

## ASSESSMENT OF SELF MANAGEMENT COUNSELLING TECHNIQUE AND SOCIAL PHOBIA AMONG NIGERIAN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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### Abstract

*This research investigated the assessment of Self-Management counselling technique and social Phobia among Nigerian undergraduate students. Concept and dimension of social phobia (cognitive, behavioural and psychological dimension) were discussed, symptoms such as Feelings of shyness or discomfort in certain situations aren't necessarily signs of social phobia disorder, particularly among undergraduate and genetic, environmental, and parental, courses of social phobia were also addressed. Self management counselling technique, procedure and process on how to improve the process were discussed. The researcher suggested that counsellors and teachers should be encouraged to use self management counselling Technique in addressing social phobia behaviour among Nigerian undergraduate students and students should be given equal opportunity and exposure to the techniques in re-addressing social phobia in schools, this will help improve the active participation in class participation and enhance teaching and learning process..*

**Keywords:** Self-Management, Social Phobia, Undergraduate students

### Introduction

Social phobia is a fast growing phenomenon, which is thought to disproportionately affect university undergraduate students. The global prevalence of Social phobia was found to be significantly higher with more than 10 million university undergraduates students in America. The symptoms of Social phobia did not differ between sexes but varied as a function of age, country, work status, level of education, and whether an individual lived in an urban or rural location and is also known for its association with depression and substance use disorder. While in case of Nigeria, university students are associated with social phobia especially at the beginning of their program. This social phobia lead to low performance and poor academic achievement among students, because social phobia is a

normal situation which one should not be afraid to participate in. Many university undergraduate students usually feel uneasy, fearful and anxious some even go to the extent of illness as result of this social phobia. This situation has broad negative consequence which emanates stress in students' concentration and psychological worries. It should be noted that the poor academic performance should not be attributed to student's intellectual problems only, but the social phobia situation created in students serve as factor of poor academic achievement. Social phobia is something that almost everyone experiences to some extent in any stressful situation. For university students one of the most frequent stressful or anxiety provoking experiences is social phobia. The anxious feeling can occur while the students is about to enter the university and during the university. Social phobia is an uneasiness or apprehension experienced before, during, and after the university. Almost every student experiences some phobia.

Social phobia is "the set of phenomenological, psychological, and behavioural responses that accompany concern about possible negative consequences (Chapell, Blanding, Takahashi, Silverstein, Newman, Gubi, & McCann, 2015) Crozier as cited in Sola, (2014) reported that there are three separate response systems that can be used to analyze emotional behavior: the cognitive verbal, the behavioral-expressive, and the bodily-expressive system. Thus, it might be fruitful to distinguish between cognitive, behavioural, and physiological aspects of social phobia.

### ***The Concept of Social Phobia***

The term Social phobia was first coined by Wolpe (1958), who described Social phobia is a term used to describe the excessive fear, nervousness and apprehension that, undergraduate students and other people experience in their social interactions. This can cause considerable discomfort and embarrassment and often affect the person's ability to act naturally or perform a task in front of people. Olamiji and Badru (2014), explained that Social phobia is a persistent fear of one or more situations in which others expose the person to possible scrutiny and fears that he or she may do something or act in a way that will be humiliating or embarrassing. Social phobia involves overwhelming phobia and excessive self-consciousness in everyday social situations. It is both a persistent and irrational fear of situations in which the person feels they may be closely watched and judged by others, as in public speaking, eating, or using public facilities. Feared activities may include most type of social interaction, especially small groups, parties, talking to strangers, restaurants.

### ***Dimension of social phobia***

#### ***Cognitive dimension of social phobia***

Situations that can provoke anxiety include talking in groups, meeting people, going to school or work, going shopping, eating or drinking in public, or public performances such as public speaking. People with social phobia believe that social situations pose a danger. They fear negative evaluation, believing in particular that "(1) they are in danger of behaving in an inept and unacceptable fashion, and, (2) that such behavior will have disastrous consequences in terms of loss of status, loss of worth, and rejection" (Clark & Wells, 2019).

