



Social Phobia And Mental Health Of Pre-Service Teachers

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study investigates the social phobia and mental health status of pre-service teachers. Recognising the critical role of mental health and psychological well-being in teacher development, the research assesses the prevalence of social anxiety symptoms and their impact on mental health among this population. Findings indicate that pre-service teachers experience varying degrees of social phobia, which influences their social interactions and overall mental health condition. The study also identifies higher social anxiety levels among urban female pre-service teachers. These results highlight the need for targeted mental health support and interventions to promote the psychological well-being of future educators. Keywords: Social phobia, Mental health, Pre-service Teachers

Introduction

Social phobia, also known as social anxiety disorder, is a serious psychological condition characterized by an intense and persistent fear of social or performance situations in which people expect negative evaluation from others (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Such worry not only impairs social functioning, but it also has a negative impact on educational attainment and mental health. Social anxiety poses distinct obstacles for pre-service teachers as they move from students to professional educators. These issues include increased performance anxiety, concerns about peer and supervisory evaluation, and ambiguity in classroom management, all of which risk their developing professional identities and efficacy.

Empirical evidence has highlighted the significant prevalence of social anxiety symptoms in educational settings, with certain demographic groups, particularly female pre-service teachers and those from urban areas, being disproportionately affected (Kocovski et al., 2023; Web:66; Web:67). The consequences of social phobia go beyond decreased social interactions to affect general mental health outcomes, such as increased despair, loneliness, and stress, all of which can impede the professional resilience required for effective teaching.

The current study seeks to determine the prevalence and correlates of social phobia among pre-service teachers, as well as its impact on mental health status while accounting for demographic differences. By positioning this question within the larger discourse of teacher preparation and mental health care, the study hopes to inform the development of individualized interventions. Such interventions are crucial for developing psychologically healthy, socially competent educators who can create inclusive and supportive learning environments.

Objectives of the Study

1. To compare Social Phobia of pre service teachers based on
 - i. Gender
 - ii. Locale
2. To compare Mental Health of pre service teachers based on
 - i. Gender
 - ii. Locale
3. To compare the social phobia of pre service teachers with mental health
4. To identify how social phobia affects mental health among pre service teachers

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is significant difference in the mean scores of social phobia among pre service teachers based on
 - i) Gender
 - ii) Locale
2. There is significant difference in the mean scores of mental health among pre service teachers based on
 - i) Gender
 - ii) Locale
3. There exists a relationship between social phobia and mental health among pre service teachers

Materials and Methods

To achieve the objectives and confirm the validity of the hypotheses, the survey method was used. The study sample consisted of 200 pre-service teachers from several colleges in the Kozhikode district. The sampling method used here is stratified random sampling.

Instrument

Data collection is essentially an important part of the research processes that the interference, hypothesis or generalization, tentatively held might to be identified as valid, verified as correct or rejected as untenable Koul (1984). The right instruments must be chosen in order for any research to be successful. Two instruments were utilized to gather the participant data. Both were prepared taking into consideration the objectives set for the study.

Process

The investigation started with the administration of the social phobia questionnaire in both offline and online modes. To enable the respondents to share in-depth perspectives, an interview was then conducted. The ethical guidelines of anonymity and impartial treatment were adhered to when collecting the data.

The questionnaire on social phobia is a five-point scale which consisted of 20 items developed by Mattick et. al., (1998).

To find out the details of mental health, a mental health scale comprising of 28 items were developed. The reliability and validity of the scale was established. With the reliability established with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.79 which is highly reliable.

Data Analysis

Following the completion of data collection, the data were exported and readied for use with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) v.26. During this process, statistics such as average and standard deviation (SD) were calculated and further analyzed.

Results and Findings

This section aims to present the fundamental findings of the study organized in the form of figures and tables for optimal visualization. The results are organized below.

Analysis

Comparison of social phobia of pre service teachers according to gender:

The results obtained for the comparison of social phobia of pre service teachers according to gender are reflected in Table 1

Table 1 *t-test for gender differences for social phobia of pre service teachers*

Group	N	Mean	SD	t value	p value
Female	143	76.7	34.7	2.1	0.05
Male	57	65.9	25.5		

The mean of social phobia scores for female and male pre service teachers are found to be Mean=76.7 & SD = 34.7 and Mean = 65.9 & SD = 25.5 respectively. It indicates that male and female pre service teachers have a moderate level of social phobia, with female pre service teachers having higher level of social phobia than their male counterparts.

Z- value is found to be $Z = 2.1$ at significance level of 0.05, which is statistically significant. Therefore, there is significant difference in social phobia among male and female pre service teachers.

Comparison of social phobia of pre service teachers according to locale.

The results obtained for the comparison of social phobia of pre service teachers according to locale are reflected in Table 2.

