

**SHYNESS BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM**Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Ehsan<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Faisal Rehman<sup>3</sup>**Original Article**

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**Abstract**

*A person's attitudes, feelings, and behaviors can be influenced by demonstrating shyness in behaviour. Shyness behaviour has a long-lasting impact on lives of adults and students. This study looked at the possible issues associated with shyness among school-going children especially when they are in the classroom. The survey questionnaire has been developed with seven perceived statements on a 5-point rating scale. A total of 150 students participated in this study. Outside of the class, the researcher has summarized the results of the shyness survey in terms of percentages. The results showed that majority of secondary level students perceived that shyness is a natural process and that a teacher can help the students to overcome their shyness in the classroom. The participants were agreed that there is close association between shyness and lack of confidence. Teachers can play a significant role to eradicate shyness and boost up students level of confidence. Shy students mostly feel uncomfortable in the classroom and it causes a huge academic lose. Although shyness is a natural phenomenon, yet fear of failure, fear of humiliation and hesitation contributes to promote shyness among students.*

**Keywords:** Shyness Behavior, Classroom, Students, Emotional Maltreatment, Physical Symptoms

**Introduction**

Shyness is the propensity to get uncomfortable, anxious, or tense in social situations, particularly when meeting new people. It can also refer to feeling uneasy, self-conscious, apprehensive, bashful, timid, or insecure. The complete opposite of being at ease around others is shyness. When someone is feeling shy, they could be hesitant to speak up or take action because they don't want to draw attention to themselves. There are various primary causes of shyness. The idea that shyness is at least partially inherited is one that scientists think they have found genetic evidences to support this idea. However, a person's shyness may also be a result of the environment in which they were raised. This includes maltreatment of children, particularly emotional maltreatment like mockery. Shyness is also related to a restricted number of friends; nevertheless, there may be

one solid friendship that may be with youngsters who also have comparable psychosocial concerns (Mjelve, Nyborg, Edwards, & Crozier, 2019).

In some cases, shyness appears to emerge first and then subsequently results in physical symptoms of anxiety. However, shyness can also start before a person has had any physical symptoms of fear. Additionally, shyness is distinct from social anxiety, a more extensive psychological disorder that is sometimes linked to depression and includes the sense of fear, apprehension, or thinking about how others will perceive you in social circumstances to the point of producing panic. Genetic characteristics, upbringing environments, and individual experiences can all contribute to shyness. Depending on a child's developmental stage, shyness may develop as a personality feature.

Similar to this, shyness is frequently perceived as impeding human growth. Shyness has a detrimental effect on a student's progress (Zakaria, Masduki, & Ismail, 2018). Although the exact etiology of shyness is frequently debated, research shows that anxiety is positively correlated with shyness, suggesting that anxious children are significantly more likely to grow up shy than children who are less fearful. In the same way, an excess of cortisol might be considered as the physiologic cause of shyness. Greater levels of cortisol are known to decrease an individual's immune system, leaving them more vulnerable to illness and disease. While shyness in childhood is beneficial for learning and socialization, it can also have lasting impacts on an individual's ideas, feelings, and behaviors that can persist into adulthood. One of the most significant and essential behavioral expressions of interpersonal communication, self-disclosure relates to the process through which individuals freely reveal their behavior and thoughts when they speak with others. In addition, researchers have found that self-disclosure has a significant impact on college students' academic and personal growth. Self-disclosure can be hindered as a result of shyness, which refers to the dread and anxiety that people experience when confronted with new social situations (Li, Chen & Liu, 2020). Whereas, the current study analysis identified three themes that contributed to childhood shyness: "social variables," "personal factors," and "relating to shyness." Additionally, there is a discussion of the implications for future study and all-encompassing educational methods. Several teachers have been reported to have adopted ways to help their timid students overcome their issues in the classroom (Mjelve, Nyborg, Edwards, & Crozier, 2019).

When confronted with a unique or unexpected scenario, a person who is shy may feel uneasy or hesitant. Growing research indicates that shyness, especially in early infancy, may increase the risk of later adjustment issues such as internalizing issues (e.g., anxiety, depressive symptoms), peer issues (e.g., rejection, victimization), and school issues (e.g., subpar academic performance). According to the research, every student has a significant impact

on learning and sociability outside of the classroom. Teachers' perception of shyness as a potential issue in the classroom has contributed significantly to the rise in awareness of the condition, especially at the primary school level. The study contends that future socio-emotional challenges in adolescence and, later, adulthood, are associated with this developing awareness. It has been found that extracurricular activities such as debating or singing in a choir or participating in sports, as well as clubs and societies focused on technical fields such as engineering or business, can help shy students develop their social skills as well as their participation in classroom instruction (Zakaria, Masduki, & Ismail, 2018).

