



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL INTERACTION ANXIETY AND ASSERTIVENESS IN MANAGEMENT STUDENTS IN BANGALORE POST-PANDEMIC

Ms. Aishwarya Tiwaskar, Mr. Dhiraj Chavan.

Student, Student,

Xavier Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship, Bengaluru, Recognized Research Center, University of Mysore,
India.

Xavier Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship, Bengaluru, Recognized Research Center, University of Mysore,
India.

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to find the correlation between assertiveness and social interaction anxiety in the management students in Bangalore. Social Interaction Anxiety Scale and Rathus Assertiveness Schedule are used in order to a gathering of data. The population consists of Management students in Bangalore and 125 persons of them were selected. The convenience sampling method was used for sampling.

It is found that Social interactive anxiety is not gender-specific. gender alone does not have a significant impact on assertiveness or anxiety. There are other factors as well. Age has a significant impact of the sample's level of assertiveness whereas age has no impact on the anxiety levels. No clear conclusion can be drawn with work experience as a factor. Both men and women can be assertive regardless the work experience.

IndexTerms: Assertiveness, social anxiety, social phobia.

1. Introduction

Being able to communicate feelings, wishes, needs, and wants in a suitable way is a significant relational and individual capacity. Assertiveness is the quality of being confident and not frightened to say what you want or believe. (The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus Cambridge University Press, 2022). "Assertiveness is a form of behavior characterized by a confident declaration or affirmation of a statement without need of proof." (Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health, (2003).

It is a form of behavior characterized by a confident declaration or affirmation of a statement without need of proof; this affirms the person's rights or point of view without either aggressively threatening the rights of another (assuming a position of dominance) or submissively permitting another to ignore or deny one's rights or point of view. (Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health, Seventh Edition. (2003))

Galassi, DeLo, Galassi, and Bastien (1974) stressed the complexity of assertiveness by classifying it into three types of responses: self-denial, negative assertiveness, and positive assertiveness. Positive emotions like agreement, affection, and appreciation are considered to be expressed when someone is being aggressive. On the other hand, negative assertiveness is the expression of negative emotions like wrath, displeasure, and disagreement. Self-denial comprises excessive concern about other people's feelings, needless apologizing, and excessive interpersonal anxiety. These distinct response classes show that assertive behavior may be used to accomplish a range of aims and that an assertive response can have either a positive or negative tone. (Kirst, Laura K., "Investigating the relationship between assertiveness and personality characteristics", 2011)

Assertiveness can help a person with imparting in an immediate, genuine, and sensible way with others in your experiences as a whole, whether at work or at home, with clients or colleagues, without encroaching on other's or their own freedoms. Being liable for a team and the results they create in requires assertiveness in social settings. Consequently, further developing this ability is fundamental, particularly for regular contact with your team or group. (Ben Richardson, 2022) Social anxiety is the anxiety and fear specifically linked to being in social settings (i.e., interacting with others). Some categories of disorders associated with social Anxiety includes anxiety disorders, mood disorders, autistic spectrum disorders, eating disorders, and substance use disorders. Individuals with higher levels of social anxiety often avert their gazes, show fewer facial expressions, and show difficulty with initiating and maintaining a conversation. Social anxiety commonly manifests itself in the teenage years and can be persistent throughout life, however, people who experience problems in their daily functioning for an extended period of time can develop social anxiety disorder. (Schneier, Franklin R; Blanco, Carlos; Antia, Smita X; Liebowitz, Michael R (2002).

Social anxiety disorder is "An anxiety disorder characterized by persistent, intense anxiety or fear of social settings in which one might become the focus of attention. People with this disorder fear that they will be negatively evaluated by others, either for showing signs of anxiety or for other reasons". (Social anxiety disorder. (n.d.) Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health, (2003). Social anxiety, also known as social anxiety disorder (SAD) or social phobia, is a mental health condition characterized by intense, and disabling fear of social situations. These feelings are experienced on emotional, physical, and cognitive levels, causing severe discomfort that can lead to social avoidance. People with SAD are afraid of being negatively judged by others, which can generate feelings of embarrassment, self-consciousness, and even depression. (National Institute of Mental Health. Social Anxiety Disorder, 2021). Social phobia is defined as "a persistent fear of one or more situations (the social phobic situations) in which the person is exposed to possible scrutiny by others and fears that he or she may do something or act in a way that will be humiliating or embarrassing"(APA,1987) while traditional social anxiety is generalized irrational fears across numerous social situations with avoidance and impairment (Reid Stell Counseling,2022)

