

Anxiety towards professional Future and its relationship with mental health among students of Adrar University -A field study on a sample of social sciences students at the University of Adrar-

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Abstract:

The current study aimed to reveal the relationship between future occupational anxiety and mental health among students of the University of Adrar. To conduct this study, we relied on the descriptive approach, where the sample of the study consisted of (130) students from the second year students of Master of Social Sciences at the University of Adrar. Participants within the sample were randomly selected. The study tools include t the Occupational Future Anxiety Scale by the researcher “Ahmed Rajab Al-Sayed” (2018), and the Mental Health Scale by the researcher “Ahmed Abdel-Khaleq” (2016). The results of the study indicate the following:

- There is a statistically significant relationship between future occupational anxiety and mental health for second-year students of Master degree of Social Sciences at the University of Adrar
- There were no statistically significant differences in the level of anxiety in the future career among the study sample due to the gender variable.
- There were no statistically significant differences in the level of mental health.

Keywords: Professional future anxiety; Psychological health; University students.

Introduction:

Anxiety is a psychological disorder that affects many individuals, varying from one person to another due to life circumstances, personal predispositions, and upbringing methods within the family, school, or university. Work pressures, life challenges, and constant thoughts about the future are all contributing factors to the emergence of anxiety. Anxiety significantly impacts

individuals by limiting their potential and being a primary cause of failure in achieving future goals.

Future-related anxiety poses risks to individuals' mental health and behavior. High levels of anxiety can disrupt their life balance, leading to severe psychological and physical effects. Such consequences extend across various aspects of their lives (Mohammed Al-Momani & Mazen Naim, 2013: 173).

University years are pivotal for students as they plan for their future. Anxiety about graduation, finding a job, and meeting their basic needs can lead to a pessimistic outlook. Problems related to career prospects are among the most significant challenges facing university students, as highlighted in studies like Faraj Mohammed's (2006), which found that most students experience fear and anticipation about their professional future, family formation, and parenting responsibilities (Faraj Mohammed, 2006: 01).

1-Research Problem:

Anxiety is a common psychological issue, particularly among university students, due to the challenges they face in life and the overthinking about their future after graduation.

Graduating students often endure heightened anxiety as they prepare to confront an uncertain future. This is especially true for career-related concerns, with growing numbers of graduates in specific fields increasing unemployment rates. Such trends amplify students' worries about job opportunities and their future family life (Mohammed Al-Safasfa, 2017: 11).

Employment is a fundamental goal for young people, forming the foundation of progress and psychological balance by providing security and confidence. On the other hand, unemployment undermines stability, causing various social and behavioral issues such as alienation, pessimism, and irresponsibility. This creates a bleak and anxious outlook on the future, stemming from individuals' inability to adapt to economic and social changes.(Saleh Khudair, 1992: 76-77)

Given the increasing demands of modern life, educational institutions, particularly universities, must prioritize mental health by equipping students with the tools and knowledge to face life's challenges. Universities play a crucial role in fostering personal growth and development for a brighter future (Khlifi Nadia, 2018: 41).

Future-related anxiety among university graduates negatively impacts their mental health, effectiveness, and aspirations, making them susceptible to psychological disorders that hinder both academic and professional success.

Research Questions:

Based on the above, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- Is there a statistically significant relationship between professional future anxiety and mental health among second-year master's students in Social Sciences at Adrar University?
- Are there statistically significant differences in professional future anxiety levels based on gender within the sample?
- Are there statistically significant differences in mental health levels based on gender within the sample?

2- Study Objectives:

The study aims to:

- Explore the relationship between future anxiety and mental health among second-year master's students in Social Sciences at Adrar University.
- Identify gender-based differences in future anxiety levels within the sample.
- Assess gender-based differences in mental health levels within the sample.

3- Study Significance:

3-1 Theoretical Importance:

- Highlights the issue of future anxiety and its connection to mental health, shedding light on its causes, manifestations, and negative effects on students' lives.
- Fills a gap in local research on this topic, as per the researcher's knowledge and available studies.

