



Article

Relationship between Social Anxiety and Self-Esteem for Nursing Students

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Abstract: The university is the most important stage of education; Social anxiety is an important factor in peoples' mental health. Good mental health while studying at university allows students to deal effectively with numerous stressors that they experience. Self-esteem seems to be an important component of a person's psychological status. A descriptive-analytic study sample that selected from Al Najaf Governorate from January 15th 2025 through May 1st, 2025. Simple random sample of (100) subjects, it is selected throughout the use of non-probability sampling, through Questionnaire questions. A total of n = 100 surveys completed by nursing students. (12 %) of them have moderate levels according to the total score of social anxiety. And there is correlation between social anxiety and self-esteem among Nurses Student with significant relationship at P value >0.01, and no significant relationship between demographic data and total Social Anxiety assessment except Resident and age which appear significant relationship. The study concluded that most of the nursing students have moderate self-esteem, it seems that the placement of students in the nursing education system does not produce any changes in their social anxiety, and More educational and recreational activities that decrease social anxiety Keywords: Social anxiety, self-esteem, Nursing students, Education.

Keywords: Social Anxiety, Self-esteem, Nurses

Citation: Fatlawi, D. A. H., Jihad, S., Al-Naffakh, R. S. Relationship between Social Anxiety and Self-Esteem for Nursing Students. Central Asian Journal of Medical and Natural Science 2025, 6(4) 1943-1948.

Received: 30th Jun 2025

Revised: 09th Jul 2025

Accepted: 31st Jul 2025

Published: 19th Aug 2025



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1. Introduction

University education is regarded as the most important stage of learning, as it represents the pinnacle of the educational pyramid and is structured to systematically prepare individuals for life. Therefore, the higher education level is given considerable attention in most developed countries due to its significant and serious role [1]. Effective interpersonal communication is a fundamental skill in nursing, as it directly impacts patient care and professional collaboration. Research has shown that social anxiety negatively affects communication competence among nursing students, leading to challenges in expressing empathy and building therapeutic relationships. Lower levels of social anxiety are associated with improved assertiveness, interaction management, and overall efficiency in communication, which are essential for delivering high-quality care [2]. Studies indicate that the mental health of nursing students not only influences their education and daily life, but also influences the quality of their professional practice in future and how long they stay in the nursing profession. Therefore, identifying factors affecting mental health has a special importance. Self-esteem seems as an important component of a person's psychological status [3]. Santrock [4] discusses self-esteem as a

crucial factor in adolescent development, emphasizing its role in shaping identity and psychological well-being. Research suggests that self-esteem serves as a protective mechanism, influencing how individuals navigate social interactions and personal growth. Contrary to some claims, studies indicate that social contexts—such as family, peers, and schools—play a significant role in shaping an adolescent's self-esteem. Additionally, social anxiety is closely linked to mental health, with lower self-esteem often correlating with higher levels of anxiety. University education equips students with the ability to manage various stressors they encounter. However, students with social phobia often struggle with public speaking, which can lead to academic failure or withdrawal from school due to fear [5]. Excessive anxiety may divert their attention from academic content, impairing their ability to engage effectively in learning [6]. Additionally, fear of negative evaluation can hinder their ability to communicate with peers and instructors, particularly in seminar settings, where socially anxious students tend to underestimate their competence, ultimately contributing to academic underachievement [7].

The objectives of the study aims to:

1. Assess the social anxiety among nursing college student
2. Assess self - esteem the among nursing college student
3. Find out the relationship between social anxiety and self – esteem

Find out the relationship between social anxiety, self-esteem, and socio-demographic characteristics of nursing college students.

2. Materials and Methods

Design of the Study

A descriptive–analytic study was carried out in order to achieve the stated objectives. The study began from January 15th 2025, through May 1st, 2025.

Setting of the Study

A sample was selected from Nursing students at the University of Kufa in Al Najaf Governorate

Sample of the Study

Simple random sample of (100) subjects, it is selected throughout the use of probability sampling, through self-report questions

Instrument of the study

The final research instrument is made up of three parts. **Part 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics:** Which consisted of (4) items, which included gender, residency, marital status, educational stage.

Part 2: Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS):The LSAS is a widely recognized tool designed to help identify and understand the impact of social anxiety. Developed in 1987 by psychiatrist Dr. Michael R. Liebowitz, it includes 24 items that explore how individuals respond to various social and performance situations. Each item looks at two aspects: a:how anxious or fearful a person feels in a given situation.

b- how often they avoid that situation due to anxiety. Responses are rated on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 3 (severe or usually), offering insight into both emotional and behavioral dimensions of social anxiety. Its solid psychometric foundation has made it a trusted measure in both clinical practice and academic research, helping professionals track symptoms and evaluate progress in therapy or intervention.

Part 3: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES): Originally developed by sociologist Dr. Morris Rosenberg in 1965, the RSES remains one of the most widely used tools for measuring self-esteem. With just 10 items, it offers a quick yet insightful look into how individuals perceive their self-worth and acceptance. The scale balances positive statements (like “I feel that I have a number of good qualities”) with negative ones (such

as “At times I think I am no good at all”). Each item is rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

3. Results

Table 1. Distribution of the observed frequencies and percent of Demographical Characteristics for Study Sample.

Variables	Categories	F.	%
Age	<= 20	27	27.0
	21 - 25	60	60.0
	26 - 30	9	9.0
	31 - 36	1	1.0
	37 - 41	1	1.0
	42+	2	2.0
	Mean + SD	22.74	4.31
Sex	Male	39	39.0
	Female	61	61.0
	Total	100	100.0
Stage of study	First Stage	25	25.0
	Second Stage	24	24.0
	Third Stage	25	25.0
	Fourth Stage	26	26.0
	Total	100	100.0
Residence	Rural	11	11.0
	Urban	89	89.0
	Total	100	100.0
Marital status	Single	72	72.0
	Married	27	27.0
	Divorce	1	1.0
	Total	100	100.0

F = Frequency, % = Percent.

