Social Anxiety in Relation to Self-Esteem among University Students in Pakistan

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Abstract

People with social anxiety in Pakistan often exhibit anxious, apprehensive, fearful, and worried behaviors, which can negatively impact their personality traits, social interactions, and overall self-esteem. These behaviors not only affect their ability to engage in social situations but can also lead to feelings of isolation and a diminished sense of self-worth. The purpose of this study is to investigate the connection between social anxiety and self-esteem among Pakistani university students, exploring how these factors influence one another in an academic setting. To achieve this, a descriptive correlation method was employed, aiming to assess whether higher levels of social anxiety correlate with lower levels of self-esteem. A sample of university students from ten different institutions across Pakistan was selected, and participants were asked to complete questionnaires designed to measure both their social anxiety and self-esteem levels. The findings revealed that, overall, students reported high levels of self-esteem and low levels of social anxiety. Moreover, the study found a statistically significant inverse relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety, indicating that as students' self-esteem increased, their levels of social anxiety decreased. These results suggest that fostering a supportive and inclusive environment on university campuses could play a critical role in helping students manage social anxiety and maintain healthy self-esteem. The study recommends organizing workshops and seminars for incoming students at the beginning of each academic year. Such initiatives, focused on building confidence, reducing stress, and promoting mental well-being, may help ease the transition into university life, ultimately leading to a reduction in anxiety and an increase in students' overall self-confidence and academic success.

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Keywords: Social Anxiety, Self-Esteem, University Students, Pakistan

Introduction

In Pakistan, social anxiety disorder is still a common psychiatric condition that affects a large number of people. One of the most prevalent emotional illnesses, social anxiety may have a detrimental effect on many facets of life by causing behavioral and psychological issues. People who suffer from social anxiety frequently feel extreme worry and unease in social and performance contexts, which can seriously interfere with their everyday routines and social relationships. According to recent research, social anxiety diagnoses have significantly increased, which can result in severe anxiety and depression (Rana et al., 2017). Even though social anxiety is not a recent phenomenon, it became more widely acknowledged as a psychiatric condition in 1980 when the American Psychiatric Association (APA) included it to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition (DSM-III). Ever since, it has been seen as a particular kind of phobia connected to different social contexts (Hofmann et al., 2017).

Social anxiety is a major problem in Pakistan, especially in light of the country's traditional emphasis on community engagement, familial responsibilities, and social conventions. Socially anxious people may find it difficult in social, professional, and academic contexts. Situations when public speaking, group activities, or social gatherings are required—essential components of Pakistani society—make this conflict clear. The importance of social anxiety on mental health worldwide is further highlighted by the fact that it is classified as a generalized social phobia in the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) of the World Health Organization (Khan & Aftab, 2019). Based on research, social anxiety often starts between the ages of 6 and 12 in childhood or adolescence and can get worse if left untreated (Bashir & Saleem, 2018).

Studies conducted recently in Pakistan have shown that women experience social anxiety more frequently than males do. This is particularly true for women who are less educated, single, have a history of unemployment, or live with parents who suffer from similar phobias (Rizvi & Raza, 2018). This pattern implies that elevated anxiety levels can be a result of conventional roles and society expectations. Furthermore, research on the psychological effects of social anxiety worldwide indicates that people with social anxiety frequently have a poor self-perception, which lowers their confidence and self-esteem (Ahmed et al., 2020). Social anxiety has a major impact on self-esteem, which is an essential element of psychological health. In Pakistan, social anxiety challenges the social position, family reputation, and community approbation that are commonly linked to one's self-esteem.

Maslow's hierarchy of requirements states that self-actualization and achievement in a variety of spheres of life, including social interactions and personal relationships, depend on having a high sense of self-worth (Siddiqui et al., 2021). People who have greater self-esteem are more equipped to take chances without feeling ashamed, participate in social activities fearlessly, and overcome obstacles. On the other hand, social anxiety sufferers typically deal with psychological instability, loneliness, and social anxiety worry, all of which have a

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detrimental effect on their self-esteem (Hassan & Malik, 2022). Numerous environmental and social elements, including as family dynamics, educational institutions, peer relationships, and experiences of success or failure, have been shown to impact self-esteem in Pakistani research (Farooq et al., 2019). These elements are very important in determining how someone feels about themselves and their general state of mind. For the purpose of creating successful therapies and support networks for individuals impacted, Understanding the relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem is crucial. When social anxiety is treated, people's self-worth and general wellbeing increase, making it possible for them to engage more fully in society and make constructive contributions to their communities (Khan & Jabeen, 2022).