#### ***Behavioural dimension of social phobia***

Behaviours are actions which are intended to reduce the risk of negative evaluation. They are problematic because they "prevent unambiguous disconfirmation of their unrealistic

beliefs about feared behaviors or the consequences of these behaviors” (Adam & Ammar,2017). Non-occurrence of the feared catastrophe is attributed to the safety behavior, rather than the socially anxious person concluding that the situation is less dangerous than they had previously believed.

### ***Physiological dimension of social phobia***

Social phobia exhibit the same somatic symptoms during anxiogenic exposure as observed in other anxiety disorders (Vieira & Matos, 2015). Palpitations, sweating, hand tremor, hot flushes. These arousal symptoms stem from exaggerated activity in the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system, and are characteristic features of the “fight-or-flight” response (Garcia- Lopez 2016). However, facial blushing and somatic symptoms of embarrassment, which are common in social phobia, might not be simply mediated by increased sympathetic activity.

### ***Types of Social Phobia***

Wolpe (1958), as cited in Akinade (2015), stated the following as the major type of social phobia, among the undergraduate students which include the following

- I. 1 Generalized Social Phobia: Generalized Social Phobia, It is normal to feel anxious from time to time, especially if one’s life is stressful. However, excessive ongoing social phobia and worry that interfere with daily activities may be a sign of generalized social phobia. It is possible for university students to develop generalized social phobia. Mitchel (2019), pointed out, that the tendency of having difficulty in the learning and teaching process can aggravate nervousness, having difficulty organizing thoughts, restlessness, among others

Those who suffer generalized social phobia have three areas of phobic behaviour:

- a. Social interaction such as meeting friends or going to parties
  - b. Performance such as giving a presentation in front of classmate or others
  - c. Observation such as being seen by others, even just walking down a street in public
- II. Specific Social Phobia: Mental health professionals often distinguish between generalized social phobia and specific social phobia. Specific social phobia is the intense fear, anxiety, and avoidance of a specific object or situation (e.g., flying, heights, injections, animals). People with generalized social phobia have great distress in a wide range of social situations (Musa 2014). Those with specific social phobia may experience phobia only in a few situations. The term "specific social phobia" may also refer to specific forms of non-clinical social phobia. The most common specific social phobias are glossophobia (the fear of public speaking) and stage fright (the fear of performance). Others include fears of intimacy or sexual encounters, using public restrooms, attending social gatherings, and dealing with authority figures (Umar et al., 2021).
  - III. Agoraphobia; According to Anastasi (2015). Agoraphobia is a type of social phobia disorder in which you fear and avoid places or situations that might cause you to panic and make you feel computable, helpless. Agoraphobia is fear of an actual or anticipated situation, such as using public transportation, being in open or enclosed spaces, standing in line, or being in a crowd. This type of social

phobia is caused by fear that there's no easy way to escape or get help if the social phobia intensifies. Anastasi (2015) further explain that, most people who have agoraphobia develop it after having one or more panic attacks, causing them to worry about having another attack and avoid the places where it may happen again. People with agoraphobia often have a hard time feeling safe in any public place, especially where crowds gather.

### ***Symptoms and Diagnosis of Social Phobia***

It's normal to feel nervous in some social situations. Giving a presentation may cause social phobia. But social phobia disorder, everyday interactions cause significant phobia, self-consciousness and embarrassment because you fear being scrutinized or judged negatively by others (Kande, 2015).

According to Umar et al., (2021). Feelings of shyness or discomfort in certain situations aren't necessarily signs of social phobia disorder, particularly in undergraduate. Comfort levels in social situations vary, depending on personality traits and life experiences. Some people are naturally reserved and others are more outgoing. In contrast to everyday nervousness, social phobia disorder includes fear, anxiety and avoidance that interfere with relationships, daily routines, work, school or other activities. Social phobia disorder typically begins in the early to mid-teens, though it can sometimes start in younger children or in adults.

