



*Anxiety among Students According to their Academic Level and
Extracurricular Activities*

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*A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of
the Degree Bachelor in psychology*

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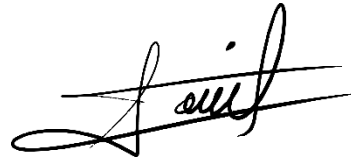
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Signatures:

Akila Sarirete on Behalf of Dr. Linda Maloul

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Akila Sarirete', written over two horizontal lines.

According to The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, (DSM- 5) classifies generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) as an anxiety disorder characterized by excessive, uncontrollable and often irrational worry about everyday things that is disproportionate to the actual source of worry. The minimum duration to be diagnosed with GAD is 6 months; it could vary in some cases and ages. Researchers all around the world have found a correlation between GAD caused by one's academic performance to further examine the effects of academic induced GAD and its comorbid, is a co-occurrence of more than one disorder in the same individual, conditions such as depression in Saudi Arabia. Inam, et.al (2015), hypothesizes that anxiety and depression is common among freshmen medical students in a medical college of Saudi Arabia. The aim of this study is to measure anxiety among university students according to their academic levels and extracurricular activities.

Two hundred eighty-eight male students and 105 female students were recruited from College of Medicine, Qassim University to perform a cross-sectional study which includes 1st, 2nd & 3rd year students. All students were given a self-administered questionnaire and The Aga Khan University Anxiety and Depression Scale (AKUADS). Later, data analysis was completed by Epi Info which indicated that females had a higher rate of anxiety and depression compared to males. First year students of both genders reported being most depressed, followed by third year students, pre-medical students, and second year students. Inam, et.al (2015) suggested ideas for future studies. For example, to identify what causes the stressors and compare the results of multiple majors, as well as, graduate programs.

Alkot, Alnewirah, Bagasi, Alshehri, and Bawazeer (2017), conducted a cross-sectional study in which 305 male students and 103 female students were randomly selected from Makkah Al-

Mukaramah, College of Islamic Studies, College of Engineering, and Islamic Architecture at Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia. To estimate the anxiety and depression rate and levels among medical versus non-medical students. Participants were given a Beck's Depression Inventory Questionnaire the results showed that freshmen men were more likely than women to suffer from depression (31.2% to 26.4% respectively). In the College of Medicine and Engineering in sophomore students, depression levels were most identical (36.9% to 34.8%). College of Islamic Studies recorded the lowest rate (22.7%) while College of Medicine female students' reported 31.1% and 21.1 respectively.

Alkot, et.al highlighted some of the limitations of their study, such as the fact it was conducted only at one university and not at other institutions in Saudi Arabia, so it may not represent all students. There is no College of Engineering and Islamic Architecture at Umm Al-Qura University for female students, so the results of female students are in the College of Medical and Islamic Studies only.

Most recently, Al-Khani, Sarhandi, Zaghoul, Ewid, and Saquib (2019), examined the association between sleep quality and mental health (e.g., depression, anxiety, stress) academic performance among medical students. All 446 medical students were emailed with the survey but 206 students responded to the survey. Out of 206 students 76% were male and the mean age of the students were 20.8 years. The survey included two tools the "Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index" (PSQI) and the "Depression Anxiety Stress Scales". It also included self-reporting of grade point average (GPA). Later, data analysis was conducted through SPSS by using an independent sample T-Test with the significance level of 0.05. The result showed that students who are physically inactive and who spend more time on screens tend to have poor sleep more often.

63.2% report poor sleep, 42% of students reported depression, 53% anxiety, and 31% stress. Al-khani, et.al discuss a limitation of the study, it is important to keep in mind the high rate of missing data in the study while interpreting the results.

Another research conducted in Greece found that Nursing students suffered from a massive stress in their university stages. The study showed the prevalence of psychological distress, depression and anxiety between students who chose to study nursing as a major in Greece. 170 students (136 females) and (34 males) their mean age was 21.5 years. Completed 3 self-report assessments: The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), the Beck Depression Inventory II (BDI-II) and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). In the Result, 52.4% of the learners experienced depressive symptoms (34.7% mild, 12.9% moderate and 4.7% severe). Especially, students in their first 3 years of college scored higher and no differences showed in stress and anxiety among genders.

