ABSTRACT

Shy individuals are active agents in their own lives. Shyness can change social world of adolescence and influence youths’ emotional adjustment in a number of ways. Guido, Lau, Yen, McCabe & Hough (2009), state that shyness in individualistic cultures may be less adaptive and it is more adaptive in collectivistic cultures because collectivistic culture value interdependence with others and self- regulation, while individualistic culture value autonomy and competition. Since Asian countries have collectivistic culture, shyness may not be perceived as a problematic trait. However, collectivistic cultures are changing, adapting to market oriented system posing a challenge to shy individuals. To be in the competitive world that demands self expression and assertiveness, one has to adapt to individualistic values. Hence, youth in Asian countries are inclined to change their behaviour to fit into changing environment. Meanwhile being social animals that we are, the need to belong plays a strong role in the desire to conform to group norms. Individuals seek interpersonal relationship to belong to a social group for fear of exclusion from group norms.

The primary aim of this study was to understand the effect of shyness on interpersonal relationship and social conformity among college students. The participants were selected based on stratified random sampling method. The participants were 240 male and 240 female college students ranging in age between 18 to 24 years. Further, sample constituted of 120 male and 120 female students belonging to urban and rural areas from English and Kannada medium. They were selected from 9 different colleges in and around Mysore, Karnataka, India. The authors hypothesised that shyness negatively affects social conformity and interpersonal relationship, and there will be significant difference between male and female, rural and urban and English and Kannada medium students with different levels of shyness in their social conformity and interpersonal relationships. Shyness assessment test developed by D’souza (2006), The Fundamental interpersonal relationship orientation scale-Behaviour designed by Schutz(1958) and Social conformity scale developed by Mehrabian and Steffi (1995) were employed to collect data. Data was subjected to statistical analysis by using contingency co-efficient, one-way Analysis of variance and General linear model two-way Analysis of variance.
Results revealed significant association between shyness and social conformity. College students with high level of shyness conformed more than those with low shyness. Male respondents were more socially conformed than female respondents. Kannada medium students with moderate levels of shyness were more socially conformed than English medium students. Irrespective of the area they belonged to students with different shyness levels did not differ in their interpersonal relationship and in their social conformity. Male and female students and students from English and Kannada medium with different levels of shyness differed in certain components of interpersonal relations. Interaction effect was observed between gender and shyness and between shyness and medium of instruction over some components of interpersonal relationships.