A person suffering from severe social anxiety in Pakistan may find it difficult to do everyday tasks and confront major obstacles in many aspects of life. This may have a detrimental effect on their effectiveness and value as contributing members of society, since social skills and self-worth are highly prized traits. Students who suffer from social anxiety may find it more difficult to communicate effectively, to express themselves, and to feel less confident because of their increased fear of shame. Without a doubt, social anxiety and low self-esteem can make it difficult to build social interactions with other people in the community. Consequently, a person's success or failure is greatly influenced by their level of social anxiety and self-worth, particularly throughout their University years. The purpose of this research is to investigate, in light of the distinct socio-cultural factors that influence university students' experiences in Pakistan, the link between social anxiety and self-esteem.

Literature Review:
Social Anxiety and Self-Esteem in University Students
Social anxiety is a widespread problem that has an impact on people's personal and professional life, especially for University students. It is typified by a severe dread of social settings, which can cause a great deal of misery and disability. Social anxiety takes on a distinct form in Pakistan because of socioeconomic and cultural variables. This review of the literature looks at current research on university students' levels of social anxiety and self-esteem, with an emphasis on the connections between these factors and successful therapeutic techniques. Among University students, social anxiety disorder (SAD) is one of the most prevalent mental health issues. According to Bögels et al. (2018), it is characterized by a severe anxiety of social situations, which can result in avoidance behaviors and serious suffering. Because of the social and academic demands they have at this time of transition, university students are especially vulnerable (Gilmartin et al., 2019). Cultural and socioeconomic variables impact the incidence of social anxiety among students in Pakistan. In a thorough analysis of social anxiety among Pakistani university students, Ali and Qureshi (2020) found a number of contributing variables, such as cultural norms and expectations. The pressure to fit in with cultural standards and the anxiety of being judged by peers and family members, according to their study, considerably. More insight into the effects of social anxiety on students' social and academic life has come from recent study. High levels of social anxiety are linked to subpar academic performance and reduced social activity involvement, according a research by Farooq et al. (2021). This is consistent with research by Hussain and Mahmood (2022), who found that students with high levels of social anxiety frequently

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struggle to build and maintain connections, which can make their academic stress worse.

Self-Esteem and Social Anxiety's Relationship

Self-worth, or one's total feeling of self-esteem, is essential to one's mental and physical health. It has been continuously connected to social anxiety, and higher levels of social anxiety are frequently linked to lower levels of self-esteem (Khan et al., 2021). Low self-esteem in students might cause them to view social interactions as dangerous, which can increase their anxiety and cause them to avoid situations (Smith & Johnson, 2020). This link has been studied in the context of University students in recent research. For example, Javed et al. (2022) discovered that students who felt more confident about themselves expressed less social anxiety. Their research indicates that therapies targeted at enhancing self-esteem can be successful in lowering social anxiety symptoms and emphasizes the significance of self-esteem in mitigating the consequences of social anxiety. Similarly, Ahmed and Bukhari (2023) investigated the relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem among Pakistani university students. According to their study, pupils who felt more confident in themselves demonstrated better coping strategies and had lower levels of social anxiety. This lends credence to the idea that improving one's sense of self-worth might lessen the negative consequences of social anxiety.

Pakistan's Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors

University students' experiences with social anxiety are greatly influenced by Pakistan's cultural and socioeconomic background. Strong traditional beliefs and social hierarchies are features of Pakistani society that may exacerbate anxiety (Ali & Qureshi, 2020). In academic environments, where students are frequently exposed to high levels of pressure to comply to cultural standards, the fear of social judgment and the urge to conform are particularly prominent. Younas and Khan's (2022) study looked at how cultural influences affect Pakistani students' social anxiety. According to their results, social pressures and cultural expectations are major factors in the escalation of social anxiety. Aslam and Iqbal's research from 2021, which revealed that students from more conservative homes had greater levels of social anxiety than their counterparts from more liberal settings, lends confirmation to this.

