Motivation as a Mediating Variable Between Parental Support and Anxiety

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More and more adolescents are seeking therapeutic intervention due to school-related anxious symptomatology. There is good evidence from the empirical literature that social support is related to anxiety, but does social support directly predict anxiety or is the relationship mediated by other variables? The present study of 110 college students found that an adolescent's motivational meaning system, conceptualized from Dweck's theory, mediated parental support and anxiety. Specifically, the lower parental support, the more Entity Thinking an adolescent is, and the more anxious that adolescent will be. Reasons, implications, and recommendations based on this finding are discussed.

As a practicing psychotherapist, this researcher has worked with young people and families with various clinical problems. Many of the clients referred are adolescents with symptoms of school-related anxiety. Aside from manifesting physiological symptomatology such as panic attacks and breathing difficulties, these young people also express specific and often 'negative' perceptions of their parents, revolving around high parental expectations. They feel that their parents will love them or feel proud of them only if they excel in school or other particular endeavors. Notably, in most of these clinical cases, the parents are very involved in their children's lives. This leads to a question worth exploring: while numerous literature have established that the amount of social support individuals receive is inversely correlated with anxiety, why would highly involved parents have highly anxious children? Could there be a mediating variable between social support and anxiety, such that differences in the "supportive" messages conveyed by parents to their adolescents may spell the difference between emotional stability and anxious

symptomatology? This is the main question that the present study addressed.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to answer several problems:

1. Which sources of social support best predict anxiety?
2. What is the relationship between motivational meaning system and anxiety?
3. Does motivational meaning system mediate between social support and anxiety?

Dweck's Theory of Motivational Meaning System

Classical cognitive theories of mental health postulate that an individual's thoughts are intimately linked with emotional distress (Beck, 1976). It may then be postulated that a person's cognitive *motivations* could likewise be linked to psychological problems such as anxiety disorders. Dweck (2000) conceptualized a motivational process model that theorizes how people cognitively define and give meaning to their world (see Table 1). These meanings influence how people frame themselves, their actions, and the environment. Some people espouse an *Entity Theory* of thinking — they believe that their traits are stable and fixed. They are either good at something or they are not. Entity 'theorists' believe that every task or situation is a definitive indicator of one's worth, the reason being that the outcome of that task or situation is a fixed stamp on whether one is high on a particular trait or not. Entity theorists

Table 1. Dweck's Motivational Process Model

Entity Thinkers ...	Incremental Thinkers...
believe that traits are fixed.	believe that traits are malleable.
feel that situations are indicators of their worth.	feel that situations are opportunities for growth
are performance oriented.	are learning oriented.
when faced with failure, fall into a helpless or destructive pattern.	when faced with failure, try to learn from their experience.

are very performance oriented. They approach circumstances as occasions to look good and be validated by the situation and the people present in that situation.

Notably, entity theorists do not jump brazenly into every circumstance. Rather, when entity theorists are faced with a situation wherein they are confident they will excel, they exhibit high persistence because they know themselves to be strong in those areas. On the other hand, when faced with a situation where they have little confidence, they fall into a helpless pattern. They persevere little or avoid the challenge altogether because they "know" that this is not their area of strength. Furthermore, when faced with failure, they fall into an unproductive or worse, destructive, pattern (Dweck, 2000).

Other people espouse an *Incremental Theory* of thinking. Dweck (2000) describes such individuals as believing that traits are malleable and that there is always room for improvement. Incremental theorists are also very learning oriented. While entity theorists are bent on proving the adequacy of their ability, incremental theorists are bent on improving them. An incremental theorist's goal is not success or self-validation, but developing the self.

With this motivational pattern, incremental theorists focus on growth. They look at how much they have improved rather than how perfect they already are. As such, when faced with failure, or any obstacle for that matter, incremental theorists remain vigorous and intent on their tasks because they see such things as simply part of the process.

