

## Self Esteem, Tolerance for Disagreement and Fear of Negative Evaluation among College Students

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### ABSTRACT

#### Background

In a multicultural society like Pakistan having disagreements and fear of negative evaluation is a common problem faced by many students. Keeping in view the importance of the issue, this research was designed to assess self-esteem, tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation among University students.

#### Aim

The present study was conducted to explore the relationship between self-esteem, tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation among university students.

#### Methods

A cross sectional research method was applied. The sample for current research study was university students. Sample size intended for current study was 126 (65 male participants and 61 female participants). Age range of the sample was 18-35. Rosenberg self-esteem scale, Tolerance for Disagreement Scale, established by Teven et al. (1998) and Brief Fear of negative evaluation scale (BFNE) were used. Ethical considerations were strictly followed.

#### Results

Results indicated negative association between tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation. Similarly there was negative association between self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation.

#### Conclusions

It can be concluded that the university students who have higher level of self-esteem and high degree of tolerance for disagreement are less fearful of negative evaluation. The regression analysis also revealed that tolerance for disagreement and self-esteem was a significant negative predictor of fear of negative evaluation. Independent sample t-test results have shown that males were found to be higher on tolerance for disagreement than female students whereas, female student were found to be higher on fear of negative evaluation as compared to male students.

*Key Words:* self-esteem, fear of negative evaluation, tolerance for disagreement

#### Introduction

Various research studies show that human nature is prone to conflict; whenever individuals connect and form relationships; there is a chance of disagreements and conflicts. (Fatima et al., 2019; Birditt et al., 2010). Tolerance is usually welcomed because it is helpful to encourage

peaceful cooperation among diverse communities and to encourage individual self-actualization. Disruption of proclivities and skills, on the other side, is thwarted by intolerance, which seeks to impose a high cost from those who dare to be different. Only in tolerant cultures do minorities have complete rights, substantial protection, and freedom, and that protection allows them to exercise democratic political rights (Corneo & Jeanme, 2007). When a person assigns symbolic importance not only to her own attributes but also to those that she lacks while others do, she is said to be tolerant. It entails admitting that others may be correct, and that my viewpoint may be wrong in the particular circumstances. An intolerant person, on the other hand, has an unbalanced value system that makes her both self-satisfied and dismissive of features and lifestyles that are not her own. (Corneo & Jeanne, 2009).

Another important construct thought to be closely associated with one's tolerance level is how much fear is there to avoid or face criticism or negative evaluation. Fear of negative evaluation can be described as a feelings of discomfort in face of unfavorable evaluation, associated cognitions and behavioral avoidance of such occasion (Ghada, 2014; Reichenberger, Smith & Blechert, 2018). This less intuitive component of social anxiety is explained in a psycho evolutionary framework (Reichenberger, Smith & Blechert, 2018).

Self-esteem is also thought to play an important role in deciding about whether a person is vulnerable for negative evaluation or vice versa. Research evidence have shown that high levels of self-esteem are linked to favorable mental health outcomes, including enhanced life satisfaction (Du et al., 2017; Hawi & Harris, 2020); better social interactions ,well-being, happiness, and positive affect (Du et al., 2017). Contrarily, lower level of self-esteem results in anxiety and depression (Nguyen et al., 2019), academic stress, and burnout (Jiang et al., 2021; Méndez et al., 2020), poor quality of life (Tavares et al., 2016), as well as health-risk behaviors (Arsandaux et al., 2020). Low self-esteem has a negative impact on individuals' overall perception of their life, which can be observed both in young adults and the elderly.

### **Tolerance for Disagreement**

Tolerance for disagreement is necessary today due to many reasons. We live in a country where people from different ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and languages reside. People are prone to disagreement due to the socioeconomic condition of the country, level of uncertainty and differences of opinion. Tolerance of disagreement can be described as a difference of opinion on substantive or procedural grounds (Simovic et al, 2014).