Therefore, the goal of the current study was to examine the specific effects that various internalizing student behaviors, such as shyness, anxiety, and emotional issues, have on various components of the student-teacher interaction (i.e., closeness, conflict, and dependency). The development of solutions to improve these connections in the classroom may be aided by empirical research in this area. It may help us better understand the forms of internalizing student behavior that primarily raises the risk of poor student-teacher interactions. When a child is shy, they do not meet the criteria for special educational needs and statutory support, such as a Provision of Educational and health Plan in England. Teachers who strive for inclusive classrooms must meet additional requirements based on psychological research, which suggests that it may be linked to poorer academic achievement (Mjelve, Nyborg, Edwards, & Crozier, 2019).

Unfortunately, it has been widely believed that children who enter the classroom with internalizing conduct are more likely to have relationships with their teachers that are characterized by a lack of intimacy and a great deal of conflict and dependence. By adding their personal qualities, the purpose of this descriptive study was to better comprehend early school students' shy attitude in the classroom and its perceived impact on their performance.

### Literature Review

Children that are shy are hesitant or uneasy around strangers or in unfamiliar settings (Coplan & Arbeau, 2008). One of the biggest reasons for poor performance in the classroom is shyness (Sangani & Jangi, 2019). According to Jones (2009), shy kids may even view themselves more negatively than positively. They are actually only constrained by their own thoughts and emotions because of this worry, which also limits their thoughts and strengths to a very narrow group of people. They are always convinced that people are belittling, deriding, or otherwise harming them. Shyness is discomfort in social situations that gets in the way of one's objectives. It is a type of extreme inward concentration that is preoccupied with one's own thoughts, emotions, and bodily responses. It can range from little social shyness to social anxieties that completely disable you. Shyness is a personality trait that can be either chronic or dispositional, depending on how it is defined (Honig, 1987). Similarly, Byrnes (1984) claimed that there are primarily two categories of students in classrooms: social outcasts who are intentionally shunned and those who are neglected or forgotten. Students who are deemed to be aggressive and disruptive are rejected. They frequently feel uncomfortable in the classrooms. The second group of kids is known as the isolated group of students. These students lack friends and are ignored. Because of their passivity and timidity, they go overlooked by their peers and professors. These kids are more likely to experience self-consciousness in social settings when they are more obvious and exposed mentally. The child's lack of confidence, social anxiety, embarrassment, speech difficulties, and low speaking voice are all symptoms of shyness. With negative self-talk, the shy person may end up utilizing their shyness as a crutch and a justification for avoiding more social situations: "I can't handle these kinds of circumstances because I'm so shy." Obviously, the more they tell themselves negative things like this, the more difficult it is for them to interact with others, create friends, and develop both personal and professional relationships. It turns into a negative habit. This type of self-defeating behavior causes an individual to avoid social situations more and more until they are entirely paralyzed by fear and

unable to function in everyday social situations (Moosa, Ajmal, & Rahman, 2011). The trait of shyness is one that almost everyone has experienced at some point. Seventy-five to ninety-five percent of people have experienced shyness at some point in their lives, and fifty-five percent of people in the globe identify as shy. Shyness is the propensity to feel uncomfortable, anxious, or tense during social interactions, particularly with strangers (Chishti, Amin, & Yousuf, 2018). Students that are reserved suffer greatly. They find it challenging to speak in front of people. They have a poor opinion of themselves, which will affect how motivated they are to communicate. The same thing occurs when they are asked to reply to a question in a foreign language or desire to speak in that language. A timid individual may stutter, pause frequently, or even flee the situation (Namaghi, Safaee, & Sobhanifar, 2015). Children who are shy experience anxiety and worry when meeting new people, and they frequently feel humiliated and self-conscious when they believe others are judging them (Rubin, Coplan, & Bowker, 2009). According to the findings of an increasing number of studies, shyness is linked to a variety of socio-emotional and academic issues from early childhood through adolescence, such as issues with peer relationships (such as exclusion and rejection), internalizing issues (such as anxiety, loneliness, and low self-esteem), and academic maladjustment. There is little study on how teachers interact with shy students in their courses. It has been indicated that teachers are less likely to utilize high-powered tactics and more likely to use peer-focused strategies when dealing with children's shyness. For example, encouraging a timid child to collaborate with a classmate or participate in activities with other kids (e.g., punishment) (Bosacki, Coplan, Rose-Krasnor, & Hughes, 2011). The relationship between shyness and interpersonal problems is influenced by the teacher's sensitivity. Sensitivity on the part of the teacher can influence involvement and play a crucial role in creating environments that are encouraging for timid kids (Buhs, Rudasill, Kalutskaya, & Griese, 2015). A temperamental feature known as shyness is defined by dread and anxiety when faced with unfamiliar social situations and self-