Adequate intervention measures are necessary to address social anxiety in university students. Numerous strategies for reducing social anxiety and raising self-esteem have been brought to light by recent research. Organizing psychoeducational seminars and workshops is one useful tactic. These kinds of treatments have the potential to greatly raise students' self-esteem and lower their anxiety levels, claim Ahmed and Bukhari (2023). Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has also been demonstrated to be beneficial in reducing social anxiety, in addition to workshops. According to a meta-analysis conducted in 2016 by Cuijpers et al., cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a very successful treatment for social anxiety, significantly reducing symptoms and boosting self-esteem. This is consistent with research by Hussain et al. (2022), which showed that university students' levels of social anxiety and self-esteem significantly improved as a result of CBT-based therapies. The intricate connection between university students' self-esteem and social anxiety is shown by

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recent studies, especially when considering Pakistan. According to current research, social anxiety is significantly influenced by cultural and socioeconomic variables, and improving one's self-esteem may be a useful strategy for reducing its impacts. It has been demonstrated that intervention techniques including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and psychoeducational seminars are successful in treating social anxiety and raising self-esteem. The current study's findings, which demonstrate that Pakistani university students have high levels of self-esteem and low levels of social anxiety, are consistent with previous research and highlight the need of focused treatments. These findings advance our knowledge of university students' self-esteem and social anxiety while offering useful guidance for developing successful intervention techniques that will enhance students' overall wellbeing.

Intimacy and Self-Regard in Social Media
Numerous studies demonstrate that social anxiety is typically accompanied with psychological issues such as dread, dissatisfaction, and low self-esteem. Analogous parallels have been discovered in studies about Pakistan. For instance, social anxiety and university students' self-esteem were shown to be significantly correlated negatively in a 2020 research by Ali and Gul in Lahore. The study found that individuals with high levels of social anxiety also tend to have low self-esteem, which affects their overall psychological well-being. A person with social anxiety may experience substantial changes in their self-perception. It typically results in a negative self-perception, which can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and failure in social situations. Conversely, becoming self-compatible requires growing in self-worth. It helps people learn to tolerate failure and move tactfully through strange or challenging social circumstances. As a result, one's perception of self-worth directly affects their level of social anxiety and vice versa. Individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to respond negatively in social situations, which makes it more difficult for them to engage with society at large.

Success in both personal and professional spheres is greatly impacted by self-esteem, especially in Pakistan where cultural standards and expectations can be very strict. It improves a person's self-assurance and capacity for social interaction in their society. But when someone fails or is rejected, they can stop interacting with others, which would make them less happy. This disengagement may be a sign of deeper psychological issues including low self-esteem and social anxiety. A study by Ahmed and Akhtar (2019) found that social anxiety is frequent among young people in Pakistan, particularly in school environments where peer comparisons and high expectations are prominent. Anxiety may negatively impact a person's self-esteem and, in turn, their self-image if it persists. Hope, Chavous, Jagers, and Sellers (2013) emphasize how crucial self-esteem is to obtaining psychological stability, academic success, and self-compatibility. This result is in line with recent research from Pakistan, where higher levels of self-esteem have been connected to improved mental health and academic achievement (Khan & Niazi, 2021).

Studies conducted in Pakistan have examined the relationship between social anxiety and a number of psychological variables, including violence, self-worth, social rejection, and negative body image. For instance, a study conducted in 2022 by Farooqi and Sultana looked

at social anxiety among Islamabad university students and discovered a negative relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem. In contrast, the gender differences in self-esteem and social anxiety scores did not reach statistical significance, which is consistent with Shamma's (2015) findings in a different cultural setting. Hussain (2021) looked at the connection between social anxiety and self-esteem in a different research including first-year university students in Karachi. The findings showed a negative association between the two measures, indicating that the individuals had high levels of self-esteem and low levels of social anxiety. Interestingly, this study also discovered substantial gender variations in social anxiety, with women reporting higher levels of anxiety than men. These findings may be explained by Pakistani cultural quirks related to gender norms and socialization techniques.

Furthermore, a previous study by Rehman (2018) highlighted the connection between social anxiety and self-esteem while focusing on special education students at a Peshawar university. The results indicated that individuals had low levels of social anxiety and an average degree of self-esteem, with a negative link between the two.The study suggested measures to help new students manage their anxiety and develop their self-esteem, such seminars and counseling sessions. In conclusion, the relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem is a major source of concern in Pakistan. It affects the mental health and social functioning of individuals of various ages and educational backgrounds. In order to help people develop a good self-image and boost their self-esteem, more targeted therapies are needed to address these issues. Eventually, this will reduce social anxiety and enhance people's overall quality of life.

