showed much higher symptoms of social anxiety (Hardt et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the pair of only child and middle born was also significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which depicted that social anxiety was greater in only child as compared to the middle born. Additionally, the pair of only child and last born was also significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which showed that social anxiety was greater in only child as compared to the last born. It is interesting that only children have fewer opportunities to practice social skills (Lupcho, 2020). Other reasons can be that the only child doesn't have siblings which can create hindrance in his/her communication and support, especially if their parents are strict, unsupportive and uncooperative

(Rohreret et al., 2015).

Moreover, the pair of middle child and last born was also significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which showed that social anxiety was greater in middle born as compared to the last born. Studies have shown that middle children received their parent's attention the least. Another research indicated that middle-borns had difficulty performing well on the social component of extraversion and features of openness (Rohreret et al., 2015).

However, the pair of first born and middle child was non-significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which showed that both the birth orders had equal social anxiety. In addition to this, the pair of first born and last born was also non-significantly different in terms of social anxiety, which indicated that both the birth orders had equal social anxiety. Possible reasons for the non-significant differences between these birth orders can be the students' various personality styles, and their different childhood experiences.

Conclusively, only child had the greater social anxiety as compared to first born, middle born, and last born. We obtained evidence that the absence of a sibling relationship contributes to loneliness and antisocial behaviours (Gupta, 2022). Research agrees that these effects continue into adulthood, resulting in difficulties interacting with fellows, hypersensitivity to criticism as adults, and poor social skills in only children (Goisis, 2023).

Moreover, the study depicted that males had higher level of social anxiety as compared to females, with small effect size. Moreover, the small effect size indicates that the difference between males and females is weak.

. This is possibly explained by the assumption that in a country like Pakistan, social roles and stereotypes are attached with males that expect them to stay strong and confident, provide for their families, pay bills, do grocery shopping for the household etc. However, least attention is paid towards their mental health. Higher expectations are also associated with the males of the Pakistani society which is one main reason for higher levels of social anxiety in them as compared to females.

This pattern of results is consistent with previous literature that students had high levels of social anxiety, and that females had significantly lower levels than males (Hassan & Ali, 2014). However, the result is contradictory to a research which showed that females have high rates of social anxiety than males (Bahrami & Yousefi, 2011)

Furthermore, it was hypothesized that unemployed people will have more social anxiety as compared to employed people among university students. The results highlighted that employed people had greater social anxiety as compared to unemployed people, with small effect size. Further, the small effect size indicates that the difference between employed and unemployed people is weak.

This is perhaps due to the assumption that in a society like Pakistan, the nature of job, immense work load, low salary package, toxic work environment and abuse create a challenge for working people

alongside their financial crises and the continually increasing inflation of the country. Thus, worsening their mental health and contributing to the social anxiety symptoms.

The finding can be explained by the idea that most individuals with social anxiety have a job; however, they report being less productive and taking more days off due to their symptoms (Stein et al., 2016). Jobs that require giving presentations may be avoided or left by employees (Konnopka et al., 2009). Another study reveals that social anxiety can worsen when a person experiences pressure to interact in ways they are not comfortable with, feels humiliated or criticized or he/she has other fears and worries (Bietra, 2023). However, the finding of the present research is contradictory to the literature where the unemployed experienced higher levels of social anxiety than those who were employed (Westly, 2011).

Additionally, the results of present study support the hypothesis that single university students will have more social anxiety than married university students. This idea is further supported by the finding that single people have higher level of social anxiety than married people, with medium effect size. Therefore, the stated hypothesis was accepted. Moreover, the medium effect size shows that there is a moderate difference between single and married people, and the research findings hold a good practical significance.

Participants who were single showed increased fear and avoidance in social contact and performance situations. People with social phobia have trouble establishing and sustaining romantic relationships. They are also likely to be unmarried than people without social phobia (Schneier et al., 2014; Trevor et al., 2015; Turner et al., 2016). However, women have more drastic hormonal changes as compared to men, particularly during pregnancy and after childbirth. Anxiety levels including social anxiety have been connected to these chemical changes in females (Carpenter, 2022).

The study also hypothesized that nuclear family system will have more social anxiety than joint family system in university students. However, contradictory to the hypothesis, results showed that there were no significant differences of social anxiety across different family system, with small effect size. The current finding can be justified with the assumption that the students might have families that offer them support, discuss issues, and help with decision-making, as well as the spouse's support (Nazir et al., 2022). Students' different personality styles and their contextual experiences can also be other possible reasons for the non-significant findings.

