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Original Article

Assessment of Class Room Anxiety Among Nursing Students at Private Nursing Institute, Karachi, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Class room anxiety, stemming from academic pressure and fear of evaluation, impacts students' well-being and academic performance, underscoring the necessity for supportive learning environments. **Objective:** To assess the Class room anxiety level among nursing students. **Methods:** This cross-sectional study was undertaken at a private nursing institute in Karachi, Pakistan, from November 2023 to January 2024. Utilizing a convenient sampling technique, the study comprised one hundred twenty student participants. **Results:** The study's demographics reveal that 91.7% (n=120) of participants are aged 18-24, with a male majority of 83.3% (n=100). In terms of education year, 26.7% (n=32) are in the first year, 37.5% (n=45) in the third year, and 30.8% (n=37) in the fourth year. Regarding Class room anxiety, 7.5% (n=8) exhibited normal levels, 26.7% (n=32) showed mild to moderate anxiety, 55.0% (n=66) experienced severe anxiety, and 10.8% (n=13) reported extreme anxiety. **Conclusions:** This underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions in educational settings and emphasizes the ongoing importance of researching contributing factors for effective strategies to promote a healthier learning experience.

INTRODUCTION

University is a significant part of life, and in today's education system, tests and evaluations play a significant role in deciding what career path a student might take in the future [1]. Anxiety is formally described as an unfavorable emotional state encompassing an individual's perceived feelings of tension, apprehension, and nervousness, coupled with the activation of the autonomic nervous system [2, 3]. Anxiety represents an emotionally adaptive reaction to situations that are uncertain or alarming, priming individuals to take action and respond appropriately [4]. The literature extensively addresses anxiety among nursing students in diverse clinical placements, recognizing its potential impact on learning and performance [5]. Clinical placement is the physical setting and personnel teaching for healthcare workers, including nurses and nursing students [6, 7]. In regular circumstances, nursing students have indicated experiencing anxiety from multiple origins, including the intricate design of nursing courses, apprehension about exam outcomes, perceived deficiency in faculty support, and sometimes clinical teacher [8]. Nursing students develop their nursing skills by participating in activities that involve observing, imitating, ongoing assessment, exploration, hands-on practice, and reflective processes [9]. Nursing students, like others, experience significant pressure to meet academic and practical requirements,

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heightened by the belief that even minor mistakes could have serious consequences for patients and their careers, with instructors noting heightened test anxiety compared to other fields [10]. Anxiety and perceived stress levels are anticipated based on workload, student behavior, and employment conditions, with the most substantial factor contributing to heightened anxiety being the considerable absence of administrative support [11]. Although anxiety can be beneficial in specific tasks, it has the potential to hinder the learning process. As a rule, nursing students commonly experience stress and anxiety throughout their education and training [12]. Teaching nursing skills through distance education has been observed to induce significant anxiety in the majority of students [13]. Labrague emphasizes the negative impact of unaddressed stress and anxiety on nursing students' emotional well-being, leading to a concentrated effort over the past two decades to devise psychological interventions for stress reduction during clinical practice [14]. A recent multicenter study in Spain involving 28,559 students from 16 universities revealed that 20.84% experienced substantial anxiety during exams, requiring specialized assistance. Additionally, research on healthcare degree program students indicates a higher prevalence of pre-exam anxiety, ranging from 30% to 50%, compared to other university degrees [15].

Recognizing the importance of understanding and addressing this phenomenon within the educational context. As nursing students navigate rigorous academic and practical demands, the investigation seeks to provide insights into the prevalence, sources, and impact of class room anxiety. This study is driven by the rationale that a comprehensive understanding of such anxiety is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems, ultimately enhancing nursing students' overall learning experience and well-being as they progress through their education and training.