consciousness when there is a possibility of social judgment (Zhou, 2015). Typically, shyness is characterized by social retreat, weak conversational skills, and introversion. Therefore, a lot of people think that shyness has nothing to do with violence or that it has a negative relationship with aggression, yet past research has shown that shy persons have greater levels of aggression (Zhao, Gao, Xu, Sun, & Han, 2020). Shyness has been shown to be a significant contributing factor to social anxiety. Less is known, though, about the mechanisms behind such relationships. However, the relationship between shyness and social anxiety was partly mediated by the Behavioral Inhibition System and self-esteem, according to the results of structural equation modeling. This suggested that these factors may be crucial in the relationship between shyness and social anxiety (Ran, Zhang, & Huang, 2018). According to certain studies, shyness fosters strained relationships between teachers and students. Because of the numerous problems and distractions that shy children in a new school are frequently forced to deal with in a short amount of time, they frequently perform worse academically. Shy students frequently choose to observe rather than actively participate in group activities, which prevents them from understanding the lessons that the activities were designed to teach (Thomas, 2012). The "behavioral inhibition involving anxiety and fear of social circumstances" is how shyness is commonly defined (Shiner, 2006, p. 3). Shyness is typically regarded as irrelevant or negatively associated with aggression because it is a social drawdown personality trait. The study's findings revealed that parent-child conflict and self-control were key mediators between shyness and aggression, with aggression being stronger in children whose levels of shyness were higher in late childhood (Xu et al., 2021). Since fear is thought to be the fundamental component of shyness, there has been researching on the link between shyness and fear. According to empirical research, one's perception of the availability of social support can be used to predict one's likelihood to be shy. According to studies, shy people are less likely to disclose their true feelings, as social skills are crucial for effective self-disclosure (Batool & Zubair, 2018). Most

people experience shyness at least occasionally, but some people's shyness is so severe that it prevents them from connecting with others, and this repression of their wants causes issues (Ahmad, Nasreen, & Aiman, 2020).

#### **Objectives:**

This paper aims to determine the perceived reasons and effects of shyness on students' performance in the secondary school classrooms.

#### **Research Questions:**

How shyness behaviour affects secondary level students' academic performance in the classroom? How teachers perceive the effects of shyness behaviour on the performance of secondary level students?

#### **Methodology**

This study is descriptive in nature and it has been based on a quantitative research approach using statistical analysis in SPSS software version 22. It is assumed that the phenomenon being studied can be measured in quantitative research, which involves measurement. It aims to analyze data for patterns and connections as well as to validate the measurements. All research ethical considerations were taken into account pertaining to taking prior permissions and not disclosing the identity of the respondents in the report.

#### **Population and Sampling**

It is next to impossible to gather data from the complete population while undertaking research that is aimed at demographics. Sampling is used to collect data that are thought to be representative of the target population when the full population cannot take part in a study or the participants of the study population cannot all be recognized (Stratton, 2021). Results of the research project that used these methods to trace conceptual pathways from various forms of shy students to psychosocial adjustment in elementary school are reported in the last component of the research. However in this research study, out of 150 students of a public model school in Islamabad, students have been chosen through convenient approach. On the first day of the class, the researcher distributes the questionnaire copy and asks the student to complete it and collected it after about 10

minutes. This also includes short discussions with the teachers. All research related ethical considerations were followed in the study.

### Results and Discussions:

Responses of the students recorded at five-point behavior rating scale with 7 relevant statements

have been given in table No.1 below (**N=150**). All students were studying in a public model school in Islamabad, Pakistan, about the shyness behaviour in the classrooms.

**Table 1: Responses of Students about Shyness Behaviour and Classroom Performance**

Sr.	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	N	D	DA
1	Shyness students lose confidence	40(27%)	60(40%)	12(8 %)	18(12 %)	13(20 %)
2	Lack of self confidence leads towards shyness	16(11%)	80(53%)	10(7%)	20(13%)	24(16 %)
3	Students feel shy in class due to fear	28(19%)	72(48%)	0 ( 0%)	30(20%)	20(13%)
4	Teachers can help the students to avoid shyness in class	25(17 %)	64(43%)	32(21%)	20(13%)	9 (6%)
5	Shyness behaviour is a natural	22(15%)	78(52%)	12(8%)	16 (11%)	22(15%)
6	Students belonging to rural areas feel shy in the class	18( 12%)	48 (32%)	16 (11%)	50(33%)	18(12%)
7	Shy students experience hesitation to communicate in the classroom	5(3%)	85(57%)	15(10%)	45(30 %)	0(0%)