It is seldom possible that people agree on everything with each other. People are not born with the ability to be either tolerant or intolerant. It's a learned behavior. It is based on knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and beliefs. Disagreement tolerance is the product of people's interactions (Crowley, 2006). People learn to be tolerant or intolerant, and both functions are beneficial. There are a variety of elements that influence whether a person is tolerant or intolerant. If a person is empathic, for example, he will comprehend another individual regardless of race or cultural background, and hence will be more accepting. Intolerant people are more likely to be strong believers in race, ethnic heritage, or have an insensitive temperament (Krizmanic & Kolesari, 2005). Similarly, our moral values, our ability to distinguish between right and wrong based on our moral, social, cultural, and ethnic identities, are influenced by our moral, social, cultural, and ethnic identities can help us to be tolerant and hence more ability to have tolerance for disagreement. According to the viewpoint of Batelaan and Gundara (1993), "communities have become more diverse, that is, we can observe the development of diversity and interdependency awareness. The urgent need for

respect toward different cultures and awareness of common values has arisen, which are necessary for the development of democracy and application of social and human rights in practice (Miloloza et al, 2014)”.

Conflict can be of two types, either it can be constructive or destructive. In constructive conflict, having any kind of Disagreement is seen as a difference of opinion; however, destructive conflict includes a number of aggressive qualities such as a lack of trust, competition, and other types of antagonism, in addition to disagreement (Alkazemi, 2019). People who are tolerant of differing viewpoints are less prone to engage in destructive disputes (Tevan, et al, 1998). If a person with higher level of tolerance for disagreement has conflicting or difference of opinion with an individual for whom he has high affect, the individual will move into a state of conflict at a very slow pace than an individual having lower level of tolerance for disagreement and faced with same kind of situation (Knutson, McCroskey, Knutson & Hurt, 1979; Anderson, 1998).

Tolerance for disagreement does not need a person weighing each argument equally (Nauman, 2017). It only helps in seeing both sides of the picture and make a better more informed decision (Nauman, 2017). McCroskey (1992) stated that “people having higher level of tolerance for disagreement are more likely to be conflict resistant, whereas people having low level of tolerance for disagreement are highly likely to engage themselves in conflict rising situation” (p. 172). High tolerance for disagreement is very useful for a person as it enables them to convey their points of view and arguments in a more methodical and ordered manner (Nauman, 2017; Richmond & McCroskey, 2010). People with diverse levels of tolerance for disagreement have different perspectives of conflict and, as a result, use different ways to deal with conflict (Nauman, 2017).

Disagreements or differences in opinion are inevitable but if one is armed with good communication skills then the outcome can be constructive without allowing it to become a conflict (Teven et al., 1998). Some dispositional factors may determine how an individual may communicate and what degree of tolerance for disagreement may be expected of them. Tolerance for disagreement does not necessitate ones to see every argument as equal in worth. It only provides a person the ability to see both sides of the picture and make a better more informed decision (Nauman, 2017). Tolerance allows contradictory views to surface because exchange of your viewpoints, opinion and ideas will help a person to get a more vivid picture of their own reality (Nauman, 2017; Gillmorr et al., 1990).

Richmond and McCroskey (1979) looked at the concept of tolerance for disagreement as an aspect of organizational behaviour and how people interact with supervisors in the workplace. This communication construct was subsequently graded on a scale ranging from catastrophic interpersonal results to purposeful disagreement and constructive in nature (Teven et al., 1998). The concept was refined further in an attempt to characterise disagreement, which occurs when people's perspectives differ but something useful and beneficial emerges from the interaction, as opposed to confrontation, which frequently results in antagonism (McCroskey & Wheelless, 1976). Communication tolerance for disagreement comprises both verbal and nonverbal components. (Richmond et al., 2007).

Some personality factors can influence how a person communicates and how much tolerance they have for disagreement. Thus, personality features may influence how we deal with difficulties to some extent, but cognitive and behavioral training can alter the generally stable pattern of conflict reactions (McCroskey et al., 2001). According to Martin and Rubin (1994), people who have a high tolerance for disagreement have good cognitive flexibility, which

implies they can understand and accept other points of view. Extreme tension and animosity can lead to acts of violence in situations where individuals interact and know each other well, as well as in interactions with strangers.

Tolerance for disagreements aids in the improvement of our perceptions and judgments and shapes them in a better way, it also influences how others see you (Nauman, 2017).