3-2 Practical Importance:

- Addresses the psychological challenges faced by university students, a vital societal group.
- Provides insights for mental health professionals to design guidance programs aimed at reducing professional future anxiety among students.

4-Study Scope:

The study focuses on second-year master's students in Social Sciences at Adrar University during the 2019-2020 academic year.

5-Operational Definitions:

5-1 Future Anxiety:

Defined as a state of discomfort, tension, and fear about an uncertain future, particularly regarding career prospects.(Al-Safasfa & Al-Mahamid, 2007)

5-2 Mental Health:

A relatively stable state where an individual feels emotionally, socially, and psychologically balanced, achieves self-fulfillment, and effectively manages life demands (Hamed Zahran, 2005).

5-3 University Students:

Refers to second-year master's students in the Department of Social Sciences at Adrar University during the 2019-2020 academic year.

6-Methodological Procedures of the Field Study

6-1 Study Methodology:

The researcher adopted a descriptive approach, which suits the nature of this study. This method aims to describe phenomena, collect facts and observations, and analyze and interpret data to uncover relationships between variables.

6-2 Study Sample:

The study sample consisted of 120 students: 90 females and 40 males, selected randomly.

6-3 Study Tools:

First Tool: Professional Future Anxiety Scale

Developed by Ahmed Ragab El-Sayed (2018), this scale initially consisted of 40 items, divided into four key dimensions: psychological, physical, professional, and social (10 items per dimension).

The preliminary version of the scale was tested on a pilot sample of 48 students from the Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, King

Faisal University in Saudi Arabia during the first semester of the academic year 1437–1438H. This trial aimed to evaluate the scale’s validity and reliability.

Validity:

The scale's designer employed various methods to ensure validity, including expert review and internal consistency, proving the scale’s reliability and accuracy.

Internal Consistency:

The researcher calculated the internal consistency of the Professional Future Anxiety Scale by correlating each item with the total score of its respective dimension and with the overall scale score.

The following table presents the internal consistency results:

Table (01): Internal Consistency of the Professional Future Anxiety Scale Items with Their Corresponding Dimensions.

Psychological Dimension	Reliability Coefficient	Physical Dimension	Reliability Coefficient	Professional Dimension	Reliability Coefficient	Social Dimension	Reliability Coefficient
1	0,50**	3	0,74**	5	0,39**	7	0,57**
2	0,73**	4	0,60**	6	0,52**	8	0,54**
9	0,64**	11	0,64**	13	0,44**	15	0,55**
10	0,50**	12	0,60**	14	0,36**	16	0,32*
17	0,51**	19	0,60**	21	0,39**	23	0,43**
18	0,38**	20	0,84**	22	0,36*	24	0,57**
25	0,58**	27	0,75**	29	0,28*	31	0,63**
26	0,50**	28	0,66**	30	0,32*	32	0,19
33	0,63**	35	0,62**	37	0,28*	39	0,46**
34	0,53**	36	0,71**	38	0,35*	40	0,63**
Overall Dimension	0,82**	Overall Dimension	0,48**	Overall Dimension	0,73**	Overall Dimension	0,31*

**Significant at the 0.01 level.

*Significant at the 0.05 level.

The table illustrates the correlation coefficients of each item with the overall score of the dimension it belongs to. Most correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, except for specific items (14, 22, 29, 30, 37, 38) in the professional and (16) in social dimensions, which are significant at the 0.05 level. One item (32) in the social dimension was not statistically significant.

These results validate the reliability of the scale items and their main dimensions.

To ensure reliability, two methods were applied: split-half reliability and Cronbach's alpha. Table 2 shows the results:

Table (2): Reliability of the Professional Future Anxiety Scale and Its Dimensions

Dimensions	Number of Items	Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Cronbach's Alpha
Psychological Dimension	10	0,89	0,58
Physical Dimension	10	0,89	0,91
Professional Dimension	10	0,78	0,71
Social Dimension	9	0,69	0,80
Total Scale	39	0,62	0,91

The results show that the reliability coefficients for the Professional Future Anxiety Scale, assessed using both split-half reliability and Cronbach's alpha, were consistently high. Split-half reliability coefficients ranged between 0.62 and 0.69, while Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.71 to 0.91. This demonstrates that the scale is reliable (Ahmed Ragab El-Sayed, 2018: 44-47).