Table 2 *t-test for locale differences for social phobia of pre service teachers*

Group	N	Mean	SD	t value	p value
Rural	120	67.5	29.4	3.3	0.01
Urban	80	82.8	35.1		

The mean scores of mental health for teachers in rural area and urban area are found to be Mean=67.5 & SD = 29.4 and Mean = 82.8 & SD = 35.1 respectively. It indicates that pre service teachers in urban and rural areas are having moderate level of social phobia.

z-value is found to be $t = 3.3$ at significance level of 0.01 which is statistically significant. Therefore, there is a significant difference in social phobia among pre service teachers from urban and rural areas.

Comparison of Mental Health of pre service teachers according to gender:

The results obtained for the comparison of mental health of pre service teachers according to gender are reflected in Table 3

Table 3 *t-test for locale differences of mental health according to gender*

Group	N	Mean	SD	t value	p value
Female	143	89.7	32.2	1.99	0.05
Male	57	99.6	30.4		

The mean scores of mental health for female pre service teachers and male pre service teachers is found to be Mean=89.73 & SD = 32.2 and Mean = 99.67 & SD = 30.49 respectively. It indicates that male pre service teachers and female pre service teachers are having mental health with male pre service teachers having a high mental health.

Z- value is found to be $Z = 1.99$ at significance level of 0.05, which is statistically significant Therefore, there is significant difference in mental health of male and female pre service teachers.

Comparison of mental health of pre service teachers according to locale:

The results obtained for the comparison of mental health of pre service teachers according to locale are reflected in Table 4

Table 4 *t-test for locale differences of mental health according to locale*

Group	N	Mean	SD	t value	p value
Rural	120	101.8	30.4	5.3	0.01
Urban	80	78.6	29.1		

The mean scores of mental health for rural pre service teachers and urban pre service teachers is found to be Mean=101.8 & SD = 30.4 and Mean = 78.6 & SD = 29.1 respectively. It indicates that urban pre service teachers and rural pre service teachers are having a moderate mental health with urban pre service teachers being much lesser in the case of mental health.

Z- value is found to be $Z = 5.3$ at significance level of 0.01, which is statistically significant Therefore, there is significant difference in mental health of urban and rural pre service teachers.

Relationship between social phobia and mental health:

The results obtained on the relationship between social phobia and mental health are reflected in the Table 5

Table 5 *Correlation between Social phobia and Mental health*

Variables	r - value
Social phobia	-0.141
Mental health	

From the correlation value it is clear that there is a slight negative correlation between social phobia and mental health indicating an inversely proportional relationship.

Discussion

The study's findings shed light on pre-service teachers' social phobia and mental health, showing important demographic distinctions. Female pre-service teachers have greater levels of social phobia than males, which is consistent with previous research indicating that females are more sensitive to social anxiety disorders (Kocovski et al., 2023). Females' heightened social anxiety may have an impact on their confidence and performance in social and professional relationships, potentially affecting their future teaching effectiveness. According to the statistics, urban pre-service teachers exhibit much greater levels of social phobia than their rural counterparts. This urban-rural gap could be due to the greater social pressures and competitive conditions common in urban areas, which may amplify social worries and anxieties. In contrast, rural pre-service teachers had higher mental health scores, which could be attributed to the less stressful and more community-oriented rural surroundings.

The inverse link discovered between social phobia and mental health emphasizes the negative impact of social anxiety on general psychological well-being. Social phobia can cause feelings of isolation, stress, and poor mental health, reducing pre-service teachers' resilience and capacity to deal with professional responsibilities. This link emphasizes the need for mental health support interventions targeted specifically to teacher training programs.

These findings add to the mounting evidence that mental health issues among educators begin during their training, underlining the importance of tailored programs that alleviate social anxiety and promote mental wellness. To address these difficulties, universities and teacher training institutes can consider offering counselling services, anxiety management seminars, and stress reduction approaches.

Addressing social phobia early in teacher education has the potential to benefit not only pre-service teachers' mental health, but also their future classroom management and professional interactions. A mentally healthy teacher is better able to provide inclusive, supportive, and successful learning environments for their pupils.

This study adds critical knowledge that argues for proactive steps to promote the psychological health of pre-service teachers, with the goal of achieving long-term gains in the education system.

Conclusion

It is evident from the analysis and conclusions drawn from the data that social phobia is a growing problem that is affecting all spheres of society. The educational sector will continue to be impacted. As can be seen, socialization has become a crucial activity due to more recent technological advancements. Technology will always be used in the classroom, but excessive use is a major problem. It is considerably worse for students in higher education. The students can't just leave it as such as everything is currently online. Thus, it is more important that the students are given proper ideas on how to use smartphones efficiently without affecting the moral structure of the society. This in turn will reduce the risk of lack mental health in the physical world and produce a sustainable society.

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