### **Theoretical Background of Tolerance for Disagreement**

#### ***Balance Theory***

Personal affinity, according to the Balance Theory, can lead to more or less fruitful interactions and conversation. Conflicts arise from disagreements, which are better accurately described as incompatibility in goals or interests in any two-way interaction. When a person disagrees with someone he likes on an issue, he feels uneasy. This is known as an uneven circumstance, and it causes a person to shift his feelings or ideas. Humans will aim for equilibrium. (Fritz, 1946).

#### ***Tolerance for Disagreement Theory***

Disagreement tolerance has a significant influence on how people see us. It also has an impact on how we view others. Teven (2000) looked at the concept of tolerance for disagreement in academic settings and tried to come up with a test that could be used to assess tolerance for disagreement among teachers. (Nauman, 2017; Teven, 2005).

#### ***Fear of Negative Evaluation***

Fear of negative evaluation (BFNE) is a maladaptive trait associated with worry about others' judgments, discomfort about their negative evaluations, avoidance of evaluating situations, and the assumption that others would adversely judge one (Reynolds, 2021; Watson & Friend, 1969). They can also be used to organize social networks in a hierarchical manner (Dickerson et al., 2004).

According to Gilbert (2014), it may have been evolutionary advantageous to closely monitor these judgments in order to effectively regulate behavior. Certain people, on the other hand, have very strong and consistent frightened beliefs about the outcomes of negative evaluations. Such strong fear of negative evaluation has been linked to unfavourable outcomes in various areas of social, emotional, and cognitive functioning which has grabbed the curiosity of experts from a variety of domains, prompting greater research into the nature and correlates of such evaluation-based fears? FNE is at the heart of most social anxiety theories (Heimberg & Rapee, 2010; Reichenberger & Blechert, 2015). When we suppress the expression of emotions, it not only does not help alleviate negative emotions, but also reduces the experience of positive emotions and hinders the performance of social interaction, making the interaction partner disgusted and affecting the maintenance and development of the relationship. Testing, being on a date, talking to one's superiors, getting interviewed for a job, or giving a speech are all examples of situations where fear of negative evaluation can be observed.

### **Theoretical Background of Fear of Negative Evaluation**

Some of the important theories about fear of negative evaluation are describe below

#### ***Cognitive Theory***

The fear of negative evaluation is considered a defining trait of social anxiety. Fear is created by incorrect information processing, according to cognitive theories, especially when anticipating a terrifying occurrence (Clark & McManus, 2002). Individuals that are socially anxious have a maladaptive assessment of their social situation, which is characterized by selective recollection of negative information about them (Rapee & Heimberg, 1997). It results in negative judgement. According to most cognitive theories, people with social anxiety have a variety of information

processing biases that create worry (e.g., negative self-referential biases, higher self-focused attention (Clark & McManus, 2002).

### ***Neurocognitive Theory***

According to neurocognitive theories, these information processing biases may be generated by abnormal emotion regulation techniques, which are caused by prefrontal brain regions' defective regulation of negative affect (Etkin & Wager, 2007).

### ***Social Identity Theory***

The concept of a person's identity based on their group memberships is known as social identity. Tajfel (1979) asserted that belonging to a group (e.g., a socioeconomic class, a family, a football team, etc.) was an important source of pride and self-esteem. Groups provide us with a sense of social identity, or a sense of belonging in the social world. To increase their self-esteem, members of a group are more prone to hunt for unfavorable connections between themselves and others, according to social identity theory.

According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), assessing others entails three mental processes that must be completed in a precise order. The first step is to categories. The world is divided into categories by us. The second stage is social identification, in which we adopt the identity of the group we have been assigned to. Social comparison is the final stage. Once we have classified ourselves as members of a group and established a bond with it, we tend to compare it to another. According to social identity theory, individuals establish their identity in connection to social groupings, and this identification serves to defend their self-identity. It also implies that people are motivated to achieve and maintain a favorable self-image. People are frequently motivated to maintain their self-esteem and positive self-image. Because of the emotional investments people make in their group memberships, their self-esteem is tied to the social standing of their preferred organisations ( Corneo & Jeanne, 2009).

