International Journal of Economic, Business, Accounting, Agriculture Management and Sharia Administration (IJEBAS)

International Journal of Economic, Business, Accounting, Agriculture Management and Sharia Administration (IJEBAS Journal) | ISSN (e): 2808-4713
Volume 6 No. 6 (2026)

THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIAL ANXIETY IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SOCIAL INTERACTION

Adisty Rahelia Putri Arafat[1], Fahish Azka Ahmad[2], Muhammad Aflah[3], Muhammad Zidan Yusuf[4], Zahra Febriana Hasibuan [5], Zhafira Adzra Anharry [6], Sariman Al Faruq [7]
SMAS Al Azhar Unggulan Medan, Indonesia
distyarafat@gmail.com , deezusnuts4life@gmail.com , yusufzidan099@gmail.com , anharry09@gmail.com , muhammadaflah119@gmail.com , zhrahsb24@gmail.com

Received: 04//08/2026 | **Revised:** 15/08/2026 | **Accepted:** 02/09/2026 | **Published:**04/11/2026

Abstract

Social anxiety is one of the problems that students may experience when engaging in social interactions within the school environment. This condition may arise when students feel afraid, nervous, insecure, or concerned about how others perceive them. This study aims to identify the forms of social anxiety, the factors that contribute to its emergence, and its effects on the social interaction process among eleventh-grade high school students. This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving eleventh-grade students who met the research criteria. The data were then analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that social anxiety among students was manifested in the form of nervousness when speaking, fear of expressing opinions, concerns about negative judgment, lack of self-confidence, and a tendency to avoid certain social situations. Previous research involving 642 high school students showed that 71% of students were categorized as having moderate social anxiety, 17% as having high social anxiety, and 11% as having low social anxiety. Factors contributing to social anxiety include low self-confidence, unpleasant social experiences, unsupportive peer environments, and pressure to conform to social groups. Social anxiety also affected the interaction process by making students more passive, less confident in communicating, and less involved in group activities. Based on these findings, social anxiety needs to be addressed because it can affect students' comfort and ability to establish social relationships within the school environment.

Keywords: high school students, peer environment, school environment, social anxiety, social interaction

Introduction

Social interaction is a crucial part of students' lives because it allows them to build relationships with their peers, teachers, and the world around them. In high school, students are not only expected to achieve academic success but also to possess the skills to communicate, collaborate, adapt, and build positive relationships with others. Interaction skills are crucial to school life because most students' activities involve interacting with others. Not all students navigate social interactions easily. Some may feel shy, afraid, insecure, or worried about others' judgments when in social situations.

This condition can be related to social anxiety, a feeling of fear or anxiety that arises when someone is in a situation involving interaction with others. Social anxiety can make an individual worry about being judged negatively, making mistakes, or being the center of attention. In students, this condition can be seen when they feel nervous when speaking in front of the class, are afraid to express their opinions, have difficulty starting conversations, or choose to avoid certain situations involving large groups. Social anxiety in students can also hinder carrying out activities and building social relationships in educational settings (Aprilia et al., 2026). Adolescence is a period when peer relationships play a significant role in students' lives. Difficulties in social interactions can create uncomfortable experiences for students and impact their engagement in the school environment. Social anxiety in adolescents can be related to psychological conditions that then influence the process of social relationships with their surroundings (Imaddudin et al., 2023). Experiences within peer groups can also contribute to the emergence of anxiety when students must interact with others (Oktavianti et al., 2026). The problem of social anxiety in adolescents requires attention because it can affect an individual's ability to carry out various social activities in daily life (Sakinata et al., 2025).

Social anxiety in high school students is an interesting phenomenon to study, particularly in relation to social interactions in the school environment. This research focuses on students' experiences with social anxiety, situations that can trigger it, and how this anxiety affects students' social interactions.