Table 1 shows statistical distribution of Study sample by their socio-demographic data, it explains that the highest percentage of the student's subgroup are: students with ages between (21 - 25) years old (60.0%), female students (61.0%), single students (72.0%), those who live urban residents (89.0%), those who study in Fourth Stage (26.0%).

Table 2. Overall Assessment of Social Anxiety among the Students.

	Categories	Frequency	Percent	M.S.	S.D.	Assess
Social Anxiety	Low	22	22.0	2.92	0.74	Moderate Anxiety
	Moderate	66	66.0			
	High	12	12.0			
	Total	100	100.0			

M.S. = Mean of Score, S.d. = Standard Deviation. Low anxiety = less than 2.33, moderate anxiety = 2.34 – 3.66, High Anxiety = 3.67 and more

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and assessment for determination of social anxiety domain among the Students, it explains that the assessment of all the domain items was (moderate).

Table 3. Overall Assessment of Self-Esteem among the Students.

	Categories	F.	%	M.S	S.D.	Assess
Self Esteem	Low Self Esteem	1	1.0			
	Fair Self Esteem	40	40.0			
	High Self Esteem	59	59.0	27.41	3.88	High Self Esteem

M.S. = Mean of Score, S.d. = Standard Deviation. Low Self Esteem = less than 13.33, Fair Self Esteem = 13.34-26.66 –, High Self Esteem = 26.67 and more

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics and assessment for determination of Self-Esteem among the Students, it explains that the assessment of all the domain items was (High Self Esteem).

Table 4. Correlation between Social Anxiety and Self Esteem among Nurses Student.

	Statistics	Self Esteem
Social Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.242*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.015 S
	N	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows correlation between social anxiety and Self Esteem among Nurses Student and their demographic data, it shows that there is significant relationship between demographic data and total Social anxiety assessment.

Table 5. Relationship between Students' Overall Social Anxiety and Their Demographical Characteristics.

Variable	F	Sig.
Age	2.110	0.004 S
Sex	1.130	0.334 NS
Stage of study	0.976	0.534 NS
Resident	1.972	0.009 S
Marital status	0.595	0.964 NS

S = significant, NS = non- significant

Table 5 relationship between Students' Overall Social Anxiety and Their Demographical Characteristics it shows that there is no significant relationship between demographic data and total Social Anxiety assessment except Resident and age which appear significant relationship.

Table 6. Relationship between Students' Overall Self-Esteem and Their Demographical Characteristics.

Variable	F	Sig.
Age	0.706	0.802 NS
Sex	0.883	0.603 NS
Stage of study	1.278	0.221 NS
Resident	1.137	0.332 NS
Marital status	3.813	0.0000 S

S = significant, NS = non- significant

Table 6 shows Relationship between Students' Overall Self-Esteem and their demographic data, it shows that there is no significant relationship between demographic data and Self-Esteem assessment except marital status which appear significant relationship.

4. Discussion

The results of table 1 shows statistical distribution of Study sample by their socio-demographic data, the study sample were within ages between (21 - 25) years old (60.0%), The above table also shows that the majority of participants were female students (61.0%), Much of the students involved in this study are single (72.0%). Also, the results show that more of them in those who graduated in Fourth Stage (26.0%). Also, in regarding to the subjects Residence, the results show that was (89.0%) Urban. This study is agreeing with Zan and Khudhair [1] which was found that the majority of the study sample (86.7%) are from urban residence. From the investigator point of view, this result may be due to the urban residential area students are more likely to continue in their education than those in rural residential area and that refer to educational and economic factors of their family, in addition to the higher density of population in urban than in rural residential area. The study results show that the majority of the study sample (61,0%) is females, because of the shortage in female nursing staff in the country, this result is supported by Chen et al [8].

Discussion of Socio-medical Data

The results of table 2 shows descriptive statistics and assessment for determination of anxiety domain among the Students, it explains that the assessment of all the domain items was (moderate). which involves more frequent or persistent symptoms than those of mild anxiety, but still allows for daily functioning in comparison to severe anxiety or panic disorder [9].

Discussion of Correlation between Social Anxiety and Self Esteem among Nurses Student

The results in table 5 indicate that there are significant positive relationships between all the studied scales at $p\text{-value} \leq 0.01$ between the self-esteem scale from one side with the social interaction anxiety and social phobia scales the relationship from another side was negative. This result agrees with Izgic et.al. [10]; who studied social phobia among university students and its relation to self-esteem and body image in turkey and other study by Mull [3], their finding indicates that there is a significant negative relationship between the social phobia and the students' self-esteem. The present findings agree with the finding of Azar et al [11] who studied the prevalence of anxiety and its relationship with self-esteem among Zabol University students in Iran, and other investigators who have shown that self-esteem decreases with increases anxiety.

Discussion of Relationship between Students' Overall Self-Esteem and Their demographical Characteristics

In table 6 shows that there is no significant relationship between demographic data and Self-Esteem assessment except marital status which appear significant relationship. This result indicates that self-esteems of nursing collegians are non-affected significantly in most self-esteem items [12].

5. Conclusion

- a. The study concluded that most of the nursing students have moderate self-esteem, it seems that the placement of students in the nursing education system does not produce any changes in their social anxiety.
- b. More educational and recreational activities that decrease social anxiety.

Recommendations

- a. The researcher recommends a farther study about Social anxiety.
- b. More educational and recreational activities that decrease social anxiety.

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