In another major, a study investigated stress among interior design students and furniture in King Abdul-Aziz University. The researchers took into consideration the university year and gathered a sample of 59 students from different years/levels of studying the major. The method used was a questionnaire called Ages and stages questionnaire (ASQ). The result showed that the least number of respondents was from the second year of college (22%), 33.5% from the third year, while the largest number of respondents 4th level/ 4th year (47.5%) was from various causes.

In another research, there is little data on the relationship between anxiety and suicidal thoughts and extracurricular activities among college students. The purpose of the current study

is to investigate the connections between extracurricular activities, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. First, it was assumed that greater involvement in extracurricular activities would be correlated with greater worry. Second, it was predicted that elevated anxiety would act as a mediator between involvement and overt suicide ideation. Third, it was predicted that elevated anxiety would act as a mediator between involvement and implicit suicide thoughts. Fourth, it was anticipated that thwarted belongingness rather than perceived burdensomeness would be a better predictor of suicide ideation. 80 college freshmen with an average age of 19.11 (SD=2.06) made up the sample. A computerized test that examined implicit suicide thoughts was also completed by participants in addition to various self-report surveys. Results showed that more participation was related to lower anxiety.

These studies show the effect of classifying generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and its comorbid disorders on academic performance to some extent; however, numerous flaws limit the efficacy of each study in understanding the effect of GAD and its comorbid disorders on academic performance. For example, each study does not measure GAD or depression at the baseline, the samples were mostly male dominant. The following study aims to have a female sample size. It also will focus on establishing a baseline level for each participant in order to compare it to the levels of anxiety before an assessment.

Population Methodology

Targeted number of participants: 60 participants (50 female, 10 male) will be recruited from Effat University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Mostly Arabs with an age range of 18 to 27 years. All participants will be current or previous peers.

Sampling Procedure

This study is based on a survey/questionnaire. After surveys are answered by the students the researcher will analyze the data using the Spss and Excel according to the anxiety assessment.

Study Design

Anxiety will be measured by the Aga Khan University scale designed for measuring Anxiety and Depression. The study will be a between-subject design; all participants will be randomly chosen. Each participant will be timed while they complete an assessment, which includes a series of 25 questions. Later, the data will be compared to find similarities and differences between different levels to determine the effects of anxiety in the students' academic levels.