The scale's validity was also confirmed using internal consistency. Correlation coefficients between each item and the total score for its respective dimension, as well as the overall scale, were calculated using a pilot sample of 50 students. The results showed coefficients ranging from 0.52 to 0.78, statistically significant at 0.01, except for items (14, 29, 30, 38), which were significant at 0.05. These findings affirm the scale's validity.

Additionally, internal consistency reliability was verified for the current study using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a value of 0.70, further supporting the scale's reliability.

Second tool: Mental Health Scale

Developed by Ahmed Abdel-Khaleq (2016), the Mental Health Scale consists of 40 positively worded items rated on a five-point Likert scale. Responses range from "Not applicable" to "Completely applicable," with scores reflecting higher mental health levels. The scale's total score ranges between 40 and 200, with higher scores indicating better psychological well-being.

Psychometric properties of the scale were validated using samples of 154 participants from Kuwait and the USA. The results showed that Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.94 to 0.96, and internal consistency coefficients ranged between 0.84 and 0.94—both demonstrating strong reliability (Saada Al-Hashimiya, 2017: 70).

For the current study, internal consistency validity was confirmed by calculating correlations between each item and the total scale score using a pilot sample of 50 students. Coefficients ranged from 0.62 to 0.88, all statistically significant at 0.01, confirming the scale's validity. Reliability was further validated using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.86, highlighting the scale's strong reliability.

6-4 Statistical Analysis Methods:

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS Version 20.0, employing the following methods:

- Pearson correlation coefficient: To examine the relationship between professional future anxiety and mental health, as well as to confirm internal consistency validity.
- T-tests: To identify statistically significant differences between male and female students on both scales.
- Cronbach's alpha: To measure the reliability of the scales.

7-Presentation and Discussion of the Results:

7-1 Presentation and Discussion of the First Hypothesis:

This hypothesis states that there is a statistically significant relationship between career future anxiety and mental health among second-year master's students in Social Sciences at Adrar University.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between career future anxiety and mental health among the study sample. The results indicated the following:

Table (03): Shows the correlation coefficients between career future anxiety and mental health among the study sample.

Measure	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
Career Anxiety	0,78	0,01
Mental Health		

The results from the previous table show a statistically significant correlation between career future anxiety and mental health among second-year master's students in Social Sciences at Adrar University. The correlation coefficient was found to be 0.78 at a significance level of 0.01. This indicates that as career future anxiety increases, mental health decreases, and conversely, as career future anxiety decreases, mental health improves. This result can be attributed to the fact that the university environment is full of challenges, and students' lives are burdened with life demands and limited job opportunities, which significantly contribute to their fatigue. All of this leads to increased anxiety about their professional future. University students are more susceptible to career future anxiety due to their aspirations after graduation to secure a respectable job amid economic changes and the desire for financial independence. Their fear of not securing a job in the future leads to negative expectations and a pessimistic view of their future, which can negatively affect their mental health, social and psychological adjustment, self-esteem, and may lead to feelings of failure and social isolation.

This result aligns with the findings of the study by "Nabil Mansouri et al.," which identified a relationship between career future anxiety and mental health among university students.(Nabil Mansouri: 133)

7-2 Presentation and Discussion of the Second Hypothesis:

Table (04): Shows the significance of differences between males and females in the level of career future anxiety using the independent samples t-test.

	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	Degrees of Freedom	Statistical Significance
Males	40	51,04	3,98	1,25	128	Not significant
Females	90	63,54	5,74			

This hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences in career future anxiety levels among the study sample based on gender.

To test this hypothesis, a t-test was used to examine the differences between genders in terms of career future anxiety levels. The following table presents the results.

The data from Table (04) shows that the mean score for males was 51.04 with a standard deviation of 3.98, while the mean score for females was 63.54 with a standard deviation of 5.74. The t-test value for the significance of the differences was 1.25, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis, which states that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of professional future anxiety between the male and female participants in the study. The results thus indicate that the hypothesis was not supported.