Hassan and Ali (2014) examined the relationship between university students' self-esteem and social anxiety. In a similar vein, recent research carried out in Pakistan has examined these processes within the framework of the local educational system. Similar findings were discovered in a University of Punjab study that looked at social anxiety and self-esteem in physical education students, suggesting that among Pakistani students, social anxiety and self-esteem are inversely associated (Khan & Rehman, 2021). The study used self-esteem and social anxiety questionnaires on a carefully chosen sample of 150 pupils. It showed a negative relationship with self-esteem and a noteworthy degree of social anxiety. The results made clear the necessity of programs that help kids develop resilience and self-confidence. These programs should also include students in extracurricular activities, encourage candid communication, and provide a friendly yet competitive learning atmosphere.

Al-Ali, Singh, and Baqer (2011) found connections between youths' social skills, self-worth, confidence, and social anxiety. Similar research was conducted in Pakistan with secondary school pupils in Karachi and Lahore. The study used a variety of questionnaires and discovered gender differences in social anxiety and self-esteem that were statistically significant (Ahmed &Khan, 2023). Similar to what was found in Kuwait, female students were shown to have lower self-esteem and higher levels of social anxiety than their male counterparts. This demonstrates the need of having gender-sensitive support mechanisms in schools, such social skills training courses and counseling. Cheung (2006) examined the variables affecting social anxiety in Chinese University students and discovered that work-

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study conflicts raised anxiety levels. Due to financial difficulties, many students in Pakistan must juggle their studies with part-time employment, which can make social anxiety worse. Students who work part-time during the day and attend evening classes at Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad have greater levels of social anxiety, which lowers self-esteem (Farooq & Shah, 2024). The report advocates for financial assistance alternatives and flexible class schedules as well as other measures that promote students' mental health.

Izgic et al. (2004) looked at the relationship between social anxiety and self-worth and found that people with social anxiety frequently had lower self-esteem. Similar results were found in a research undertaken in Pakistan across many campuses, including the University of Karachi and the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). The findings showed that among students, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, social anxiety is a strong predictor of low self-esteem (Raza et al., 2022). Overall, the majority of research shows that among University students, social anxiety and self-esteem are negatively correlated. By concentrating on applied technical disciplines, the present study being conducted in Pakistan seeks to further investigate this link. It is one of the first to look at these psychological aspects in particular geographical contexts, including the provinces of Sindh and Punjab.

Similar to other countries, Pakistan views its university students as the upper class, essential to the advancement and development of the country. They must continually navigate difficult social situations, psychological strains brought on by current crises, cultural and cognitive ambiguity, and evolving social roles. One of the most significant psychological issues that young Pakistani students still deal with is social anxiety, which has an impact on their academic performance, participation in class, and relationships with classmates and the larger community. Many students avoid social settings that call for excellent communication and social integration abilities because they feel confused and embarrassed. Thus, creating a conducive learning environment in Pakistan requires treating social anxiety and increasing self-esteem via focused interventions.

Research Questions:
The following inquiries are the focus of this study:
- What is the prevalence of social anxiety among Pakistani university students?
- What is the degree of self-worth among Pakistani university students?
- Is there a statistically significant relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem among Pakistani university students at the level of ($\alpha < 0.05$)?

Research Terminology and Procedure Definitions
1) Social Anxiety:
An acute and enduring fear of social settings or social performances, especially while engaging with strangers or being under observation, can be used to characterize social anxiety in Pakistani contexts. Stein and Walker (2011) state that this dread is frequently the result of a worry that one's behavior may be seen as offensive or confusing, which could lead to unfavorable conclusions. Procedure-wise, social anxiety in Pakistan can be assessed with social anxiety measures that have been culturally modified to account for regional social norms and values.

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2) Self-Relatedness:
According to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), having a good attitude on life, a healthy self-view, and a calm feeling of self-worth are all components of self-esteem. In Pakistan, having self-esteem is being able to identify one's talents and limitations, accept them, and make reasonable objectives that fit in with social and cultural norms. Procedure-wise, it may be assessed by using self-esteem questionnaires that are specifically designed to capture the distinct cultural and social milieu of Pakistan, accounting for elements like social conventions, community expectations, and family values.

3) **University Students:**
When we talk about university students in Pakistan, we're talking about people who are enrolled in different higher education institutions all around the nation. Students attending public or private universities in large cities like Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi, as well as regional campuses situated in smaller cities and rural regions, may fall under this category, for instance, if they are enrolled for the 2017–2018 academic year. These students reflect the wide range of social, economic, and cultural origins found in Pakistan and constitute a diversified group.