### **Literature Review**

Many studies have been conducted on these variables, but there is limited literature on how these variables are interconnected depicted the relationship between these two variables (Carleton, Collimore, & Asmundson, 2007). Tolerance can be defined as a person's ability to accept the existence of others' opinions and disagreements. It is an individual's ability to tolerate or go through actions or beliefs that are disliked or disagreed with, whereas Fear of Negative Evaluation is the fear of negative judgement and assessment by others, as well as the expectation that others will think negatively of oneself.

Xinyi et al. (2020) investigated the “Roles of fear of negative evaluation” and “social anxiety” in the association between self-compassion and loneliness. A total of 871 Chinese teenagers were employed from a high school in Shanxi, China. Asher & Wheeler (1985) used a self-report scale, a Self-Compassion scale, and a Social Anxiety scale to assess adolescent loneliness (Greca & Lopez, 1998; Xiny et al., 2020). According to this study, people who have more self-compassion had less social anxiety. Self-compassionate adolescents, in particular, expressed less fear of negative appraisal, which led to a reduction in social anxiety symptoms.

In another research Nauman (2017) explored the association between disagreement tolerance and conflict management style. Results indicated that tolerance for disagreement levels was strongly connected with conflict management styles of collaborating, accommodating, and

avoiding. According to an independent sample t-test, males showed stronger tolerance for disagreement than females. Muhammad et al. (2020) investigated how life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and resilience among university undergraduate students could promote tolerance for disagreement and the desire to belong. This study comprised a total of 576 undergraduate students. They concluded that life happiness, psychological well-being, and resilience were all significant predictors of disagreement, tolerance and sense of belonging. Their findings also revealed a substantial link between disagreement tolerance, the urge to belong, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and resilience. Findings show that developing and implementing intervention techniques and programs for students should focus on boosting life happiness, psychological well-being, and resilience, which will increase undergraduate students' dispute tolerance and sense of belonging. To provide assistance to students, student counsellors should organize feeling of belonging-oriented programs or conduct counselling sessions.

Another study by Kim and Choi (2020) looked at the relationship between children's ego function and their fear of negative evaluation. Kim and Choi (2020) investigated the relationship between children's ego function and their fear of negative evaluation. They also investigated how these qualities influenced young children's tolerance for failure in school. Results indicated that children, who showed more initiative and resilience, as well as a lower fear of negative judgement, were more tolerant of academic failure in all three classes in the first three grades. The effect of academic failure tolerance on resilience was assumed to be totally mediated by Fear of negative evaluation in particular. Second, considerable changes in pathways between grade levels were identified. In first grade, students who scored high on competence had less fear of negative judgement and were more forgiving of academic failure. For students in second grade, initiative is critical. Through the dread of unfavorable judgement, initiative had an indirect effect on academic failure tolerance in second grade children.

Miloloža et al. (2014) conducted research on tolerance for disagreement for students. A sample of Media university students ( $N=147$ ) were taken in Koprivnica. The goal of this study was to see how well people can tolerate each other when they disagree with them. The findings reveal that students at the media university are highly good at tolerating disagreement during conversation which was also thought to be an indication of self-confidence. According to this study, distinct desires, needs, and interests, as well as varied awareness, standpoints, and attitudes toward specific phenomena, circumstances, and people, are some of the most common reasons of communication problems.

Gill et al. (2018) investigated teenage social anxiety and self-compassion. A total sample of adolescents ( $N=316$ ) were taken in Scotland, UK, completed 7 questionnaires. They used Self-compassion scale (Neff, 2003). Social phobia inventory (Connor et al., 2000), Fear of negative evaluation (FNE) (Leary, 1983), Cognitive avoidance questionnaire (Sexton & Dugas, 2008), Self-focused attention (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Generalised anxiety symptoms (Birmaher et al., 1999) and short mood and feeling questionnaire (Sangold et al., 1995). Results indicate that self-compassion is inversely related with social anxiety (Gill, Watson, & Chan, 2018; Semenchuk, Onchulenko, & Strachan, 2021). The findings support the notion that self-compassion is adversely associated to social anxiety, and that therapy strategies aimed at self-compassion could be useful in avoiding or treating teenage social anxiety (Gill, Watson, & Chan, 2018).

