Shyness and school phobia among school going children

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Abstract
Childhood is the age span ranging from two years to adolescence. The term childhood is non- specific in its time span and can imply a varying range of years in human development. There are broad three stages of childhood which includes early childhood, late childhood and adolescence. Starting primary school is an important, but potentially stressful time in a child's development. How well a child is prepared for the demands of school life can have implications for their overall adjustment to school. Shyness is the tendency to feel awkward, worried or tense during social encounters, especially with unfamiliar people. School for shy children is particularly more stressful than non- shy children and has a major effect on internalising behaviours. School phobia is simply defined as anxiety and fear associated with going to school. School refusal usually develops after a child has been home from school for an illness or vacation and other stressful family events such as divorce, parental illness, injury or death of a loved one. The main cause behind school phobia among children was separation anxiety from parents especially from mother, being bullied, severe teacher criticism and teasing. It was found that shyness is associated with low peer popularity which in turn, is related to lower school liking. It was also found that shyness affects childrens peer relations, including increased difficulty making friends and tendency to be ignored, excluded and bullied by peers. So school phobia and shyness is the main concern for parents and teachers and there is a need for providing guidance and counselling to school children to protect them from developing psychological effects of bullying.

Keywords: shyness, school phobia, school going children

Introduction
Child hood is the age span ranging from two years to adolescence. The term childhood is non- specific in its time span and can imply a varying range of years in human development. There are broad three stages of child hood.
Physical changes in early childhood are accompanied by rapid changes in the child's cognitive and language development. From the moment they are born, children use all their senses to attend to their environment, and they begin to develop a sense of cause and effect from their actions and the responses of caregivers.
Shyness is the "tendency to feel awkward, worried or tense during social encounters, especially with unfamiliar people. "Shyness may also produce physical symptoms such as sweating or stomach complications. Shy children will be weary in new social situations, will perceive such instances as threatening and may experience high level of anxiety. Children face anxiety through perceived social evaluation when they are in novel social situation when children became older; they may not only experience anxiety but also embarrassment in new social situations.
School for shy children is particularly more stressful than for non-shy children. Schools make use of large peer groups, such as group work and large group instructions, and these situations require verbal participation. Shy children will very likely withdrawal from these activities and will not participate in many academic and social growth opportunities. Many of these children will become dominated by the Anxiety, making concentration on other academic activities very difficult.
Shyness has a major effect on internalizing behaviours for children. For instance, they are much more likely to experience anxiety disorder. School is a place of much distress for shy children. They will be unwillingly to interact with peers. They will also feel anxiety when interacting with peers. There are many expectations for students to actively participate in class; shy children will feel anxious when such expectations are placed on them. Teacher holds lower expectations for shy students. Not only do they believe that shy students cannot obtain high grades, many teachers hold stereotypes that shy children have inferior cognitive abilities. They expect shy students to lack the skills necessary for performing well in the classroom.

Rationale
School phobia is a complex syndrome that can be influenced by the child's temperament, the situation at school and the family situation. Current study defines school phobia as an anxiety disorder related to separation anxiety. Shyness is the tendency to feel awkward, worried or tense during social encounters. Shyness has a major effect on internalizing behaviours for children. School phobia and shyness is the main concern for parents and teachers. The purpose behind this study is to see the factors that cause school phobia, it usually develops after a child has been home from school for an illness or vacation, stressful family event or death of a loved one.

Objectives
- To study the research papers related to shyness and school phobia among school going children.
- To review the available literature related to shyness and school phobia among school going children.

Srivastava (2018) [26] conducted a study on 'social adjustment problems of school going academic achievers'.

The aim of the study was examine the level of academic achievement among school going students about their social adjustment. The sample consisted of 280 students (140 boys and 140girls) belonging in different locality of mohanpur subdivision in west Tripura district. The data had been collected with the help of Adjustment Inventory for school students by applying descriptive survey method and statistical technique. Study investigator found that high achievers are more adjusted than low achievers. The findings revealed that girls and boys differ significantly in their social adjustment. Girl students are more socially adjusted than boy students.

