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INTRODUCTION:

Egocentrism is a phenomenon associated with the early life of children¹. Piaget² has defined egocentricism as the focus of a child during the early stages of consciousness. During the sensory motor stage, a child lacks the capacity to discriminate between him and the world. Likewise, a child is in no position to evaluate the importance of others and appreciate their viewpoint. Piaget explained egocentrism as an obstacle in the matter of discrimination between self and oneself and the diversity in it could be experienced during certain stages of development. Piaget lays stress on the importance of up gradation of the new cognitive abilities at each stage of development and the movement to next stage expressing intellectual maturity³. After successfully completing operational stage the adolescent enters adulthood and acquires meta cognitive skills to reason and understand abstraction. Egocentrism is inherent in homo sapiens, which plays important role in childhood. At this stage the brain is not fully developed to respond to teachings and experiences of others and discriminate between subjective and objective aspects of one's self⁴. This is the difficulty of brain but if the child persists with the same behavior, cognitive complications will occur. Piaget

is of the view that this trait is associated with childhood but when a child grows and matures it will disappear in due course. Adolescents may however experience a sort of new egocentrism during their cognitive development. They may attain the ability of meta cognition which means that they are capable to think and can also appreciate the thoughts of others. Initially it is difficult for the adolescents to discriminate between their own thoughts and that of others. This conflict between thoughts of the adolescents and others is known as adolescent egocentrism. This concept put forth by Piaget was further developed by Elkind⁵. Adolescent egocentrism is expressed in two ways, which are two inter-related concepts i.e. imaginary audience (IA) and personal fable (Pf). Imaginary audience has two dimensional aspects abiding self which means excessive concern for permanent aspects of one's self, transitory self which keeps focus on temporary aspect of one's self when adolescents believes in self-importance and his omnipotence that is known as personal fable. This point of view is reflected in their neglectful conduct amongst regular day-to-day existence. The contrast between the two sets is that imaginary audience is identified with cognizance while personal fable is reflected character. Adolescents are dependent on parents but at the same time they are obsessed with the idea of independence. The confusion between imaginary audience and personal fable can however be resolved⁶. Researchers looking into the concept of imaginary audience and have achieved different results in different situations and age. Piaget reported that egocentrism decreases at the end of adolescent because of fortify self-understanding⁷. Gradient in IA observed in eight grades, while gather intensity at

formal operational stage^{5, 8}. Imaginary audience normally drops down during adolescent because of the appearance of different personality factors at different stages⁹. Piaget¹⁰ is of the view that imaginary audience could not be limited to youth, and with formal operational thoughts, besides these adults who procure identity characters had one-sided opinion about themselves¹¹. Therefore, it is presumed that IA may cause shyness, social anxiety, and embarrassment congruity among affectees¹². Self-awareness, feeling of disgrace, identity expressions and requirement for seclusion expounds socially sensitive behavior of imaginary audience adolescents^{13, 14}. Ryn and Kuezkowski,¹⁵ reported that adolescents having doubt bond with their parents indicated reliable result score on imaginary audience scale. Adolescents Pf type also thinks the same way, their behavior is influenced by feeling of indestructibility, which is observed, and risk taking behavior¹⁶. Pf affecters are beset by malaise narcissism and self-importance¹⁷. Teenagers with IA traits have no positive contribution to society because of their negative thinking style and orientation. Elkind associated egocentrism with adolescence⁵, but some researchers established that adults were also susceptible to develop geocentrism¹⁸. Galavoki⁷ conducted a study to confirm Elkind's theory of adolescent with IA and Pf. The main objective of the research was to test Piaget's explanation for egocentrism and its growing criteria with age. Health risk behavior e.g. eating disorder, cigarette smoking, and the substance use are also investigated in relation with geocentrism¹⁹. Another study suggests geocentrism as a prominent predictor of online risk behavior²⁰. Depression among college students is common.

Normally during this transitory period, many students feel joy, worries, concern and passion at the same time some develop depression. These depressive symptoms may be a reaction to score good grades, concerns about future, away from home etc. Girls may experience more depression as compared to boys. It may be girls face unique socio cultural, psychological, biological factors, lower social status and unequal power and workload²¹⁻²³. In order to verify relationship between geocentrism and depression 152 participants between the ages of 18-25 were tested. The result indicated positive relationship between two. Psychologists ignored the phenomenon of IA, but the construct of IA was again taken up for study to find out the behavioral problems of adolescents. Likewise, IA and its relation to depression in Pakistani college students were never given attention. Therefore, the present study took initiatives to find out gender role not only in depression but also in geocentrism construct of imaginary audience.

