

THE EFFECTS OF SHYNESS AT HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

Shyness is an important social and religious value in Pakistan. Haya (حياء) is the word being used for shyness in Urdu, Persian and Arabic language. *Jhijhak* (جهجهك) and *sharam* (شرم) are words translated in Urdu which mean hesitation and shyness in English respectively. In Western world, shyness is taken totally as a negative personality trait. In Islam, there are two different perspectives of shyness i.e. social and academic. There are many clear commandments in Islam to describe the importance of shyness in social perspective. In teaching and learning, Islam has never ordered to shy but unfortunately it is totally misunderstood in our society. The aim of the study was to identify the effects of shyness due to misunderstanding in teaching and learning process. The pupose of the study was to highlight the bad impacts of shyness which is misundestood but socially accepted value. The study highlighted the bad impacts of shyness on students' personality as well as on teaching and learning process. The study will also assist teachers in understanding and coping shyness in high school enviroment.

Key Words:

Effects, Shyness, Teaching, Learning, Process, High School.

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Introduction

Every society has a set of social values. Determinants of these values are religion, social structure, beliefs, customs, traditions, historical background etc. These values are given importance and habitants are evaluated by considering these values. Values affect our daily routine, life pattern and style, social psychology and approach. Shyness is one of the important moral values of Islamic and Pakistani culture simultaneously. It has a vital importance and place in the education system of Pakistan as well.

Shyness (Haya) in Islam is a part of faith as Narrated by Abu Huraira (ra): The Prophet said, "Faith (Belief) consists of more than sixty branches or parts. And shyness (Haya) is a part of faith."(Translated by Khan, 2009).This concept of Shyness is given in social perspective and is not applicable in teaching and learning. Islam also encourages teaching and learning deliberately but unfortunately we have misunderstood.According to Quran (2:26) translated by Ashar and Shamim, (1996):“Indeed, it does not embarrass Allah to use as a parable a gnat or what exceeds it”. Hence Islam does not promote shyness in teaching and learning.

The western concept of shyness is different from our existing concept. Children’s shyness and withdrawal have been associated with negative outcomes (Rubin, Coplan, & Bowker, 2009). In educational respective, the westerns encourage learning without shyness. An individual must discuss his queries, questions, problems and issues deliberately. Teacher must go to any level to deliver the concepts and ideas. Despite of shyness, Western countries are promoting assertiveness, boldness and confidence.

Shyness is being misunderstood in Pakistani education system. This misconception is restricting students especially of high school as well as teachers to discuss their social issues, problems, challenges etc. deliberately. Shyness as stated by Gazelle & Ladd (2003) has been linked with poor treatment from peers. These misconceptions about shyness are restricting and discouraging our educational environment in interacting, discussing, socializing, communicating, expressing, creating and innovating. The social values and customs have been implemented in education system without judging intelligent decision about its consequences. Hence, the aim and educational line of action has been disturbed.

Our students are facing bullying, sexual abuse and violence, women violence and abuse, dogmatic approach, punishments, domestic violence etc. which are bad experiences to have. On the other hand, our students don't have confidence, courage, social and communication skills, crime awareness, crimes' preventive measures, creativity, social association, initiation, expressing ability, assertiveness etc. The Pakistani students' problems, challenges and issues are not being addressed due to misconception in shyness concept. The students are shy to ask, discuss, interact and express themselves in the class. Graduated high school students are unable to know, handle, differentiate and modify the bad customs, patterns, traditions and social structures as was not discussed in school due to shyness and its related issues.

On the teachers' side, the teachers are confused about the limitations and boundaries of ethics and Islam. The teachers hesitate in discussing some important areas at high school level like socio-sexual abuse, sexual violence, adolescence issues, marital issues, human reproduction, etc. whereas, Quran has discussed these areas deliberately. In curriculum, there are no special guidelines for the teachers so that they can teach affectively. They are not properly trained to deal with students' emotional disorders, psychological problems, social issues, adolescence urge and instincts, guidance and counseling etc. They are using sensitive tools for students' correction without knowing the consequences after excessive usage like punishments, criticism, insult, negative evaluation, isolation, demotion and sometimes throwing out of school which are promoting shyness.

On the managerial side, the appropriateness of our curriculum always remained doubtful. The content and subject matter is not student friendly to make student competent enough to behave confidently. The overall environment of the school is promoting so called obedience and compliance which is decreasing students' confidence, attention, motivation, interest etc. School management is also stressing more on the results of the exams than the student emotional and social development. They take the step to improve mean result of their institute for their publicity, instead of focusing on students' social abilities like assertiveness, expression, presentation, communication and interaction.