### **Rationale**

The purpose of this study is to look at the relationship between university students' tolerance for disagreement and their fear of bad evaluation. Tolerance for disagreement refers to

the ability to communicate with people who hold opposing viewpoints or worldviews without becoming upset (Spacey, 2007). It's the inclination to firmly express one's own point of view in public, despite the fact that other people may hold opposing views and may disagree. Individuals with a high tolerance for disagreement have a lesser fear of negative evaluation and are more inclined to be compassionate to others when they accept their own and others' imperfections realistically. One way to be constructive while disagreeing is to actually listen to what the other person is trying to say. Most of us don't pay attention to what someone with whom we disagree says. Emotions and biases impede our ability to perceive. Our mindset is that we must prove we are correct and they are incorrect (Overall, Fletcher, & Simpson, 2015). However, what we really need to do is enter a conversation with the ability to be open to the possibility that what they are saying will clarify things and help us see things from their point of view. That doesn't mean we need to agree, but it means that we can understand where the other person is coming from and what he/she is actually trying to convey. By becoming open to new experiences, a person can get more chance of exploring one's true potential and such an attitude can help them to survive in society without any fear or worry. (Friedrickson, 2001).

Nowadays, technology has attained domination over humans, and turned them into self-centered creatures that don't have time to think about one or others. Excessive use of technology according to this perspective can change our experiences and people start to merge offline reality with online fantasy. It also discourages thought and reflection, and creates detachment from friends, feelings and bodies (Akhtar 2011; Silberstein, 2015). Hence, it is important to take initiatives and realize the importance of tolerance for disagreement towards others. It strengthens our emotional stability and helps better to tolerate others.

### **Objectives**

- To investigate the relationship between self-esteem, tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation among university students.
- To investigate whether there is any gender difference in "Tolerance for disagreement" and "fear of negative evaluation" among university students.

### **Hypothesis**

- There will be negative relationship between Tolerance for Disagreement and Fear of Negative Evaluation.
- There will be negative association between self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation.
- Tolerance for disagreement is likely to predict Fear of negative evaluation in university students.
- There is likely to be significant gender difference in tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation among university students.

### **Measures**

**Consent form and demographic sheet.** A consent form was used to obtain permission from the participants. To gather information about the participants, a demographic data sheet was used. To acquire permission from the participants, a consent form was attached to the questionnaire, along with a demographic sheet. Students who were involved in the current study were requested to provide information on their age, education, university, income, and family system. Participants were briefed on the study, its goal, and who they can contact if they have any questions about the present research project.

**Tolerance for disagreement (TFD):** The Tolerance for Disagreement Scale, established by Teven et al. (1998), was used to assess degrees of disagreement tolerance. There are 15

entries on this scale. It's a 5-point scale with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being highly agree. To compute the overall score for tolerance for disagreement, first sum the flexibility scores from the items designed to measure this subdomain (item 1,2,5,7,8,14 and 15). Second, responses to statements designed to assess the likelihood of avoiding dispute will be added (item 3,4,6,9,10,11,12 and 13). The following formula can be used to obtain the total score of attitude toward conflict: disagreement tolerance = 48+ flexibility result – avoiding disagreement score. Low scores were defined as those below 32. Scores under 32 were categorized as low levels of TFD, between 32 and 46 as moderated and exceeding 46 as high. The Cronbach's alpha as reported in the manual is 0.86.

#### **Brief Fear of negative evaluation scale (BFNE)**

Leary created the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (1983). It is a 12-item self-report measure that describes fearful or worried thoughts. On a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5, the respondent specifies how well each item characterizes himself or herself. On this scale, the lowest and highest possible scores are 12 and 60, respectively. The scores for items 2, 4, 7, and 10 are reversed. The total score is calculated by summing the scores from all of the components. If the participants get a score of more than 25, the handbook says they have clinically substantial social anxiety. According to the documentation for this scale, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.96.

#### **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)**

The scale consists of 10 items and responses were made on a 4-point scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (4) "strongly agree". Half of the items are reverse coded (i.e. 3, 5, 8, 9, 10) and half of them are normal coded (i.e. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7). Test-retest reliability coefficients vary from .82 to .88, while Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) are found to be between .77 and .88 (Rosenberg, 196)

### **Method**

The present research is designed to explore the relationship between Self-esteem, Tolerance for disagreement and Fear of negative evaluation among university students

#### **Research Design**

The correlational research design was used in the study to inspect the association between Tolerance for disagreement and Fear of negative evaluation among university students..

