The Relationship between Future Anxiety and Aspiration Level among El-Minia Faculty of Nursing Students

BY
Hassan, S., S; Abed El-Kader , N., M ; Mohamed , I., I & Abu-Elmagd , M., H.
Psychiatric & Mental Health Nursing, Faculty of Nursing – El Minia university
Psychiatric -Mental Health Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, Cairo University
Psychiatric -Mental Health Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, , Assiut University
Psychiatric –Mental Health Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, El-Minia/Umm Al quraa University

Abstract

Few studies have explored the effect of future anxiety on aspiration level among nursing students in Egypt. Therefore, the aim of this study was to assess and investigate the relationship between future anxiety, and aspiration level among faculty of nursing students at El-Minia. A descriptive correlational design was utilized in this study. This study was conducted at the Faculty of Nursing at El-Minia University. The sample included all the four grade students. Three tools were utilized to measure the variables of the study: socio-demographic data sheet, future anxiety scale, and aspiration level scale. Results of this study revealed that, females represent 68 % of the sample, and more than half of the sample resided in rural area. Fourth year students had the highest mean score of future anxiety. However, the total mean scores of aspiration level were higher among second and third grade students. There were highly significant negative correlations between future anxiety score with aspiration level score. Designing and implementing psychological counseling program is recommended to help in decreasing future anxiety level and improving aspiration level of the undergraduate nursing students.

Key words: Future Anxiety/Aspiration Level.

Introduction

Youths attending universities constitute the future's highly qualified employees. University youth are generally open to change and are more sensitive to personal, interpersonal, and sociocultural differences and conflicts. Thus, their psychological issues are more widespread. Anxiety is one such psychological issue. The level of anxiety among university students has an important short-term and long-term consequence. Furthermore, prior research has revealed that worrying about the future and educational constraints were problems experienced by many students and that, these problems were correlated with anxiety. Thus, protecting university students from preventable causes of anxiety will facilitate these students' future success (**Ozen, et al., 2010**).

Anxiety can be defined as a negative emotional state characterized by nervousness, worry, and apprehension and associated with activation or arousal of the body (**Weinberg & Gould, 2007**). **Barlow and David (2002)** also suggesting that, it is a distinction between future versus present dangers that divides anxiety and fear. However Future anxiety is defined as a state of apprehension, uncertainty, fear, worry and concern of unfavorable changes in a more remote personal future. In an extreme case this would be a threat (panic) that something really catastrophic may happen to a person. (**Zaleski, 1996**).

According to **Bernard, et al., (2008).** The word 'aspiration' is 'a desire or ambition to achieve something'. The word thus signifies some aim or target and a preference or wish to attain it. The meaning also suggests, rather implicitly, that some effort would be exerted to realize the desired aim/target. In short, aspirations combine or summarize the preferences held, the expectations formed, and the constraints acknowledged by an individual with respect to the future. In this respect, **Pangma, et al., (2009)** concluded that, aspiration was a variable influencing the adversity quotient in both direct and indirect ways because it represented a personality with a high expectation which was to be in under control for reaching the success. Aspiration did influence directly on achievement motivation and future expectation as well.

Furthermore, **Quaglia & Cobb 1996 (coded in Bajema et al. 2002)** acknowledged that, aspiration is the " student's ability to set goals for the future while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals". **Patrick, et al. (2002)** assumed that, the criterion variable of educational aspirations is strongly linked with an array of psychological variables such as anxiety and fear.

Significance of the study
It is well known that the university years/stages are the fundamental basis for providing students with knowledge and skills that enable them to face life and its requirements. So, the seriousness of the future

anxiety phenomenon is that it has negative impact on students to realize their effectiveness and their own potentialities and aspirations for the future. This is reflected negatively on the lives of young university nursing students and society as a whole. In addition, future anxiety can influence cognition, attitudes and behaviors of those students. If there are no preventive actions were being taken, then the anxiety would rise. It is expected to have negative consequences on students' learning process and may affect also on their accomplishments and their success. So, conducting this study could be helpful in gaining information that assists in carrying out the preventive measures to overcome future anxiety and increasing aspiration level

Subjects and Method

Aim of the study:
The aim of this study was to assess and investigate the relationship between future anxiety and aspiration level among El-Minia faculty of nursing students

Research question:
Is there a relationship between future anxiety and aspiration level?

Research Design:
A descriptive correlational research design was utilized for the current study.

Setting:
This study was conducted in the Faculty of Nursing at El-Minia University in El-Minia governorate.