Rathman et al. (2018) [25] examined the impact of class level climate on school aged children's life satisfaction. Data was derived from the German National Educational Panel Study (NEPS) using 6th grade school aged children. Class climate includes indicators of teacher's care and monitoring, demands interaction, autonomy as well as school aged children's attitudes towards school work at the class and individual level. Results showed that individual perceived class climate in terms of teachers care and monitoring and autonomy was positively related to life satisfaction. Whereas, school related demands were related to lower life satisfaction. It was revealed that school aged children's life satisfaction is not associated with teachers care and monitoring at class level.

Tukur and Muhammad (2017) [30] conducted a study to determine the level of student's school phobic behaviour as a result of insecurity of school environment. The sample of the study comprised senior secondary school students of Elkanemi College of Islamic Theology Maiduguri Borno state, 90 students consisting of 38 female and 52 male were used. The instrument used for data collection was School Refusal Assessment Scale (SRAS). The study was guided by research question and data collected were analysed by the use of descriptive statistic to determine the level of student's school phobic behaviour as well as ascertain the difference of student school phobic behaviour across gender. The result indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female school phobic behaviour. This was based on assumption that frequent insurgency activities like bomb blast, shooting, killing and abduction of students in the school environment could trigger or influence student to exhibit school phobia. The findings revealed that unsecure school environment did not particularly contribute to school phobia.

John et al. (2017) [17] studied 'knowledge regarding school phobia among parents of children in selected wards of Nayarambalam panchayat, Ernakulum'. The objective was to assess the knowledge regarding school phobia among parents. Methodology used were non descriptive research design among 80 parents of children between (4-10 years), using non probability convenience sampling technique. The data was collected by using structured knowledge questionnaire on school phobia. Out of 80 subjects, 45 had average knowledge regarding school phobia. Findings revealed that the majority of parents had average knowledge regarding school phobia in children.

Masek and Masduki (2017) [23] examined the relationship between shyness and children's participation during the teaching and learning of basic psychomotor skills in early education. The sample consisted of 55 boys and 163 girls, shy pre school children who resolved in the Segamat Preschool, Malaysia who were nominated by their teachers.

The data was collected by convenience sampling technique and questionnaires. While participating in teaching and learning of basic psychomotor skills, the analysis showed that the children level of shyness was high whereas the children participation was low. There was no significant difference in the level of shyness between boys and girls. The findings revealed that there was a strong negative correlation between the level of shyness and the student's participation in the teaching and learning of basic psychomotor skills. It was revealed that children experience the highest level of shyness when they are asked to give their opinion during a discussion. This was because they are afraid that others will underestimate them if they say something wrong or irrelevant.

Thabet et al. (2016) [29] conducted a study aimed to observe the rate of school refusal behaviour in Palestinian children. The sample comprised of 122 boys and 115 girls, age ranged from 9-13 years. The tools used for data collection were children administered self- report scales, socio demographic scale, the school refusal assessment scale. The estimated prevalence rate of school refusal behaviour was 18.2%. The findings of the study showed that there was no significant difference in total school refusal behaviour or subscales. However, children who reported that their mothers had been psychiatrically ill scored more in total school refusal and they had more attention getting or separation anxious behaviour. Such study should encourage concerned professionals to treat children with school refusal behaviour.

Guohan et al. (2016) [29] explored the role of teacher child relationship and pre-schooler's shyness level and externalising problem. The sample consisted of 463 children from 6 preschools of Shandong province in north china. Cluster random sampling was used to collect the data, Mothers reported that shyness level, aggressive behaviour and attention problem of their children, whereas teachers rated the teacher child relationships. Results indicated that shyness level of girls were significantly higher that of boys, shyness was associated with more aggressive behaviours, more attention problems, higher teacher child dependency, higher child conflict and lower teacher child closeness.