#### **Sample**

The sample for current research study was university students. Sample size intended for current study was 126(65 male participants and 61 female participants). Age range of the sample was 18-35.

#### **Sampling Strategy**

Taking the following inclusion and exclusion criteria into consideration, purposive sampling technique was used to collect data from university student.

#### **Inclusion Criteria**

Following criteria were used for the inclusion of participants.

The participants within age range 18-35 were selected. All participants were university students of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The participants of the study were from Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi, ARID Agricultural University Rawalpindi and International Islamic University Islamabad.

#### **Exclusion Criteria**

Following criteria was used for the exclusion of participants.



Individuals who cannot understand English were not approached. Participants diagnosed or reported to have any psychological or mental health issues were not included. Data was delimited to students of Rawalpindi and Islamabad university students only.

### Procedure

A survey design was used to collect the data via using Gorrila software from university students ( $N=126$ ) which included male ( $n=65$ ) and female students ( $n=61$ ) from different universities of twin cities Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan (Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi, ARID Agricultural University Rawalpindi and International Islamic University Islamabad). Ethical procedure as approved by the University Ethical Committee were followed (participation was voluntary; the participants had the right to withdraw at any stage. Anonymity and confidentiality was assured. Participants were debriefed about the purpose of study with the help of information sheet. It was insured that there is no psychological or physical harm to the participants. The participants were approached online. Informed consent was taken from the participants and they were briefly described about the objective of the study. They were assured that the information provided by them would be kept confidential and only be used for educational purpose. After filling and submitting all questionnaires they were thanked for their participation. No personal information was required by the participants; for example name, address and IP address were not collected in the present study. After collection of data, the results of the study were calculated using SPSS version 23.

### Ethical Considerations

Following ethical consideration was followed during the process of research.

- Information sheet was provided to ensure informed consent?
- Data collected from participants was kept confidential by password protected computer.
- The anonymity of all the participants was maintained by not asking personal information at any stage of data collection and analysis.

### Demographics of the study

51% of the participants were males and 49% were females. Socioeconomic status was categorized into three levels: upper class; middle class and lower class. Family income criteria were used to describe the socioeconomic status of the participants. Majority of the data falls in middle class category (62%). For the purpose of research study age of the sample ranged 18-35. In terms of family system, majority of the participants had joint family system (64.2%) while 35.7% had nuclear family system. Joint family system here mean that different family members like grandmother, grandfather , uncle aunties used to live together in a combined set up while nuclear family system here means that participants lived along with mother and father only. Further demographic details are illustrated through table I.

**Table I**

*Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Variables*

Variables	F	%
Gender		
Male	65	51
Female	61	49
Age		
18-35	126	100

Marital Status		
Married	26	20
Un married	100	80
Family Structure		
Joint	81	64.2
Nuclear	45	35.7
Socioeconomic Status		
Upper	19	15
Middle	78	62
Lower	29	23

Note:  $n=126$ ,  $f$ =frequency, %=percentage

### Analysis

In order to assess the relationship between self-esteem, tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation, Pearson product moment correlation was calculated. The impact between Tolerance for disagreement and Fear of negative evaluation in university student was investigated through simple linear regression analysis. Tolerance for disagreement was predictor variable and fear of negative evaluation was predicted. Independent sample t-test was run to measure mean differences on gender.

Table II indicates mean value of the participant's score and alpha reliability coefficients for the scales used in the present study. The Cronbach's alpha reliability value for the scale tolerance for disagreement was .62 and for the scale fear of negative evaluation was .87. These values indicate acceptable and good internal consistency of scales administered on university students. Scores under 32 were categorized as low levels of TFD, between 32 and 46 as moderated and exceeding 46 as high. Participant's score on tolerance for disagreement scale is 47.92 that indicated that scores are in the high range. Mean score of the participants on fear of negative evaluation scale according to present study is 35.42. According to the manual if the participant's score above 25 then scores are in the higher range on fear of negative evaluation indicating higher levels of social anxiety.

