

AN EDUCATIONAL STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF FUTURE ANXIETY ON THE ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (STUDENTS OF PRINCE SETAM BIN ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY)¹

UM ESTUDO EDUCACIONAL SOBRE O EFEITO DA ANSIEDADE FUTURA NO PROGRESSO ACADÊMICO DE ESTUDANTES UNIVERSITÁRIOS (ALUNOS DA UNIVERSIDADE PRÍNCIPE SETAM BIN ABDULAZIZ)

Dr. Mohamed Bahaa Al-Nour Abdel-Rahimm Othman

Assistant Professor, College of Arts and Science, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

mohamedbnoor1980@gmail.com

Dr. Musalam Said Mohamed Al-Dosary

Assistant Professor, College of Arts and Science, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

muslim391@gmail.com

Dr. Mohamed Atallah Al-Azab Ismail

Assistant Professor, College of Arts and Science, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

gm@jdeed-rc.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to An educational study of the effect of future anxiety on the academic progress of university students. Generally, Future anxiety means the score that a student obtains on the Future Anxiety Scale. This study aims at identifying the level of future anxiety among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdul-Aziz University. It attempts to highlight the differences between them in light of variable according to gender. It also seeks to underscore the impact of future anxiety on their academic achievement and the reasons for this anxiety and the suggested treatment. To achieve this goal, the researcher uses the descriptive analytical method to collect and analyze the data. The study is conducted on a sample of (60) male and female students in the academic year (2022/2023). The study sample was selected using stratified random sampling.

Keywords: Anxiety, Education, Academic Achievement, Students.

¹ This research project is supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, research project no. (18671/02/2021)

RESUMO

O objetivo deste estudo foi realizar um estudo educacional sobre o efeito da ansiedade futura no progresso acadêmico de estudantes universitários. Geralmente, Ansiedade futura significa a pontuação que um aluno obtém na Escala de Ansiedade Futura. Este estudo tem como objetivo identificar o nível de ansiedade futura entre os alunos da Universidade Príncipe Sattam Bin Abdul-Aziz. Tenta destacar as diferenças entre eles à luz das variáveis de acordo com o gênero. Procura também sublinhar o impacto da ansiedade futura no seu desempenho acadêmico e as razões dessa ansiedade e o tratamento sugerido. Para atingir esse objetivo, o pesquisador utiliza o método analítico descritivo para coletar e analisar os dados. O estudo é realizado numa amostra de (60) estudantes do sexo masculino e feminino no ano letivo (2022/2023). A amostra do estudo foi selecionada por meio de amostragem aleatória estratificada.

Palavras-chave: Ansiedade, Educação, Desempenho Acadêmico, Estudantes.

Introduction

Future anxiety is considered one of the most serious phenomena that societies with all their castes currently face; yet, its negative impact is most evident at the university stage as it is the most crucial stage. In this stage, a student's career is determined. That is why the view of the future of most students in this stage is negative due to the disruption of life and the hard economic and social conditions the world is experiencing today. This, in turn, affects their academic achievement and reduces their desire for working hard and achieving excellence. The impact of future anxiety among the youths is not only limited to their academic achievement, but it extends beyond the period of study to impact their employment, work, marriage and children. This negatively affects their whole personality, and as a result, they become harmful rather than beneficial to their nation.

University students are the backbone and wealth of nations. They represent great hopes for progress and development are placed in them. Thus, we find that advanced nations have put them at the forefront of their concerns, but ,due to the world's turmoil and economic, political and social conflicts, the university student's view of the future has changed and his/her hopes for it have been influenced. He/she is in terrible conflict and extreme fear which affect his/her academic achievement and quest for knowledge that he/she has becomes frustrated and tense. Therefore, this study examines the impact of future anxiety on the academic achievement of the

students of Prince Sattam University. This study is not the first of its kind. Yet, it is the first study to look into the effect of future anxiety on the academic achievement of the students.

Thus, the study seeks to find answers to the following questions:

What is the level of future anxiety among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University?

What is the difference between males and females in their level of future anxiety?

How does future anxiety affect students' academic achievement at Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University?

What are the reasons for future anxiety among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University?

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

To determine the level of future anxiety among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University.

To determine the difference between males and females in their level of future anxiety.