Increasing awareness for shyness has been brought to attention, mainly due to teachers considering shyness as a possible problem in the school environment (Coplan, Hughes, Bosacki, & Rose-Krasnor, 2011). Unfortunately, we have not still defined the problem area. This study is undertaken to see, clarify and highlight effects of shyness in teaching and learning process at high school level.

SHYNESS ETYMOLOGY

In this section, the meaning and translations of shyness is given. Synonyms and antonyms are also given to know the depth and shades of it.

Shyness Meaning and Translations

According to Longman Dictionary (1987), a shy person is one who feels nervous in presence of others and also lacks in self confidence. Shyness means in Urdu as bashfulness (شرم) as per Rabia Dictionary (Part I). Haya (حياء) word in Urdu means shyness, shame and modesty as per Rabia Dictionary (Part II, Pg 346). According To Feroz ul Lughat (2005), Shyness (حياء) means bashfulness (شرم). Haya (حياء) word in Urdu means shyness, shame and modesty as told by Dr. Masood Alam (Maqbool Dictionary, Pg 321). The word *jhijhak* (جھجھک) in Urdu means hesitation, timidity and shyness according to Rabia Dictionary (Part II, Pg 288).

Synonyms of shyness

Following words are synonyms of shyness according to Thesaurus.com:

Timidity

Modesty

Bashfulness

Meekness

Sheepishness

Following words are synonyms of shy according to The Oxford Thesaurus (1991):

Diffident

Bashful

Timid

Meek

Sheepish

Antonyms of shyness

Following words are antonyms of shy according to Webster's Dictionary (1988):

Bold

Confident

EFFECTS OF SHYNESS ON STUDENTS

Shyness is generally difficult to judge. It is basically a psycho-social problem but still there are several indications of shyness. These indications assist teachers and education experts to judge and treat the individuals. These indications can be found common even in cultural and individual differences. Following are the indications of shyness at high school level:

Psycho-Cognitive Effects

Psycho cognitive includes all those indications which cannot be judged through physical means. These are related with mind and its processes. As the brain controls all the functions of the body, the body reacts as the mental condition changes. The brain internally has different parts and factors affecting it. Shyness affects the brain through psycho cognition. Following are the psycho cognitive indications of shyness:

Anxiety

Anxiety is basically an unpleasant inner feeling, fear, usually having nervous behavior, or apprehension; often with no clear justification (*Encyclopædia Britannica*). It is a response to a perceived danger or threat. It is a mixture of internal emotional conflicts and self perception due to experiences in the past. Anxiety and fear reactions have similarity as both have unwanted emotional reactions to expected harm from external threat (Adam Kuper & Jessica Kuper, 1989, pg.34). Anxiety levels change with academic pressure. Students in panic perceive themselves as, dull, less intelligent, less competitive, less talented etc in the class. Hence, they exhibit shyness and make challenges for their teachers to normalize them.

Less Presentation Skills

It does not mean that an individual has a limited capacity to present himself. He actually cannot express himself. He has knowledge but cannot present due to shyness. Shy person cannot present himself in front of public. It is an essential ability and skill of a student as well as teacher to present himself successfully in the class and public. There can be different reasons for this issue. Inappropriate handling, poor peer treatment, bullying, negative remarks etc. are the major factors which limit the presentation skills of an individual. Public fear, social hesitation and isolation are the few reasons to this issue.

Unease in Social Association

Shyness confines social relationship and association by limiting the courage, confidence, approach etc. of the individual. Shy person tend to be less social than an average person. Asendorpf and Meier (1993) found that shy students were less communicative as compared to non shy students. Shy students feel difficulty in adjustment, participation and friendship in the classroom.

Shy student perform better in written test than oral. In written test, they perform better in group test than face-to-face test due to less fear of being judged or monitored. Crozier (2001) experimented and found that the performance of shy individuals was better in group test than face-to-face written test whereas the performance of non shy students was relatively consistent in all test types.

Insecure Feelings

Shyness limits the confidence so feelings of insecurity tend to rise. It brings fears and individual loses his decision power. Shyness is basically a mindset; hence individual behaves awkward in normal conditions. Maddux, Norton & Leary (1988) concluded after a study that the experience gained in social interaction by shy and non-shy college students was same but the behavior and approach was different. What differed was the belief on the part of the shy group that their feelings and thoughts were abnormal. Insecure feelings make the shy students to feel doubt, distrust and disbelief in the class. Shy teachers hesitate to trust, rely and believe in their fellow teachers and staff.

