

Role of Shyness and Perceived Social Support in Self-disclosure among University Students

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The present study investigated the role of shyness and perceived social support in self-disclosure among university students. It was also intended to examine the moderating role of perceived social support in the relationship between shyness and self-disclosure. Shyness Questionnaire (Henderson & Zimbardo, 2002), Perceived Social Support Scale (Cutrona & Russell, 1990), and Self-Disclosure Scale (Magno, Cuason, & Figueroa, 2008) were used to measure study variables. Sample consisted of 380 university students including both men and women within age range of 18 to 30 years ($M = 28.33$, $SD = 6.51$). Results showed that shyness was significantly negatively related with self-disclosure and perceived social support. However, self-disclosure had significant positive relationship with perceived social support. Results further showed that perceived social support moderates the relationship between shyness and self-disclosure. Significant gender differences were found on shyness, perceived social support, and self-disclosure, with male university students reflecting more perceived social support and self-disclosure; while, they were low on shyness as compared to female students. Future implications of the study were also discussed.

Keywords. Shyness, perceived social support, self-disclosure, university students

Self-disclosure has been defined as disclosing one's personal information to another person and is considered to be the important feature of communication with someone in a close relationship such as friendships and marital relations (Williamson, Stohlman, & Polinsky, 2017). Self-disclosure has been dealt as the attribute of the person and also as the feature of the relationship one has with the other person; additionally, self-disclosure is not a stable feature of the individual rather it is viewed as a process that changes or varies with the changing relationships and life of the individual (Sprecher &

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Hendrick, 2004; Wang et al., 2018). It is a process in which a person actively discloses one's thoughts, emotions, and feelings to the other person involved in the interaction (Derlega, Greene, & Mathews, 2006). However, the pattern of disclosure between the individuals is influenced by the level of interaction and type of relationship between the prospective partners (Bavelas, Coates, & Johnson, 2000).

Recent evidences (Horne & Johnson, 2018; Robinson, 2017; Wang et al., 2018) indicated that self-disclosure is an intentional or purposive act of an individual that is aimed to unveil personal information, thoughts, and emotions to the other person they are interacting. In addition, self-disclosure is related to many qualities of the relationship like its positive relationship has been observed with love, relationship strength, and the pleasure or one's contentment with the relationships. The reason for this association between relationship qualities and the disclosure is that it is considered to be the sign of relationship stability and continuation for a long time. However, there are major factors that may facilitate or inhibit the expression of self-disclosure; for instance, personality traits (e.g., extraversion, self-esteem, shyness, wellbeing, materialism; Hui & Tsang, 2017); contextual states (e.g., motivation, self-presentation, relationship efficacy; Horne & Johnson, 2018; Williamson et al., 2017), and social factors (e.g., parental support, peer influence, social support; Bukhari & Afzal, 2017; Shahed, Ilyas, & Hashmi, 2016). Therefore, in the present study, specific focus has been placed on the dispositional tendencies such as shyness and availability of social support in developing and sustaining relationships for a long time.

Shyness is generally defined as the "behavioral inhibition involving anxiety and fear of social situations" (Shiner, 2006, p. 3). The relationship of shyness has been seen with fear, as fear is considered to be the main constituent of shyness (Rothbart, 2006). Similarly, shyness is considered as an innate ability of the individual (Henderson & Zimbardo, 2009) as well as characterized by the negative self-assessment associated with the feelings of distress and uneasiness in social settings and causes hindrance for the person in achieving one's daily life as well as career goals (Henderson & Zimbardo, 2009). According to Zimbardo (2017), shyness could be experienced at affective level (such as extreme feelings of nervousness or uneasiness); behavioral level (inability to react appropriately); cognitive level (negative thoughts about one's own self); and at physiological level (increased heartbeat and perspiration) prompted by different situational events. Oakman (2005) asserted that most of the referrals of shyness fulfill the criteria of generalized social phobia, that is, they generally have trouble in starting conversations in the social

settings and also feel difficulty in maintaining such conversations. Some referrals are also found to meet the criteria for avoidant personality disorder in which individuals are over sensitive to be rejected by the others (Tignol et al., 2001). Many other disorders are also found to be present as the co-morbid factors of shyness such as dysthymia, generalized anxiety disorder, phobias related to specific situations and with specific things and in some cases also have dependent and paranoid personalities (Butt, Moosa, Ajmal, & Rahman, 2011).