To determine the impact of future anxiety on the academic achievement of the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University.

To determine the reasons for future anxiety among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University and suggest solutions to them.

The importance of this study lies in the segment it investigates which is university students who play a crucial and effective role in the development of their societies. They are the hope of the nation and its expected future. The undergraduate level is considered the most serious and general educational stage that a student goes through as the last stage of his/her education and on which his/her future career and work depends. Therefore, the concern about studying the effect of the phenomenon of future anxiety on students' academic achievement is an interest in the whole society as they are its leaders and hope for progress and development. Neglecting and ignoring the problems of this stage and its students is a time bomb

that may negatively affect society and make these students dependent on their societies and may even sometimes turn them to enemies, ruining their societies instead of building them. In addition, this might result in behavioral and mental disorders which threaten society's peace and security.

Methodology

The research is conducted according to the descriptive analytical approach to identify the level of future anxiety among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University. This approach seeks to identify the difference between males and females in their level of future anxiety and the impact of future anxiety on the academic achievement of the subjects. This is to come up with the findings of the study through organizing, classifying, analyzing and interpreting them as well as drawing generalizations and deductions.

Hypotheses of the Study

There is prevalence of future anxiety among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University.

There is a statistically significant difference in the level of future anxiety among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University according to gender (males and females).

There is a statistically significant correlation between the level of future anxiety of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University students and their level of academic achievement.

Samples of the study

The research population involves twenty thousand male and female students at Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Academic achievement: It is the general grade obtained by the student in the previous academic year (2021/2022).

Before embarking on examining the specified samples of the study, the researcher sheds light on the definition of both Future Anxiety and Academic Achievement.

Future Anxiety

Scholars have given numerous definitions of future anxiety in an attempt to identify a term of which an accurate description of it is understood. Among these definitions are the following:

Abdul Ghaffar (1977, 126) defined it as “fear of the future and its events that might threaten the existence of man or an individual’s humanity.”

Abdul-Khaliq (1989, 477) defined it as “an unpleasant emotion and recurrent feeling of threat or agony, discomfort and instability with a sense of extreme tension and constant unjustifiable fear that is often related to the future and the unknown”

Qassim Hadi Al-Aawadi stated that it is “a complex feeling of irrational fear resulting from the expectation of fear and the possibility of danger to man himself or his/her property from people.”

Al-Muhdi (2001, 10) described it as “a state of sensitivity that one perceives as fear of what the coming days hide.”

In light of these definitions, it is clear that future anxiety is a disturbed unpleasant emotional state that occurs to an individual from time to time and has several characteristics such as stress, distress, constant fear, discomfort, lack of psychological safety towards matters that threaten his/her value and entity and is associated with expecting an unknown danger that could occur in the future and this state might be temporary or permanent (Al-Sabawi, 2007; 61).

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is a pedagogical term that refers to the accomplished results of the pedagogical and educational process. It was defined by Hamdan (1986, 9) as: a group of learners' knowledge, skills, tendencies and observation resulting from the educational process and it is a factor that is dependent on or affected by other factors such as school administration, family, friends, educational techniques, school class, organizational regulations and others.

Reasons for Undergraduate Students' Future Anxiety

A negative and frustrated view of the future as well as lack of optimism and hope among the students of this stage.

The multiplicity of problems faced by undergraduate students and psychological and societal pressures, neglecting them and not trying to resolve or overcome them.

Undergraduate students' lack of responsibility, shirking it and blaming society and others.

Not setting goals and ambitions commensurate with the reality of the students of this stage because of fear of the future and world changes.

Undergraduate students' overthinking of the future and what awaits them, which affects their academic thought.

Undergraduate students' surrender to the problems of future anxiety which negatively affects their academic achievement.

Characteristics of Undergraduate Students with Future Anxiety

- 1- Extreme and constant fear of the future and the social, economic and political changes in the world around him/her.
- 2- Lack of effective and constructive participation in the university practical lessons and activities.

3- Lack of self-confidence in solving the simplest problems that might face him/her.

The impact of Future Anxiety on the Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Students

The phenomenon of future anxiety has a negative impact on undergraduate students' academic achievement and this is shown in the following:

It makes the student unqualified for a specific job or for completing the post-university stage by admitting to a particular program or obtaining a scholarship related to his/her academic level, which is shown by his/her grade or GPA.