Speechlessness

Crozier (2001) found silence in shy children throughout childhood in response of exposure to new or unfamiliar setting or adults. Keeping above mentioned indications of shyness in mind; it is obvious that shy person will tend to be silent. An individual speaks where he feels himself safe, free and open. Shy students in the class tend to be silent in the class. They do not participate actively in group discussion, debate etc. The reason of this can be their previous experience, teachers' behavior, bullying, abuse etc. it is the duty of the teacher to cope with this issue.

Due to shyness, high school students especially girls tend to be silent in the class. In the western countries, assertiveness is promoted instead of shyness. Due to speechlessness the students lag in studies, presentation, verbal communication, debate and discussion. In their future life, they lag in leadership, social interaction and normal communication.

Under Confidence

Confidence basically is the feeling of certainty, surety and guarantee of something. Confidence ensures the acts and behavior of an individual. It is the trust on self and others. Generally it is taken as self assurance of ideas, knowledge, skills and traits. Shyness hurts the confidence by insecure feelings. Under confident teacher cannot teach deliberately and loose subject command. Under confident students possess knowledge and skills but use to hesitate in sharing, performing, communicating and delivering in the class. Paulhus & Morgan (1997) stated that shy students are initially considered as less intelligent and incompetent due to their quietness and found complaining about being perceived as rude, dull or lacking in confidence.

Embarrassment

Embarrassment is the feeling of discomfort with oneself. It is usually occurred in a social unacceptable situation. According to Webster's Dictionary (1988), embarrassment is a sudden loss of self-confidence and a growing feeling of shame and inadequacy. It is experienced in loss of honor and dignity, revelation of private matters, loss of privacy, unexpected situation etc. As shy students are not confident enough to tackle the situation, they feel embarrassment in the class in participating, responding, interacting, leading, guiding etc. They feel embarrassment in normal

conditions like, getting permission for toilet, giving and taking gifts, sharing meals, asking help, sharing experiences and jokes, dealing with opposite gender etc.

The reasons of embarrassment are privacy violations, awkward acts and situations, lack of knowledge and skill, lack of appropriate feeling, criticism and rejection and unsuitable environment. Shy students embarrass even when praised or acknowledged in the class, as this was not pre expected.

Panic

According to Chamber's Dictionary (1996), Panic is a great terror without any visible ground or foundation. Panic is basically strong sensation of fear which interrupts reason and logical thinking. Panic is a sudden and general fright (Webster Unified Dictionary). It is a sudden arousal of fear with or without cause that produces hysterical or irrational behavior. Usually a shy student exhibits panic when he is addressed in the class for any reason under normal circumstances. He will be in panic specially when dealing with more than one person. Exam preparation, boarding and leaving transport, supervision, time bounded activities etc are the challenges for shy person to cope with panic.

Physical Effects

There is coordination between mind and body. Mind controls the overall functions and operations of the body. If the mind is healthy, the body will also healthy. If the mind is abnormal, the body can never be normal. As shyness is the mental condition, hence it has effects on physical body. In a certain mental condition, the body reacts and reflects some physical indications. Shyness not only brings psychological changes but physical also. Teachers can judge shy persons by catering physical indications. Following are the physical indications of shyness:

Over sweating

A shy person feels uncomfortable in social gatherings, meetings, interactions etc. He feels uneasy in adjusting and interacting with society. Over sweating actually happens due to this uncomfortableness. This psychological unease makes sweating disorders in the body. Shyness is

also a type of fear, which causes over sweating. Non shy students do not under go from sweating disorders because they don't feel any fear in normal situations.

Breathing difficulties

The body remains in peaceful and calm condition only when the mind is in peace. When the psychological pressure is on, it never behaves normal. It shows biological reactions too. When the body feels any kind of uneasiness and fear, its organs starts working in emergency mode. In fear and danger, person loses his temperament and behaves in abnormal way. Shy person feels abnormalities in normal circumstances. Shyness restricts individual in social interaction and relationship. It makes individual to feel insecure and unsafe under normal circumstances. Hence, it causes breathing difficulties.

Less friendly

Shyness hinders relationship even with closed ones. Shy person keeps himself private and reserve due to shyness. Friendship demands openness and frankness. Adam Kuper & Jessica Kuper (1989, pg.474) found that the risk of loneliness increase due the approach and fear of shy person. These include shyness and introversion, low self-esteem and inadequate social skills. Therefore, a shy person always happens to be less friendly. Individuals used to avoid shy persons because shy persons are not normal persons for living. Friendship can't afford shyness as it demands frankness.