Intense anxiety or dread of being rejected in a social or performance context is the defining characteristic of social anxiety disorder, often known as social phobia. People who suffer from social anxiety disorder may worry about acting or seeming uncomfortable (such as blushing or tripping over their words), or they may worry about being thought of as unintelligent, awkward, or uninteresting. As a result, they frequently steer clear of social or performance situations, and when they can't, they suffer from severe anxiety and anguish. When confronted with a frightening circumstance, many persons with social anxiety disorder also have severe physical symptoms, like a rapid heartbeat, nausea, and sweating, and they may even go into full-blown attacks. (Anxiety and depression association of America, 2022)

2. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to find out the relationship between social interaction anxiety and assertiveness in PGDM students in Bangalore. Another purpose of the study is to find out how demographic aspects impact social interaction anxiety and assertiveness in PGDM students in Bangalore. The choice of PGDM students as a sample was made since they frequently encounter stressful circumstances. Soon these students would be entering the corporate world, and Covid has affected their lives and reduced their social life to nil.

3. Literature review

Disorders of assertiveness brought up a number of psychological issues, which prompted a debate of how the brain and emotions function in humans. Azas, F., and Granger, B. (1995). In the second year of high school, Abedzadeha, M., and Mahdian, H. (2014) looked into how assertiveness and social anxiety related to happiness. The findings indicate that social anxiety and assertiveness have an impact on and can predict a person's level of happiness. At a level of less than 0.01, there is a significant positive correlation between assertiveness and happiness. Additionally, social anxiety and its components have a negative and significant association with happiness at a level lower than 0.01.

Hasanvand Amouzadeh M. investigated the connection between social anxiety and shyness, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and assertiveness. The findings of this study indicate a significant and inverse relationship between self-esteem, self-efficacy, and assertiveness and social anxiety, but a significant and inverse relationship among shyness and social anxiety. Additionally, self-esteem was the best indicator of social anxiety in girls and shyness had been the best indicator of social anxiety in males. The ANCOVA analysis of a research that examined the impact of assertiveness on social anxiety, self-esteem, and self-efficacy in high school students revealed that assertiveness reduced social anxiety and improved self-esteem and self-efficacy. (2015) Rezaei and Gheibat. There is an intriguing perspective on the connection between demographic characteristics and assertiveness. According to gender, national culture, and race, assertiveness varies. Despite their gender, country culture, or colour, people with comparable levels of education and status exhibit comparable levels of assertiveness. On the contrary hand, African American women are thought to be the most forceful, followed by American men. Vietnamese males came in second, then Vietnamese women, and last white women. (2015). (Parham, J.B., Lewis, C.C., et al.

People's opinions of leaders are significantly influenced by individual assertiveness variances. People are viewed as less successful leaders when they are either notably low or notably high in their assertiveness. According to the researchers, the curvilinear effects of assertiveness are related to trade-offs between social and instrumental outcomes, with a high level of assertiveness worsening the relationship and a low level of assertiveness lowering goal accomplishment. In earlier research, which concentrated on figuring out what made a leader rather than what deterred one, assertiveness was a trait that had gone unnoticed. (Ames, D. R., & Flynn, F. J., 2007. Daniel Ames, 2009, investigated assertiveness and how it affects a person's ability to become a leader. The author claims that prior research on interpersonal assertiveness and organizational efficiency has painted a confusing picture: some studies have shown a favorable relationship, while others have highlighted negative consequences. From a different perspective, this essay examines assertiveness as a contributing element to leadership failure and deficiencies. This approach identifies interpersonal assertiveness as a key component that has a curved, inverted-U relationship with leadership success. The author looked at this effect's supporting data together with the role of social and instrumental outcome mediators.

The experience of social anxiety, the most prevalent anxiety condition with significant occupational ramifications, was examined by Katherine Naomi Rau in 2018. They looked at the implications of mental illness for leadership, especially emergence. The research showed that social anxiety significantly predicted emotional tiredness in terms of frequency and intensity. Emotional exhaustion and professional self-efficacy both predicted leadership emergence once personality was taken into account, but they did not act as mediators in the relationship between social anxiety and leadership emergence. (2018) Katherine Naomi Rau Numerous studies have also revealed a strong connection between social anxiety and a person's personality. Contrary to social anxiety, which is more closely tied to personality traits expressing neuroticism, circumscribed social dread is associated with a fear of anxiety symptoms. (G.Ron Norton, Brian J. Cox, et al., 1997).