Methodology:
The study employed a descriptive correlation technique in order to meet its goals. This method works well for analyzing a phenomenon's present state since it gives a thorough description, gathers data, and performs an analysis based on field research. This approach makes it possible to identify patterns and correlations pertinent to the study topic by evaluating real-world data gathered from several sources, providing an in-depth insight of the difficulties in Pakistan. The study population comprised 426 students from various departments within a public university in Pakistan, as recorded by the institution's admission and registration department for the academic year 2022–2023. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across different strata of the student body. From this population, a sample representing 78% was selected, including a total of 334 male and female students. A thorough analysis of psychological measures and pertinent educational literature was done in order to examine the psychological characteristics of Pakistani university students. The following resources were chosen for use with a sample of students from ten Pakistani institutions based on this review.

Social Anxiety Scale:
Students' social anxiety was measured using the Social Anxiety Scale, which was first created by Murad (2017). This measure has 28 items total, broken down into five domains: physical symptoms (7 items), communication and self-expression difficulties (7 items), social anxiety (7 items), idea dispersal (4 items), and low self-esteem (3 things). On a 4-point Likert scale, from "Completely agree" (4 points) to "Completely disagree" (1 point), each item is scored.

Self-Esteem Scale:

The Self-Esteem Scale created by Melhem (2012) was used to measure pupils' levels of self-esteem. There are thirty items on this scale, and each one has a 5-point Likert rating, with response possibilities ranging from "Completely disagree" (1 point) to "Completely agree" (5 points).

These measures, which offer a strong framework for assessing social anxiety and self-esteem among university students across the chosen institutions, were picked for their applicability and relevance to the Pakistani setting.

The social anxiety scale:

A sample of ten institutions was chosen in order to confirm the validity of the measure within the setting of Pakistan. To evaluate the association between the overall scale score and each item score and the associated domain, correlation coefficients were computed. Every correlation coefficient was shown to be statistically significant by the results. Each domain's correlation coefficient with the total scale varied from 0.76 to 0.86, indicating that each domain has a significant contribution to determining the degree of social anxiety experienced by students at the chosen Universitys. In addition, the majority of the correlation coefficients, which ranged from 0.40 to 0.67 and were statistically significant, were positive, supporting the construct validity of the scale in this particular situation. Test-retest methodology was used to guarantee the scale's dependability. A pilot sample of 35 students from the chosen institutions was given the scale first, then two weeks later, the same sample received another administration of the scale. This method verified the validity of the scale used to assess social anxiety among Pakistani university students. Calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient in the context of a study including a sample of ten universities in Pakistan, the result was 0.82. According to Table 1, this result shows that the scale employed in the study had an adequate degree of dependability.

Table 1. The social anxiety scale's domains' Pearson correlation coefficient and the total scale

Domain	Reliability
Physical symptoms	0.77
Difficulty of communication and self-express	0.82
Fear of social situations	0.81
Dispersion of ideas	0.78
Lack of self-confidence	0.79
Thetotalscale	0.82

Self-Esteem Scale Validation and Reliability

Correlation coefficients were calculated between the overall scale score, the corresponding domain for each item, and the score of the self-esteem scale in order to evaluate the validity of the measure in the setting of ten Pakistani Universitys. The validity of the scale was confirmed by the findings, which showed substantial values for every item.

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We used the test-retest approach for reliability testing. After a two-week break, the same set of 35 students from the participating universities received another administration of the scale. With a calculated Pearson correlation value of 0.81, a high degree of dependability was shown.

Cronbach's Alpha was computed in order to confirm the scale's internal consistency; the result was 0.87. This high coefficient indicates that the scale is consistent across many settings and has adequate dependability.

Criterion Validity
Social Anxiety Scale:
Regression analysis was used to determine the degree of social anxiety among students from ten Pakistani institutions that were chosen. The social anxiety scale was divided into the following categories according to the arithmetic means of the participants' answers:
- Low Social Anxiety: 1.0 to 1.99
- Average Social Anxiety: 2.0 to 2.99
- High Social Anxiety: 3.0 to 4.0

Self-Esteem Scale:
To evaluate self-esteem levels among the same sample of university students, the following regression scale was used, derived from the participants' arithmetic means:
- Low Self-Esteem: 1.0 to 2.33
- Average Self-Esteem: 2.34 to 3.67
- High Self-Esteem: 3.68 to 5.0

These scales provide insights into the psychological well-being of students in the context of Pakistani higher education institutions.