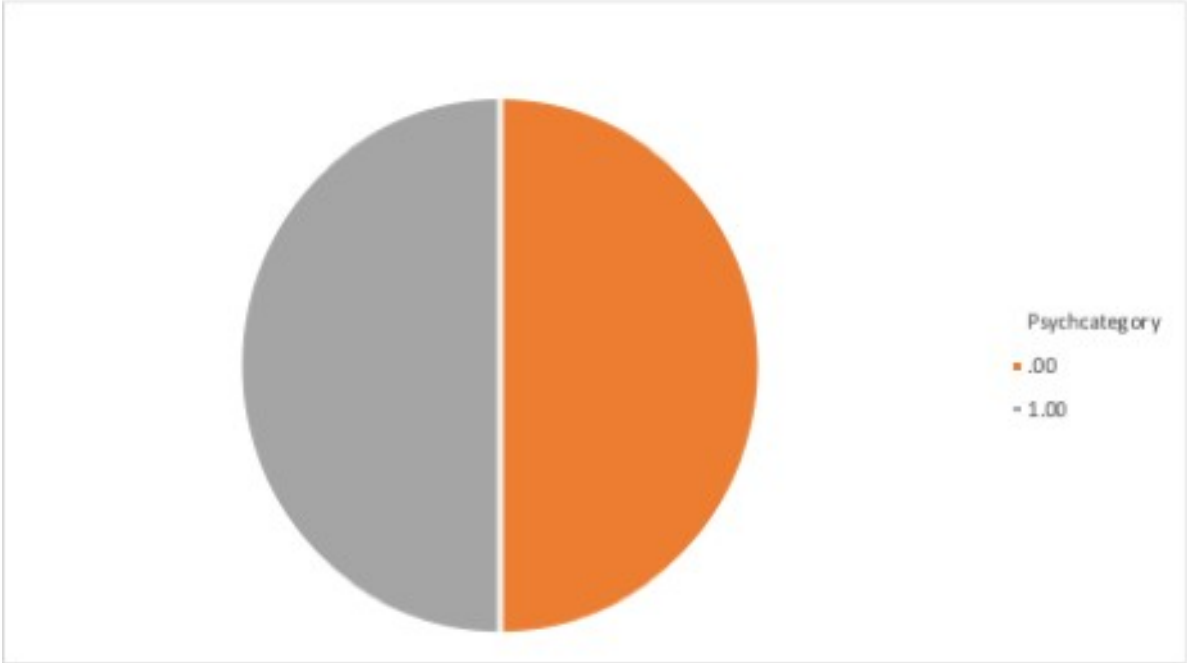
Reliability and Validity

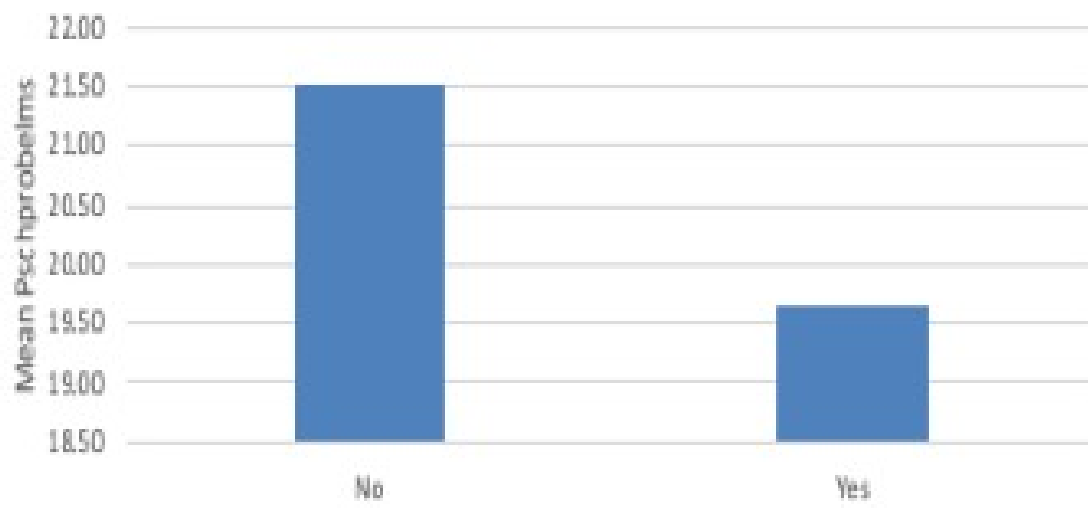
According to Aga Khan University (1998), this scale is an indigenous screening instrument developed in Urdu for anxiety-depression syndromes at the Aga Khan University. It has been developed from the complaints of 150 anxious and depressed patients presenting to a non-specialty clinic and has been validated in 53 patients in a psychiatry clinic; the questionnaire has 25 items, 13 psychological and 12 somatic. At a score of 20 it has a sensitivity of 66%, a specificity of 79%, a positive predictive value of 83 and a negative predictive value of 60. In comparison with available instruments in Urdu, comprising of either psychological or somatic items, this scale includes both, which increases its reliability for use as a screening instrument by Community Health Workers in a primary health care setting, in epidemiologic work in Pakistan and in transcultural psychiatric research (JPMA 48:261,1998).