Perceived social support has been defined by Gottlieb (2000) as “a process of interaction in relationship which improves coping, esteem, belonging, and competence through actual and perceived exchanges of physical or psychosocial resources” (p. 200). Perceived social support is considered as an important asset that an individual thinks to be present or that is truly provided to the individual both by recognized support groups and by the intimate relationships (Ozbay, Johnson, & Southwick, 2007). Furthermore, social support is a kind of feedback which a person receives through the contact with significant others (Uchino, 2009). It is also viewed as the support that is attainable or achievable for an individual through his relationships with other individuals and groups (Cohen, Underwood, & Gottlieb, 2000). An important distinction, explained by Wills and Shinar (2000) needs to be addressed regarding perceived and received social support as the support which is thought to be present and which is actually provided to the individual. Perceived social support is defined as an individual’s prospective (probable) approach to social support and is more related to intrapersonal (within the person) approach; while the received social support is defined as the support reported by the individual after utilization of the support resources and is more closely linked to interpersonal approach; that is it is about between two individuals (Remezankhani, Gharlipour, Heydarabadi, Ranjbar, & Moosavi, 2013). With reference to health behaviors, Cohen (2004) found that the perceived social support is more effective than the actual or received social support because people usually thought that if the existing resources of support are not perceived by the individual they cannot be used effectively. Further, empirical evidence suggested that the perceived social support is more powerful than the actual support provided to the person (Feldman, Dunkel-Schetter, Sandman, & Wadhwa, 2000; Shahed et al., 2016). Thus both the types of social support have their own significance and place in individuals’ lives.

Empirical evidence suggested that shyness can be predicted from one’s perception about availability of the social support. For instance, Zhao, Kong, and Wang (2013) illustrated that less perceived social

support leads to shyness in the presence of low self-esteem and loneliness. These findings suggest that perceived social support explains an alternate path for the development of shyness and hence, has mediatory effects. Chan (2012) found that the presence of social support minimizes the negative effects of shyness on the individual and prevents oneself from getting depressed. In addition, Awang, Kutty, and Ahmed (2014) declared that negative impact of low self-esteem, shyness, and poor psychological wellbeing can be minimized by the availability of familial and peer support as well as social efficacious skills. Russell and Cutrona (2017) further added that shyness is usually associated with perceived fear of social rejection; therefore, provision of emotional and instrumental support from family, friends, and peers help in restraining the repercussions of social shyness.

Studies suggest that those who are high on shyness are found to be low on self-disclosure, as social skills are very important for the effective self-disclosure and the individuals who have good skills of socialization are usually high on self-disclosure (Brunet & Schmidt, 2007). Earlier findings suggested that the lack of social support among university students usually lead them towards social isolation (Bazarova, Hancock, & Jiang, 2011), poor wellbeing (Awang et al., 2014), and more academic stress (Kugbey, Osei-Boadi, Atefoe, 2015). Owing to lower interpersonal skills such individuals are shy and hesitate to disclose themselves (Rumi & Kunio, 2000). Moreover, shyness creates hindrance in self-disclosure by the individual, as such individuals have few friends to whom they can indulge in face to face disclosure (Sheldon, 2013). Similarly, Zimbardo (2017) asserted that shy individuals are reluctant to make their appearances in social gatherings and find it difficult to share their thoughts and feelings with others. Hence, this inability to build social bonds with others renders them with few options to develop friendships.