Sample:
The sample included all four years nursing students enrolled in the academic year of 2010/2011 who agreed to participate in the study. The total number of students was (392).

Tools of the study
1- Sociodemographic Data questionnaire:
A structured interview questionnaire was developed by the researcher included data such as age, gender, residence and grade.

2- Future Anxiety Scale which was developed by (El-Mashiky, 2009):
It consists of 43 items divided into five subscales as the following: Negative thinking about the future, negative view of life, the anxiety from stressful life events, psychological manifestations of anxiety and physical manifestations of anxiety Subjects were asked to use 3- point likert scales. The total score of the scale ranged from 43 to 129 and was divided into three levels; Low future anxiety is ranged from (43-71), moderate future anxiety is ranged from (72-100) and high future anxiety is ranged from (101-129). By testing reliability, it was found that Cronbach alpha value was (0.91).

3-**Aspiration Level Scale which was developed by (Abed El-Azim, 2005).**
This scale consists of 36 statements distributed on four dimensions as the following:
Optimism, the ability to put objectives, acceptance of the new, and tolerance of frustration. The total score for this scale ranges from (0-108), the responses ranged from (0-3) for positive statements, the score will be reversed in the negative statements. Reliability and validity of translated version were done. By testing reliability, it was found that Cronbach alpha value was (0.92).The total score of the scale was divided into the following three levels: Low aspiration level is ranged from (0-35), moderate aspiration level is ranged from (36-72) and high aspiration level is ranged from (73-108).

Procedure

- A review of related literature covering various aspects of the problem was done, using available recent books and journals, to get acquainted with the research problem and to select the accurate tools to measure the study variables.
- An official permission from the dean of the faculty of nursing was obtained to conduct the current study.
-The purpose of the study was explained to the subjects and informed consent was taken for participation in the study. The researcher assured the voluntary participation and confidentiality to each subject who agreed to participate.
- The researcher collected data in May 2010 through interviewing participants using a structured questionnaire conducted after students finishing their clinical time in class room.
- The researcher distributes the study questionnaires to the students and the questions were recorded by the students, they take about 30-40 minutes for responding about all the questions. During this time the researcher stays with the students and clarifies any vague question.
- The researcher trying to collect the data after or before the theoretical lectures but the number of students is very little comparing to their number in clinical time.

Pilot Study
A pilot study was conducted at the beginning of the study. It included 10% of the total sample to investigate the feasibility of data collection tools and their clarity. Subjects included in the pilot study were excluded from the actual study.

Statistical Analysis
The content of each tool (scale) was analyzed, categorized, and then coded by the investigator; subject's responses to each category were tabulated separately by using the Statistical Package for Social

Science (SPSS) version 13. Descriptive statistics were calculated as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation. T-test and ANOVA test were also used to test differences between group and Pearson correlation was used to test the associations between study variables. Probability (p-value) less than 0.05 was considered significant and less than 0.001 was considered highly significant.

Ethical Consideration

Oral informed consent was obtained from the students. The researcher ensured that confidentiality was maintained during and after the research process and the participant's dignity and privacy was maintained and respected throughout the research process.

Socio-Demographic data		NO.	%
Gender	▫ male	124	32.0
	▫ female	268	68.0
Residence	▫ urban	149	38.0
	▫ ruler	243	62.0
Grade	▫ The first year	100	25.5
	▫ The second year	95	24.2
	▫ The third year	99	25.3
	▫ The fourth year	98	25.0

Results

Table (1) Distribution of the studied subjects according to their socio- demographic characteristics (N=392).

Table (2): Differences between Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Future Anxiety and Aspiration Level among the Studied subjects (n=392).

Item	1st year N=100	2nd year N=95	3rd year N=99	4th year N=98	F	P
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Future anxiety	88.02±18.609	84.12±20.166	90.35±23.271	97.90±16.436	8.350	0.000*
Aspiration level	56.65±26.795	65.51±31.049	63.35±28.186	45.64±23.592	10.270	0.000*

(*) P value is significant at ≤ 0.000

Table (3): Differences between Rural and Urban Students in Relation to Total Future Anxiety, and Total Aspiration Level Scales among the studied subjects.

Total scales	Residence		t-test	p-value
	Rural	**Urban**		
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Total future anxiety	99.04. ±16.470	75.76±17.574	13.256	0.001*
Total aspiration level	45.97±23.170	76.72±25.895	-12.203	0.001*

Table (4): Differences between Total Future Anxiety and Total Aspiration Level Scales as Regards Gender among the studied subjects.