**Table II**

*Descriptive values Mean ,Standard Deviation and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient values of Tolerance for Disagreement and Fear of Negative Evaluation*

Scales	M	SD	Range	A
TFD	47.92	14.6	24-70	.62
FNE	35.42	5.7	14-60	.88

Note:  $n=126$ ,  $M$ = Mean,  $SD$ = standard deviation,  $a$ = Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient,  $TFD$ = Tolerance for Disagreement,  $FNE$ = Fear of Negative Evaluation

### Hypothesis1

It was hypothesized that "A negative relationship exists between self-esteem, Tolerance for Disagreement and Fear of Negative Evaluation". As the sample statistics reveal that correlation -.91 between Tolerance for Disagreement and Fear of Negative Evaluation is significant at 0.01 levels so our hypothesis is supported.

### Hypothesis 2

Second hypothesis was to assess the association between self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation. Results of the data obtained from the sample indicated a correlation value of  $-.84$  indicating negative association between the study variables.

### Hypothesis 3

It was hypothesized that “Tolerance for disagreement is likely to predict Fear of negative evaluation in university students”. After data collection from the sample and subsequent analysis findings are shown in table III. Table III show the impact of Tolerance for disagreement on Fear of negative evaluation in University Students. The  $R^2$  value of  $.83$  revealed that tolerance for disagreement explained 83% variance in fear of negative evaluation in University Students with  $F(1,125) = 639.94, p < .001$ . The findings revealed that tolerance for disagreement significantly negatively predicted fear of negative evaluation in university students ( $\beta = -.35, p < .001$ ). It can be asserted from the obtained findings that the higher tolerance for disagreement the less fear of negative evaluation people report.

**Table III**

*Regression Coefficients of Tolerance for disagreement on Fear of negative evaluation in University students*

Variable	B	$\beta$	SE
Constant	52.56		.70
Tolerance For Disagreement	-.35	-.91	0.14
R2	.54		

Note,  $n=126$ , B= Standardized Coefficient, SE= Standard Error,  $***P < .001$

### Hypothesis 4

It was hypothesized that “There is likely to be significant gender difference in tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation among University students”. Findings of the study after data collection and analysis support this hypothesis and are expressed in table IV.

Table IV illustrates mean, standard deviation and t-values for male and female university students on tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation. Findings reveal significant mean differences on tolerance for disagreement with  $t(126) = -6.67, p < .01$ . Results also indicate that males exhibited higher scores on tolerance for disagreement ( $M=57.42, SD=10.48$ ) as compared to the females ( $M=48.32, SD=9.34$ ). The value of Cohen’s  $d$  indicates large effect size. The results also highlighted significant mean differences on fear of negative evaluation with  $t(198) = -3.45, p < .05$ . Results indicated that females exhibited higher scores on fear of negative evaluation ( $M=31.12, SD=9.56$ ) as compared to males ( $M=24.68, SD=9.12$ ). The value of Cohen’s  $d$  indicates medium effect size.

**Table IV**

*Mean comparison of Male and Female University Students on Tolerance for Disagreement and Fear of Negative Evaluation*

Variables	Gender				t(126)	p	95% CI		Cohen'd
	Male	(n=65)	Female	(n=61)			LL	UL	
TFD	57.42	10.48	48.32	9.34	6.67	.00	6.23	11.89	.90
FNE	24.68	9.12	31.12	9.56	-3.45	.00	-7.98	-2.76	.54

Note. M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation; CI= Confidence Interval; LL= Lower Limit; UL= Upper Limit, \* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between university students' tolerance for disagreement, self-esteem and their fear of negative evaluation. It was theorized that tolerance for disagreement has something to do with the fear of being judged negatively. It was expected that disagreement tolerance would be a predictor of fear of bad appraisal. Linear regression and Pearson product moment correlation were utilized. Gender differences in tolerance for disagreement and fear of unfavorable judgement were also assessed using an independent sample t-test test to compare males and females of this sample.

Considering our cultural scenario, tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation are important concepts. Participants were selected from the universities of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad as pupil from all over Pakistan come here for seeking education. There is wide range of cultural and ethnic background represented in these universities, therefore assessing these three variables from these sample helped in understanding the attitude of tolerance for disagreement and level of social anxiety that they might face from the perspective of negative evaluation when they interact with other students in university setting belonging to different cultural and ethnic background.