The role of perceived social support has been extensively studied in relation to physical and psychological health; for instance, depression (Lachman & Firth, 2004), happiness and life satisfaction (Prenda & Lachman, 2001) and found that emotional component of social support is more beneficial as the individual feels to be loved and accepted by others. It is further suggested that the perceived social support increases one's physical as well as psychological health as the studies showed that large and effective social networks hinder one's risk taking behavior and prevent the individual from negative considerations (Ozbay et al., 2007). Moreover, numerous studies (Jibeen, 2015; Kugbey et al., 2015; Metts, Manns, & Kruzic, 1996) have pointed out that perceived social support is considered to be the

most crucial and effective constituent in building confidence and bringing out positive academic results in the receiving individuals. As per social penetration theory (Altman & Taylor as cited in Remezankhan et al., 2013) in every kind of relationship self-disclosure has the peculiar importance because every relationship begins and is sustained by the self-disclosure between the partners. In addition to that these relationships are the source of support for the individual in the times of need (Mcpherson, Smith, & Brashears, 2006). A good relationship needs a certain amount of disclosure so that it can be beneficial for the partners whenever they need each other's support (Ogunleye & Balogun, 2013). Likewise, Emadpoorl, Lavasani, and Shahcheraghi (2015) further added that perceived social support has an immense accelerating effect not only on augmenting interpersonal skills of the students and their ability to self-disclose, but also enhancing their psychological wellbeing and intrinsic academic motivation.

Research findings suggested that one's perception about the availability of social support has a buffering effect which causes one to show more self-disclosure (Martins et al., 2013). The availability of social support makes a person better able to stand against the life stressors (Qian, 2008); and personal hindrances such as shyness and social inhibition (Frese & Fay, 2001). In addition, that shy individuals feel more interpersonal rejection and thus exhibit reluctance in approaching others, and these feelings are aggravated by less perceived social support which ultimately leads them towards loneliness (Jackson, Fritch, Nagasaka, & Gunderson, 2002). Theorists, Cohen and McKay (as cited in Kugbey et al., 2015) proposed that social support acts as stress buffer, and further posited that social support promotes health by facilitating psychological resources under highly stressful circumstances. Stress buffer function of social support is supported by research findings, such as Dour et al., (2014) found that the availability of social support moderates symptoms of anxiety and depression in students. Numerous researches (Awang et al., 2014; Bukhari & Afzal, 2017; Emadpoorl et al., 2015; Jibeen, 2015; Shahed et al., 2016) have inferred the buffering role of perceived social support against various odds among university students such as academic stress, low self-esteem, depression, shyness, loneliness, and psychological problems. Perceived social support influence university students' social, emotional, academic wellbeing and family, friends play important role in their wellbeing (Awang et al., 2014). Perceived social support also influences academic motivation, as Emadpoorl et al., (2015) showed that the perceived social support directly and positively influence significant psychological wellbeing and academic

motivation. On similar grounds, Jibeen (2015) found significant negative relation between perceived social support and mental health problems among Pakistani university students.

Researches (Gazelle, Peter, & Karkavandi, 2014; Rubin & Barstead, 2014) on shyness highlighted the gender differences by stating that as it is less acceptable for boys hence they are treated in a way that can make them more self-assertive and dominant while the girls usually get less chances to explore things and to move freely so they may develop shyness. In addition, shyness does not match the gender norms assigned to the males (Doey, Coplan, & Kingsbury, 2014). On perceived social support, the literature does reflect gender differences, as men and women differ in providing social support. Men are found to provide more the instrumental support and also want to get it back whenever they need it. Women are more likely to provide emotional support to others and are more satisfied when it is given back to them (Matud, Ibanez, Bethencourt, Marrero, & Carballeira, 2003). Moreover, men have more perceived social support as compared to women because men perceive almost equal social support from all of their social groups as compared to women (Tam, Lee, Har, & Pook, 2011) and men are found to be more contented with the available support as compared to women (Terblanche, 2011). Additional set of studies (Horne & Johnson, 2018; Wang et al., 2018) showed that there are gender differences in the level of self-disclosure as there are differences in the type of information shared by the men and women; for instance, men share more about their daily life and activities; while, women disclose more about their intimate life and relationships. Furthermore, men have more breadth of self-disclosure; whereas, women show more depth of disclosure, but overall, the amount of self-disclosure is almost equal in both the genders (Paluckaite & Matulaitiene, 2012). Further evidence (Remezankhani et al., 2013) concluded that men are higher on self-disclosure and use diverse channels of sharing as compared to women.