It is well known that social anxiety SA exhibited decreased relationships with agreeableness, openness, and trust, and that openness was related to SA for those with low levels of trust. SA also had positive associations with neuroticism and negative associations with extraversion. High degrees of openness may prevent the elevated SA levels associated with low trust. (2015) by Simona C. Kaplan, Cheri A. Levinson, et al. Bullying in the workplace and injustice are moderated by assertiveness. Bullying is closely linked to a variety of health indicators, with the association being tempered by social anxiety, assertiveness, and social dysfunction and depression. (Bernardo Moreno-Jiménez, Alfredo Rodríguez-Muñoz, et al., 2007) Baker, Amy E. and Jeske, Debora (2015) studied and proposed that self-esteem, as well as the degree of anxiety and assertiveness people experience during traditional and online interactions, are major predictors of social network use. Poorer self-esteem was not linked to more frequent usage of social networks, in contrast to the social compensation theory. Self-esteem was a significant negative predictor of social anxiety and a significant positive predictor of assertiveness in both offline and online settings. Higher social anxiety was associated with worse social assertiveness in both situations.

In the past, researchers have looked at the complex definition of assertiveness based on behaviour, cognition, and the impact of facial expression. Moore, K. K., Hudson, E. E., and Smith, B. F. (2007) investigated the truthfulness of a commonly accepted statement that aggressive people experience less anxiety. The Assertiveness Self-Report Inventory scale and the Fear of Negative Evaluation scale were both used to assess social anxiety. This study showed no proof that assertiveness and social anxiety are negatively correlated. (K. K. Moore, E. E. Hudson, & B. F. Smith, 2007) Social anxiety appears to respond well to assertiveness training. Jackson, A., Hunter, K., & Chambless, D. L. (1982). The Fear of Negative Evaluation questionnaire, the Social Avoidance and Distress Scale, the Assertion Inventory, and the Two Factor Index of Social Position were given to 112 students and 78 agoraphobics. This research is 40 years old and have used standard tools. It helped to understand the correlation between these two variables.

Based on earlier assumptions that assertive responses are incompatible with anxiety and successful in overcoming neurotic fear, there is an inverse relationship between assertiveness and anxiety. Men are far more assertive than women. Analyses of variance showed that assertiveness strongly and inversely correlated with measures of neuroticism, trait anxiety, and interpersonal anxiety for both men and women (Orenstein, H., Orenstein, E., & Carr, J. E. 1976) Can group training in assertiveness reduce social anxiety? Group assertive training reduces social anxiety while enhancing social skills and academic performance as compared to control groups (Mehrabizade M. H., Taghavi S. F., et al., 2009) Thus, it is clear that social anxiety can be effectively treated with group assertiveness training. Self-beliefs can play a significant influence in social anxiety and assertiveness. The most effective indicators of assertiveness are social anxiety and self-perception. When working with clients who are worried about social anxiety or assertiveness, mental health counsellors should assess their clients' self-beliefs (Aoki, S. K., Mearns, J., & Kurpius, S. E. R. 2017). Assertiveness and personality traits might be significantly related. Numerous studies have attempted to determine the relationship between assertiveness and the five personality traits in the past (extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness). In addition to having inverse links with neuroticism, shyness, and fear of criticism, assertiveness has direct associations with self-esteem, extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness. (2011) Kirst, L. K. There is a scope to learn more about the complex personality structure of low-assertive people.

There is a widespread belief that less aggressive behavior and social anxiety are associated. Low self-perceptions of assertiveness and a propensity to negatively evaluate one's own behavior are both associated with social anxiety. When compared to the opinions of outside observers, people with social anxiety overestimate how well they do in social situations (Weber, H., Wiedig, M., Freyer, J., 2004). Social support study has not examined the connection between interpersonal traits and social support, despite the fact that research has demonstrated that socially supportive relationships are important drivers in psychological adjustment during stressful periods. Personal

assertiveness in particular, one interpersonal factor, has the capacity to enhance the beneficial aspects of social support. Certain types of social bonds are significantly improved by personal assertiveness when predicting psychological symptoms in high-stress situations.