This outcome can be explained by the nature of the study sample and the shared circumstances and challenges faced by both male and female students, such as large graduation cohorts each year from various disciplines, limited job opportunities, and the prevalence of favoritism and nepotism in securing employment. Additionally, students face post-graduation pressures, such as unemployment and housing issues.

The result also reflects the anxiety about future responsibilities. The fear of not securing a decent job after graduation and the inability to meet essential life needs heightens their concerns about the future.

This finding aligns with studies by Ibrahim Sfsafa and Shaker Al-Mohamadi (2007), Mahmoud Huweida and Farag Anwar (2006), Sarah Bakkar (2016), Moyaid Hiba, and Atfa Mahmoud and Nazmi Ouda (2016), all of which found no statistically significant differences in future career anxiety based on gender.

However, the current results contradict studies by Al-Ansari (2004), which reported differences favoring females, and Al-Akayshi (2000), which found a significant difference in future career anxiety, with females exhibiting higher anxiety. Similarly, Duaa Shalhoub (2016) found statistically significant differences in anxiety scores based on gender, favoring males, as did Mohammad Momani and Mazen Mahmoud (2012), who found significant gender differences in future anxiety levels, with males showing higher levels. Furthermore, Mohammed Al-Qahtani’s study found significant differences in future anxiety between male and female students in the psychology department at Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, again favoring males. Ahmad Zaqawa’s study (2013) also reported significant differences in future anxiety levels, both in psychological and professional aspects, with males showing higher levels.

7-3 Presentation and discussion of the third hypothesis: There are statistically significant differences in mental health levels in the study sample based on gender

Table (05): Table (04): Shows the significance of differences between males and females in the level of career future anxiety using the independent samples t-test.

	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	Degrees of Freedom	Statistical Significance
Males	40	47,36	3,63	2,44	128	Not significant
Females	90	58,51	5,12			

Table (05) shows that the average score for male participants was 47.36, with a standard deviation of 3.63, while the average score for female participants was 58.51, with a standard deviation of 5.12. The t-test value for differences was calculated at 2.44 which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. As a result, the null hypothesis, stating that there are no significant differences in

mental health levels between males and females in the sample, is accepted. This means the hypothesis suggesting differences was not supported.

This outcome can be attributed to the fact that both genders share similar academic environments and university life conditions, such as standardized schedules, exam pressures, and the risk of failure. Additionally, the lack of suitable spaces for pursuing personal interests or activities that reinforce self-confidence affects both groups equally. Similar parenting styles, social upbringing, and shared societal challenges also contribute to this lack of differences.

These findings align with those of Reem Atiya (2017), who, in her study on university students' mental health, concluded that there are no significant gender-based differences in mental health. She attributed this to the similar parenting approaches and family dynamics experienced by both genders (Reem Atiya Haidar, 2017: 133).

This result is further supported by Al-Zubaidi and Al-Hazaa (1997), who also found no statistically significant gender differences in mental health levels.

8-Conclusion:

In conclusion, the findings of this study, analyzed based on its hypotheses, reveal both significant and non-significant results, summarized as follows:

- The first hypothesis was confirmed, showing a statistically significant relationship between professional future anxiety and mental health among second-year master's students in social sciences at Adrar University.
- The second hypothesis was not supported, as no statistically significant differences were found in professional future anxiety levels based on gender.
- Similarly, the third hypothesis was not validated, as there were no statistically significant differences in mental health levels based on gender.

Based on these findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:

- ._ Enhance the role of psychological counselors in universities to provide career and mental health support.
- ._ Raise students' awareness about their career potential and help them plan effectively for their professional futures.

- Develop preventive counseling programs aimed at reducing professional future anxiety and improving mental health among university students.
- Conduct further research to explore the relationship between professional future anxiety and mental health across other academic levels.
- Investigate the relationship between professional future anxiety and other variables, such as self-esteem, psychological stress, resilience, and quality of life.
- Examine the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral intervention programs in alleviating professional future anxiety among university students.

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