Review of earlier literature has identified certain substantial grounds for the present study. Firstly, previous studies (Doey et al., 2014; Matud et al., 2003; Remezankhani et al., 2013) highlighted the need to focus on the traits which may have an impeccable influence on the development and sustenance of interpersonal relationships among young adults such as shyness, self-disclosure, self-esteem, and social anxiety. Therefore, the present study attempted to examine the predictive role of shyness in developing tendencies of self-disclosure. Secondly, existing set of studies (Jibeen, 2015; Shahed et al., 2016) drew attention towards the buffering role of protective factors such as familial and peer support which would act in facilitative manner to

overcome the negative inclinations such as social anxiety, social fears, and inhibitions. In lieu to the same context, present endeavor attempted to determine the shielding role of perceived social support in overcoming the negative impact of shyness and guarded inclinations. Similarly, this study aimed to investigate how social support provided by the different persons in the individual's social network, have influence in enhancing self-disclosure and reducing shyness. Thirdly, in this study, specifically university students have been targeted as a sample. The probable explanation comes from the prior global (Russell & Cutrona, 2017; Sheldon, 2013; Zimbardo, 2015) and indigenous explorations (Bukhari & Afzal, 2017; Jibeen, 2015) which have shown that the university environment and the social norms may make the young adults look more confident but those individuals who would have been shy in their childhood could still feel internally shy which undoubtedly would affect their self-disclosure when forming new relationships.

Social support is one of the important functions of social relationships. Interaction with others is not only a way to build relationships, but is also important for the individual as it provides social support in the times of need (Emadpoorl et al., 2015). However, building relationships is a complex task, as it initiates with the partners disclosing them and this initial interaction is difficult for the individuals who are shy and reluctant in their dealings with others (Awang et al., 2014; Sheldon, 2013). Thus, for successful socialization and relational life, shyness and self-disclosure are important to be considered along with the social support available to the person. Therefore, the major objectives of this study were to determine the role of shyness and perceived social support in self-disclosure among university students. It was also intended to explore the buffering role of perceived social support in explaining the relationship between shyness and self-disclosure.

Hypotheses

1. Shyness is negatively associated with perceived social support and self-disclosure.
2. Self-disclosure is positively related to the perceived social support.
3. Perceived social support moderates the relationship between shyness and self-disclosure.
4. Female students are more likely to express shyness, lesser perceived social support, and self-disclose than male students.

Method

Sample

A convenient sample of ($N = 380$) university students including both men ($n = 171$) and women ($n = 209$) was acquired. The age range of the sample was 18 to 32 years ($M = 28.33$, $SD = 6.51$). The sample was collected from both the private and public sector universities including Iqra University ($n = 33$), Bahria University ($n = 49$), COMSATS Institute of Information Technology ($n = 41$), Air University ($n = 30$), FAST University ($n = 51$), Quaid-i-Azam University ($n = 115$), and Hamdard University Islamabad ($n = 51$). Respondents were students of masters or BS program of different departments of natural and social sciences.

Instruments

Following instruments were used in the present study:

Shyness Questionnaire. The Henderson and Zimbardo Shyness Questionnaire (2002) was used to assess shyness inclinations among students. The questionnaire consisted of 35 items and rated on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = *not at all characteristic of me*, to 5 = *extremely characteristic of me*, with four items (10, 29, 30, & 35) to be reverse scored. High scores on the scale showed high level of temperamental shyness with possible score range of 35 to 175. The scale was found to be highly reliable with $\alpha = .92$ (Sheldon, 2013); while in the present study α of .84 was acquired.