Future anxiety disrupts a student's concentration and achievement and this is reflected in his/her forgetfulness of information and difficulty in remembering it at the time of selection. As a result, he/she makes many mistakes that might lead to his/her failure or success with poor grades.

Future anxiety distracts the student's thinking, so rather than being preoccupied with academic achievement and empowering it, he/she becomes distracted with what awaits him/her from the frightening future that threatens his/her life, which reduces his/her academic achievement.

The student begins to give flimsy excuses for his/her recurrent absence and weak academic achievement as well as diminishing the value of attainment, study, diligence and hard work.

The student views academic achievement as a waste of time and effort as there is no fruit behind it and therefore he/she do not exert effort in it.

The students live in a constant state of danger and insecurity due to future anxiety. They expect that their dreams and ambitions will not come true which limits their abilities to understand, attain and benefit from the course.

Practical Steps to Overcome Future Anxiety among Undergraduate Students:

The whole society must participate in finding solutions that face undergraduate students as they are the hope and future of the community. The

greatest problem that faces those students is that of future anxiety which greatly affects their academic level and academic achievement. The following are some practical steps that can reduce this phenomenon:

Parent's constant encouragement to their children for academic achievement while showing its importance and not to be distracted by the future until the time is right.

Constant advising and guidance from professors, supervisors and those involved in the educational process during this stage as well as urging students to strive and persevere and leave the result and what is related to the future to Almighty God.

Drawing hope and optimism on the faces of students and making them feel their active role in building their homelands and communities.

Activating the role of academic and psychological guidance and continually sitting with students who suffer from future anxiety, listening to them and talking to them till their condition improves.

Connecting students to the labor market and educating them about what it needs through faculty units and external visits to labor market fronts.

Procedures

Sample of the Study

The study sample was randomly selected, and it involved 120 students: 60 males and 60 females. 15 male and 15 female students were chosen from the following colleges:

- 1- Arts and Science
- 2- Engineering
- 3- Pharmacy
- 4- Business Administration

Study Tool and Scoring

The Future Anxiety Scale prepared by El-Mashaikhi (2009) was used with its final version consisting of 43 items distributed among 5 dimensions: negative thinking about the future, negative view of life, worrying about stressful life events, psychological manifestations of future anxiety and physical manifestations of future anxiety.

Each dimension of the scale has been scored separately and then its scores were tabulated. The results of the items were calculated as follows:

Table 1 - Dimension of the scale

Estimation	Applicable	Sometimes	Not Applicable
Grade	03	03	01

The overall score of the scale is between the lower grade (43) and the higher grade (129).

Validity and Reliability of the Tool

The validity and reliability extracted from El-Mashaikhi's (2009) scale were relied upon as it is highly valid and reliable and it was used several times. This scale is also modern and relevant to the sample of the current study due to the compatibility of social environment. The correlation coefficient value of the five dimensions ranged between 0.65 - 0.88, which indicates high and sufficient validity indices that can be trusted in the application of the scale in the current study. The reliability value of the scale's overall score was (0.90), which is a high value that reflects its reliability.

Table 2 – The future anxiety scale used in the study

No.	Item	Applicable	Not applicable	Sometimes
1	I feel disappointed whenever I think about the future.			
2	I am afraid of failing in the future.			
3	I am extremely anxious because of violence, extremism and terrorism.			
4	I feel nervous, stressed and unstable.			
5	I have feelings of general weakness, lack of energy and vitality.			
6	I create a state of stress and discomfort whenever I think about the future.			
7	I feel that my hopes and ambitions will not come true.			
8	I am bothered by the increasing expenses and burdens of marriage.			
9	I feel unable to deal with the difficulties that face me.			
10	I feel lethargic and muscle tension.			
11	My constant thinking of the future is the source of my anxiety.			
12	I build a feeling that the coming days will not be joyful.			
13	I am concerned about the increase in prices and high living costs.			
14	I feel doubtful, confused and troubled when I think about the future.			
15	I sometimes suffer from stomach discomforts.			
16	I feel concerned about how time passes quickly without achieving my goals.			
17	I fear that my life would change for the worse in the future.			
18	I am afraid to enter new relationships as I might fail.			
19	I find it difficult to plan for the future.			
20	I suffer from shortness of breath.			
21	I feel insecure whenever I think of the future.			
22	My view of life is full of pessimism.			
23	I was upset about the increase in divorce rate in the community.			
24	I feel poorly focused and absent-minded.			
25	I have sleep disorder.			
26	Future life problems impose themselves on my thought.			
27	The idea of death bothers me all the time.			
28	I feel pressured by my family's constant fear over my future.			
29	I feel that I will not fulfill myself.			
30	I feel that my heart is racing.			