Result and Discussion Result

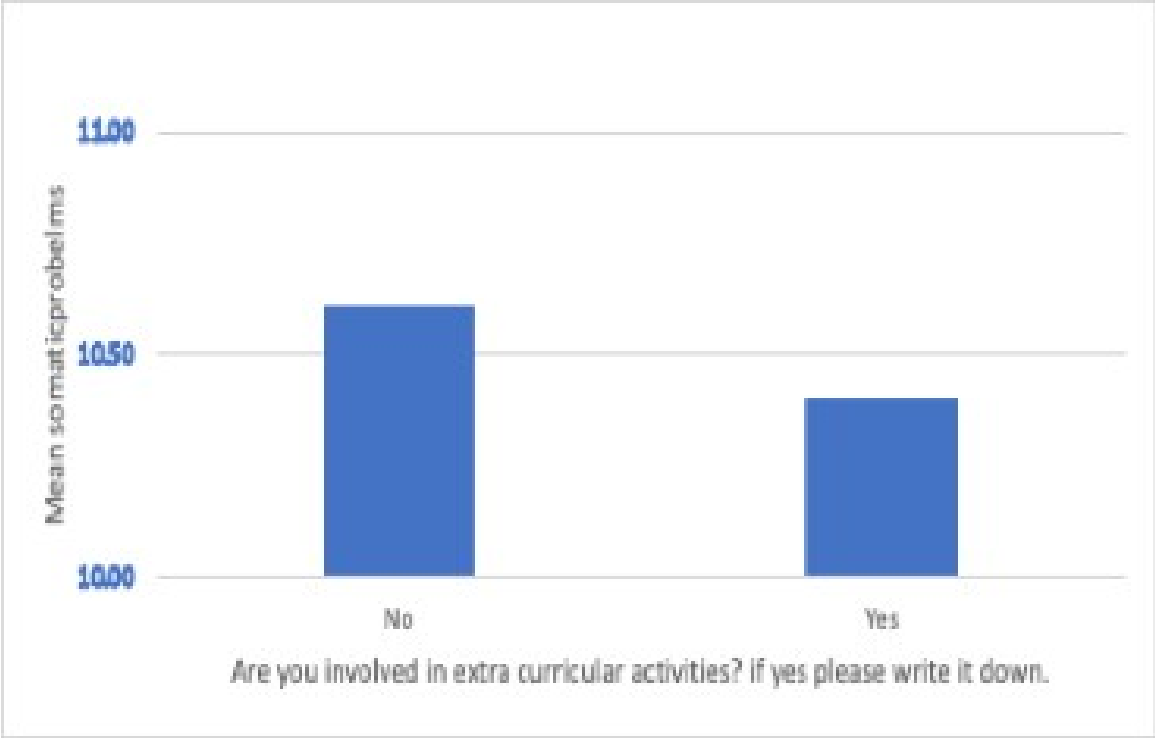
The result showed that 52.2% of the students suffered from anxiety throughout their academic years, specifically sophomores and freshmen had higher levels of anxiety according to the Aga Khan scale. The other 47.8% of students measured average anxiety and depression levels. Based on the extra activities results, it showed that the students who had extracurricular activities showed fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression levels. On the other hand, the students who weren't involved in any type of extracurricular activities showed higher symptoms of anxiety

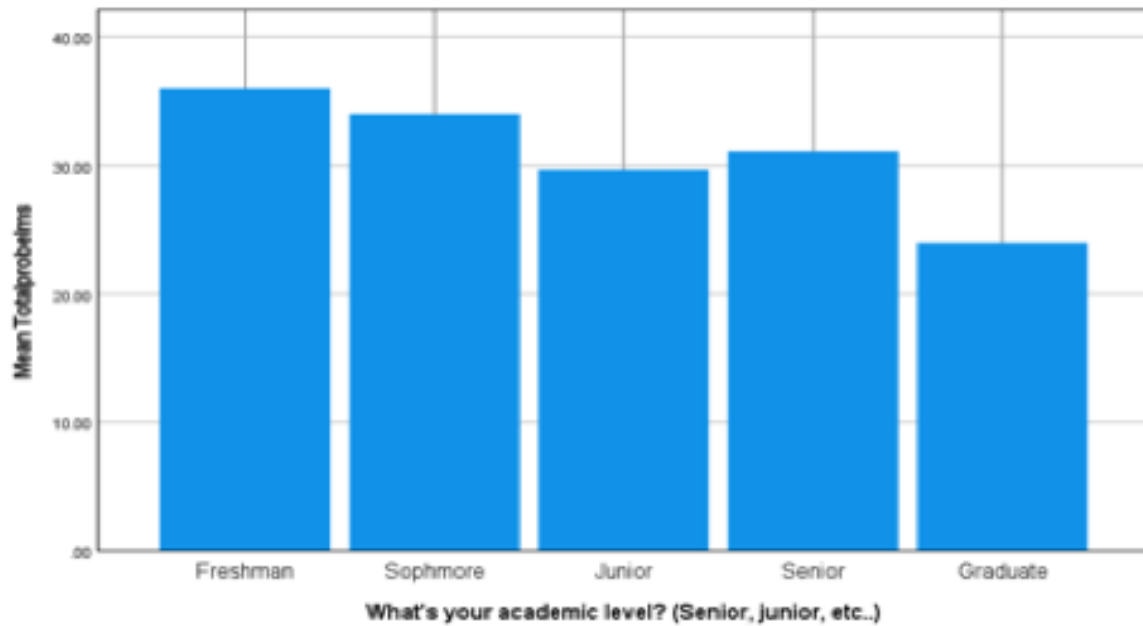
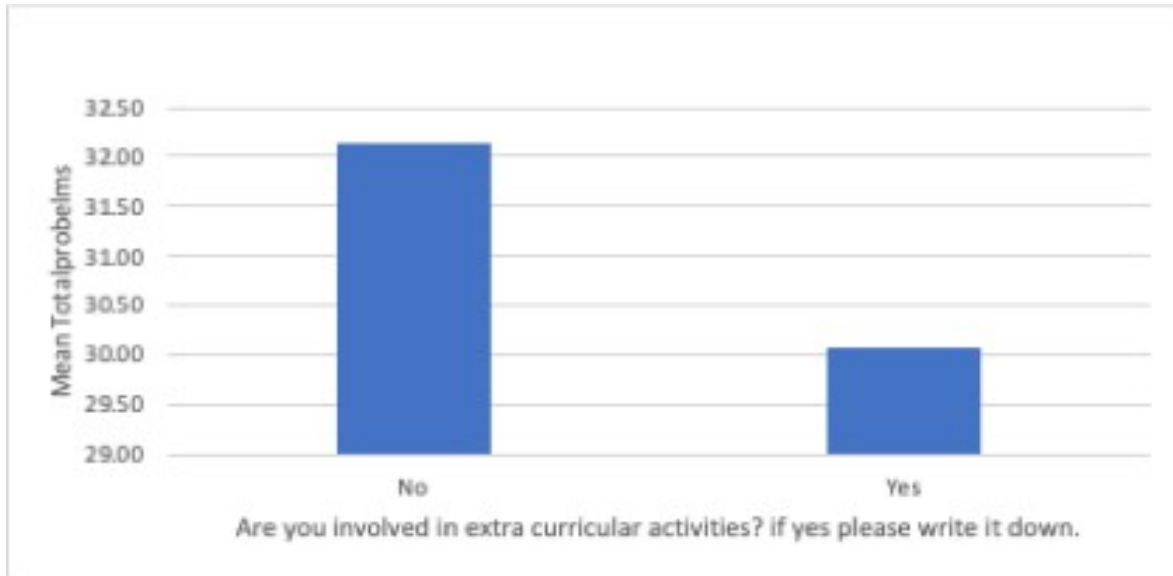
and depression levels.