The theory of Dweck focuses on a motivational framework of intelligence, and her studies have looked at the effect of these two kinds of motivation on academic outcomes. This study utilizes her theory but puts forth the possibility that a motivational belief system is not only related to particular abilities or school-related success. Rather, an individual's motivational framework might also be related to emotional outcomes and clinical symptomatology.

For this study, Dweck's motivational framework was operationalized through Dykman's Growth Orientation Inventory (1998). In his scale's terminology, entity thinkers are said to be *Validation Seeking*, while incremental thinkers are said to be *Growth Seeking*. Dykman based his instrument on Dweck's theory, and

expanded on it by creating a measure that reflects general cognitive motivations rather than motivations related to the academic dimension only. Dykman's terminology will be adopted for the rest of this paper.

Social Support and Anxiety

Anxiety is defined as a tense emotional state, characterized by physical symptomatology such as chest discomfort, palpitations, and shortness of breath. Anxiety also involves feelings of continuous expectations of disaster. Anxiety- ridden persons are always unhappy, worried, or pessimistic (Freeman & Di Tomasso, 1994). Lastly, anxious people feel helpless in the face of threatening situations. They doubt that any action could produce favorable results (Wolman, 1994). They believe that no one can ever save or protect them.

Research on emotional disorders consistently reveals the power of social support in buffering emotional distress (Berman, Kurtines, Silverman, & Serafina, 1996; Horowitz, Weine, & Jekel, 1995; Nahulu et al., 1996). Cohen and Willis' review (1985) discuss as well that the perception of social support protects people from the pathogenic effects of stressful events.

Thought Processes and Mental Health

There is also good empirical evidence of a strong relationship between a person's thoughts and anxiety. Anxious and non-anxious individuals had distinct kinds of appraisals when confronted with hypothetical situations (Laurent & Stark, 1993). When analyzing scenarios of stressful events, a *threat appraisal* was found among subjects with significant anxiety symptomatology. This was in contrast with non-anxious subjects who saw the same scenarios with a *challenge appraisal*. The anxious subjects' appraisals were found to be related with higher perceptions of stress, more negative emotions, and poorer performance.

Similarly, a series of studies by Riskind et al (2000) found that anxious individuals have a unique cognitive framework known as a *looming maladaptive style*, a cognitive style that functions as a danger schema to produce specific vulnerability to anxiety, but not to other emotional disorders such as depression. This cognitive style contributes to a bias for remembering and processing threat-related information and interpreting situations as being more dangerous than they are.

The studies above suggest that how one thinks does affect emotional well-being. In particular, they show how one's *evaluation* of a situation results in problematic emotional repercussions. Another study investigated another cognitive dimension.

Dykman (1998) investigated the *motivational factors* related to depression. Moving beyond Dweck's framework and findings, he found that people with a *validation seeking orientation* had significantly higher scores on a depression scale when compared with people with a *growth seeking orientation*. Validation seeking individuals whose goal is to constantly prove their worth, competence, and likeability, when faced with difficult challenges, felt their whole self-worth was on the line, making them vulnerable, helpless, and depressed. In contrast, growth seeking individuals were more motivated to improve themselves, and these growth strivings often superceded ego needs such as concern about failure or self-esteem protection. Thus, when faced with failure or negative situations, they felt challenged instead of hopeless and despairing.

A study by Henderson and Dweck (1989) had similar findings in the area of anxiety rather than depression. They found that validation seeking seventh grade students felt threatened when they feared they might not obtain positive judgments of their intellectual capabilities. The more threatened they felt because of confusion, mistakes, or level of difficulty, the more likely they were to experience anxiety in any situation that evokes that feeling of threat. The validation seeking students were most vulnerable to a helpless pattern, and expressed more anxiety than other groups. Such repercussions make sense in the light of an important point made by Dweck, that "wouldn't you be afraid... if each (task) you confronted could tell you how smart you were now and forever?" (Dweck, 2000, p. 26).