METHODOLOGY:

In the present study the sample consisted of N=600 (boys = 300, girls = 300) participants. Out of these 27 participants did not complete the questionnaires. So, remaining 573 participants were included in the study. As a result, 299 boys and 274 girls participated in the study. The data was collected using purposive sampling technique from different colleges of Peshawar (KPK). Age range of the sample was 17-22 years (M=19, SD=1.47). The scale was devised by Elkind and Bowen,²⁴ in order to measure eth response of adolescents in different situations and highlight their thinking process. The response of the

adolescents was obtained through questionnaire regarding their daydreaming and different social events, which affected their popularity. The reliability of the scale on the present sample is $\alpha = .831$. This inventory was developed to measure the symptoms of depression²⁵. It is a self-evaluation questionnaire comprising 21 items. The time allowed 5 minutes to the subjects to put circle on the number that described the best. The ages of the subjects for BDI are ranged between 13 years to 80 years. Score of 14-19 indicates mild depression, 20 to 28 are indicative of moderate depression and 29-63 shows severe depression. In this study the Cronbach alpha reported 0.799. Permission of the concerned college authorities was obtained to contact the participants for collecting data. The participants were informed about the type of study and its objectives. They were assured that the data would be kept confidential and will be used for research purpose only. Questionnaire was given to the volunteers" along with written and verbal instructions. The subjects were given consent forms besides NIAS and BDI. Those who needed clarification were also obliged now. Data of 27 subjects was discarded being unsatisfactory. Remaining filled questionnaire of 573 participants was processed.

RESULTS:

In order to get effective result, the missing data was handled through SPSS version 20. Those questionnaires, which were completely empty, deleted using stepwise deletion technique. Then Pearson correlation is conducted on New Imaginary Audience Scale, and Beck Depression Inventory with age variable to determine their association. The correlation is found for NIAS ($r = .121^{**}$, $p < .001$) and BDI ($r =$

$.100^{*}$, $p < .05$). The significant correlation shows that the status of the data is missing at random. The missing data is replaced by linear interpolation method. In the last 529 questionnaires are evaluated for NIAS and 528 for BDI. Further Q-Q plot and histogram shows that the data is normally distributed, as illustrated in Figure 1, 2 and 3. Later t-test was applied to find out gender differences on NIAS and Depression.

Figure1: Q-Q Plot of The Sample of NIAS and BDI

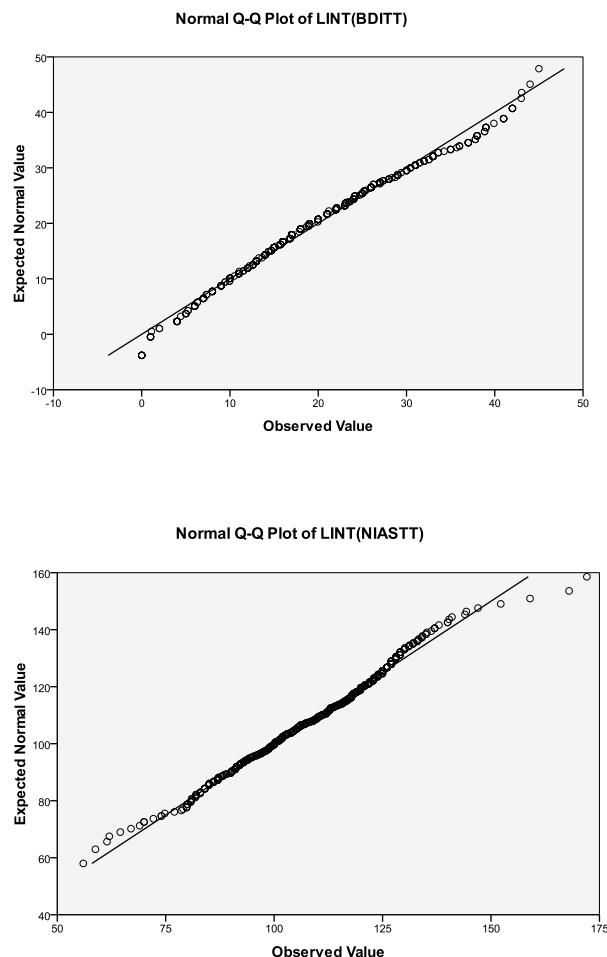


Figure 2: Histogram Showing That the Data is Normally Distributed on NIAS (N=529)