- Students' responses reflected in Table No. 1 shows that 67% respondents perceived that shy students lose their confidence in the classroom. Likewise 64% students professed lack of confidence leads students towards shy behaviour in the classroom. Both items were conveying almost a similar sense. It can be established that shyness and lack of confidence mean same to the students.
- 68% students believe that students demonstrate shyness in the classroom because they feel fear. There may be certain categories of fear e.g fear of teacher, fear of exposure etc that force students to demonstrate shyness in the classrooms.
- 60% students believed that teachers can help out students to overcome their shyness. It can be established that teachers can play a significant role to develop confidence among students. This data indicates that students have higher expectations from their teachers.
- 67% students considered that shyness behaviour is a natural phenomena. It indicates the majority of students were mentally ready to demonstrate shyness or expect to experience shyness behaviours during class.
- Only 44% students were agreed and 44% were disagreed that students belonging to rural areas feel shy in the classroom. It can be conceived from the data shyness behaviour is not associated with living in urban or rural areas.
- 60% students were agreed that students with shyness behaviour experience hesitation to communicate with others in the classroom. It can be established that hesitation to communicate with others may result in academic loss of students.

### Discussion

The psychological study of shyness has long been a main area of study. Teenage shyness has received the most attention in research (Butt, Tattlah, Anwer, & Junaid, 2019). However, this study looked at the perceived characteristics of shy students at secondary level. It is a common

observation that most children at the early school level have been found shy during classroom participation. Shyness is characterized by nervousness in social situations or interpersonal actions brought through concerns with others' opinions. It is a complicated phenomenon involving mental, psychological, and social components (Abbasi, Maleki, & Romanian, 2020). The current study is an attempt to find out what the students themselves think about their shy behavior in the classroom. The results display that majority of the students were agreed that students feel shy in the classroom and that shyness is the main cause of lower level of confidence while performing classroom tasks.

As it is a usual observation that those students who are not confident, do not actively engage them in classroom proceedings and stay behind in academic achievements. They develop a schema in their minds that if they did any wrong they will face trouble which is their only fear. This fear does not allow them to actively participate in classroom activities. Instead, they prefer to sit idle and hide from the eyes of teachers and other class fellows. Shyness shatters their confidence. Shyness demonstrated low levels of intrinsic motivation, and a diffuse avoidant style entirely mediated with this relationship, i.e., shy people tended to utilize a diffuse avoidant style which decreased their intrinsic motivation (Monacis et al., 2012). Moreover, the results of this study show that most people think that student feel shy in the classroom due to fear. The fear might be an illusion that if they did any wrong their fellow students will laugh at them or their teacher will get angry with them. While in reality, the case might not be like that. Shyness behaviour is not associated with living in urban or rural areas, rather it is perceived as natural phenomena. Sette et al. (2019) argued in their study that shy children are more likely to have communication issues. This study endorse the results conducted by Sette et al (2019). A child's emotions of self-consciousness may be bolstered by these unfavorable experiences in the social realm. The study suggests that children's unfavorable views about themselves may be linked to their shyness because of their negative interactions with others. Children who are socially awkward should have

more opportunities in preschool to make friends who are more outgoing in order to alleviate their sense of social isolation. Teachers who strive to create inclusive classrooms environment may encounter difficulties when working with shy students. They may have lower levels of education than their peers, facing adjustment issues in schools. It may lead students towards psychological concerned e.g. social anxiety disorders. As Abidi (2012) that shyness affects school children's social and emotional development but has little impact on a home or health related adjustments. They tend to be silent in a variety of school settings, which is a recurring finding. Students may feel reluctant to participate in common oral activities, e.g. group projects or group discussions. However, more research is required to probe the shyness phenomena.

### Conclusions & Recommendation

Majority of students perceived that shy students lose their confidence in the classroom, experience lack of confidence that leads shy students towards lack of confidence. Students demonstrate shyness in the classroom due to fear feelings. Teachers can help out students to overcome their shyness. Students have higher expectations from their teachers. Majority of students remained ready to demonstrate shyness or experiences shyness during their classroom interactions. Vast majority believe that shyness behaviour is a natural phenomena. Students not believe that students belonging to rural areas feel shy in the classroom. Students with shyness behaviour experience hesitation to communicate with others in the classroom. There is a dire need to motivate and train teachers to cope with shy behaviours. Usually teachers criticize students with shy behaviour. Results of many studies cited in the literature review endorse that students feel shy due to hesitation and fears.

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