According to Kande (2015), the signs and symptoms of social phobia disorder can include constant:

- I. Fear of situations in which you may be judged negatively
- II. Worry about embarrassing or humiliating yourself
- III. Intense fear of interacting or talking with strangers
- IV. Fear that others will notice that you look anxious
- V. Fear of physical symptoms that may cause you embarrassment, such as blushing, sweating, trembling or having a shaky voice

### ***Characteristic of People with Social Phobia***

Clark and Wells, (as cited Portia & Osuji, 2016), suggested that people with social phobia usually go through the following characteristic in three-stage process:

- Stage 1: People with social phobia hold a set of beliefs about themselves that ultimately set the scene for difficulties during social encounters. Sometimes these same people can remember one or more key moments during their early years that have since developed into a negative association. For example, a comment about some physical aspect like body odor or sweaty palms, or the fact they dressed inappropriately or sounded nervous.
- Stage 2: Involves the social interaction itself. At the first sign of social threat the person feels their body responding by trembling, increased pulse rate, mental blanks and feeling flustered.

Stage 3: Involves a process of self-evaluation and discrimination following a social exchange. They characteristically evaluate their performance as negative or ambiguous at best. Ambiguities frequently become recast as negative and the whole process feeds back into the beliefs they hold about themselves and as previously outlined in stage.

### ***Causes of Social Phobia Disorder***

Researches into the causes of social phobia are wide-ranging, encompassing multiple perspectives from neuroscience to sociology. Scientists have yet to pinpoint the exact causes.

- I. Genetic Causes ; Studies suggest that genetic can play a part in combination with environmental factors. According to Montesi Conner (2014), asserts that social phobia is not caused by other mental disorders or by substance abuse. Generally, social phobia begins at a specific point in an individual's life. This will develop over time as the person struggles to recover. Eventually, mild social awkwardness can develop into symptoms of social phobia.
- II. Environmental Causes; Social Phobia is genetically transmitted disorder but some time is course by some environmental factors. The environment in which a students is raised can contribute to the kind of behaviour such a students will put up. For instance, the influences of parents, extended family, care giver, poor school performance, difficult temperament, inflated self-esteem, impulsivity, low verbal intelligence. Peer and neighborhood risk factors may play a significant in the development of Social Phobia disorder and others and therefore, Healthy environment will produce healthy students while unhealthy environments will encourage or promote SPD and other behavioural disorder. (Aderka & Hofman, 2015).
- III. Temperamental Causes; Mussen, Conger, Kagan, and Huston, (as cited in Ahmed, 2019) defined temperament as an inborn biases towards certain moods and emotional reaction styles and they depicted two temperamental styles of students called inhibited and uninhibited. Inhibited children are characterized by withdrawal and increased autonomic arousal in situations of uncertainty, in contrast to uninhibited students who tend to react with spontaneity and approach in these situations.
- IV. Parental Causes; Hudson and Rapee (2019) in their study found out that there is a reciprocal relationship between parent and child behaviour. They then claim that anxious students are more likely to have anxious parents whose behaviour may maintain phobia and avoidance. Also Hadi and Maryam (2015), observed that a parent with social phobia disorder is more likely to have anxious offspring, and therefore believed that the risk for social phobia disorders in offspring of anxious parents was 3.5 times that of non-anxious students.

### ***Challenges of Social Phobia Disorder***

Social phobia disorder will not only hinder our social interactions and relationships, but also have some challenge on our physiological, Cognitive and behavioral as well. If social phobia disorder is appropriately and professionally addressed and treated, the prognosis for this mental health condition can be drastically improved. The following are some of the major challenges of social phobia stated by Bengner, 2015.