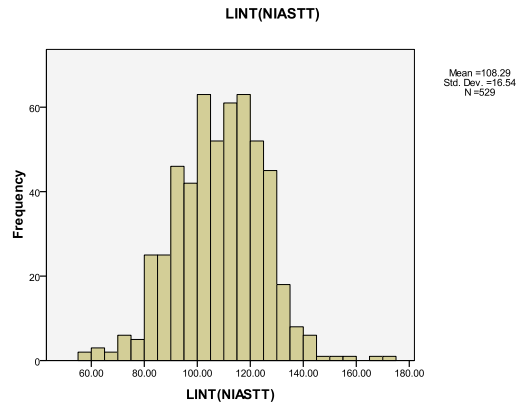


Figure 3: Histogram Showing That The Data was Normally Distributed on BDI (N=528)

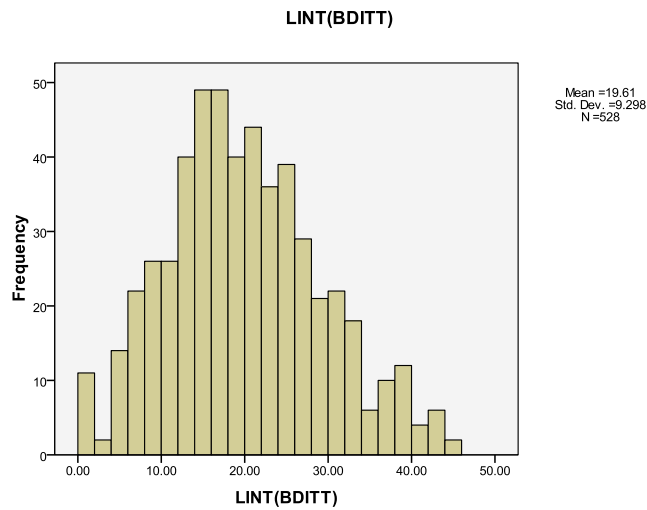


Table 1: Gender Difference Among Students on New Imaginary Audience Scale (N=529)

	Boys (260)	Girls (269)	P
Variable	M (SD)	M (SD)	
NIAS	106.45 (18.4)	110.1 (14.2)	.01

Table 1 shows the comparison between boys and girls on NIAS. Significant gender

differences were found between boys and girls. The result suggests that girls score high on NIAS as compared to boys.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and T-Value Showing Gender Differences of Students on Depression (N=528)

	Boys (259)	Girls (269)	P
Variable	M (SD)	M (SD)	
Depression	20.94 (10.1)	18.32 (8.3)	.02

The results revealed gender differences on BDI scores. However, it further indicates that boy's scores on depression are slightly high as compared to girls.

DISCUSSION:

Imaginary audience is a phenomenon pertaining to adolescence. This phenomenon has been extensively researched but few researchers have paid attention to NIAS with young adults. The present research is focused on NIAS among the student's sample. Gender differences coming to surface proves the hypothesis that imaginary audience is higher among girls in comparison to boys, could be on account of socialization to which male and female students are exposed under social cultural pressure. Girls are focused on the issues of identity and career, which may push them to egocentrism. Brody²⁵ was of the view that adolescent boys suppressed their emotional expressions whereas girls also did not express socially unacceptable emotions like anger. Peterson and Roscoe,²⁶ concluded that college students exhibited more IA as compared to subjects. Egocentrism was investigated among Canadian adolescents who displayed depressive symptoms. The study revealed that the girls were distinct and self-conscious in comparison to

boys. The researchers also found relationship between social class and geocentricism²⁸. The data was also analyzed to find gender differences in students' sample about depression. The research proved that depression was more common in girls as compared to boys^{29, 30}. The research also led to mixed result among the students, for example no gender difference was found in students displaying depression symptoms³⁰. Moeini et al,³¹ also suggested girls are more susceptible to depression whereas in some studies man were reported to be showing more depressive symptoms as compared to women³². This data indicated that boys got high score on BDI as compared to girls. This might be since in our culture males have to shoulder more responsibilities than women as they have to bear the pressure of jobs and supporting their families. Age of adulthood is immaterial because the males are brought up in social conditions where family responsibility becomes integral part of their personalities. Depressive symptoms common in students are due to academic problems, loneliness,

economic problem and relationship with other students.

CONCLUSION:

Summarizing the aforesaid factual position, it is concluded that there are gender differences on NIAS and BDI. Girls score more on NIAS as compared to boys. The boys are more prone to depressive symptoms during student life.

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CONTRIBUTORS

1. **Ume Kalsoom** - Concept & Design; Drafting Manuscript; Supervision; Final Approval
2. **Sabeen Rahim** - Data Analysis/Interpretation; Critical Revision
3. **Huma Akbar** - Data Acquisition



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