4. Method of research

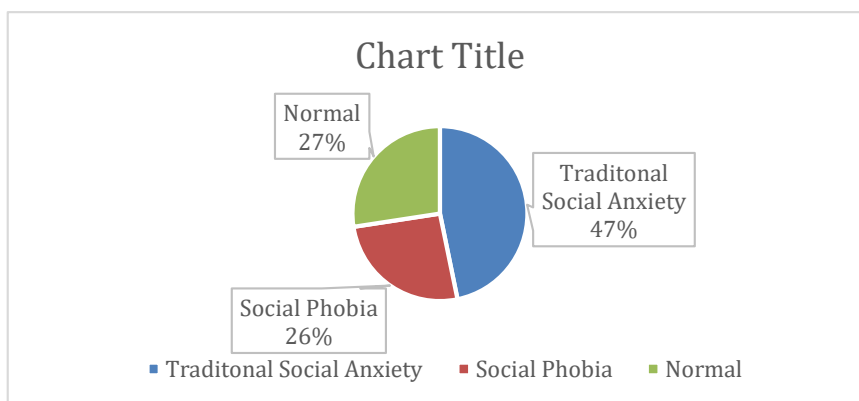
XIME Bangalore PGDM students made up the population. There were 150 students in the sample. The sample was chosen through convenience sampling. The Social Interaction Anxiety Scale was created by Rathus, Mattick, and Clarke. The poll was conducted using Spencer Rathus' Assertiveness Schedule. The survey asked questions that were graded from extremely characteristic of me to extremely uncharacteristic. The inquiries concern several traits such as aggressiveness, openness, carefulness, comfort with expression, and shyness. In this survey, the participants were asked to describe the breadth and intensity of their comfort and discomfort in circumstances that called for assertiveness. The data gathered from this study was analyzed using the SPSS tool. The methods of analysis were correlation and Anova.

5. Hypothesis formulation

1. There is no statistical relationship and significance that exists between the two variables, social interaction anxiety and assertiveness and There is no significant relationship between age and social interaction anxiety in MBA students in Bangalore.
2. There is statistical relationship between social interaction anxiety and assertiveness, the level of Assertiveness decreases with increase in social interaction anxiety and Demographics of a person influences level of social interaction anxiety.

6. Analysis and Results

1. Division on the basis of Type Social Interaction of Anxiety



source- primary data

From the above pie chart, it is observed that, out of 124 samples,

- 47 percentage of the sample experience anxiety at the level of Traditional Social Anxiety (as discussed before)
- 26 percentage of sample experience anxiety at the level of Social Phobia (as discussed before)
- 27 percentage experience anxiety at normal level (as discussed before)

1. Tabulation of Gender and Type of Social Interaction Anxiety

Type of Anxiety	Male	Female
Traditional Social Anxiety	Approx. 22.5%	24.19355
Social Phobia	8.870968	16.93548
Normal	12.90323	14.51613

To gain a better understanding, the above table shows that

- Approximately 22.5 percentage of men whereas 24.1 of women experience anxiety at a level of Traditional Social Anxiety
- 8.8 percentage of men whereas 16.93 percentage of women experience anxiety at the level of Social Phobia
- 12.9 percentage of men whereas 14.51 percentage of women experience normal level of anxiety

2. coefficient of variance for gender and social interaction anxiety

	Male	Female
Average (Mean)	51.14545	52.37681
SD	14.78791	15.61495
Coefficient of Variance	3.4586	3.354274

The difference between value for Males and Female is almost negligible, suggesting that irrespective of the gender, the table above suggests that men and women both can experience social interaction anxiety, more or less at the same levels. Social interactive anxiety is not gender specific and hence opens scope for future studies to identify various other factors.

3. coefficient of variance for gender and assertiveness

	MALE	FEMALE
AVERAGE	92.01818	90.27536
SD	14.34172	15.3794
Coefficient of variance	6.41612	5.869888

When it comes to Assertiveness, the difference between the Coefficient of Variance is significant, hence, men at a certain level can be more assertive than women.

1. tabulation of annova results

ANOVA Gender vs Assertiveness n Anxiety						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Assertiveness	Between Groups	92.960	1	92.960	0.417	0.520
	Within Groups	27190.750	122	222.875		
	Total	27283.710	123			
Anxiety	Between Groups	46.404	1	46.404	0.199	0.656
	Within Groups	28389.039	122	232.697		
	Total	28435.444	123			

ANOVA test with Gender as a factor and Assertiveness and Anxiety as the variables suggest that sex alone does not have a significant impact on assertiveness or anxiety. There are other factors as well. This opens a scope for further studies.

