

ANXIETY OF CHITTAGONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempted an empirical investigation to identify the factors influencing anxiety level among students of Chittagong University. A total of 120 respondents constituted the sample of the study. Among the 120 students, 60 students were male (30 were from residential and 30 were from non-residential) and 60 students were female (30 were from residential and 30 were from non-residential). In each group, 10 students were from Science Faculty, 10 students were from Commerce Faculty and 10 students were from Arts Faculty. The Bangla Anxiety Scale developed by (Deeba and Begum 2004) was used to measure anxiety of the respondents. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, t-value and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings of the present study showed that more female students was significantly higher anxiety level ($t = 3.38, df = 118, p < 0.05$) than male students. On the other hand, residential students expressed higher anxiety ($t = 4.22, df = 118, p < 0.05$) as compared to non-residential students of Chittagong University. The students of arts faculty expressed more anxiety as compared to science and commerce faculties ($F = 4.83, df = 2, p < 0.05$).

Key Words: Anxiety, University students.

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is one of the most fundamental of all constructs now-a-days. The concept of anxiety is central in conceptualization of psychopathology, motivation, and personality. Anxiety is a normal human emotion that everyone experiences at times. Many people feel anxious, or nervous, when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test, or making an important decision. These feelings are easily justified and considered normal. Anxiety is considered a difficulty when symptoms hamper with a person's ability to sleep or else activity. Anxiety is a symptom for different disorders that generate nervousness, fear, hesitation, and disturbing. Anxiety disorders are diagnosed when subjectively experiences feeling of anxiety are clearly present. It is one of the psychological disorders whose feature is anxiety and trepidation where anxiety is a troubled about future events and trepidation is a reaction to recent events. These disorders affect in our daily life activities. Mild anxiety is not serious but severe anxiety causes serious impact on daily life (Crosta 2015). There are a variety of forms of anxiety disorders, such as generalized anxiety disorder, a phobia, social and panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic disorder (American Psychiatric Association 2013).

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Anxiety disorders affect on many University students. A university is an institution of advanced education and research which grants academic degree in a variety of subjects and provides both undergraduate education and postgraduate education. A student (also pupil) is a learner, or someone who attends an educational institution at a university or other place of higher education is called university student. The major symptoms of anxiety disorder among students of Chittagong University is trouble of sleeping, shortness of breath, heart palpitations, dry mouth, nausea, muscle tension, feeling of panic, fear and dizziness. They transpire slightly more often in women than in men. The core causes of anxiety is political imbalance, seat politics, distance between campus and city, problem of getting tuition, medical facility, career plan etc. These symptoms and causes were identified from survey on Chittagong University students before conducting research.

Evidence suggests that university students are vulnerable to mental health problems has generated escalating public distress in numerous societies (Stanley and Manthorpe 2001). A research was conducted by Kessler *et al.* (2005) and they found that the probability of anxiety disorders is high among females than males. And 18% of Americans and 14% of Europeans may be affected by one or more anxiety disorders. About 1 in 20 people have an anxiety disorder at any one time. A correlation was designed between anxiety sources and the effect of students' academic performance. The result discovered that in term, students' high level of anxiety, achieved low academic performance (McCraty 2007). According to Saravanan and Wilks (2014), 44% of the students were anxious and 34.9% were depressed. More female students showed more anxiety than male students. A significant difference was found between depressed and non depressed and anxious and non anxious students' experience of stressors due to frustration, change, and their emotional reaction to stressors. Anxiety influences four skills of language in which speaking anxiety is the highest above all. The major sources of anxiety are presenting before the class, making mistakes, losing face, inability to communicate, fear of breakdown, test anxiety, incomprehensible input, inability to comprehend, remembering target rules and grammar, poor pronunciation, lack of vocabulary and poor knowledge of English language (Shenin 2013). A research was formulated by Tabrizi *et al.* (2011) on relationship between creative thinking and anxiety among adolescent boys and girls in Tehran, Iran. Their results revealed that there were no significant differences in anxiety between girl and boy adolescents. They also found no significant correlation between age and birth order with anxiety. But in further researcher, high correlation was found between creative thinking and anxiety among adolescents. They suggested that creative thinking may help a person reduce anxiety. Seven sources of anxiety were recognized by Vitasari *et al.* (2010). But, among seven sources of anxiety, there are five potential sources of study anxiety which affects student's performances. These are exam anxiety, class presentation anxiety, mathematic anxiety, language anxiety and social anxiety.

