

Social anxiety and active learning discomfort: The role of classroom comfortability and professor-student rapport

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Introduction

Despite the general belief that active learning is beneficial for student learning, evidence has been largely mixed when comparing performance and engagement across courses that implement active learning and those that do not (Bernstein, 2018).

To date, little research has looked at individual differences in student populations that might contribute to the effectiveness of active learning techniques.

Study 1: Testing the Role of Rapport

In study 1, we sought to replicate the finding that social anxiety is positively associated with active learning discomfort (Cohen et al., 2019) and to investigate whether professor-student rapport serves to moderate this relationship.

H1: Social Anxiety will be positively correlated with Active Learning Discomfort

H2: This relationship will weak under high levels of professor student-rapport but strong under low levels of student rapport.

126 College students participate through Prolific™, and online data collection platform.

Study 1

Social anxiety scale

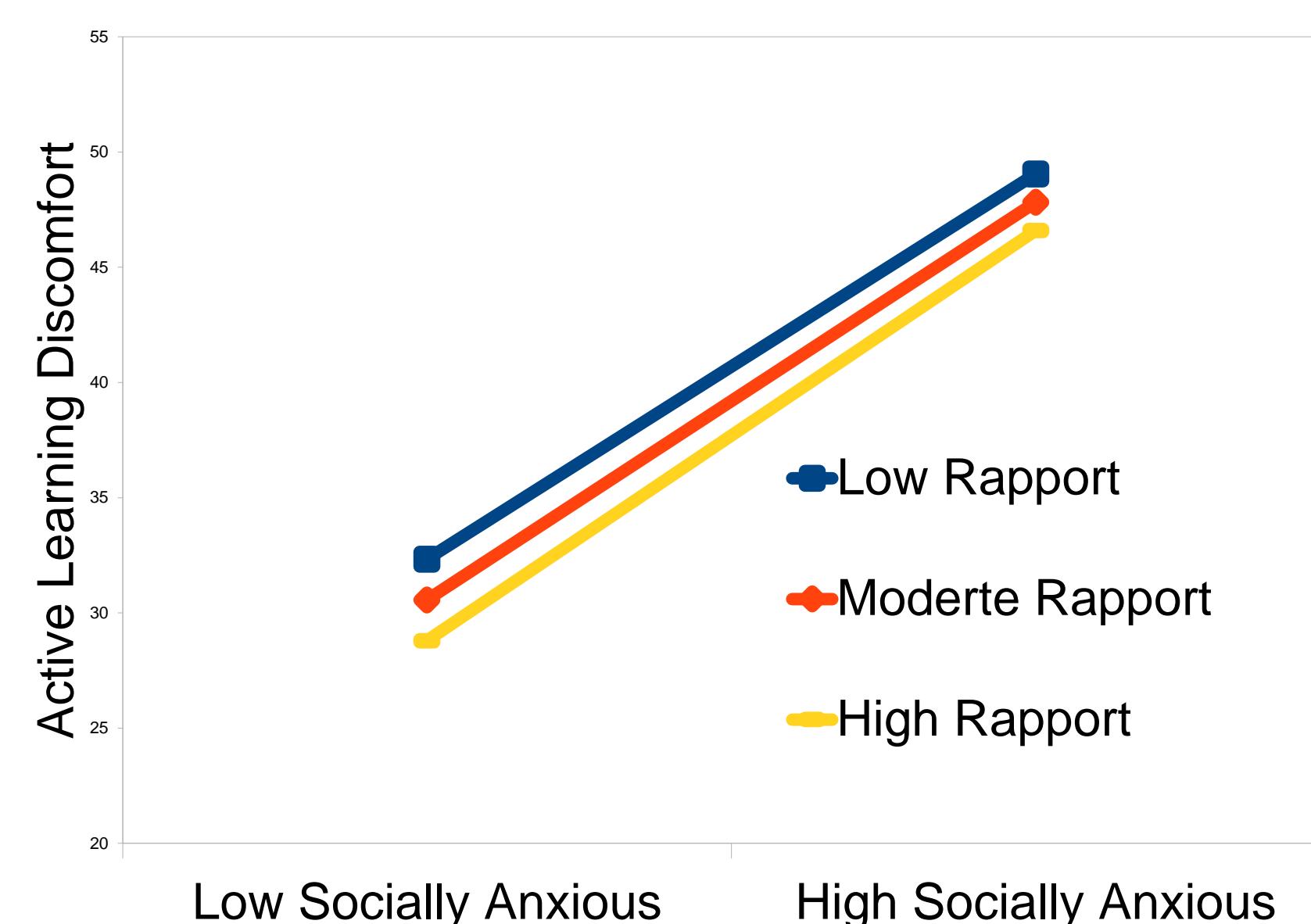
Professor-student rapport scale

Active Learning Discomfort Scale

Participants asked to think about a recent class.