Social Support and Motivation

An individual's motivational meaning system is strongly based on interpersonal relationships (Dweck, 2000; Wentzel, 1999). For adolescents, significant social influences include parents, teachers, and peers (Wentzel 1998; 1999). Studies have shown that the kind of support they gave was strongly related to different motivational thought patterns.

Parents appear to be the primary influence in the creation and maintenance of a young person's motivational framework (Wentzel,

1999). A series of studies by Dweck and colleagues (Dweck, 2000; Mueller & Dweck, 1998) explored how parent-child interactions played a significant role in setting different motivational patterns for children. Specifically, it was found that certain kinds of judgments and criticisms resulted in different motivations. A parent's global judgment of "you are so smart" ingrained in a young person that permanent traits are based on present performance. Hence, hearing such a pronouncement made a child work towards high performance in order to validate his or her traits. While this may sound encouraging, such children are also found to fall into the trap of giving up easily if they failed on a certain task, or choose only easy tasks so as to justify their labels.

On the other hand, criticism that made a child focus on effort or strategy created a more incremental kind of thinking, and consequently a growth based motivation. A parent's constructive comment such as "you really worked hard on that math problem" resulted in children being more persevering on, and challenged by, difficult tasks. "This shows that some of the common feedback practices that parents employ can have a powerful effect on their children's (motivational) skills" (Dweck, 2000, p. 111).

Other studies showed that parental support as a whole was also predictive of kind of motivation. Wentzel (1998) found that a supportive relationship with parents was positively correlated with growth seeking validation, while less adaptive parenting skills were linked with validation motivations. Similarly, another study found that the extent to which mothers were involved in their children's lives (e.g., were knowledgable about their children's day-to-day activities and spent much time with them), was related to the child's motivational development (Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991).

Adolescents' relationships with teachers reflected the same motivational repercussions. Wentzel's (1999) study showed that teachers who gave individual attention to their students through the diversity and personal relevance of the requirements were more likely to be growth oriented in terms of motivation. In contrast, teachers who were more impersonal and gave normative and comparative evaluation standards were more likely to promote performance related motivational orientations. Another study also found that students who felt their teachers cared for their academic and non-academic well-being were more internally motivated, while those who felt their teachers only cared about academic achievement were more externally or grades oriented (Wentzel, 1994).

In summary, feelings of belongingness appear to have a motivational function, awakening enthusiasm and perseverance in everyday tasks. And in an Asian country where social influences are especially important in understanding an individual's behavior (Bernardo, 2001; Chao & Tseng, 2002) the relationship between social support and motivation takes on a special significance. And given that social support is related to anxiety, and motivation is also related with anxiety, the relationship among these three variables are worth exploring.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 110 Sophomore college students, 39 males and 71 females, from a private university. They were purposively sampled from General Psychology classes where they took a series of psychological tests.

Measures

Anxiety. The items for the anxiety measure were adapted from the Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS), a self-report measure that assessed the presence and severity of anxiety in children and adolescents. The adolescent indicates either "yes" when the item is self-descriptive and "no" when the item is not. The yes responses are summed for a total score. Internal consistency for the total anxiety values fall in the .80 range. Test-retest reliability is reported at .90 for a period of three weeks (Reynolds & Paget, 1981).

The RCMAS yields three anxiety measures, Physiological Anxiety, Social Concerns and Concentration (Social Anxiety), and Worry/Oversensitivity (Cognitive Anxiety). Items under Physiological Anxiety included "I get tired a lot" and "Often I feel sick in my stomach". Among the items on Social Anxiety were "I worry about what other people think about me" and "I feel that others do not like the way I do things". Cognitive Anxiety was reflected in such items as "I get nervous when things do not go the right way for me" and "I often worry about something bad happening to me". The factors of the test are particularly useful in determining specific dimensions of anxiety (Ollendick, 1995). Reynolds and Richmond (1979) investigated the factor structure of the RCMAS

scale, and factor analysis results lend strong support to the construct validity of the three anxiety measures.