Less expressing ability

Shyness takes the confidence away from individual; the individual hesitates to face public. In situation where he has to face public, he exhibits less expressing ability. He can't express, share and communicate his feelings, ideas, views, emotions etc. due to shyness. This inability to express harms the efficiency and effectiveness of education system both for teachers and students.

Lack of initiation

Initiation is basically a new step, idea, trend, beginning etc. in the society, system or process. It needs courage, confidence and boldness whereas shyness opposes them all. Initiation is quite

necessary for the development and progress of the society. Students and teachers need this trait too much. The teacher has to take initiative when normal methods have failed in the class. He has to present new ideas, approach, method, strategy etc. to make the students learn effectively. The students too need initiation to explore new and their own worlds.

Less communication skills

Human relationships mainly depend on the communication skills. An individual needs communication skills to express him. He needs these skills to share feelings, emotions, ideas, views, comments etc. Communication skills play basic role in the classroom. Broberg et al (1997) claimed that shy children would perform better in written test than oral. Without these skills, teacher cannot deliver his lesson and message to the student. In the presence of shyness, communication skills cannot prosper.

SHYNESS EFFECTS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

In this section, the detailed discussion is given about the existing problems due to current concept of shyness. The discussion has focused the students of high school and the teaching and learning process. Problem and effects of shyness is given below with details.

Personal Identity Development

Everybody in this world has a unique identity. Everyone is different from other in abilities, color, approach, skills etc. Shy individual always avoids social interaction and relationship. He actually avoids exposing himself in public. As Gard (2000) has explained that a shy person is so concerned on how others view them that they might change their personality in order to fit in with other people. Shy person feels fear of judgment and to be noticed by others negatively. So the shy person avoids personal identity development to avoid public interaction.

At high school level it is very important that an individual must face public with confidence because he is going to start either his professional studies or professional life. He will have to soon start his marital life where he will have to lead and play a role of head of family. His children and grand children will be known by his reference. The avoidance personal identity

development will then be a big issue. Shyness isolates an individual and he starts underestimating himself.

Shyness and social skills

Social skills include all those skills and activities which facilitate human interaction and communication. These can be verbal and non verbal. The process of learning social skills is called socialization. Shyness actually restricts and limits social and self confidence in the individual. Shy person exhibits himself as incompetent in social skills. Social skills need demo, practice and guidance as well as courage and confidence. Catwright (2003) experienced that shy students are not less talented and incompetent but unfortunately they actually underestimate their potential. In majority cases, the students are not motivated, encouraged and envisioned about importance of human interaction and communication which need social skills. Low confidence level due to shyness restricts social skills in the classroom. A shy person possesses potentials and competence but shyness makes individual incapable and incompetent.

According to Young et al. (1999) in new and unfamiliar environment, shy person exhibits inhibited and awkward social behavior. New mates and individuals in the class can be handled with confidence and courage. New challenges and experiences in any environment and situation need these traits too. The teacher is the key person to look these matters closely. He has to judge, guide and counsel the students in deficit of social skills. Students must be involved in social activities to improve.

Gap in relationships

Shy person lacks in social skills. He avoids social interaction. Shy students are found in the class as speechless, less friendly and reserved. These students don't express themselves and share their feelings, emotions and views. They even hesitate in suggestion and comments. Shy individual can be found easily in the class but difficult to recover. Hence, shy students possess a gap in relationships even in the class. This gap of relationships travels throughout his their lives. On the other hand, shy person tends to be less interacting with the teacher which creates hinderance in

student- teacher relationship. This gap enables the teacher to underestimate the students potentials and energies.

Undiscovered personality traits

Shy persons are less sharing and reserved in the society. Shy students also possess same characteristics. Openness and frankness lets others to know more about an individual's personality. Allah has gifted man with countless hidden talents and capacities. This is the responsibility of the teacher and education system to explore and polish them. In the shy students, it is difficult to explore their talents due to their reservedness. Hence, their personality traits for individual and social development remain undiscovered. As shy person avoids exposure to public, his personality traits remain covered and behind the curtain.

In adolescence, man has to play his economical, social, parental, cultural, religious and managerial role in the society. His talents must be guided and polished. He must know himself and his potential. Shyness is covering an important thing and human resource is being wasted and unaddressed in the society. Society is unable to take advantage of it. The teachers of high schools will have to make their children bold enough to overcome shyness.

Hidden discoveries

Everybody in this world seeks and attains knowledge. Every human gains experience as time passes. It is important for the society to have that knowledge. Sharing of knowledge and experience develops society. Ultimately, everybody is a discoverer. The point to establish here is that every individual must share his experience for progress. According to researcher personal observation, it is rare to share and communicate these discoveries in our society and education system as well. Hence, these are termed as hidden discoveries by researcher.