Results and Discussion:
Table 2. Means, SD, level of social anxiety, and ranks of participants' responses to the domains of the social anxiety scale

No.	Domain	Item	Mean	SD	Socialanxietyl evel	Rank
1	Physical symptoms	7	1.65	0.52	Low	5
2	Difficulty of communication and self-express	7	2.02	0.60	Average	3
3	Fear of social situations	7	1.92	0.55	Low	4
4	Dispersion of ideas	4	2.13	0.62	Average	2
5	Lack of self-confidence	3	2.14	0.71	Average	1
	The total scale	28	1.97	0.48	Low	

The arithmetic means of the social anxiety scale domains in our investigation, which involved ten universities in Pakistan, varied from 1.65 to 2.14, with standard deviations ranging from 0.52 to 0.71. With an arithmetic mean of 2.14, the domain of "Lack of Self-Confidence" had

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the highest level of social anxiety. On the other hand, with an arithmetic mean of 1.65, "Physical Symptoms" came in last, indicating a lesser degree of social anxiety. In general, the other categories' social anxiety levels ranged from moderate to medium. The sample's overall level of social anxiety was found to be modest, with an arithmetic mean of 1.97 and a standard deviation of 0.48 on the entire scale. The social anxiety scale's individual item responses had arithmetic means ranging from 1.52 to 2.55, with the setting of Pakistani students making the transition from high school to University can help explain these findings. This stage is a big shift that brings fresh chances for self-realization, expressive freedom, and psychological adjustment.

Universities with smaller student populations—like those in Al-Shoubak and Ma'an—may be especially helpful in reducing social anxiety because they may encourage more integration among their students and more involvement in extracurricular and academic activities. Thus, the focus on engagement and self-assurance aids in the development of more positive interacting behaviors in kids as well as a well-rounded social experience.

In Pakistani universities, especially the smaller ones, a close-knit community develops between students and faculty and administrative personnel. Students' social anxiety and psychological strain might be considerably lessened by this familial connection. Additionally, living on campus fosters a greater sense of social stability and dependency, both of which might lessen social anxiety. Al-Balqa Applied University, which approaches education from a knowledge economy perspective, is one such example. With this approach, the focus of the teaching-learning process is on the practical, hands-on abilities of the pupils. Students are encouraged to actively connect with their classmates in such an educational setting, which lessens social anxiety and promotes positive engagement.

The present discovery is consistent with other investigations, such as those conducted by Murad (2017), Abu lkushik (2014), and Alati (2015), which documented reduced levels of social anxiety among University students. It is in contrast to the research conducted by Hassan and Ali (2014), who found that students had greater levels of social anxiety and that there were notable variations that favored females. The findings of the self-esteem of students from ten Pakistani Universitys' sample showed a variety of answers on the self-esteem scale. The item with the highest mean score (4.37), "I wish my body was more constant," indicated a high level of self-worth. Conversely, the statement, "I enjoy a tremendous love of others," earned the lowest score (1.67), suggesting a lesser degree of self-esteem in that domain. Using a conventional method, the average self-esteem score was 3.25 overall.

With a standard deviation of 0.35 and a mean self-esteem score of 3.25 overall, participants had a typically high degree of self-esteem.

According to this study, social anxiety and self-esteem are inversely correlated. Pupils who have less social anxiety typically feel better about themselves and have higher self-esteem. Students that are in a healthy psychological state are better able to integrate socially with their peers, friends, and family, which in turn motivates them to strive for both academic and personal success. The relationship between social anxiety and self-worth highlights how crucial a supportive learning environment is to fostering students' general wellbeing. This

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outcome is in line with research by Hassan and Ali (2014) and Alati (2015), who found that their study samples had high levels of self-esteem. On the other hand, it differs from Abu lkushik's (2014) observations of university students' average levels of self-esteem.

Table3. Correlation coefficients between the domains of the social anxiety scale and the total scale and the self-esteem scale

No.	Domains of social anxiety scale	Self Esteem Scale
1	Physical symptoms	-0.38
2	Difficulty of communication and self-express	-0.54
3	Fear of social situations	-0.55
4	Dispersion of ideas	-0.44
5	Lack of self-confidence	-0.56
	Total social anxiety	-0.55

Statistically significant at($\alpha \le 0.05$);Statisticallysignificantat($\alpha \le 0.01$).

A substantial negative link has been found between social anxiety and self-esteem among students at ten institutions in Pakistan, as indicated by the results presented in Table 4. At the $\alpha < 0.01$ level, the correlation coefficient, which is -0.55, is statistically significant. This suggests that the two variables have a significant inverse connection.