Motivation. The motivation scale was adapted from the Goal Orientation Inventory (GOI) constructed by Dykman (1998) to assess whether a person is Growth Seeking (GS) or Validation Seeking (VS). Dykman patterned his tests after Dweck's theory, with GS individuals being incremental in orientation, and VS individuals being entity thinkers. Participants respond to 36 statements using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Items indicating a validity seeking orientation included "Instead of just enjoying activities and social instruction, most situations to me feel like a major test of my basic worth, competence or likeability" and "I feel like I'm constantly trying to prove that I am as competent as the people around me". Among the items indicating a growth seeking orientation included "I have a knack for viewing difficult or stressful situations as opportunities to learn and grow" and "I'm the type who is willing to risk the possibility of failure or rejection in order to reach my fullest potential as a person".

Participants obtain several scores on the GOI: a score for each subscale as well as an over-all score. The GOI over-all score involves summing the responses to each subscale then subtracting the GS score from the VS score to arrive at a total net score (possible range of -108 to 108). The higher the score obtained, the greater the validation seeking motivational pattern. Scores above zero reflect that an individual is more validation seeking than growth seeking.

The test-retest reliability of the GOI was found to be .82 for the total score, .76 for the VS subscale and .78 for the GS subscale. Internal consistency was high at .96 (Dykman, 1998).

Parental Support. The parental support measure was adapted from the Perception of Parents Scale or POPS (Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991) that assesses the amount of involvement, support, and warmth that an adolescent perceives to be receiving from his/her parents. Internal consistency among samples evaluating the POPS, ranged from .67 to .70 for maternal and paternal autonomy and involvement support. Subjects respond to 21 statements using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 7 (*very true*). The parental support score is based on the sum of all responses. Generally, scores above 84 suggest a positive relationship with parents. Furthermore, the higher the score, the more positive the relationship between parent and child.

Teacher and Peer Support. Measures of perceived support from teachers and peers were adapted from the teacher and peer social support subscales of the Classroom Life Measure (Johnson, Johnson, Buckman, & Richards, 1985). On the CLM, teacher's personal support subscale carries a Cronbach's alpha of .80, the student's personal support scale carries a Cronbach's alpha of .78. In this study, a participant responds to items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). The teacher's support subscale has seven items, while the peer support scale has eight items. Scores above 21 on the teacher support scale, and scores above 24 on the peer support scale, suggest a positive relationship. The higher the score, the more positive the relationship.

Data Analysis

Simultaneous Multiple Regression analysis was done with the social support scores as independent variables, and the over-all anxiety score as the dependent variable. Secondly, using a Pearson R correlational analysis, the participants' over-all and subscores on the anxiety scale were correlated with the over-all score of the Goal Orientation Inventory. Lastly, Parental Support and GOI scores, individually and collectively, underwent Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analysis with anxiety as the dependent variable.

Results

Cognitive theories on mental health assert that one's thinking process is related to emotional vulnerability. In this study, quantitative analysis revealed that an individual's sources and amount of social support significantly predict anxiety. Secondly, motivation was found to be positively correlated with different dimensions of anxiety. Last and most importantly, this study has shown that, when predicting anxiety, parental support loses statistical significance when paired with the motivational variable, suggesting a mediating effect of goal orientation.

Description of the Sample

In terms of anxiety, the mean score of the sampled students on the RCMAS was 10.58 (*SD* = 5.05), indicating that the students checked less than half of the indicators of anxiety. This suggests that the study sample is generally not anxious and may be emotionally stable.

On the GOI, a mean score of -16.36 (SD = 32) was obtained, suggesting that the sample as a whole is generally more growth seeking rather than validation seeking in terms of motivation.