METHODS

A descriptive cross-sectional study assessed class room anxiety among 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year nursing students. A current study was conducted in a private nursing school. The chosen school was Horizon School of Nursing and Health Sciences in Karachi, Pakistan. The target population was a bachelor of science in nursing students. 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year, male and female and 18 years and above students were included. The participants who were diplomatic nursing students and below 18 years old were excluded from the study. The sample size was calculated through open Epi with a 95% confidence interval. The calculated sample size was 132, but 13 students did not complete the questionnaire, so the data were analyzed for 120 students.We used convenience sampling for this study to pick participants from the selected study setting. The study lasted from November 01, 2023, to January 10, 2024. We got permission to collect data from the authorized organization, and participants agreed to take part. The researchers explained the study's reasons, goals, methods, and importance to the participants both in writing and verbally. After that, participants filled out the questionnaire online. Approval was taken from the Horizon School of Nursing with reference number (SHNHS/2023/501) to gather data. Each participant was asked to sign an informed consent form. The researchers are dedicated in maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, and no one was obligated to participate. The study employs an instrument designed to measure class room anxiety, inspired by Richmond's Situational Communication Apprehension Measure, with an expected alpha reliability of around 0.90. They were instructed to swiftly circle their initial impressions, using a 5-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). Specifically, bold questions were recorded in reverse, and the cumulative class room anxiety score was derived by adding the scores for each item. This composite score ranged from 20 to 100. 20-44 indicated a normal range of anxiety, a score of 45-59 indicated mild to moderate anxiety levels, a score of 60-74 indicated marked to severe anxiety levels, and a score of 75 and above indicated extreme anxiety levels. SPSS version 26.0 was employed for data analysis, and demographic data were calculated using frequency percentages.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of demographic variables, including age, gender, and year of education of the study participants. Among the participants, 91.7% (n=110) fell within the 18-24 age range. Most participants in terms of gender were male, constituting 83.3% (n=100). Regarding the year of education, 26.7% (n=32) of participants were in their first year, 37.5% (n=45) in the third year, and 30.8% (n=37) were in the fourth year.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics n=120

Variables		Frequency (%)
Age	18-24	110 (91.7%)
	25-30	10 (8.3%)
Gender	Male	100 (83.3%)
	Female	20 (16.7%)
Year of Education	1st year	32 (26.7%)
	2nd year	6 (5.0%)
	3rd year	45 (37.5%)
	4th year	37 (30.8%)

Table 2 displays the levels of class room anxiety. Specifically, 7.5% (n=8) of participants exhibited a normal

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range of anxiety, 26.7% (n=32) showed mild to moderate anxiety levels, 55.0% (n=66) experienced severe anxiety, and 10.8% (n=13) reported extreme anxiety levels.

Table 2: Level of Class Room Anxiety

Level of class room anxiety	Frequency (%)
Normal range of anxiety	9 (7.5%)
Mild to moderate anxiety	32 (26.7%)
Severe anxiety levels	66 (55.0%)
Extreme anxiety levels	13 (10.8%)

DISCUSSION

Class room anxiety, from academic pressure and the fear of evaluation, influences students' well-being and academic performance, emphasizing the critical requirement for learning environments that offer support [16]. The current study with 120 participants showed a predominant age group of 18-24 (91.7%), a substantial male majority (83.3%), and 37.5% in the 3rd year of education, while the second study with 221 participants featured a different demographic profile, including 37% aged 18-20, 84.6% females, and a majority (52%) from the junior class [17]. Comparing Class room anxiety levels, the present study showed 7.6% normal, 26.7% mild to moderate, and 55% severe anxiety, while another study indicated 11% normal, 69% moderate, and 21% severe anxiety [18]. In a different study involving university students, it was found that 21.9% displayed moderate anxiety symptoms, 6.3% reported severe anxiety, and 2.3% indicated extremely severe anxiety symptoms [19]. Other results have showed that, during their clinical rotation, 32.3% of students reported mild to moderate anxiety, whereas 67.7% of students reported normal levels of anxiety [20]. A different survey discovered that 41.3% of individuals reported mild anxiety, 40.0% had moderate anxiety, and 18.8% had high anxiety [21]. In a separate study, students faced language-related anxiety in the Class room, with 55% highlighting speaking in a second language as a significant concern, accompanied by worries about grammatical errors, pronunciation, and the ability to respond promptly [22]. The findings of this study are crucial for two main reasons. First, in the realm of nursing education, there is currently a lack of a brief instrument for the convenient measurement of state and trait anxiety accessible to nurse educators and researchers [2]. In our research study, it is vital to highlight that the current study identified a predominant occurrence of severe anxiety levels among participants. In contrast, a different study indicated that most participants exhibited normal anxiety levels [23]. The present study revealed that the majority of participants, 55%, experienced mild to moderate levels of anxiety. Similarly, another study conducted in Pakistan also demonstrated comparable results, with 50.9% reporting an average anxiety level [24].

CONCLUSIONS

Notably, 55% reported experiencing severe anxiety, and 10.8% indicated extreme anxiety levels. These findings underscore the pressing need for targeted interventions to address elevated anxiety in educational environments.

Authors Contribution

Conceptualization: HN
Methodology: HN, AB
Formal analysis: HN
Writing-review and editing: HN, F, FA, MY, IN, SZ, AB

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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