Perceived Social Support Scale. The Perceived Social Support Scale (Cutrona & Russell, 1990) was used to assess perception of available social support. It consisted of two parts, with 11 items in the first part measuring how much the family members and others remained supportive in an individual's life. The second part had 20 items which measured various dimensions of social support. In the present study, only second part was used which was to be rated on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*, with 5 reverse scored items (i.e., 1, 6, 8, 11, & 12). Second part comprised of 20 items and five subscales; that is, Nurturance (3 items); Attachment (5 items); Reassurance of Worth (2 items); Reliable Alliance (7 items), and Social Integration (3 items). The high score on the overall scale reflects high level of perceived social support. The reliability of the scale was reported by authors as .89 (Cutrona & Russell, 1990), whereas $\alpha = .83$ was acquired in the present study.

Self-Disclosure Scale. Short Form of Self-disclosure Scale (Magno et al., 2008) with 21 items was used. The possible score range of the scale was 21-105 with cut off score of 52. It had 5 response categories ranging from 1 = *never encountered, done or felt the situation*, to 5 = *when you have encountered, done or felt the situation all the time or always*. High score on the scale reflected higher levels of disclosure and low score indicated that the person did not disclose information openly. Earlier studies ($\alpha = .83$, Hui & Tsang, 2017; $\alpha = .89$; Robinson, 2017) reported the scale as dependable measure; while, in the present study, α of .81 was achieved for this scale.

Procedure

Initially, official permission was acquired from the respective universities. The students were approached in their institutions to collect the data. Students were informed about the purpose of the research. They were assured that their personal identities would not be revealed, their information would be kept confidential, and it would be used only for the research purposes. Afterwards informed consent was acquired from the participants before administering the questionnaires. Brief instructions as well as verbal narratives were given so as to enhance genuine filling of the questionnaires. In the end, respondents were generously thanked for their cooperation and participation in the research.

Results

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied to establish the relationship among the study variables. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the moderating role of perceived social support in the relationship between shyness and self-disclosure. Independent sample *t*-test was conducted to determine the group differences across gender.

Table 1

Correlation among all Study Variables (N = 380)

Variables	Shyness	Perceived Social Support	Self-Disclosure
Shyness	-	-.19*	-.24**
Perceived Social Support		-	.29**
Self-Disclosure			-

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 1 indicates the association among shyness, perceived social support, and self-disclosure. Findings reveal that shyness is negatively aligned with perceived social support and self-disclosure. On the other hand, perceived social support is positively related with self-disclosure.

Table 2

Moderating Role of Perceived Social Support in Predicting Self-disclosure (N = 380)

Predictor	Self-Disclosure		
	<i>B</i>	95% CI	
		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Constant	-356.0*	-598.80	-113.19
Shyness	3.76*	1.42	6.09
Perceived Social Support	3.93*	1.57	6.28
Shyness X Perceived Social Support	-.03*	-.06	-.01
<i>R</i> ²	.47	ΔR^2	.26
<i>F</i>	6.27*	ΔF	10.41*
Slope (<i>t</i> -Value)	2.30 (4.90)		

p < .01

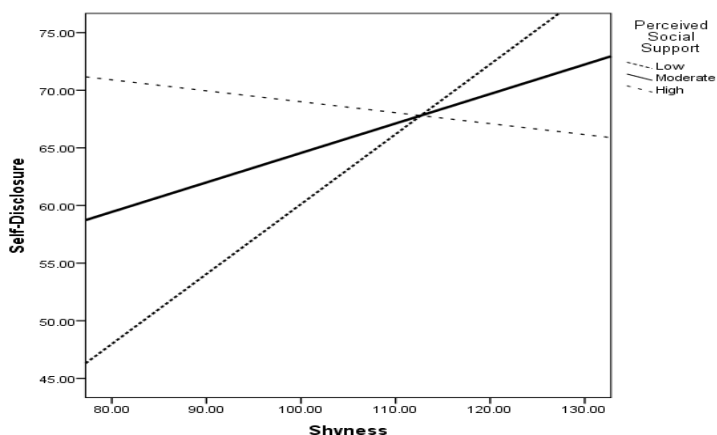


Figure 1. Moderating Role of Perceived Social Support in the Relationship between Shyness and Self-disclosure

Table 2 and Figure 1 showed the moderating role of perceived social support in explaining the relationship between shyness and self-disclosure. Findings indicate interaction effect of shyness and perceived social support collectively explained 3% variance in predicting self-disclosure among university students. In addition,

steepness of the slope indicates that in case of more shyness, availability of perceived social support buffers the downside of shyness and subsequently lead to higher self-disclosure.