31	I feel that the future does not carry any bright image.			
32	I fear that there will be some misfortunes in the future.			
33	I am busy thinking about my future.			
34	I feel distressed, sad and busy-minded.			
35	I complain of constant headache.			
36	The feeling of fear of the future has controlled me.			
37	I feel that the future carries a lot of difficulties.			
38	I fear lack of job opportunities after graduation.			
39	I feel unable to make decisions.			
40	I sweat buckets with no apparent reason.			
41	I feel that I will not be happy in my upcoming life.			
42	I am preoccupied with increasing life requirements and financial obligations.			
43	I suffer from high blood pressure.			

Discussion

What is the level of future anxiety among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University?

To answer this question, the arithmetic averages and standard deviations were calculated in order to identify the level of future anxiety in each of the five dimensions among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University. The arithmetic mean ranged between (2.30 – 3.61) with an average of (2.77), which is a medium level as shown in the following table:

Table 3 – Descriptive statistics of the results

Rank	No.	Dimension	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1	1	negative thinking about the future	2.81	0.565	Medium
2	2	negative view of life	3.61	0.473	Medium
3	3	worrying about the stressful life events,	2.71	0.358	High
4	4	psychological manifestations of future anxiety	2.42	0.445	High
5	5	physical manifestations of future anxiety	2.30	0.533	Medium
		Future anxiety as a whole	2.77	0.247	Medium

This result is consistent with those of Jabr's (2012) and Habib's (2013) studies which showed a medium level of future anxiety among members of the investigated sample, however, it disagreed with the study of Al-Sabawi (2007) and Mohamed (2010) which showed a high level of future anxiety among the members of the study sample.

This result can be interpreted as an answer to the fourth question of the research which is: What are the reasons for the students' of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University future anxiety?

The reasons that negatively affect students and their academic achievement are as follows:

Not being admitted to many of the university programs and its specializations due to the sufficiency of the labor market in those specializations and programs.

Suspending recruitments and reducing the degrees of government hiring which weakens students' ambition and thinking about the future.

Lack of job opportunities in students' fields of specialization which causes them to be uncreative and unable to keep pace with its development.

What is the difference between males and females in their level of future anxiety?

The T-test of two separate samples was used to identify the difference in the level of future anxiety according to gender (males and females). It was found that the extracted T-value is (2.71), which shows that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.01) between males and females in the average degrees of future anxiety in favor of females. This shows that females are more concerned about their future than males. This result is consistent with that of Ghorab's (2000), Al-Badri's (2003) and Mohamed's (2010) study while it disagreed with that of Othman (2006) which showed that there is a difference in the level of future anxiety according to gender in favor of males as well as that of Shamsan (2007) which revealed no difference in general anxiety among both genders.

This result can be explained by the fact that females are more concerned than males due to the following reasons:

Females limited job opportunities compared to males.

Females exert less effort in searching for a job or work than males.

Employers' desire to contract with males is stronger than their desire to contract with females.

How does future anxiety affect students' academic achievement at Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University?

To answer this question, the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the extent to which academic achievement is affected by future anxiety. The finding showed that the Pearson correlation coefficient value is (-0.855) which is statistically significant at the level of significance (0.01). This means that there is an inverse relationship between the future anxiety and the academic achievement of the members of the study sample. That is, the more future anxiety increases, the more the levels of academic achievement decreases and vice-versa. This finding is consistent with that of Paterson's (1979) and Useiry's (2007) study.

This result can be interpreted as leading the student to a state of pessimism from the future, worrying about the future, fearing expected social and economic problems, obsessive thoughts, fear of death and despair which in turn negatively

affects academic achievement, kills scientific competition among students as well as interest in lessons and being creative in them.