Every student is different from others in abilities, intelligence, approach, concept, experience, life background etc. Every student has his own point of view, insight, perception, approach, theory, philosophy and belief. Everyone faces social problems being faced by others and tries to solve them with his own unique method. They discover new ways, methods and strategies in their daily life to solve these problems. As shy students don't share normal feelings, how they

can share their discoveries having fear of being challenged or rejected? Every student must be encouraged for sharing these discoveries so that shy students can be sparked for sharing. Shy students do possess talents and potentials which must be discovered.

A student is born with countless abilities and qualities. The teacher has to discover and explore them. The teacher has to indicate and polish them. The aptitude of the students must be judged and addressed accordingly. In an ordinary school and class with normal setting, ordinary students are equipped with extra ordinary abilities waiting for spark. The abilities are behind the curtain or under the cover to be discovered or explored. The curtain or cover is shyness, hesitation and innocent fear of rejection, denial, mistake, criticism and failure.

Untold experiences

An individual gains experience by interaction. It does not need education or skill. Everybody has a mind to process, store, analyze and interpret his experiences of daily life. An individual learns from mistakes, mishaps, accidents, incidents, blunders etc. This knowledge is useful for others. Current development of the world is the result of shared experiences of past generations. In researcher point of view, students must be made confident and bold to share their self experiences. Iqbal (2009, Pg.612) says about the role of school:

گلا تو گھونٹ دیا اہل مدرسہ نے ترا
کہاں سے آئے صدا ، لا الہ الا اللہ

Iqbal has criticized the teacher and schooling staff that has made the students silent. They have preferred to make their student silent instead of making him bold, assertive, confident, and innovative which is not acceptable. After doing all this, how one can expect a dare step, voice or initiative from him? How a student can become a hero or leader in such environment?

The experience of students can be their stories, memories, conclusions, solutions, observations etc. which are of great importance for him. The teacher will have to acknowledge the experience of his students. His experience must be appreciated for his motivation. The experience will enhance the students' confidence. They will understand the value of their knowledge and experience. Shy students will also express themselves to have respect in class. They will be motivated for interaction in the class and society as well.

Unshared queries

Curiosity in the mind produces dissatisfaction in the individual. This curiosity is the essence of development, progress and advancement in life, society and knowledge. In the classroom, curiosity brings queries and questions. Query also means the inability of an individual to comprehend and understand something. Query needs courage and curiosity. Everybody has some level of curiosity but some has courage. Everybody knows something but nobody knows everything, is the strongest point and logic to have a query in the classroom. Queries enlightens the over looked areas or under discussed aspects of a topic in the class.

The teacher will have to let his students feel free to grow and develop. Shy students always hesitate in querying. They need help, support and motivation to raise queries. The current situation of our education system is not tolerating queries. Queries are taken as dullness, inattentiveness, passiveness and lack of interest in the class. The students who raise queries are laughed at, rejected, negatively evaluated and disgraced. They generally hesitate and avoid queries to avoid embarrassment and shyness in the class. In this situation, a normal student tends to exhibit shyness and shy students become shy.

The teachers will have to take some steps to break situational monopoly of current approach and concept. The value and worth of queries must be discussed in the class. Queries must be addressed, solved and satisfied patiently. The students must be welcomed, tolerated, respected, appreciated and valued for students' encouragement and motivation. Shy students must be asked deliberately for queries. Hence, shyness can be limited and overcome.

Conclusion

Shyness exists in the teaching and learning process at high school level. The students are feeling difficulties in sharing private and personal problems, creativity, boldness etc. Shyness has bad impacts on teaching and learning process. Shyness is making teaching and learning process less efficient and effective. Shyness hinders teacher and students relationships. There is a need to reconstruct and modify the current concept of shyness. The teaching and learning process can be improved by overcoming shyness.

Shyness is an important value in the society but is misunderstood in the academic perspective. The study highlighted the bad impacts of shyness in the academic perspective. The social perspective of shyness may not be mixed with with academic. The parents, teachers and administrators must be educated against academic shyness.

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Additional online resources:-

- http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr267.shtml
- <http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content3/shyk12.2.html>
- <http://www.shykids.com/>
- <http://www.apa.org/topics/topicshyness.html>
- <http://www.shyness.com/>
- <http://www.shyness-meeting-people.com/causes-of-shyness.html>
- <http://www.shakeyourshyness.com>
- <http://www.childstudycenter.yale.edu>
- <http://www.ted.com>