

RESILIENCE, RUMINATION AND SOCIAL ANXIETY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the relationship between resilience, rumination, and social anxiety among university students. A quantitative research design was carried out with a sample of (N=410) students (n=182 males and n=228 females) from the Universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, by using a convenient sampling technique. Participants completed self-reported measures, including the Rumination-Reflection Questionnaire (RRQ), the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10), and the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS). Results indicated a negative relationship between resilience and rumination, moreover, study found no relationship between resilience and social anxiety. However, rumination had positive relationship with social anxiety.

Keywords: Resilience, Rumination, Social Anxiety, University Students, Psychological Well-being

INTRODUCTION

University life is generally distinguished by considerable transformations and obstacles, ranging from academic pressures to social adjustments. For many students, this period is not just a time of intellectual progress but also one of psychological vulnerability. As students navigate the demands of higher education, they may encounter pressures that might influence their mental health, leading to illnesses such as anxiety and depression (Campbell et al., 2022). Social anxiety, is particular frequent among university students, characterized by an extreme fear of social interactions and negative assessments by others (Reta et al., 2020). This illness can substantially limit a student's ability to engage in academic and social activities, thereby compromising their general well-being and academic progress.

The complexity of social anxiety is underlined by the multiple cognitive and emotional processes that contribute to its development and maintenance. Among these processes, rumination repetitive, unpleasant thinking about past experiences or concerns has been recognized as a major element that exacerbates social anxiety (Wu et al., 2024). Rumination can imprison individuals in cycles of negative thought, deepening their concerns and leading to avoidance actions (Ehring, 2021). The tendency to ruminate may inhibit kids from efficiently coping with social issues, consequently perpetuating their uneasiness in social interactions.

Conversely, resilience, defined as the ability to adapt and recover from adversity, has been recognized as a protective factor against several

forms of psychological discomfort, including social anxiety (Vella & Pai, 2019). Resilient individuals are frequently more suited to manage stress, maintain a positive outlook, and navigate social settings without yielding worry. In the case of university students, resilience may serve as a key buffer, helping them to cope with the strains of academic life and the social demands of campus environments (Fatimah et al., 2024). The interplay between resilience, rumination, and social anxiety is particularly essential in understanding the mental health of university students, as these variables together may determine the amount to which students are able to prosper or suffer in their academic and social life (Ko & Chang, 2019; Wu et al., 2024).

This study intends to explore the links between resilience, rumination, and social anxiety among university students, with a special focus on how these variables interact to influence students' mental health outcomes. By examining these relationships, the research seeks to contribute to the understanding of factors that protect against or exacerbate social anxiety, with the goal of informing interventions that can support students in managing their anxiety and enhancing their resilience during their university years.

In light of extensive research in the fields of rumination, resilience, and social anxiety, it is still unclear how these variables relate to each other (Laicher et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2024). Therefore, considering the significance of these constructs within the realm of mental well-being and the overall enhancement of one's life, this investigation adds to the expanding corpus of scholarly inquiry that enlightens clinical methodologies and therapeutic approaches. Through an examination of the intricate dynamics between rumination, self-esteem, social anxiety, and resilience, the present study seeks to offer significant contributions to our comprehension of the elements that influence the emotional and social encounters of individuals. A greater understanding of the mechanisms can be beneficial in the planning of targeted mental health interventions in students with social anxiety difficulties.

In the Pakistani context, research demonstrate that university students experience particular

obstacles, including cultural expectations, academic demands, and inadequate mental health services (Sain, 2023; Zada et al., 2021). These characteristics may impact the frequency and interaction of resilience, rumination, and social anxiety differently compared to other cultural environments. For instance, research shows that cultural influences might alter how resilience is produced and displayed, potentially influencing its protective effect against social anxiety and rumination (Terrana & Al-Delaimy, 2023; Zheng et al., 2020). Moreover, the stigma surrounding mental health in Pakistan might discourage students from seeking treatment, making it vital to study the particular dynamics of these psychological variables in this community (Ahmad & Koncsol, 2022; Waqas et al., 2014).

Given the particular socio-cultural backdrop of Pakistan, this study intends to address a key gap in the literature by evaluating these characteristics within the Pakistani university student community. By doing this, it will offer insightful information for creating interventions and support networks that are culturally appropriate and adapted to these students' needs.

Objectives

1. To investigate the relationship between resilience, rumination and social anxiety among university students.
2. To investigate the differences based on demographics (gender, family system) in terms of Resilience, Rumination and Social Anxiety among University Students.

METHOD

Research Design

This study was based on quantitative analysis with cross-sectional survey research design with a sample of (N=410) students (n=182 males and n=228 females) from the Universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, by using a convenient sampling technique. Convenient Sampling technique was used for this study to collect data easily from nearby universities. However, the quantitative data was collected using self-report questionnaires to examine the relationship between resilience, rumination and social anxiety among university students. Participants completed

self-reported measures, including the Rumination-Reflection Questionnaire (RRQ), it is a self-report instrument that was introduced by Trapnell & Campbell in (1999). This instrument comprises 24 questions that are designed using a Likert-type scale, with five response options. The rumination scale demonstrates a high level of internal consistency, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.90. the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10), and the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS). Second, the resilience was measured by using the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10), consisting of 10 items. The scale was formulated by Connor & Davidson in (2003) . The CD-RISC-10 questionnaire comprises a set of ten items. The scale demonstrates satisfactory internal consistency, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha coefficients consistently surpassing the threshold of 0.80. furthermore, the social anxiety was measured by the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS), developed by Mattick & Clarke (2012), comprises a total of twenty items, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.90. Cronbach's alpha values of all scales show good reliability of all scales.