Table 3

Gender Differences on Shyness, Perceived Social Support, and Self-disclosure (N= 380)

Variables	Men (n = 171)		Women (n = 209)		t	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
	Shyness	90.54	8.19	95.72			8.40	5.87	
Perceived Social Support	71.19	8.23	66.69	9.62	4.64	.01	1.72	3.73	.38
Self -Disclosure	68.35	9.23	60.75	8.11	6.05	.00	1.58	3.54	.51

Table 3 demonstrates significant gender differences along the three study variables. Results show that male university students reflect less shyness, more perceived social support, and higher self-disclosure as compared to women. On the contrary, women exhibit lower inclinations for self-disclosure and perceived social support; however, express more tendencies of shyness.

Discussion

The present study attempted to determine the role of shyness and perceived social support in self-disclosure among university students.

Findings indicated that the shyness is significantly negatively related to perceived social support. These findings found support in the earlier literature, for instance, Joiner and Thomas (1997) concluded that non supported individuals or those having less social support available from social networks are usually found to be high on shyness as compared to others having high social support. As per social penetration theory (Baack, Fogliasso, & Harris, 2000), self-disclosure between individuals leads to the formation of new relationships like friendships or marital relationships but as for shy individuals this initial interaction is difficult; thus, they are not good in forming new relations. These relationships are the source of social support for the individual in the times of need. Subsequently, shyness leads to limited disclosure which results in getting less social support (Ogunleye & Balogun, 2013). On indigenous grounds, evidence (Butt et al., 2011) indicated that female school students exhibit more shyness, lower self esteem, and less receiving of social support.

Results further showed that shyness is significantly negatively related with self-disclosure. This pattern has also been asserted by Bradshaw (2006) stating that shy individuals are less likely to disclose. Similarly, shy persons usually restrict their disclosure to others because of the fear of negative assessment by others and limit their self-disclosure; and do not respond openly to their partners and thus limit their opportunities for better development of the relationships (Terblanche, 2011). Much empirical evidence showed that the shyness sometimes make the individuals shy to even certain situations and conditions and limit their self-disclosure (Brunet & Schmidt, 2007). Likewise, individuals who are high on shyness usually have problems in making first interaction with others because it usually requires some degree of self-disclosure between the interacting individuals. Hence, shyness hinders their self-disclosure and makes interactions difficult (Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004). Owing to hesitation to engage in social interactions, shy and quiet individuals are usually less on self-disclosure as compared to confident and social people (Rumi & Kunio, 2000; Wang et al., 2018).

Findings also revealed significant positive relationship between self-disclosure and perceived social support. These findings are in alignment with the prior studies, such as, Margulis (2003) suggested that as per privacy regulation theory (Altman, Vinsel, & Brown, 1981) relationship formation needs self-disclosure by the partners and one of the forces that causes the partners to disclose more is getting social support and nurturance from each other. Moreover, the individual's need for privacy decreases it leads to more self-disclosure and hence, it increases the social support of the individual (Trepte, Dienlin, & Reinecke, 2013). It has also been suggested that those who have the ability to evoke self-disclosure in others are usually good in forming long term relationships, and usually have large social networks thereby in turn get more social support in the times of need (Baack et al., 2000). With reference to Pakistani perspective, it has been found that individuals having high disclosure are found to be low on social anxiety and can easily socialize (Butt et al., 2011).

In the present study, buffering effect of perceived social support has been established in the relationship between shyness and self-disclosure. These findings are also supported by the earlier studies, for instance, one's perception about the availability of social support has a protective role which makes one to show more self-disclosure (Martins et al., 2013). Frese and Fay (2001) concluded that the presence of perceived social support makes the person better adjusted to the life stressors, feel less shy, and express more disclosure to the support groups. Similarly, shy individuals having high perceived

social support may not fear of negative evaluations, which is one of the main factors due to which shy people do not share with others. Hence, they may be more likely to disclose with significant others (Gillard, 2011). Likewise, social support buffers the harmful effects of stressors by reducing the negative effect of shyness and makes the person more adaptive to his environment (Vangelisti & Perlman, 2006).