With the exception of the "physical symptoms" area, every category on the social anxiety scale that has been examined has a substantial negative connection with self-esteem. For "physical symptoms," the correlation value is 0.38, suggesting a less strong but still significant relationship. According to these results, children with greater degrees of social anxiety may find it more difficult to express themselves, participate in a variety of activities, and assess social situations. Consequently, this influences their level of self-awareness, especially in relation to their peers, and may lead to a decrease in self-worth and heightened depressive symptoms. In the context of Pakistani universities, it may be inferred that social anxiety and self-esteem are strongly related. Students who struggle with social anxiety typically have low self-esteem and might exhibit incompatible behavioral habits. On the other hand, those who have less social anxiety typically have higher self-esteem and more flexible conduct. This result is consistent with other research that revealed a negative relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem, including Shamma (2015), Alati (2015), Abu lkushik (2014), Al-Ali et al. (2011), and Izgic et al. (2004). According to these findings, those who are more timid and anxious in social situations frequently have more conflicting self-awareness.

Summary
The well-being and day-to-day functioning of individuals are greatly impacted by social anxiety, which is typified by extreme dread and discomfort in social circumstances. Using a sample from 10 universities, this study investigates the connection between social anxiety

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and self-esteem among Pakistani university students. In Pakistan, social anxiety is particularly common. It is made worse by societal and cultural expectations, which frequently result in significant behavioral and psychological problems. Overwhelming fear of social interactions and performance settings is the hallmark of social anxiety disorder (SAD), which may be extremely distressing and make it difficult to carry out daily tasks and sustain relationships. Recent research has shown the rising worry that university students, particularly those in Pakistan, have over social anxiety. Research demonstrates that heightened levels of stress are a result of expectations related to social and academic achievement.(Iqbal, 2019; Khan & Ali, 2021).

In Pakistan, social and cultural variables are major contributors to the emergence and exacerbation of social anxiety. Students may experience increased anxiety in this setting due to conventional norms and expectations around social conduct, family reputation, and academic achievement (Nawaz et al., 2020). Social anxiety can be made worse by the pressure to live up to these expectations, which frequently results in increased self-consciousness and dread of criticism (Shah, 2022). Social anxiety and self-esteem, or a person's total feeling of value, are intimately related. According to research, those who have poor self-esteem are more likely to have social anxiety because they may worry about being judged negatively and think they are unworthy (Bashir & Ahmed, 2018). On the other hand, excessive social anxiety can damage one's sense of self, which feeds a vicious cycle of low self-esteem and heightened anxiety (Farooq et al., 2021). Comprehending the way in which social anxiety emerges and affects students in an academic environment requires an understanding of this interaction.
Social anxiety has a significant impact on both professional and educational experiences. Students who have social anxiety may find it difficult to participate in group projects, internships, and jobs. This can have a negative impact on their academic performance and hamper their ability to advance in their careers (Akhtar & Rauf, 2021). In addition to increasing overall wellbeing, treating social anxiety is crucial for boosting academic performance and career success. Targeted treatments are necessary to manage kids' social anxiety, according to recent studies. Methods including mindfulness-based therapies and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) have demonstrated potential in reducing symptoms and enhancing self-esteem (Rashid et al., 2022). Furthermore, fostering supportive learning environments in the classroom that recognize and address the difficulties experienced by nervous students can improve their mental health and academic performance.(Javed & Rahman, 2023).

In conclusion, there is a strong correlation between social anxiety and self-esteem, which has an impact on Pakistani university students. The ubiquity of social anxiety and the demands placed on students by culture and society underscore the need for efficient methods to help students cope with their anxiety and develop a sense of self-worth. Taking care of these problems through institutional and individual initiatives might enhance learning opportunities and general wellbeing.

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Key Findings:
1. Prevalence of Social Anxiety:
•   A considerable fraction of university students report having high levels of anxiety in social and performance contexts, indicating the prevalence of social anxiety among this population.
•   According to the study, social anxiety typically begins in infancy or adolescence and gets worse if it is not treated right away.

2. Self-Esteem Levels:
•   A negative correlation was observed between pupils' self-esteem and social anxiety. There was a correlation between lower self-esteem and higher levels of social anxiety.
•   In Pakistan, cultural elements including family expectations and society conventions have a big influence on self-esteem, which makes social anxiety worse.

3. Gender Differences:
•   When compared to male students, female students reported higher levels of social anxiety and poorer self-esteem. This illustrates the impact of socialization techniques and cultural norms that are gender-specific.
1.   Impact of Environmental Factors:
•   Environmental influences, such as peer relationships, family dynamics, and educational experiences, are significant in forming social anxiety and self-esteem.
•   According to the study, students who had to juggle part-time jobs or difficult financial situations had greater levels of social anxiety, which negatively impacted their self-esteem.