Total scales	Gender		t-test	p-value
	Male	**Female**		
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Total future anxiety	96.70±18.964	87.06±20.249	4.485	0.000*
Total aspiration level	49.63±26.292	61.53±28.698	-3.928	0.000*

Table (5) Correlation Matrix between Future Anxiety Scale and Aspiration Level Scale among the Studied subjects (n=392).

Items		Future anxiety	Aspiration level
Future anxiety	r	1	
	p		
Aspiration level	r	-0.854*	1
	p	0.001	

Table (1) revealed that, 68% of the studied sample was females. While 32% of them were males. As regards to residence 62 % students of the studied sample were from rural areas, while 38 % of them were residing urban areas. The first year students represent 25.5% from the total studied sample and 24.2% were represented by the second year students. While the third and fourth year students were represented 25.3% and 25% respectively from the total studied sample.

Table (2) showed that, the highest mean of total future anxiety score was found in the fourth year (97.90±16.436). However, the total mean scores of aspiration level were higher among second and third grade students (65.51±31.049) and (63.35±28.186) respectively. There were highly statistically significant differences between the four grades regarding future anxiety, and aspiration level at p≤ 0.000.

Table (3) demonstrated the differences among the total mean scores of the two scales in relation to the residence. It was noted that the future anxiety was higher among rural than urban students (99.04. ±16.470 and 75.76±17.574) respectively while, the mean scores of aspiration level were higher among urban than rural students (76.72±25.895). There were highly statistically significant differences between rural and urban students regarding future anxiety and aspiration level at p-value= (0.001).

Table (4) showed that, the future anxiety is higher in males than females; the total mean score of future anxiety scale was (96.70±18.964) for males while (87.06±20.249) for females. The females represent high aspiration level than males (61.53±28.698). There were highly statistically significant differences between males and females regarding to total future anxiety, and total aspiration level scales at p≤ 0.000.

Table (5) illustrated that, there was a highly significant negative correlation between future anxiety score and aspiration level score (r= -0.854, at P≤ 0.001).

Discussion

The result of the present study revealed that the fourth year students had the highest mean score of future anxiety than students of the other grades (table 2). This could be explained by that, the fourth year students were nearly to finish their academic years and are getting ready for their first taste of the real world as well as facing the working life with its all problems and responsibilities; such as lack of suitable employment opportunities, the demands of life and its ongoing financial commitments, and the worry of non-achievement of the expectations of the significant others.

These study findings are consistent with the results of **Abed El-Mohsen, (2007)** and **Saud (2005)** who concluded that, the future anxiety was high among the fourth year students than the first year students and they attributed this to that, the fourth year students on the eve of graduation which cause pressure for them in the face of reality, also they are more threatened and fearful about their future according to their need to get a suitable job, and be secured financially to fulfill the demands of life. Furthermore, these students have a lot of ambitions, hopes and many goals which they want to achieve; when anything seems to impede their achievement they were haunted by feelings of despair, tension and anxiety to near graduation and collision with reality.

Also, the current study findings are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by **Zhow (2003)** who confirms that, the final year university students are living in a state of anxiety for their lives and their future and they have pessimistic outlook towards the future, and that the first year students are more positive than them in their direction towards the future.

However, the second year students reported the lowest mean score in the future anxiety level and the highest mean score in the aspiration levels comparing to other grades, because the second year students acquired educational experiences and confidence with new knowledge and become adjusted in the new role. The level of anxiety again started to increase in the third and fourth year students because they worried about their future as they are approaching graduation.

In this respect, **Reddy (1989 coded in Raj, 2008)** who conducted a research to investigate the adjustment and problem areas of many adolescents in the school and the results proved that, most of the problems concentrated on academic anxiety followed by anxiety regarding their future. In addition, **MacLeod, et al. (1991)** concluded that, for an individual with high future anxiety, the uncertainty of the future can be a source of excessive worry and concern due to the negative content of their thoughts about the future as well as their lack of self-efficacy and confidence in dealing with and generating responses to negative events in the future.

The results of the current study demonstrated that, rural students were having more future anxiety than urban students (Table3). This could be attributed to that; students in rural areas have lower income expectations than students in urban areas because there is decrease in employment opportunities. Also, the rural culture forces male to marry in young age, so they face financial difficulties.

The results of the present study demonstrated that, male students had higher future anxiety level than female students (Table 4). This could be attributed to that; male students are expected to be responsible for building up their families so, they must perform well in academic study to obtain good job and suitable salary. There is agreement between these findings and the finding of **Pramod (1996)** who concluded that, boys manifest more future orientations than girls; therefore boys have more academic anxiety. Also, it consistent with **Ojha (2005)** who found, that 25% boys have extremely high anxiety whereas only 6.7% girls have high academic anxiety.