Results of the present study revealed significant gender differences with male university students reflecting more self-disclosure and perceived social support, while lesser shyness as compared to female university students. Earlier set of studies (Emadpoor et al., 2015; Kugbey et al., 2015; Paluckaite & Matulaitiene, 2012) indicated similar patterns by asserting that men disclose breadth of information while women disclose their intimate information more deeply. Likewise, Uchino (2009) asserted that the themes of the information shared by men and women differ, with women share more personal information (e.g., family, personal likes and dislikes). Conversely, men do not share their personal information deeply especially with their male friends. They tend to share more about their daily life. Men disclose their more intimate information with the female friends but not with men (Terblanche, 2011). To strangers, men are found to be more disclosing than women who disclose more to whom they know very well (Robinson, 2017). The reasons for these gender differences in self-disclosure are gender role expectations and the way they are socialized (Sheldon, 2013) and men disclose topics in wider range because they can easily talk about a number of topics than women (Paluckaite & Matulaitiene, 2012). In addition, men have higher perceived social support as compared to women because men perceive almost equal social support from all of their social groups as compared to women. Therefore, men have more social ties and a balanced number of social support groups available in the times of need. Similarly, men are found to be more contented with the available support (Tam et al., 2011) as they avoid or do not take emotional support from other men, and whenever they need emotional support they prefer their female family members or female friends for it (Liebler & Sandefur, 2002). For shyness, it has been found that it is less socially acceptable for boys as compared to girls (Rubin & Barstead, 2014) as it is treated differently in both the genders (Gazelle et al., 2014). In girls, shyness is considered normal; however, for boys it is unacceptable as it fails to comply with the masculine gender norms of being assertive and self-sufficient, therefore, girls are usually high on shyness as compared to boys (Doey et al., 2014).

Limitations and Suggestions

The present study has certain potential limitations. Firstly, the respondents were acquired from the universities only, thereby limiting the generalizability of the results. For more generalizable results, a comprehensive sample could be acquired from the different cross-sectional age groups of youth. Sample can also be taken from children and adolescents to make a comparison and to see how the transitional phases affect the study variables. Secondly, only self-report quantitative techniques were used, which may induce the problem of social desirability. For future studies, it would be more appropriate to include qualitative measures to get an in-depth insight into the phenomenon. Thirdly, it would be more appropriate to explore shyness in relation to other related variables such as personality traits, self efficacy, and hardiness. This would enhance broader and comprehensive understanding about shyness and availability of supportive networks.

Implications

Findings of the present study are a source of awareness for students about how much shyness can hinder their achievements; also the idea of self-disclosure and its convincingly influential power in building and maintaining relationships along with the experiences comprising sense of relief from their stress. Shyness is a serious concern to be considered by the clinical professionals also so, these findings can have reasonable piece of information for them to consider as a prerequisite to deal with their clients.

This study can also be a good source of information about the importance of perceived social support especially in adults' life, how they can build social ties and how they can be best utilized in the times of need. Additionally, the role of self-disclosure and social support both can collectively put the individuals on the right track with the elimination of psychological curse called shyness to set the manageable challenging standards for chasing the glory of life with its true essence. Moreover, this exploration will pave the path for the inclination of researchers towards the attempts to understand and investigate such kind of more subjective and personal behavioral experiences of individuals for assisting them to live their lives with normal and optimal morals.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to explore the role of shyness and perceived social support in self-disclosure among university students. Results showed significant positive relationship between perceived social support and self-disclosure while significant negative relationship was found between shyness with perceived social support and self-disclosure. Findings have also shown the buffering role of perceived social support in predicting self-disclosure from shyness. The findings revealed that there were significant gender differences in the study variables, that is, men were low on shyness, while high on perceived social support and self-disclosure as compared to women.

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