The mental health of university students is an area of increasing worldwide apprehension. This population has been shown to be particularly prone to depression, anxiety, and stress due to factors that include academic pressures, obstacles to their goal achievement, environmental changes and life challenges such as transition from school to

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university and the change in role from student to knowledgeable citizen. University students are the most powerful resources of our country. It will be impossible to build a bright nation without a healthy young generation. So, anxiety of university student should be considered with priority. University life is a very apex time for every student. Transition of students from higher secondary school environment to university environment could cause a psychological, academic and social shock to them, since this educational system has huge differences: the student will face new methods of teaching, new academic requirements, new type of relations between students and faculties, new relations among students themselves political turbulence, student politics. Therefore, some students who come from isolated areas need to cope with their social, emotional or psychological adjustment. Due to these changes and lack of adjustment students can potentially experience different types of anxiety, stress, hopelessness, loneliness that can affect their mental and social health, life style, self-esteem, self-confidence, academic achievement, career development. Considering these phenomena, in order to develop interventions for anxiety, it is paramount matter to determine their anxiety level. Most of the studies in this area have been done in western culture, but in Bangladesh there are very few studies. This study will facilitate us to provide such information which is very crucial for mental health workers, psychologists, sociologists, governments, NGOs and policy makers to take valuable steps to facilitate student's improvement.

The main objective of the study was to identify the factors influencing anxiety level among students of Chittagong University. Specific objectives of the study were; a. to know whether anxiety of the students vary in relation to gender; b. to see whether anxiety of the students vary in relation to their living status; and c. to observe whether anxiety of the students vary in relation to their faculties.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample

The sample of the present study constituted of 120 university students. Participants were taken purposively from Chittagong University. Among the 120 students, 60 students were male (30 students were from residential and 30 students were from non-residential) and 60 students were female (30 students were from residential and 30 students were from non-residential). Residential means the student living in the hall of the University. Non-residential means the student living outside of the hall in campus area or town. In each group, 10 students were studied in Science Faculty, 10 students were studied in Commerce Faculty and 10 students were studied in Arts Faculty. All of the respondents were physically and mentally well.

Measuring Instruments

In the following research questionnaire was used.

Bangla Anxiety Scale

The Bangla Anxiety Scale developed by (Deeba and Begum 2004) was used to measure anxiety of the respondents. The scale consists of 36 items and it is Likert type

scale. All the items of the scale are positive. There are five alternatives response option for each question. The scoring of items is 0 for Never Occurs, 1 for Mildly Occurs, 2 for Moderately Occurs, 3 for Severely Occurs and 4 for Profoundly Occurs. Total anxiety score of any individual was obtained from the sum total of scores of all the 36 items. The scale scores range from 0 to 144. Larger total score indicates higher anxiety. There are four levels of severity norm; namely- mild (27-54), moderate (55-66), severe (67-77) and profound (78-above). The cut-off score for screening an individual an anxious or non-anxious of the scale is 47.5. The split-half reliability ($r = 0.688$) indicate that the scale has a good reliability. The scale has also good content validity, criterion-related validity ($r = 0.317$ to $r = 0.628$) and construct validity ($r = 0.399$ to $r = 0.784$).

Design

Cross-sectional survey research design was followed for conducting the present study.

Procedure

For collecting relevant data from the participants, male and female students of Chittagong University who lives in hall of CU and out of the hall are requested to help. Respondents were told that the sole purpose of the investigation was academic and their response would be kept confidential. Before administration of the questionnaire, necessary rapport was established with respondents. Then, the Anxiety Scale was administered to respondents and requested a silent reading at the instruction provided with the scale before starting to answer. They were also requested not to omit any item in the scale and they were encouraged to answer all the items by telling that, there is no right or wrong answer to any item. Clarifications were made to the questions by the respondents. There was no time limit for the respondents to answer the items of the scale. After completing their tasks the answered questionnaire were collected from them and they were given thanks for their sincere co-operation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were analyzed by mean, standard deviation, t-value and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). All statistical analyses were carried out using the statistical program SPSS version 16.0 for windows.