ANOVA Age vs Assertiveness n Anxiety						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Assertiveness	Between Groups	3425.911	7	489.416	2.380	0.026
	Within Groups	23857.799	116	205.671		
	Total	27283.710	123			
Anxiety	Between Groups	1646.270	7	235.181	1.018	0.422
	Within Groups	26789.173	116	230.941		
	Total	28435.444	123			

The ANOVA table with Age as a factor and Assertiveness and Anxiety as the variable, suggests that Age has a significant impact of the sample's level of assertiveness whereas age has no impact on the anxiety levels of the sample.

ANOVA Work Exp vs Assertiveness n Anxiety						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Assertiveness	Between Groups	23.923	1	23.923	0.107	0.744
	Within Groups	27259.787	122	223.441		
	Total	27283.710	123			
Anxiety	Between Groups	852.932	1	852.932	3.773	0.054
	Within Groups	27582.512	122	226.086		
	Total	28435.444	123			

A similar ANOVA test with Work Experience as a factor and Assertiveness and Anxiety as the variables suggest. No clear conclusion can be drawn with work experience as a factor. Both, men and women can be assertive regardless the work experience as shown by the sample of students in the research

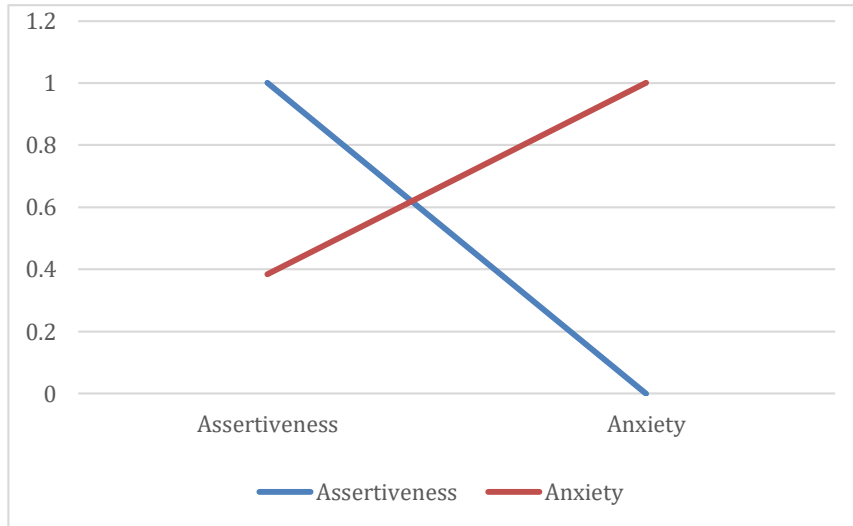
2. tabulation of regression statistics

Assertiveness vs Anxiety	
Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.614748863
R Square	0.377916165
Adjusted R Square	0.372817117
Standard Error	11.79495403
Observations	124

A regression analysis shows

- Multiple R value of 0.614 which is closer to 1. This suggests strong correlation between assertiveness and social interaction anxiety.
- R Square value of 0.3779. This suggests that the level of assertiveness has low but some impact on the level of social interaction anxiety of the sample. This reflects that the level of assertiveness is not the only factor that impacts a person’s anxiety levels. This opens a scope for study of other factors that may contribute to social interaction anxiety.

3. correlation between assertiveness and anxiety



	Assertiveness	Anxiety
Assertiveness	1	
Anxiety	-0.614748863	1

The graph and the table show a negation correlation between the sample’s assertiveness and social interaction anxiety levels.

Conclusion

The main objective of this research was to Find the correlation between assertiveness and social interaction anxiety on the management students in Bangalore. As results indicate, Social interactive anxiety is not gender specific and hence opens scope for future studies to identify various other factors. Findings suggest that gender alone does not have a significant impact on assertiveness or anxiety and the level of assertiveness is not the only factor that impacts a person’s anxiety levels.

Considerations for future research would be changing the sample data of PGDM students with students from other areas such as medical studies, engineering etc. There is a scope to do research in other geographical areas and other demographic factors can be tested.

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