Formulation of the problem

Based on the background of this research, several problem formulations were obtained which were used to compile this research, namely:

1. What forms of social anxiety do high school students experience when interacting socially in the school environment?
2. What factors cause social anxiety in high school students when interacting with friends, teachers, and the school environment?
3. How does social anxiety affect the social interaction process of high school students in the school environment?

Research purposes

The objectives of this research are:

1. To know and describe the forms of social anxiety experienced by high school students in carrying out social interactions in the school environment.
2. Knowing and identifying factors that cause social anxiety in high school students when interacting with friends, teachers, and the school environment.
3. To know and describe the influence of social anxiety on the social interaction process of high school students in the school environment.

Research methodology

This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods . This approach was chosen because the research focuses on understanding and describing in more depth the phenomenon of social anxiety experienced by high school students during social interactions within the school environment. Qualitative research allows researchers to obtain information based on the students' direct experiences, perspectives, and conditions, allowing the phenomenon under study to be explained more realistically and not simply based on numbers. The subjects in this study were high school students who experienced or had experienced anxiety when engaging in social interactions at school. Subjects were selected using purposive sampling , selecting informants based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. These criteria may include students who have experienced fear, embarrassment, nervousness, lack of self-confidence, or a tendency to avoid certain situations when interacting with friends, teachers, or the school environment.

Data collection was conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation . Interviews were conducted semi-structured to allow researchers to obtain information about students' experiences with social anxiety, situations that trigger anxiety, and its impact on their social relationships. Observations were conducted to observe the students' social interactions and behaviors that emerge when they are in social situations. Documentation was used as supporting data for the research. The use of interviews and observations in qualitative research can help researchers understand the subjects' social experiences more deeply and in accordance with conditions that occur in the field.

The data obtained were then analyzed qualitatively through several stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing . In the reduction stage, researchers selected and categorized information related to students' social anxiety. The data were presented descriptively so that any patterns or trends identified could be clearly seen. The final stage involved drawing conclusions based on the analyzed interviews, observations, and documentation. The analysis process was carried out in stages so that the research results could provide a picture that aligns with the students' experiences.

To ensure data validity, this study employed source and technique triangulation . Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from several informants, while technique triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation.

Research result

1. Forms of Social Anxiety in High School Students in Social Interaction



Social anxiety in high school students can manifest in various forms during social interactions at school. This condition arises when students feel afraid, nervous, uncomfortable, or worried about how others will judge them in social situations. In school activities, this anxiety can arise when students have to talk to friends, express opinions, give presentations, ask questions of teachers, participate in group discussions, or become the center of attention in class. Students who experience social anxiety typically worry about making mistakes, appearing incompetent, being laughed at, or receiving negative judgment from others (Ahmad et al., 2026).

Social anxiety can also be seen in students' tendency to avoid situations that require them to interact with others. Students may choose to remain silent during discussions, be reluctant to express their opinions, have difficulty initiating conversations, or prefer being in small groups rather than interacting with a large group. Students may experience a lack of self-confidence and feel constantly scrutinized by others. This concern about social judgment can lead students to limit their involvement in learning and social activities at school (Lestari et al., 2026).

In high school students, social anxiety can also manifest as negative thoughts before interactions. Students may imagine making mistakes, being unable to answer questions, or receiving unfavorable responses from peers or teachers. This can then lead to feelings of fear and nervousness, leading to students being less active in communication. If persistent, anxiety can hinder students' ability to build healthy social relationships with peers and the school community (Mardiana et al., 2023).

A description of the level of social anxiety in students can be seen from a study of 642 high school students in Indihiang District, Tasikmalaya City . The results showed that the majority of students were in the moderate social anxiety category at 71% , while 17% were in the high category and 11% were in the low category . These data indicate that social anxiety in high school students is quite often at a moderate level, so this condition still needs to be considered because it can be related to students' comfort in carrying out social interactions at school.