TABLE 1: MEAN AND SD OF THE ANXIETY SCORE OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS WITH T VALUE

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P
Male	60	45.83	10.22	118	3.38	0.00
Female	60	53.13	13.27			

* $p < 0.05$

Table 1 indicates that mean anxiety score of male students of University of Chittagong was 45.83 (SD = 10.22) and mean anxiety score of female students of CU was 53.13 (SD = 13.27). The results revealed that there is a significant difference ($df = 118$, $t = 3.38$, $p < 0.05$) in anxiety of male and female students of University of Chittagong. That is,

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gender has significant effect on student's anxiety. Female students have more anxiety than male students. This result is similar to Hosseini and Khazali (2103); Jalili (2010); Seeman (1997); Mathur and Khan (2011); Saravanan and Wilks (2014), they found that anxiety were significantly higher among females than male students. The theories that have been proposed to account for the gender differences in anxiety include (1) the notion that the feminine role predisposes women to anxiety by encouraging them to feel and act helpless, (2) the idea that women face more stress than men and so are more likely really to be helpless or powerless, (3) a developmental model suggesting-particular feminine qualities that develop in childhood interact with environmental challenges that occur in adolescence to produce a greater incidence of female anxiety (Nolen-Hoeksema 1987). The theory is based on findings that men and women show different patterns of responding to their own feelings of anxiety.

There are some major reasons for developing anxiety level in students of Chittagong University (CU). CU is located in rural hilly area-22 km north from Chittagong city. Train service is given for students from Chittagong city to university, where bus service is given for teachers and staffs. But this train service is not sufficient at all for students, where most of the students live in Chittagong town. To attend class regularly, students face long rough journey. Such poor transport system creates anxiety in students, especially female students. Moreover adequate residential facility is not available in university campus. There are 10 halls for students in Chittagong University - 3 for female students, 6 for male students and one separate hall for only the students institute of forestry. 22, 000 students study in Chittagong University. But in campus area for this amount of students adequate residence facility is not available, because only 10 halls for 22,000 students. Particularly, for female students this situation is very worse. Here, security is also major concern. Such residential situation makes anxiety in female students. Also for every female, washroom is very sensitive issue. But washroom environment in faculty is not suitable. Because washroom is not cleaned regularly. As a result, it is totally unhygienic for using by student. Treatment facility is not sufficient too for 22,000 students. Only here first aid is given for any injury and illness. Then patient is sent to Chittagong medical college hospital situated in Chittagong city. It is time consuming and often risky for serious patient injured by political conflict. Such patient sometimes is died, on the way to hospital for bleeding. Ultimately these situations are responsible for anxiety among students in Chittagong University, especially for female students.

TABLE 2: MEAN AND SD OF THE ANXIETY SCORE OF RESIDENTIAL AND NON RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS WITH T VALUE

Present Residence	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P
Residential	60	53.93	12.05	118	4.25	0.001
Non-residential	60	45.03	11.06			

*p<0.05

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Results reported in table 2 show that the mean score of residential students of University of Chittagong was 53.93 (SD = 12.05) and the mean score of non-residential students of University of Chittagong was 45.03 (SD = 11.06). Results indicate that there is a significant difference ($df = 118, t = 4.22, p < 0.05$) in anxiety of residential and non-residential students of CU. That means, residential students expressed higher anxiety as compared to non-residential students of CU. The finding is similar to Baviskar *et al.* (2013); Mathur and Khan (2011) who found that anxiety is higher among residential students than non-residential students. Students who are live in hall need to spend more money than students who's live in town with family. This costing makes anxiety for students who comes from insolvent family. The findings of Eisenberg *et al.* (2007) highlight the need to address mental health in young adult populations, particularly among those of lower socio-economic status. Many students lived in hall cannot adjust with environment in hall. May be, it is tough for them to match with roommates, food cooked in dinning and rules–regulation of hall. The standard of cooking food is really so poor in hall. Living without family creates a feeling of helplessness for many residential students. Also political involvements are related to anxiety in hall. Students in hall involve more political activities, willingly or unwillingly. There have a pressure to join, support and donate any political parties to cross the limit; even students face physical harassments. Such situation must make anxiousness in students who lives in hall.

