Method

Participants

Sixty-four participants were recruited for this study. The clinical group was comprised of participants who were referred to the Center for Anxiety and Stress Disorders at Suffolk University and were diagnosed with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) using a combination of self-report assessment and the Anxiety Disorders Interview Schedule for DSM-IV (ADIS). The ADIS is a semistructured diagnostic interview for DSM-IV that assesses the diagnosis of anxiety disorders. Participants included students, faculty, and staff from Suffolk University, with a range of demographic characteristics, including age, gender, and ethnicity. The mean age of the participants was 33.8 years (SD = 9.6), and 57% were female.

Measures

To test the hypothesis that the GAD sample would report more experiential avoidance, fear of emotions, and thought suppression than the non-GAD sample, a one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with group (GAD vs. non-GAD) as the independent variable. MANOVA was chosen because it allows for the simultaneous analysis of multiple dependent variables, which can be correlated or dependent on each other. The dependent variables included experiential avoidance, fear of emotions, and thought suppression.

Results

A Bonferroni correction was applied to the p-values to control for the increased risk of type I error due to multiple comparisons. The results indicated a significant main effect for group on all three dependent variables, with the GAD group reporting higher levels of experiential avoidance, fear of emotions, and thought suppression than the non-GAD group. The mean differences and effect sizes (Cohen’s d) are as follows:

- Experiential avoidance: GAD, M = 2.03, SD = 0.86; non-GAD, M = 1.58, SD = 0.72, d = 0.66
- Fear of emotions: GAD, M = 5.68, SD = 1.82; non-GAD, M = 4.58, SD = 1.46, d = 0.70
- Thought suppression: GAD, M = 1.85, SD = 0.86; non-GAD, M = 1.45, SD = 0.72, d = 0.50

Conclusion

The findings support the hypothesis that the GAD sample would report more experiential avoidance, fear of emotions, and thought suppression than the non-GAD sample. These results are consistent with previous research on GAD and support the development of acceptance-based approaches to treating this disorder. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms through which these constructs may influence the development and maintenance of GAD.

References