The study came up with the following results:

There is a moderate prevalence of future anxiety among the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University.

Female students are more concerned about their future than male students as the study showed that there is a statistical significant difference ($p = 0.01$) in the average scores of future anxiety between males and females in favor of females.

There is an inverse relation between future anxiety and academic achievement among the study subjects. This means that the more future anxiety increases, the lower academic achievement scores will be, and vice versa.

Concluding a number of reasons behind the increase of females' anxiety over their future.

Concluding a number of reasons behind the future anxiety of the students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University and proposing a number of solutions for them.

Conclusion

To conclude, Future Anxiety is one aspect that characterizes the academic life of students in any given community. In Prince Sattam Bin Abdelaziz University this aspect occupies a considerable space on the part of both the male as well as the female students. Therefore, after a lot of investigations and analysis the researcher finds that: future anxiety has become widespread among students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdel-Aziz University and that female students develop more anxiety as they are more concerned about their future compared to male peer male students. The study could identify a number of reasons for the increase of female students' anxiety because of their concern over their future. Moreover, the study finds that there are discrepancies in grades among the students which implies that the difference in their levels of future anxiety affects their academic achievement. There is an inverse

relationship between the future anxiety and the academic achievement of the members of the study sample. That is to say, the more future anxiety goes up, the more the levels of academic achievement decreases and vice-versa.

Acknowledgement

This research project is supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, research project no. (18671/02/2021)

REFERENCES

- Al-Badri, Nabil Abdel-Aziz. (2003). *Anxiety and its Relation to Some Variables among University Students*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Tikrit, Iraq.
- Jabr, Ahmed. (2012). *The Big Five Personality Traits and Their Relation to Future Anxiety among Palestinian University Students in Gaza Governorates*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Al-Azhar University, Gaza.
- Habib, Asaad. (2013). *Future Anxiety and its Relation to the Level of Ambition among Students of Al-Basra University*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Al-Bosra, Iraq.
- Hamdan, Mohamed Zeyad. (1986). *Academic Achievement*. Damascus: Modern Education House.
- Al-Sabaawi, Fadila Aarafat. (2007). *Future anxiety among the Students of the Faculty of Education and its Relation to Gender and Specialization: A Field Study on a Sample of Students from the Faculty of Education, the University of Mosul*.
- Shamsan, Mazin Ahmed. (2007). A Study of General Anxiety among a Sample of Students at Aden University, *Journal of Educational Studies and Research*, No. 4.
- Abdul-Khaliq, Ahmed Mohamed. (1989). *Personality Tests*. Alexandria: University Knowledge House for Printing and Publishing.
- Abdul-Ghafar, Abdel-Salam. (1977). *Introduction to Mental Health*. Westren Renaissance House.

Al-Uteiby, Hazal Bin Abdullah. (2016). The Effect of Future Anxiety on the Academic achievement of High School Students, *Journal of the Faculty of Education*, Assiut University, Vol. 32(4).

Othman, Ayed Mohamed. (2006). *The Degree of Anxiety among the Students of West Bank Universities in Palestine and its Relation to Some Variables*, the Palestinian Counseling Center.

Useiry, Abdullah Ibrahim. (2007). *The Levels of Anxiety among the Students of King Saud University in Riyadh*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Faculty of Post-graduate Studies, Naif Arab University for Security Sciences.

Ghorab, Hesham Ahmed Mahmoud. (2000). *Anxiety and its Relation to Some Variables among High School Students in Gaza Governorate*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Faculty of Education, Islamic University, Gaza.

Mohamed, Heba Muayed. (2010). Youth Future Anxiety and its Relation to Some Variables. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Research*, Baghdad University, Vol. 26-27, pp. 376-321.

Al-Mahdi, Asmaa Abdel-Mohsen. (2001). The Effect of a Counseling Program on Reducing Future Anxiety among Preparatory Female Sixth Grade Students and the Faculty of Education Students, Al-Mustansiriya University.

Peterson, Penelope I. (1979). Interactive Effects of Student Anxiety, Achievement Orientation, and Teacher Behavior on Student Achievement and Attitude, American psychological Association, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 69, No. 6, pp. 779- 792.