Study 1: Results

Correlation Matrix	Active Learning Discomfort	Professor-Student Rapport
Active Learng Discomfort	1	
Professor-student Rapport	-0.266*	1
Social Anxiety	0.718*	-0.203*



Social anxiety was positively correlated with active learning discomfort, but rapport did not moderate this relationship.

Study 2: Testing the Role of Comfortability

H1: Social Anxiety will be positively correlated with Active Learning Discomfort.

H2: This relationship will be weak under high levels of classroom comfortability but strong under low levels of classroom comfortability.

120 College students participate through Prolific™, and online data collection platform.

Study 2

Social anxiety scale

Professor-student rapport scale

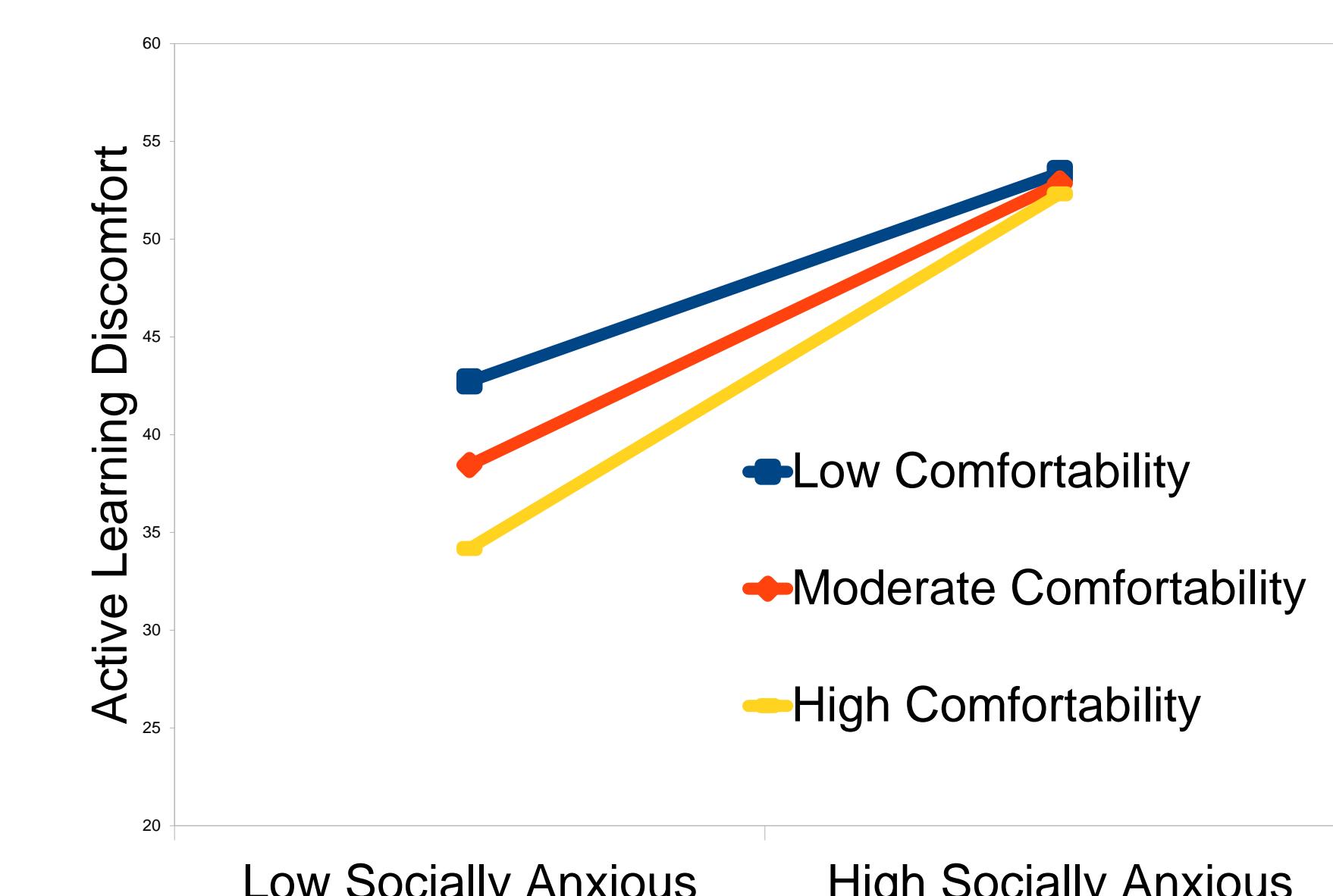
Classroom Comfortability Scale

Active Learning Discomfort Scale

Participants asked to think about a recent class.