2.   Correlation between Social Anxiety and Self-Esteem:
• There is a statistically significant inverse relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety. Students who have more social anxiety also typically have lower levels of self-esteem.

Conclusion:
Pakistani university students suffer greatly from social anxiety, which has a negative effect on their psychological health and sense of self. Social anxiety may have a significant impact on a student's everyday life and academic performance. It is typified by an overwhelming fear of social settings and being evaluated or seen by others. Recent research indicates that among these students, social anxiety and self-esteem are significantly inversely correlated. This implies that self-esteem tends to decline as social anxiety levels rise, and that attempts to reduce social anxiety might raise self-esteem in the opposite direction. The relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety is vital since self-esteem is a cornerstone of mental health. Feelings of inadequacy and social anxiety can be made worse by low self-esteem, which can start a harmful cycle. Students who suffer from severe social anxiety may find it more difficult to function both socially and intellectually and to feel confident in their abilities to engage with others. A weakened feeling of self-worth and a greater tendency to retreat from social interactions are frequent results of this loss of confidence.

In Pakistan, university students' feelings of social anxiety and self-esteem are greatly influenced by their cultural surroundings. Social anxiety is exacerbated by cultural variables,

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such as strict familial standards and social demands. Students may find Pakistani society's frequent imposition of high expectations and standards to be burdensome. These standards might include doing well in school, upholding conventional morals, and acting in a way that conforms to societal mores.

This problem is made worse by family relationships, as students may feel under pressure to live up to their parents' expectations and adopt conventional roles. Students may experience increased anxiety in social and academic contexts as a result of this pressure because they worry about upsetting their family or falling short of social norms. Students' self-esteem may be further damaged by an atmosphere where they feel inadequate and too critical of themselves due to the intense scrutiny and high expectations.

Pakistani university students who suffer from social anxiety need to be treated with a multimodal strategy that takes these cultural factors into account. The goals of interventions should be to encourage candid discussions about mental health and lessen the stigma attached to social anxiety. Giving pupils coping mechanisms and support networks can assist them in controlling their anxiety and enhancing their self-worth. Better mental health results can also result from fostering a more understanding and encouraging cultural climate that recognizes the variety of difficulties that kids confront. Finally, the strong negative correlation seen among Pakistani university students between social anxiety and self-esteem highlights the importance of focused treatments. Students' psychological health and general well-being may be enhanced by addressing the cultural elements that contribute to social anxiety and creating a supportive atmosphere. This will also help to alleviate social anxiety and self-esteem.

Recommendations
Targeted Interventions:
Create and execute focused interventions to help kids who struggle with social anxiety. These might consist of stress management courses, social skills seminars, and counseling services.
Support Systems:
Create support networks inside Universitys to assist students in overcoming social anxiety and developing a sense of self-worth. Peer support groups and mentorship programs may be part of this.
Gender-Sensitive Approaches:
Develop gender-sensitive support systems in response to the greater levels of social anxiety and poorer self-esteem that female students have been reporting. Adjust treatments to target certain social and cultural norms.
Economic Support:
Implement policies that provide financial aid and flexible class schedules to alleviate the economic pressures that contribute to social anxiety.
Awareness and Training:
Raise awareness of social anxiety and its effects by offering parents, teachers, and students training programs. Encourage candid conversations to lessen stigma and boost assistance seeking.

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Early Identification and Intervention:
Give social anxiety assessments to students at ten of Pakistan's top institutions, spanning a range of age groups. By taking a proactive stance, social anxiety problems can be recognized and treated early on, before they worsen.

Supportive Environment:
Provide a welcoming atmosphere where kids, parents, friends, and instructors may freely debate any subject. Students can gain confidence in their ability to express themselves and experience less fear by creating a nonjudgmental environment where errors are viewed as teaching opportunities.

Orientation Workshops and Seminars:
At the beginning of each academic year, plan lectures and workshops for incoming students at each of these universities. To assist students in settling into university life more easily, these activities ought to emphasize lowering stress and social anxiety as well as building students' self-esteem.

Encouragement in Social Activities:
Encourage kids who struggle with self-esteem to participate in group projects, social events, and community service. Encouraging children to participate in these activities can boost their confidence and help them form a good self-image. Through the integration of supportive practices and treatments within the university setting, this approach seeks to manage and alleviate social anxiety.

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