### ***Physiological challenge of social phobia***

Physiological Effects of social anxiety disorder can be common, even while social phobia involves social behaviours. These are some physiological effects that may be experience, Umar et al., (2022):

- I. Racing heart or tightness in chest due to nervousness
- II. Difficulties in occupational functioning
- III. Emotional detachment
- IV. Extreme feelings of fear inferiority
- V. Profuse sweating/shaking
- VI. Difficulty initiating or sustaining relationships

### ***Method of Controlling Social Phobia***

The treatment of SPD is typically involves the following three folded process of using cognitive behavioural principles and techniques as described in MacManus (2013):

- I. Challenging and Changing Dysfunctional Thinking. Students with social phobia disorder tend to have a lot of limiting beliefs, plus an unrealistic view of social standards and of themselves. These need to be corrected by consciously changing the way they think.
- II. Gradual Exposure: Students with social phobia disorder need to be gradually face those exact situations they are afraid of and they typically avoid. Systematic exposure, combined with combined with combating unrealistic thinking that will set their mind and emotions on the right path.
- III. Improving social Skills: Since students with SPD avoid social situations as much as they can, their social skills have often atrophied or they have never truly developed at all. Thus, training key social skills and learning how to start conversation, how to keep it going or how to connect with people is crucial.

### ***Self-Management Technique***

Self-management technique allows students to maximize their productivity, improve their academic performance and efficiently achieve professional goals. Improving their Self-Management technique can help students to increase their employability and better manage their social phobia situation. In this , we identify self-management technique related to social phobia.

- I. Self-Monitoring Technique ; Self-Monitoring could be referred to as a process of controlling student's behaviour in accordance with observed appropriate behaviours. However, for Dombeck and Wells-Moran (2014), stated that Self-Monitoring involves the student's ability to learn how to pay careful and systematic attention to his problems, behaviours and habits and to the stimuli that trigger them. Furthermore Dombeck and Wells-Moran , ( 2017 ) . pointed out that Self-Monitoring at its best, when it is approached in a primarily quantified way. In other words the student's is made to decide what behaviors or habits to be monitor, the occurrence of each and every behavior are counted and recorded.



- II. Thought Stopping Skill; In using Self Control technique thought Stopping comes to play bearing in mind that to effect a change students stops the negative act to initiate a new and positive one. In trying to correct a fault in electricity the electrician switches off the current and on correction of the faults switches on the electricity. Becks (2018), earlier pointed out in his study that when students changes what he thinks, he can change his mood. In other words, student's behavior mirror's students feeling, hence, in thought stopping, the students consciously issue the command "stop", when repeated negative, distorted or unnecessary thoughts are being experienced.
- III. Self Talk Technique; Self statements have implications for the emotional reaction that could result from them. The bid to alleviate any behaviour related problem might develop proficiency in adjusting to real life challenges. To this Wine (2019), opined that research showed that the self-talk of students with social phobia usually tend to be negative and self-defeating with negative statements. "inner voices" as patterns of internal conversation in narrative form as it influences self. Laderman (2016), earlier pointed out that these inner voices influences interpersonal relationships. In conclusion,demonstrated that self-talk provides a way to actively manipulate the environment, evaluate self, find meaning and direct ones behaviour accordingly and that adequate management of self-talk may be important in allowing therapists to maintain an appropriate focus on clients.

#### ***How to improve self-Management skills***

Enhance your self-management skills by actively focusing on ways you can direct, evaluate and improve upon your daily tasks. Here are a few ways you can improve your self-management skills Umar et al., (2021):

- I. Assess your strengths. Determine what professional tasks you're best at, and focus on ways to maximize your abilities in these areas. Understanding your strengths helps you manage your social phobia in a way that makes the most of skills like coding, technical writing, graphic design or customer service.
- II. Practice patience. Maintain a sense of calm so students can think clearly and objectively. Be considerate of others, and try to empathize with their needs and experiences to more effectively help them.
- III. Take care of students health and wellness. Maintain a proper diet, exercise regularly, care for your personal hygiene and actively focus on lowering your stress levels. Take breaks to stretch and clear students mind, keep healthy snacks at work and look for opportunities for physical activity, such as a brisk walk on your lunch hour.
- IV. Evaluate students progress. Objectively assess the progress students made toward their goals by setting checkpoints along the way and tracking your accomplishments to see if you've met them. Ask a mentor for assistance to get a well-setting appraisal. Use this feedback to improve your Self-Management going forward