The sample also obtained a mean score of 110 on the parental support scale (SD = 21.02) — the students seem to enjoy a generally positive and supportive relationship with their parents. On the teacher support scale, the mean was 23 (SD = 3.78), also indicating a perception among these students that they had a positive relationship with their teachers. The mean score on the peer support scale (M = 30, SD = 4.68) likewise suggest that the sample felt they received positive support from their peers (see Table 2 for a summary of descriptive findings).

Table 2. Characteristics of Study Sample

Measure	Mean	SD	Sample is generally...
RCMAS	10.58	5.05	Emotionally stable
GOI	-16.36	32	Growth oriented
Parental Support	110	21.02	Close to their parents
Teacher Support	23	2.78	Close to their teachers
Peer Support	30	4.68	Close to peers

Social Support and Anxiety

The regression analysis revealed that social support was predictive of anxiety (R square = .11, p = .006). Furthermore, parental support showed a significant and inverse correlation with generalized anxiety (see Table 3). The less support perceived from parents, the more anxious the students were.

Table 3. Social Support Predictors of Anxiety

Support System	B	SE	T
Parental Support	-.07	.02	-3.13*
Teacher Support	-.02	.15	-.12
Peer Support	-.04	.12	-.04

*p < .002

The Mediational Effect of Motivation

Generalized anxiety was also found to be significantly related to an adolescent's motivational meaning system. As seen in Table 4, the more validation seeking an adolescent's motivation is (with scores >1 reflecting this), the greater is his/her cognitive anxiety (e.g., "worried all the time"; "has problems with concentration"), social anxiety (e.g., "worried about how he compares with others"; "is oversensitive to criticism") and physiological anxiety ("is tired a lot"; "often feels sick in the stomach")..

Table 4. Correlations between Motivational Meaning System and Anxiety (N = 110)

| GOI Dimensions of Anxiety	Pearson r
General Anxiety	.57**
Cognitive Anxiety	.56**
Social Anxiety	.49**
Physiological Anxiety	.21*

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 5 reveals that parental support and motivational meaning system individually predict anxiety. Taken together, the two variables significantly predict anxiety as well (R square = .35, $p < .00$). Notably though, collectively, motivation alone significantly related to anxiety (see Figure 1).

Table 5. Mediational Role of Motivation

	B	SE	t
Step 1			
Parental Support	-.078	.022	-3.55**
Step 2			
GOI	.091	.012	7.27**
Step 3			
Parental Support	-.037	.02	-1.87
GOI	.083	.01	6.36*

**$p < .001$
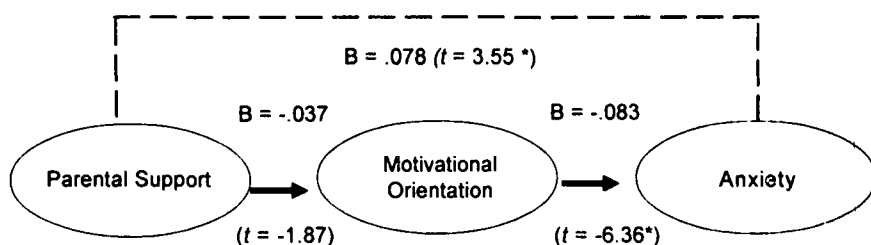
Parental support is related to anxiety by way of an adolescent's motivational meaning system

While parental support appears to predict anxiety, this figure reveals that, taken with motivational orientation, parental support becomes non-significant, thus suggesting a mediating effect of motivational orientation.

Figure 1 . *The Mediating Effect of Motivational Meaning System*

Discussion

Parental Support Predicts How an Adolescent Will Feel

Across significant social support providers (parents, teachers and peers), this study has revealed that, as suggested by the literature, low social support predicts high levels of anxiety, with parental support being most predictive. Given that the participants are older adolescents who are in a so-called *second individuation phase* where they aim to establish independence and autonomy from their parents, this finding is rather surprising (Dacey & Kenny, 1994). One explanation may be cultural. Family is still the well-spring of support and refuge for Filipino adolescents, as it is for younger Filipino children (Miralao, 1997). Filipino adolescents still seek comfort and affection in the home, such that, when they feel deprived of parental support, they feel anxious.