TABLE 3: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ANXIETY SCORE ACCORDING TO FACULTY

Faculty	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Science	40	48.22	11.678	26	78
Commerce	40	46.10	10.519	27	75
Arts	40	54.12	13.521	26	89
Total	120	49.48	12.349	26	89

Table 3 indicates that the mean anxiety score of students in science was 48.22 (SD = 11.68), the mean anxiety score of students in commerce was 46.10 (SD = 10.52) and the mean anxiety score of students in arts was 54.12 (SD = 13.52). Total mean anxiety score of students from faculty was 49.48 (SD = 12.35), minimum anxiety score was 26 and maximum anxiety score was 89. Among three faculties, the students of arts faculty expressed more anxiety as compared to science and commerce faculties.

To investigate the main and interaction effect of faculty on anxiety, one- way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed.

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TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF ANXIETY SCORE ACCORDING TO FACULTY

Source of variance	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1383.017	2	691.508	4.826	0.010
Within Groups	16764.950	117	143.290		
Total	18147.967	119			

Table 4 shows that faculty has significant effect on anxiety ($F = 4.83$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.05$). That means, the students of arts faculty expressed more anxiety as compared to science and commerce faculties. This finding is similar to Shah and Kataria (2009); Baviskar *et al.* (2013) who stated that students of arts faculty showed more anxiety and depression than commerce and science faculty.

TABLE 5: POST HOC TEST (LSD) FOR STUDENT'S FACULTY TYPES ON ANXIETY SCORES

(I) Faculty	(J) Faculty	Mean Difference (I-J)	SE	Sig.
Science	Commerce	2.13	2.68	0.71
	Arts	-5.90	2.68	0.08
Commerce	Science	-2.13	2.68	0.71
	Arts	-8.03*	2.68	0.01
Arts	Science	5.90	2.68	0.08
	Commerce	8.03*	2.68	0.01

Based on observed mean, *the mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Mean differences as shown in table 5 at 0.05 level of significance through post hoc test (LSD) were found between students of commerce and arts faculty. Similarity in table 5 significance mean differences in anxiety at 0.05 level of significance through post hoc test (LSD) were also found between the students of arts and commerce faculty.

The nature and pattern of study is different from one faculty to another. The number of class, class schedule, the number of course, course pattern, the number of exam and exam pattern all most vary everything from one faculty to another. The student of science faculty gives more attention in class, lab work, and research work. Their study habit helps to prepare for getting good job. The student of commerce faculty anxiety level is low. Because, in Bangladesh their subject related job field is in a better position. Even in student life they can get different opportunities such as part time job, private tuition, etc. In these area, student of arts faculty feels more anxiety than commerce and science faculty. Student of arts faculty get more time to engage sedentary life style. And it leads to more

involvement with political activities, drug usage; it may hamper their academic career. Therefore, they cannot earn money like students of science and commerce faculty. They have to fully depend on family's income. So, this factor creates anxiety among student of arts faculty.

TABLE 6: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ANXIETY ACCORDING TO SEVERITY NORM

N	minimum	Maximum	mean	SD	mild	moderate	severe	Profound
120	26	81	49.48	12.35	75	34	7	4

Table 6 shows that the minimum and maximum anxiety score of students of Chittagong University were 26 and 81; mean score was 49.48 (SD = 12.35). Considering the severity norm of the anxiety scale, 75 participants were found mildly anxious, 34 participants were found moderately anxious, 7 were found severely anxious and 4 were found profoundly anxious. Considering the cut-off score for screening norm (47.5) of anxiety scale, 64 students of CU were found as anxious. The high prevalence of anxiety symptoms among university students is alarming. This shows the need for primary and secondary prevention measures, with the development of adequate and appropriate support services for this anxious group. This finding is similar to Stanley and Manthorpe (2001); Shah and Kataria (2009) who found high prevalence of social phobia and anxiety among university students.

This study provides important recommendations that (a) the educationists, specifically teachers, psychologists and counselors to keep in view the role of anxiety and academic self-efficacy while dealing individuals especially students and (b) teachers and authorities of halls to identify what problems are faced by these anxious students, so that they can help them to cope up with their problems through proper counseling and guidance services arrangements. Considering the fact that psychosocial management is an important component of psychiatric care and called for a need to establish a National Policy for Mental Health of the students.

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