Jaureguizar et al. (2015) [29] studied school maladjustment in 1843 children and adolescent aged 11-18 from public and grant assisted private schools in the autonomous region of the basque country (Spain).The student filled out the self-report of the Behaviour Assessment Scale for Children (BASC).The sample was obtained through convenience sampling. The result showed that 6.2% of the students scored very high in school maladjustment while, 16.5% were at risk and 77.3% showed no school maladjustment. The study revealed that school maladjustment is a serious issue, and that a relevant percentage of students score high in school maladjustment or at a risk of it.A typically and sense of inadequacy were risk factors, while good relations with parents acted as a positive factors.

Kalar et al. (2013) [19] conducted a study to determine the fear in school children in a private school of Karachi; Pakistan. The participants were school children of 7-12 years of age and were selected on the basis of non-probability convenient sampling. The sample size calculation was done by using the WHO software for 'sampling size calculation'. Questionnaire was administered to indicate the level of fear, most of the students feared from failing in their test (62.3%) proceeded by fear from

electricity (59.3%) and fear from wild animals (57.6%). Significant difference was found between males and females, male fear score was higher than females and may contribute to school disliking.

Saltali and Erbay (2013) [27] conducted a study to examine stressfulsituations 6 year old experience when they attend kindergarten for the first time. Study consisted of 45 pre-school teachers working in kindergartens affiliated to ministry of national education in Konya. Qualitative research methods were used in the study; a semi structured interview was developed by the researchers. Open- ended questionswere aimed at identifying certain things,such as problems children experience during first school days, possible reasons of the problems, the way children manifest the problems and teacher strategies in dealing with the problems. Research findings revealed that children feel stressed in their first days of school life because of the feeling to be away from family-especially from mother, social anxiety regarding school environment, fears related to teachers, problems related to self -care skills and fear of failure in activities. Besides, it was also found that children disclosed their stress by crying, refusing to participate in activities, behaving introvertedly, acting aggressively or not letting mother leave the school.

Wilkens et al. (2013) conducted a longitudinal study with 291 kindergarteners exploring the relationships among children's shyness, school liking and internalising problems in early school years. The study aim was to understand how shyness during first and second grade predicted popularity in peer groups and how children's shyness and popularity uniquely contributed to school liking or school avoidance. Parents and teachers completed questionnaires assessing shyness, popularity and school liking. The research showed that shyness is associated with low peer popularity, which in turn, is related to lower school liking.

Abidi & Shahzad (2012) [1] conducted a study on 'effects of shyness on the adjustment of high school children'. The sample was selected from 8th and 9th grade classes; there were 150 school children (age 13-15years).Data was collected by the use of shyness Questionnaire for measuring shyness level and Bell Adjustment Inventory for measuring different types of adjustment. The results showed that shyness has no effects on home and health adjustment but effects social and emotional adjustment of school children. Findings revealed that girls are shy than boys and nuclear family children are shy as compared to extended family system children.

Findings of the study

- It was revealed that the students who were high academic achievers are more adjusted than low achievers and girls are more socially adjusted as compared to boys. Srivastava (2018) [26].
- It was found that school aged children's life satisfaction was not associated with teachers care and monitoring at class level. Rethman et al. (2018).
- No significant difference between male and female students school phobic behaviour was found. The findings revealed that unsecure school environment did not particularly contribute to school phobia like bomb blast, shooting and abduction of students in the school environment. Tukur & Muhammad (2017) [30].
- The results revealed that majority of parents had average