Relatedly, cross-cultural literature also reveals that, for collectivist countries, the family is a major source of one's sense of self (Liu & Chen, 2003). For Filipinos, an individual's goals and identity are context based and interdependent. Possibly, when adolescents feel that their parents are not supportive of them, they feel the anxiety related to a loss of their very selves, and feel helpless about what to do and where to go. In this study, parental support was significantly predictive of social anxiety rather than the physical dimensions of anxiety. The more parental support,

the less the anxiety related to social comparisons (i.e., "other children are happier than I") or loneliness (i.e., "a lot of people are against me"). This further stresses the point of the family being an emotional refuge. When adolescents feel that their parents are there for them, they feel worthy enough in themselves and feel no need to compare themselves with others. Furthermore, even when they might feel lonely or alienated in school or with peers, the support that parents provide makes them feel less anxious and distressed.

Are Teachers and Peers Not Supportive?

Contrary to the literature, teachers and peers did not figure in terms of predicting motivational framework nor anxiety levels. Several reasons for these findings are suggested. Given the literature on parent-child relationships in Filipino culture, it is not surprising that adolescents' motivations are much more connected to parental support than to adults outside the family. The same argument may be given in terms of the lack of relationship between teacher and peer support and anxiety. Parental support may be the more pivotal kind of support with emotional repercussions.

In terms of peer support, another argument may be considered. Given the developmental need of adolescents to engage in peer relationships and the wealth of literature on the prevalence of peer support in teenage years, the lack of correlation between peer support and other variables may be because regardless of kind of motivation or anxiety level, peer support is present in these adolescents' lives. Peer support may be in constant evidence in the lives of all adolescents that it cannot account for differences in motivational thinking or emotional functioning.

The Messages Parents Send: The Mediating Effect of Motivation

The relationship between parental support and anxiety appears to be an indirect one, with parental support exerting its influence by way of an adolescent's motivational meaning system. Possibly, the process of parental support is operationalized through how an adolescent learns certain things, such as 1) what goals are important; 2) how to assess one's sense of self-worth; or 3) how to face challenges and failure. These, in turn may predict anxiety.

Relatedly, it is possible that parental support translates into a certain kind of thinking in an adolescent. Intuitively it makes sense to say that when an adolescent feels his parent does not provide him with much support, the adolescent feels undervalued. As such, something else outside the adolescent is more important. This point works well with a validation seeking orientation where it is the external that is of essence. This could predict anxiety: when someone feels he or she has to constantly run after an external goal. On the other side of the coin, when parent are perceived to provide high levels of support, adolescents feel valued for themselves. This is consistent with a growth seeking orientation, as adolescents' main motivational goal is to improve themselves, and focus on how much they improve within themselves, regardless of how they compare to an external and fixed standard. This motivational orientation result in lower levels of anxiety.

The mediating effect of motivation might also be explained from a developmental perspective. Adolescence is a time when young persons begin to make key decisions for themselves. What limited parental support there is could influence how adolescents orient themselves as to what is important or not important. It is in this area of support that anxiety becomes manifested.

Motivational Underpinnings of Anxiety: I am Smart... I am Anxious

This study has shown that the more validation seeking a young person is, the more anxious he or she is likely to be. This anxiety may be expressed as social anxiety, cognitive anxiety, or as physiological symptoms. Validation seekers view all challenges as tests of core traits. Hence, with every situation, much is at stake. At every moment of everyday, these students' intelligence, likeability, even their whole self-worth seem to be on the line. The potential for continuous anxiety is great because every step taken may mean a loss to their identity and individuality.