Contradictory results are reported in a study conducted by **Raj (2008)** who found that, girls showing more academic anxiety than boys. He explained this by that boys in general have better self–esteem and tension areas for them are restricted to academics and future, as till date, boys are expected to be the primary breadwinners. The sources of tension for girls are more than boys. Girls are more prone to depression, be it their looks, marriage or the self–esteem. But today's girls are getting involved in the frenzy of competitions and career worries too. As a result even for girls, the emerging source of depression is the increasing dreams and aspirations regarding their independence and career along with the usual concerns regarding looks, mate selection and marriage. All these make them more vulnerable to emotional pressures and problems one of which is found to be the high future anxiety.

The results of the present study demonstrated that, there was a negative relation between future anxiety and aspiration level (table 5). In other words, when anxiety increases the aspiration level decreases. This could be explained by that, the student's view the future as a way of reaching goals and achieving aspirations but when future anxiety increases this view will be different and the student sees the future as a source of fear. This fear leads him/her to put unrealistic goals that are hard to achieve because this is not consistent with his/her abilities so, he/she will fail in achieving. Consequently, this failure in turn will increase the anxiety level and the student becomes disappointed.

This is consistent with the study of **Ashry (2004)** who reported that, the future anxiety has an impact on the response to fear about what tomorrow would bring, the negative prediction of events expected, the sense of tension, the inability to achieve goals and aspirations, the sense that life is worthwhile and the feeling of insecurity for the future.

Also, there are agreements between the results of the present study and the results of **Hassanin (2002)** who found that, there was a negative relation between future anxiety and aspiration level, he attributed this to that the ambitious student has more insight into himself and has the ability to confront situations and achieve his goals, so he is more confident in the future. On contrast, low-ambitious students were less confident in the future.

In this respect, **Schwarzer and Schmitz (2005)** reported that, the level of aspiration was influenced by the future anxiety because fear and anxiety from the future is reflected on the level of individual aspiration by reduce it to the narrowest limits, and because the inability to achieve this aspiration from the individual point of view so he takes the position of self-withdrawal rather than face the current and future difficulties. Indeed, the level of aspiration was determined by the individual view of the future. In other words as the extent that an optimistic outlook for the future as far as high level of aspiration.

Furthermore, experiences of success and failure are affecting and control the individual look to the future and determine the level of his aspiration.

In a study conducted by **Khalil (2002)**, it was found that; the individual who has the appropriate level of aspiration has life satisfaction, sense of happiness and good compatibility with life. In contrast, individual who has low level of aspiration is negatively assesses of the future, has a sense of despair, tension and suffering from the lack of existence of clear specific goal to his life also not having any future ambitions all of these lead to the increased level of future anxiety and decreasing level of efficacy. In the same line, **Ezat (2009)** agreed that, the level of inspiration has important role in the life of the individual and the group for it acts as a motive makes the individual to do certain behaviors.

In this respect **Masooud (2006)** reported that, isolationism and withdrawal are reactions to the various failures, which is accompanied by sense of inner powerlessness and helplessness. The individual learns to suppress his desire in attempting to not feel the pain, frustration and anxiety. Also the person learns to limit his ambitions by putting goals or ambitions within reach, or is in extreme cases; makes the lack of goals as standard in life and leaves himself to life conditions without going the direction of his life and don't know how his future will be.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the present study; it can be concluded that, future anxiety in undergraduate nursing students is an important factor that influences their sense of aspiration levels in the near future and has negative impacts on future career. The fourth year students had the highest level of future anxiety than students of the other grades. Furthermore, there was a negative correlation between future anxiety with and aspiration level.

Recommendations

- Design and implement psychological counseling programs are essential to help in decreasing future anxiety level and enhancing aspiration level of the undergraduate nursing students.
- Conducting comparative studies among nursing and other faculties' students to investigate differences between them and the related variables.

Reference

1. **Abed El-Mohsen, M. (2007).** The effectiveness of psychological counseling in reducing the professional future anxiety among faculty of Education students at Assuit. Un-published Master thesis. Assiut University.

2. **Abed El-Azim, S. (2005).** Aspiration Level Scale. The Anglo. Egyptian Bookshop, Cairo.

3. **Ashry, M. (2004).** Future anxiety and its relationship to some of the cultural variables, cross-cultural study, comparison between students of some faculties of Education in Egypt and Oman. Eleventh Annual Conference of psychological counseling at the University of Ain Shams. The first volume. Pp 139-178.