### ***Process of Self – Management Counselling Technique***

Self-management is the ability to manage stress and impulsive while motivating oneself to meet a specific goal. Self management strategies for students start before problem behavior occur, however, they can replace disruptive behavior by substituting them with more desirable conduct John (2019).The process or stages are as follows;

1. Goal Setting ; Students and teachers should cooperate In setting small reachable goal that the student can work towards, goals can be anything from "working quietly for 15minutes" to turning in "homework consistently" by allowing the students to participate in setting their goals, you empower them to take an active role in self management strategies as well as self management intervention
2. Behaviour Monitoring; Self-monitoring, or behavior monitoring occur when students observe and record their behaviours, redirecting themselves when necessary. They practice thier self awareness skill and build a record of their difficulties and success. Through self monitoring, student become more aware of where they struggle and where they succed. As their self awareness increases they gain confidence in their ability to redirect themselves and participate in self reinforcement activities.
3. Self-Reinforcement; Self reinforcement is the act of rewarding oneself after completing the desired behavior or meeting a goal. Rewarding positive behaviour increases in likelihood your students will repeat behaviour. According to psychology today,85% of people who don't learn self-reinforcement have trouble to other areas, like self esteem. Reward can be completing an assignment, extra computer time or assigning classroom jobs, tailor the reward to the students and the behaviour you want to reinforce with the self management plan ,Umar, T. Yunusa S, & Ado M, (2021)..
4. Self Evaluation; While students may look forward to the rewards, reflection of the process teaches them the most what help inspire them? What was the most challenging part of the process? Was the reward worth it? What can they do better the next time? These questions and answers help teachers and students gain confidence in themselves and their skills.they can also identify areas where the teachers and students believe they can improve. This self-evaluation process also teaches students the power of resilience and perseverance they learn that failure can happen but if they keep trying, they can succeed.

### ***Self-Management can be implemented through the following stages***

According to Umar, (2022) the following are some of the ways of implementing self-management;

- I. First, bring the target behavior under control using externally-managed (i.e., teacher-administered) intervention techniques, when necessary.
- II. Select a system of data recording that is appropriate to the target behaviour and to the abilities of the student. Acquire or construct the necessary materials (e.g., recording sheets, clipboards, timers, wrist counters).
- III. Let the student determine, with your guidance, the performance criterion that must be achieved to earn reinforcement. This criterion should be specific and also



achievable. In the early stages, it should be possible to attain it immediately rather than distantly. Let the students determine, with your guidance, the amount and type of reinforce to be administered.

- IV. Instruct the students how to use the data recording system. Consider modeling its use, simulations, and role playing. Conduct and supervise some practice data-recording sessions in the environment in which the student's actual recordings will occur. Reinforce the student when the student's recordings match yours. Re-train the student if the student's recordings are too inaccurate.

### Suggestion

- I. Based on the above explanation it can be suggested that, counsellors and teachers should be encouraged to use self management counselling Technique on re-addressing social phobia behaviour among Nigerian undergraduate students .
- II. Students should be given equal opportunity and exposure to the techniques in addressing social phobia in schools, this will help improve the active participation in class participation and enhance teaching and learning process.

### Conclusion

Many studies have revealed that Social phobia is a fast growing phenomenon, which affect university undergraduate students. The global prevalence of Social phobia was found to be significantly higher with more than 10 million university undergraduates students in America. The symptoms of Social phobia did not differ between sexes but varied as a function of age, most of the problems stated above of social phobia are most likely to be manage by the self management techniques. The resultant effects of the situation coupled with some recommendations on how to tackled social phobia among undergraduate education in Nigeria using self management counselling technique

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