On the other hand, being more focused on growth and incremental learning does not carry such ego implications. Challenges, obstacles, and failure are seen as opportunities to learn about one's self and how to deal with similar situations in the future. Possible losses are less anxiety provoking to those who thrive on growth rather than validation seeking.

Beck's cognitive theory of emotional disorders states that the mind mediates its influence through repetitive and involuntary thoughts. These thoughts or schemas are screens that impair objectivity and prevent people from evaluating things in a realistic manner. For validation seeking individuals, it might be said that their thoughts in general, and their motivations in particular, are rigid and inflexible. They have definitive thoughts such as "I am the smart one" or "I have to do this homework *now* or else!" These exemplars reflect the fixed and stable nature of validation seeking individuals. They are motivated towards exact goals, with no room for mistakes. Such thought processes may result in heightened emotional anxiety.

Studies on anxiety reveal that clients with anxious symptomatology are very self-focused (Mor & Winquist, 2002). They are continuously evaluating the discrepancy between their current self and a salient standard to be reached. Validation seeking individuals might be seen as being always focused on themselves. They are constantly ego validating, motivated to choose tasks that further reflect how good they are at something. In contrast, growth seeking students center more of their attention on learning and growth. Their focus is on the task at hand and on the challenge of understanding and conquering each obstacle they face. Furthermore, validation seeking adolescents not only are always self-focused, but they also always focus on a self-concept as perfect. Hence, as daily life continuously tests their competencies and abilities, such students are constantly anxious because their idea of themselves is never endingly assaulted.

In summary, while empirical literature relates low social support to high levels of anxiety, this study has shown that social support is related to anxiety by way of motivational meaning system; that the higher parental support adolescents feel they receive, the more growth oriented they are and the less anxious as well.

Some Implications

Findings from this study have implications for how social support providers motivate and encourage adolescents, especially adolescent students. Validation seeking adolescents focus on perfection of products and outcomes. How do social support providers contribute to this kind of thinking?

In the academic realm, studies show that excessive praise focused on what the student *is* (e.g., "You are so smart!") rather than what he or she *does* might actually inculcate a validation seeking orientation, with its anxiety-related consequences. Students overly-praised in this manner may end up seeking challenges that re-affirm or assure them of worthiness, working at and excelling in areas they know they are good at, and avoiding goals that might bring failure. In contrast, in areas where they think they do not naturally shine, they may fall into a helpless, anxious pattern. Relatedly, there is the issue of incentives. To promise students rewards for achievements may focus them on the end goal rather than the learning process.

On the other hand, process and incremental growth are what growth seeking motivation are about. Linked to process are strategies (e.g., "I noticed you tried a different way of studying this, maybe that's what works for you"). Likewise, when social support providers remark on improvement, students may realize that growth is worthy to strive for.

Recommendations

Other measures of the variables utilized in the present study are recommended. Other kinds of support scales that tap different kinds of support, might provide more comprehensive ideas about how support is related to motivational meaning systems and anxiety. Practical support, encouragement, or emotional support might be related to motivation and anxiety in different ways. Other tests measuring anxiety, as well as measures of other kinds of psychological distress (such as depression), might also be utilized to gain a better understanding of motivational and social factors related to emotional wellness. Thirdly, other variables might also be introduced to further enrich the findings presented here. Introducing such factors as age and developmental stage, gender, and SES, would broaden the knowledge on motivation, anxiety, and support, and the relationship among these variables.

Conclusions

There is a growing number of adolescents experiencing anxious symptomatology. In this clinician-researcher's experience, more and more high school and college students are coming to the clinic with symptoms of emotional distress, a perceived lack of control, and a constant feeling of dread or disaster. Knowing the underlying dynamics of support as it relates to anxiety, it is possible to help adolescents avoid anxiety better. Motivating adolescents towards growth and learning rather than perfection may spell the difference in terms of emotional wellness.

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