4. **Bajema, D., Miller, W., & Williams, D. (2002).** Aspirations of rural youth. *Journal of Agricultural Education* Vol. 43 (3). Pp 61-71.

5. **Barlow, A., and David, H. (2002).** "Unraveling the mysteries of anxiety and its disorders from the perspective of emotion theory". American psychologist. 12, 47-63 from http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/amp/55/11/1247.pdf.

6. **Bernard, T., Taffesse, A., and Dercon, S. (2008).** Aspirations failure and well-being outcomes in Ethiopia towards an empirical exploration p 6.

7. **El-Mashiky, K. (2009).** The future anxiety and its relationship with both of self-efficacy and ambition level of a sample of Al-Taif University students, faculty of Education, Om Al-Koura University, published doctorate dissertation. Pp: 247-248.

8. **Ezat, A., (2009).** Origins of psychology, Dar El-fekr, Jordan. Coded in Youssef, S.A., (2011). Constructing a measure of future anxiety and its relationship with the aspiration level of fencing players. World Journal of Sport Science 5 (1): 46-50.

9. **Hassanin, A.M. (2002).** Future anxiety and test anxiety and their relationship with some psychological variables of a sample of the students of the second grade in the secondary school. Unpublished.. Master Thesis, Faculty of Arts, Minia University, Egypt.

10. **Khalil, H. (2002).** The relationship between the goal directions and the occupational ambition in a sample of university students. Unpublished MA Thesis. Ain-Shemesh University.

11. **MacLeod, A., Williams, J. M., & Bekerian, D. A. (1991).** Worry is reasonable: The role of explanations in pessimism about future personal events. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 100, 478-486.

12. **Massoud, S. (2006).** Some variables related to the future anxiety among a sample of adolescents. Unpublished doctorate dissertation. Tanta University.

13. **Ojha, V. (2005).** Academic Anxiety in Relation to Sex Role Orientation of Early Adolescents between Ages 13-15 Years. Unpublished M. Sc. Dissertation, Jodhpur: JNV University.

14. **Ozen, N., Ercan, I., Irgil, E., and Sigirli, D. (2010).** Anxiety Prevalence and Affecting Factors among

University Students. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health.* Vol. 22, No. (1). Pp 127-128.

15. **Pangma, R., Tayraukham, S., and Nuangchalerm, P. (2009).** Causal Factors Influencing Adversity Quotient of Twelfth Grade and Third-Year Vocational Students. *Journal of Social Sciences* 5 (4): 466-470.

16. **Patrick, J., Rottinghaus, L., Lindley, D., Melinda, A., Fred, H., and Borgen, D. (2002).** Educational Aspirations: The contribution of personality, self-efficacy and interests. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 61, 1-19.

17. **Pramod, S. (1996).** Future time perspectives, cognitive efficiency, achievement motivation, anxiety and academic performance among eleventh standard boys and girls. *Indian Journal of Psychology*, 33(1): 34-38.

18. **Quaglia, R. J., and Cobb, C. D. (1996).** Toward a theory of student aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 12, 127-132. Sited in Bajema, Miller, Williams aspirations of rural youth. *Journal of Agricultural Education* Vol.43, (3), 2002.

19. **Raj, K. (2008).** Is Academic Anxiety Gender Specific: A Comparative Study. *J. Soc. Sci.,* 17(1): 1-3.

20. **Reddy, A. (1989).** Problems of concern for many of the school going adolescents. Indian Psychological Review, 18(1-4): 71-74.

21. **Saud, N. (2005).** Future anxiety and its relationship to the traits of optimism and pessimism. Unpublished doctorate dissertation. University of Damascus. Syria.

22. **Schwarzer, R. & Schmitz, G.S. (2005)** Perceived self-efficacy and teacher burnout: a longitudinal study in ten schools. Research paper. Fray University Berlin, Germany. http://self.uws.edu.au/Conferences/2004_Schwarzer_Schmitz.pdf [Accessed March 2008].

23. **Weinberg, R., & Gould, D. (2007).** Foundations of sport and exercise psychology. Human Kinetics Publishers Groups.

24. **Zaleski, Z. (1996).** Future anxiety: concept, measurement, and preliminary research. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 21, 165-174.

25. **Zhow, A. (2003).** The role of faculty of Education in the development of work values among their students. *Journal of the future of Arab education*, Arab Center for Education and Development. 9: (30). Pp. 69-106.