Inclusion criteria. In inclusion criteria students above 18 years' age, currently enrolled in full-time program in the university were included in the study. Moreover, students who were willing to participate voluntarily were selected for the study.

Exclusion criteria. The exclusion criteria consisted of university dropouts and students with diagnosed psychiatric conditions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations assume utmost significance in every scientific inquiry. It was imperative that all individuals participating in the study were provided with informed consent, thereby guaranteeing their comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives and potential risks. The data was secured, and the identities of the participants were protected through the rigorous upholding of confidentiality measures. The investigation was rigorously adhered to ethical guidelines and standards set forth by pertinent ethics committees to safeguard the welfare of participants and uphold the integrity of the research endeavour.

Procedure

The study titled " Resilience, Rumination and Social Anxiety among University Students" shared findings in an empirical method. To investigate the interconnections, regularities, and correlations between different variables, the present study involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data. The investigator was evaluating rumination, social anxiety, and resilience by employing well-established measurement instruments and questionnaires. The gathered data was undergone rigorous statistical analysis, and the proposed hypotheses regarding the intricate relationship between these factors were systematically examined through empirical testing.

RESULTS

Table 1

Demographics Characteristics of the Study Variables (N=410)

Demographics	F	%
Gender		
Male	182	45
Female	228	55

Family Structure

Nuclear	234	57
Joint	176	43

Education

Graduate	265	75
Masters	145	35

Note. f= Frequency of demographics.

The frequency and percentage of the demographic variables are displayed in table 1.

Table 2

Correlation for Rumination, Resilience and Social Anxiety (N= 410)

	1	2	3
Resilience	-	-.129**	-.064
Rumination	-	-	.393**
S-Anxiety	-	-	-

Note: M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation and **p<.01, *p<.05, ***p< .001.

The Pearson correlation coefficients between the three variables such as social anxiety, rumination, and resilience are shown in table 2. As demonstrated that there is a negative correlation

between Resilience and Rumination ($r = -.129$, $p < .01$), whereas rumination is positively linked with social anxiety ($r = .393$, $p < .01$).

Table 3

Gender differences on rumination, resilience, and social anxiety (N=410)

Variables	Male (n= 182)		Female (n= 228)		t (408)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Rumination	40.02	7.38	44.46	6.24	-5.01	.00	.65
Resilience	36.96	4.56	34.29	5.93	5.00	.00	.50
S-Anxiety	48.99	12.21	55.89	15.03	-5.12	.00	.50

Note. M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation.

The table 3 presents mean scores and standard deviations for males (n = 182) and females (n = 228) on rumination, resilience, and social anxiety. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine gender differences. Results indicated that females reported significantly higher rumination scores than males, $t(408) = -5.01$, $p < .001$, with a

medium effect size ($d = 0.65$). Males scored significantly higher on resilience compared to females, $t(408) = 5.00$, $p < .001$, showing a medium effect size ($d = 0.50$). Additionally, females reported significantly higher social anxiety than males, $t(408) = -5.12$, $p < .001$, also indicating a medium effect size ($d = 0.50$).

Table 4
Family System differences on Rumination, Resilience and Social Anxiety (N=410)

Variables	Nuclear (n= 234)		Joint (n= 176)		t (408)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Rumination	43.32	6.54	41.38	7.69	2.69	.007	0.27
Resilience	35.89	5.05	36.14	5.42	-.46	.64	-
S-Anxiety	52.44	13.80	53.35	14.86	-.63	.52	-

Note. M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation.

Table 4 presents mean differences between individuals from nuclear (n = 234) and joint (n = 176) family systems on rumination, resilience, and social anxiety. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the two groups. Results showed that participants from nuclear families reported significantly higher levels of rumination than those from joint families, $t(408) = 2.69$, $p = .007$, with a small-to-medium effect size ($d = 0.27$). No significant differences were found between the two family systems for resilience, $t(408) = -0.46$, $p = .64$, or social anxiety, $t(408) = -0.63$, $p = .52$.

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationships between resilience, rumination, and social anxiety in university students. The study found medium levels of resilience ($M = 31.78$, $SD = 6.46$), rumination ($M = 15.68$, $SD = 4.49$), and social anxiety ($M = 23.32$, $SD = 9.88$) among university students.

A significant negative relationship was found between resilience and rumination, suggesting that higher resilience is associated with lower rumination. This is consistent with previous literature, including the work of Yi et al. (2024) and Yi et al. (2020). This suggests that resilience acts as a protective factor, possibly by employing coping mechanisms like emotion disengagement to mitigate negative thought patterns.

In contrast, there was no significant relationship found between resilience and social anxiety. This finding contradicts some studies (Wang et al., 2021) but aligns with others that suggest resilience

alone may not be enough to buffer against social anxiety. The non-significant direct relationship could be due to the study population or measurement tools, and the relationship may be indirect or mediated by other factors like rumination.

A significant positive relationship was found between rumination and social anxiety, indicating that increased rumination is associated with increased social anxiety. This supports established literature on the role of repetitive negative thinking in maintaining social anxiety (Fresco et al., 2007; Zada et al., 2021). Rumination, especially concerning social failures, exacerbates self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation. This link is further supported by Zada et al. (2021), who found mental health issues (often involving high rumination) negatively impact student well-being. Additionally, Zhang et al. (2024) suggest that stress and maladaptive cognitive styles contribute to psychological distress and academic burnout. These results highlight the need for interventions focused on rumination to reduce social anxiety symptoms in students.

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