knowledge regarding school phobia in children. JOHN et al. (2017) [17].
- Findings revealed that children experience the highest level of shyness when they are asked to give their opinions during a discussion; this is because they are afraid that others will underestimate if they say something wrong or incorrect. Musek & Masduki (2017) [23].
- Shyness level of girls were significantly higher that of boys, shyness was associated with more aggressive behaviours, more attention problems, higher teacher dependency, higher child conflict and lower teacher child closeness. GUOHAN et al. (2016) [12].
- Children who reported that their mothers had been psychiatrically ill scored more in total school refusal and they had more attention getting or separation anxious behaviour. THABET et al. (2016) [29].
- The study revealed that school maladjustment is a serious issue and that a relevant percentage of students score high in school maladjustment or at a risk of it. A typically and sense of in adequacy were risk factors, while good relations with parents acted as a positive factor. JAUREGUIZAR et al. (2015) [16].
- Research revealed that children feel stressed in their first day of school life because of the feeling to be away from family especially mother, social anxiety regarding school environment and fears related to teachers. SALTALI & ERBAY (2013) [27].
- Significant differences was found between males and females, male fear score was higher than females. KALAR et al. (2013) [19].
- The findings revealed that shyness is associated with low peer popularity, which in turn is related to lower school liking. WILKEN'S et al. (2013).
- It was found that children from nuclear families are shy as compared to children from extended families and shyness has no effects on home and health adjustment but effects social and emotional adjustment of school children. Abidi et al. (2012) [1].

Summary

Childhood is the age span, followed by infancy and starts with toddlerhood when the child begins speaking or taking steps independently. While toddlerhood ends around age three when the child becomes less independent on parental assistance for basic needs. At this stage children are learning through observing, experimenting and communicating with others. Adults supervise and support the development process of the child, which will lead to the child's autonomy. Also during this stage, a strong emotional bond is created between the child and care providers. Starting primary school is an important, but potentially stressful time in a child's development. How well a child is prepared for the demands of school life can have implications for their overall adjustment to school. Familiarity with school is very important for children and their families in easing the stress of confidence in the new environment. The main cause of school phobia among children is separation from parents especially from mother, being bullied, severe teacher criticism and teasing. However it has been shown that school refusal usually develops after a child has been home from school for an illness or vocations or it may trigger from a particular starting point, unexpected life events such

as death of a loved one, divorce, parental illness or injury. In addition to this, shyness affects the school adjustment which in turn may contribute to school disliking. Similarly teachers also reported that shyness might negatively affect children peer relations, including increased difficulty making friends, tendency to be ignored, neglected and excluded by peers.

Conclusion

Conclusion was made in the light of the results that shyness and school phobia affects the self-esteem of school going children. It has been shown that shyness has no differential effect on home and health adjustment whereas it effects on social and emotional adjustment of school children. Children feel anxious about being separated from family, especially from mother. In addition to this, social anxieties regarding school environment, fear related to teachers, problems related to self-care skills, fear of failure in activities, fear related to rules and fear of being forgotten in the school are regarded as children's stressors. So it is necessary to have intervention programs to enhance parent's knowledge to prevent shyness and school phobia among school going children. It is obvious that girls are moreshy than boys and nuclear family children are more shy as compared to children from extended families. It has been also found that shyness is associated with low peer popularity which in turn, is related to lower school liking. So there is a need for providing guidance and counselling to school children to protect them from developing psychological effects of bullying.

Recommendations

- Create conducive school environment for the student.
- Relaxation training andSocial skill training should be introduced in schools.
- Authorities should provide security in all schools.
- The parents have to be aware how to prevent future occurrences of school phobia.
- Professional social workers should be appointed in all schools.
- Encourage and provide opportunities to children so that children learn by doing.
- Further a box where children can drop their complaints, even if anonymous has to be provided in each school.
- Encourage parents to set up regular evening and morning routines, reinforce child's positive behaviour and ignore negative behaviour.
- Teachers should build a relationship and a supportive environment which is important aspect for successful teaching.
- Teacher should assign collaborative learning which enhance confidence.
- Set up rewards for school attendance.
- Assign a peer buddy recess or lunch to help socially anxious child feel more comfortable.
- Provide academic interventions and supports for students who have academic difficulties.
- Create a welcoming and engaging environment that helps students feel connected to their school and teachers.
- Involve families in the school through outreach and after school programs.
- Never pressure shy students to talk or speak up and punish them for their shyness.

- Be your child's friend, provide unconditional love and support.

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