The result revealed a significant negative correlation between tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation. Previous studies like Levy (2016) found out that there are significant positive relationships between emotional regulation strategies and tolerance for disagreement. So it can be said that if emotional regulation worked positively, tolerance for disagreement will be higher and then individual would deal with fearful situation efficiently both variables have positive relation. In a similar way if tolerance for disagreement will be higher than you deal fearful situation or negative criticism constructively. One would not lose confidence or escape that situation because of negative criticism. Similarly, Kim and Choi (2020) found that out that there are significant negative relationship between child ego function and fear of negative evaluation

Similarly, another studies like Xinyi et al., (2020) found out that fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety have significant positive correlation. Author concludes that if fear of negative evaluation is high then social anxiety will also be high and if fear of negative evaluation is low then social anxiety will also be low. In the same way if tolerance for disagreement will be high then fear of negative will be low. Individuals were more confident and helpful to cope with fearful situations or negative evaluations. Another studies like Wrench et al.,

(2006) found out that there are significant negative relationships between tolerance for disagreement with ethnocentrism and religious fundamentalism. It can be concluded that those individuals who have low tolerance level have high ethnocentrism that those individuals who have high tolerance level have less ethnocentrism.

It was hypothesized that tolerance for disagreement will be a significant predictor of fear of negative evaluation. Simple linear regression analysis showed that tolerance for disagreement was significant negative predictor of fear of negative evaluation. Carr (2001) in their study find out that emotional intelligence was a significant predictor of tolerance for disagreement. If individual are emotionally intelligent, their emotions are well controlled, and they are aware of their emotions. It can be concluded that having a good tolerance for disagreement is an indication of better controlled over emotions including a well mastery over controlling a fear of negative evaluation. Nauman (2017) in his study also found out that tolerance for disagreement was a significant positive predictor of conflict management. People with high tolerance for disagreement resolve conflict management.

Further it was also hypothesized that there were likely to be gender differences in tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation. Results revealed significant gender difference in these variables with male score more on tolerance for disagreement as compared to females. Nauman (2017), in their study also found out that men are more likely to have tolerance for disagreement as compared to females. Levy (2016) studied significant difference between male and female scores. Results revealed that male have more tolerance for disagreement than females. Likewise present study concluded that females were high on fear of negative evaluation than males. Considering the culture in Pakistan, boys are generally considered as being more powerful, and we assume that males can control situations under stressful circumstances and are not easily emotionally crushed, and we expect males to achieve that norm. Males have also been influenced by our culture, and they have been groomed in this manner (Iqbal & Ajmal, 2018).

### **Conclusion**

The present study, after examining the relationship between self-esteem, tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation came up to the conclusion that tolerance for disagreement is negatively associated with fear of negative evaluation. The university students who had high degree of tolerance for disagreement were found to be lower on fear of negative evaluation. The regression analysis also revealed that tolerance for disagreement was a significant negative predictor of fear of negative evaluation. Independent sample t-test results have shown that males were found to be higher on tolerance for disagreement than female students whereas, female student were found to be higher on fear of negative evaluation as compared to male students.

### **Limitations:**

Sample size is small due to which generalizability is low. Secondly, the psychological tools which are used in present study increases the probability of yielding socially desirable responses. Thirdly, Due to lack of genuine responses there is a chance of misleading conclusions. Fourthly, The present study focuses on exploring the direct relationship between tolerance for disagreement and fear of negative evaluation and ignores other multiple confounding variable. Fifthly, this study has targeted educated population so it cannot be generalized to uneducated population.

### **Implications**

- The current study was an attempt to make people aware of tolerance and its importance in one's life. Individuals with a high level of tolerance for disagreement are better able to

manage situations with varied opinions without experiencing strong emotions such as anger.

- Results have significant implication for future researchers. Our findings imply that increasing understanding of dispute tolerance may provide and promote alternate approaches to deal with a setting characterized by a lot of disagreement. Assertiveness training can help students with a high tolerance for disagreement maintain their self-interest rather than entirely complying with requests from coworkers or supervisors.
- Universities need to foster an environment that values diversity and accepts it respectfully. This effort will not only foster innovation, but it will also foster a more open environment in which people can freely express themselves. When people's thoughts are heard, they feel more respected.

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