Are you involved in extra curricular activities? if yes please write it down.





Discussion

Several studies were conducted on undergraduates students during their freshman year and the result showed that the students of first year in many majors were suffering from the highest level of anxiety. Due to the more university hours in freshman year compared to the senior year which are less.

According to Aiesha Gaither research (2000), The findings in this study show that freshmen reported 37% more stressful experiences than college seniors who reported 32%. This study found that college freshmen reported more stressful experiences such as too many things to do at one time, while most seniors reported situations such as making important decisions about their future.

Many interviews conducted among students of freshmen and seniors showed that freshmen learners have to deal with many quizzes, exams, and assignments which caused them a higher anxiety level. However, students in their senior year have less work load, classes, and exams and can have time for extracurricular activities which can help them to reduce their anxiety intensity.

Implications

This research could be used by Counselors and Academic Coaches to promote their perspectives on the reasons and efforts. Managing strategies and initiatives to know the basic causes of anxiety and depression may cause problems among university students. University Students will benefit instantly from this research since its findings may convince them to consider alternative coping methods in order to reduce their levels of anxiety. Researchers might utilize the findings of this study to investigate possible initiations and the worth of various therapy modes in the treatment of various mental health conditions.

Limitations

Some components could have affected the external validity of the study. This study used convenience sampling which could have possibly led to biased results. Some participants might have completed the survey in a hurry due to the workload they had.

Since the research was conducted online it introduced a lot of confounding variables that could not be controlled and affected internal validity in multiple ways. Standard procedures such as time of day, environment, and amount of rest each participant had before starting the survey.

Participants might have known the demand characteristics of the study as participants were recent and previous peers.

Conclusion

This research found some evidence that suggests freshman and sophomore students have higher levels of anxiety and depression compared to juniors and seniors. Freshman and sophomore students were anxious about their academic performances whereas juniors and seniors were anxious about their future which is supported by Inam, et.al (2015). Some factors could have influenced the results of the study. Most juniors and seniors are active members of one or more clubs which increases the activity level which is also demonstrated by Al-Khani, et.al (2019)

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