2. Factors That Cause Social Anxiety in High School Students

Social anxiety in high school students

This can arise due to various factors related to the student's personal condition and their social environment. During adolescence, relationships with peers become an important part of daily life. Students begin to pay more attention to how they are perceived and accepted by others. This can make students feel anxious when communicating, expressing opinions, or participating in group activities. When these concerns arise repeatedly, students can become less comfortable in social interactions and tend to limit themselves.

One factor that can contribute to social anxiety is a lack of self-confidence . Students who perceive themselves as lacking in communication skills, appearance, or academic ability can become more fearful when interacting with others. Feelings of being inadequate compared to their peers can lead students to overthink others' reactions. As a result, students become hesitant to speak up or express their opinions for fear of making mistakes. This suggests that how students perceive themselves can influence their confidence in social situations (Najich et al., 2024).

In addition to internal factors, social experiences and peer groups can also influence the emergence of social anxiety. Experiences such as being teased, embarrassed, not accepted in a group, or receiving a negative response when speaking can make students more cautious in future interactions. Students may worry that the unpleasant experience will recur. A peer group that lacks a sense of security can also lead students to choose

to remain silent or avoid certain social situations. Unsupportive peer relationships can be one of the conditions associated with the emergence of social and emotional problems in adolescents (Pringgodiqdo et al., 2025). Another factor is the pressure to conform to the social environment . Students may feel compelled to conform to group customs, speech patterns, and behaviors to be accepted by their peers. When students feel different or unable to meet group demands, they fear rejection from their peers. This situation can lead them to focus more on the judgments of others than on enjoying the interaction process. The social pressure experienced by adolescents can impact their psychological well-being and comfort in social relationships (Damaiyanti et al., 2022).

3. **The Influence of Social Anxiety on the Social Interaction Process of High School Students**
   Social anxiety can impact students' social interactions because the fear, worry, and discomfort that arise in social situations can make them less comfortable communicating. Students experiencing social anxiety tend to think more about how they will be perceived by others, thus reducing their attention to the interaction process. This condition can be seen when students feel nervous when having to talk to friends, express opinions in discussions, ask questions of the teacher, or perform in front of the class. As a result, students can become more passive and choose not to participate in certain social situations.
   One noticeable impact is a decrease in students' courage to communicate . Students who feel anxious may have difficulty initiating conversations or conveying what they want to say. Fear of making mistakes or receiving a negative response makes students prefer to remain silent even though they actually have something to say. This condition can hinder the formation of good communication between students and their peers and teachers. Social anxiety can also make students feel uncomfortable when they have to be the center of attention, so they tend to avoid activities that require them to speak or appear in front of others (Nirmalasari et al., 2026).
   Social anxiety can also affect students' group involvement . During discussions, group work, organizations, and other school activities, students experiencing social anxiety may choose to remain silent and delegate roles to other group members. However, group involvement is a crucial part of developing students' social skills. If this condition persists, students may miss out on opportunities to develop communication, cooperation, and adjustment skills. Difficulties in social interaction in adolescents may be related to limitations in building comfortable social relationships with those around them (Haryati et al., 2025).
   In addition to affecting communication and group engagement, social anxiety can also lead to a tendency to avoid social situations . Students may choose not to participate in certain activities, avoid conversations, or limit interactions with others because they feel safer when they are not in situations that cause anxiety. If repeated, this behavior can further limit students' social relationships. This condition can ultimately make it more difficult for students to adapt to the school environment and make them feel less connected to those around them. Unmanaged social anxiety can hinder adolescents' ability to optimally engage in social interactions (Sulistyo et al., 2026).