However, previous researches have suggested that smaller families can still teach their children good values, but they might not be able to help them get ready for more adult responsibilities like making adjustments, showing kindness, and understanding, so on and so forth (Raza et al., 2020). Another study suggested that kids in nuclear family system don't get to socialize with other family members; children in nuclear families may grow up socially anxious (Lodhi et al., 2021).

This can be further explained by the assumption that electronic media and social media have also contributed for the social anxiety among university students. Students are exposed to a diverse content on these platforms, which ultimately creates a huge impact on their mental well being,

including the onset of the social anxiety symptoms. Transformation in family system is another crucial aspect that contributes towards the social anxiety.

According to the schema theory, a child's ability to regulate and express their emotions is crucial to their development (Young et al., 2003). Young children must learn to send and receive emotional messages in ways that are beneficial to both themselves and others if they are to successfully engage in interpersonal interactions and establish the relationships required for pleasant social experiences. Children who are able to regulate their emotions are better able to participate in tasks and social interactions with others without fear of rejection or unfavorable reactions. Moreover, securely attached young children typically show signs of distress when their parents depart and joy when their parents return. These children will turn to their parents or other adults for solace when they're scared. Children who are securely attached are open to parental contact, and they behave positively when a parent returns. In the absence of a parent or caregiver, these children can be somewhat consoled by others, but it's evident that they prefer their parents to others. However, if parents are absent, neglect them, come and go from their lives, or are otherwise abusive to them, children may not form a secure attachment. Inconsistent parental behavior and emotions can also prevent the development of secure attachments.

Limitations and Future Directions

The study conducted had potential limitations like any other research. One of the limitations was time constraints and limited access to universities due to security concerns. In addition to this, only a few universities were selected due to less time.

Moreover, response bias on the participants' end could be the possible limitation with respect to social desirability in which the participants answer in accordance with cultural norms to make themselves look acceptable socially.

Future researches are suggested to have a large sample size so that the findings can be generalized on the rest of the population. Secondly, interviews from the university students should also be done in the future to match their responses to ensure the accuracy of the responses. Thirdly, the scales can be translated into Urdu language so that it is easier for everyone to understand process and fill in the questionnaire items being asked. Moreover, present study was limited find out the perceived parenting styles of the parents (mother and father) altogether. An extensive study should be considered to find out the perceived parenting styles of the mother and father to fill in this literature gap. Lastly, comparison with respect to age of the university students can also be done in future research.

Implications

Findings from this research could influence policies and practices in the educational sector, such as molding the learning strategies for students and granting leaves to the students suffering from mental health conditions; thus, leading to a more supportive and mentally healthy learning environment. This research will also have the potential to make a meaningful impact on the well-being and success of university students and enhance our understanding of the complex factors contributing to social anxiety through publication of this research. Moreover, the study will provide scientific evidence for creating and promoting healthy parenting styles, which will then lessen the social anxiety among students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the aim of the current study was to determine the impact of perceived parenting style on social anxiety among university students, assessing the demographic differences on social anxiety in university students and examining the mediating effect of cognitive style between perceived parenting style and social anxiety.

The results of the analysis showed that perceived parenting style was found to be significantly positively associated with social anxiety and cognitive style among university students. However, social anxiety was found to be non-significantly associated with cognitive style among university students. Second, statistically significant gender differences were found in terms of social anxiety, which depicted that males had higher level of social anxiety as compared to females, with a small effect size. Third, statistically significant job status differences were found in terms of social anxiety, which depicted that employed people, had a higher level of social anxiety as compared to unemployed people, with small effect size. Fourth, statistically significant marital status differences were found in terms of social anxiety, which depicted that single people had higher level of social anxiety as compared to married people, with medium effect size.

However, non-significant educational institute differences were found in terms of social anxiety. Moreover, there were significant differences of social anxiety across different birth orders, with medium effect size, which depicted that only child had the greater social anxiety as compared to first born, middle born, and last born. Also, there were no significant differences of social anxiety across different family system.

Lastly, perceived parenting style was found to be a non-significant predictor of cognitive style and social anxiety. Moreover, cognitive style was also found to be a non-significant predictor of social anxiety. However, cognitive style was found to be a significant mediator between perceived parenting style and social anxiety, which showed that a decrease in cognitive style tends to decrease perceived parenting style, which in turn decreases social anxiety among university students.

However, it's necessary to consider that this study is not without its limitations. The sample consisted mainly of individuals from a single geographic region being Islamabad, which therefore, limits the generalizability of our findings. Future research should aim to expand the search on a broader level with more diverse populations.

All things considered, the current study plays an essential part in the contribution to the increasing body of research putting emphasis on the significance of perceived parenting style on social anxiety. It is expected that this study has provided a better understanding of the relationship between perceived parenting styles on social anxiety among university students within the Pakistani context.