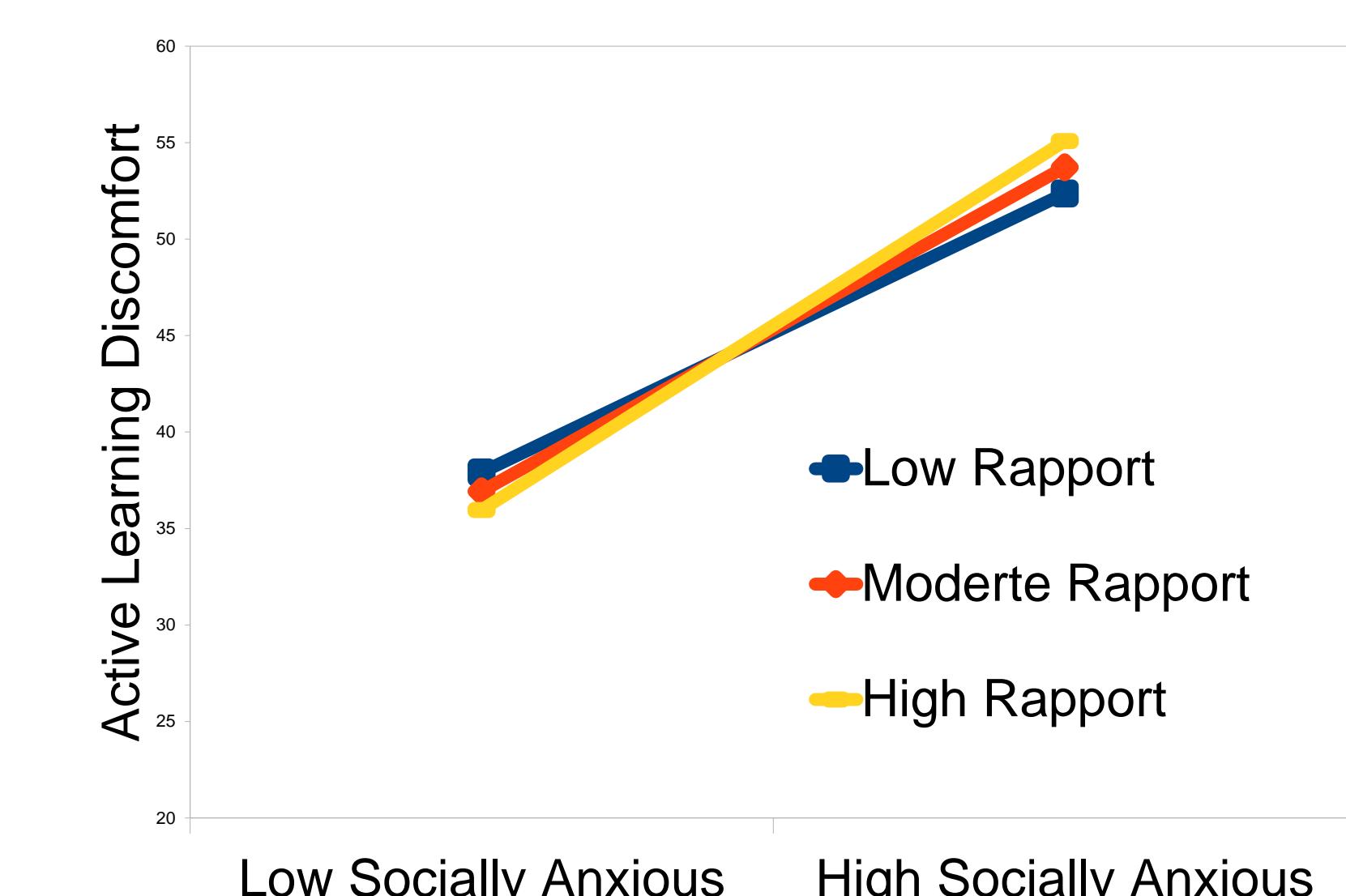
Study 2: Results

Correlation Matrix	Active Learning Discomfort	Classroom Comfortability
Active Learng Discomfort	1	
Classroom Comfortability	-0.401*	1
Social Anxiety	0.674*	-0.374*



Social anxiety was positively associated with active learning discomfort, and classroom comfortability moderated this relationship in an unexpected way.

Rapport did not have an impact on the social anxiety and active learning discomfort relationship.



Conclusions

Students who experience social anxiety are more likely to feel discomfort in an active learning environment, but neither rapport nor comfortability reduced discomfort for highly anxious students.

Future work will investigate the impact of discomfort on performance and other ways to reduce comfort in socially anxious students.