Conclusion

Referring to the research results that have been presented, social anxiety is a condition that is quite often experienced by high school students in social interactions in the school environment. The forms of anxiety that arise can take the form of fear, nervousness, lack of confidence, worry about the judgment of others, to the tendency to avoid social situations such as speaking in front of the class, expressing opinions, asking teachers, and participating in group discussions. The description of the level of social anxiety in high school students also shows that the majority of students are in the moderate category, namely 71% , while 17% are in the high category and 11% are in the low category. This indicates that social anxiety is a condition that needs to be considered in students' lives at school. The emergence of social anxiety is not only influenced by a student's internal conditions, but also by their social environment. A lack of self-confidence can make students more afraid of making mistakes and overly concerned about the judgments of others. Unpleasant social experiences, such as being teased, embarrassed, or not accepted into a group, can make students more cautious in their interactions. Pressure to conform and gain peer acceptance can also exacerbate anxiety in social situations. Social anxiety can then impact students' interactions by making them more passive, less confident in communicating, and more likely to avoid certain social situations. Students may choose to remain silent in discussions, delegate roles to peers when working in groups, or limit interactions with others because they feel more comfortable when they are not the center of attention. Therefore, social anxiety is not only related to feelings of fear or nervousness but can also affect students' engagement in school activities and their ability to build comfortable social relationships with friends, teachers, and those around them.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, H., & Mustamiin, MZ (2026). THE EFFECT OF COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING TECHNIQUES ON SOCIAL ANXIETY IN STUDENTS. Realita: Journal of Guidance and Counseling , 11 (1), 167-183.

Aprilia, F., Umari, T., & Donal, D. (2026). The Effectiveness of Group Counseling with Self-Talk Techniques in Reducing Social Anxiety in 7th Grade Junior High School Students. Indonesian Journal of Educational Research , 5 (1), 951-956.

Damaiyanti, S., Suri, SI, & Octavia, D. (2022). The relationship between obesity and social anxiety in high school students in Bukittinggi City. Jurnal Ners , 7 (1), 27-31.

Haryati, A., Hadikusuma, R., Afriyani, R., Purnama, VT, & Sari, TK (2025). The Influence of Social Anxiety on Student Achievement at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. Journal of Educational Studies (JKIP) , 6 (2), 305-314

Imaddudin, A., Arumsari, C., & Dianah, R. (2023). Social Anxiety Profile of High School Students and Its Implications for Counseling Services. Journal of Innovative Counseling: Theory, Practice, and Research , 7 (02).

Lestari, MDT, & Ahmad, H. (2026). THE EFFECT OF NEGATIVE THOUGHT IDENTIFICATION TECHNIQUES ON SOCIAL ANXIETY IN STUDENTS OF SMAN 1 KERUAK. Realita: Journal of Guidance and Counseling , 11 (1), 263-276.

Mardiana, Y., & Endriani, A. (2023). The effect of assertive counseling techniques on social anxiety in class XI IPS students at SMA Negeri 1 Janapria. Visionary Journal: Research and Development in the field of Educational Administration , 11 (2), 150-157.

Najich, MA, Rahman, DH, & Atmoko, A. (2024). Analysis of factors contributing to social anxiety in students: A systematic literature review. Ideguru: Journal of Teacher Scientific Work , 9 (3), 1653-1662.

Nirmalasari, PS, & Budiarto, S. (2026). THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND SOCIAL ANXIETY IN STUDENTS OF SMA N 3 BANTUL. AN-NAFS , 20 (1), 22-28.

Oktavianti, T., & Yanti, E. (2026). CASE STUDY OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS DIFFICULTIES AMONG STUDENTS AT STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 7 PONTIANAK. Didactics: Scientific Journal of PGSD STKIP Subang , 11 (02), 290-303.

Pringgodiqdo, GCKP, & Kadafi, A. (2025). Case Study: Analysis of Factors Causing Verbal Bullying Behavior towards Grade XI Students of Maospati State Senior High School. Journal of Guidance, Counseling and Psychology , 5 (2), 146-156.

Sakinata, WNA, & Moesarofah, M. (2025). The influence of self-esteem and motivation on students' social anxiety levels. Counsellia: Journal of Guidance and Counseling , 15 (1), 60-68.

Sulistyo, E., & Suhadianto, S. (2026). A Systematic Review of Predictor Factors and the Impact of Social Anxiety on Adolescent Victims of Bullying. Dewantara: Journal of Social Humanities Education , 5 (2), 876-888.

OPEN ACCESS