

Review Article

Social Anxiety Experiences Among Saudi College Students: A Mini-Literature Review

Fahad Sultan Alotaibi^{1*}, Gil M. Parentela²

¹Staff Nurse, Eradah Mental Health Complex, Riyadh, KSA

²Assistant Professor, King Saud University, Riyadh, KSA

*Corresponding authors: Mr. Fahad Sultan Alotaibi, Staff Nurse, Eradah Mental Health Complex, Riyadh, KSA.
Tel: 00966555887001; Email: Falotaibi158@moh.gov.sa

Citation: Alotaibi FS, Parentela GM (2022) Social Anxiety Experiences Among Saudi College Students: A Mini-Literature Review. Ad Nurs Sci Resear: ANSR-116.

Received Date: 07 November, 2022; **Accepted Date:** 15 November, 2022; **Published Date:** 21 November, 2022

Abstract

Background: One of the most prevalent conditions in the entire world is social anxiety disorder. Data from Saudi Arabia is not as current at the same time. Since there is a lack of data on college students, the study's main goal is to ascertain the prevalence of SAD among Saudi college students, its relationship to sociodemographic variables, and the impact of anxiety and stress disorders on their academic performance.

Study Aims: Numerous studies have found that social anxiety is a prevalent problem for students. Due to the conservative and conventional nature of the majority of Saudi households, Saudi students also struggle with social anxiety. It ultimately has the impact of causing and growing social anxiety traits in students. Understanding the nature and extent of worry among the diverse students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the main goal.

Method: Between 2017 and 2022, a literature review was conducted. Research Gate, Scopus, PubMed, Google Scholar, the KSU e-library, and Research Gate were utilized to evaluate and look up pertinent studies.

Results: Studies conducted in Saudi Arabia revealed a moderate to severe level of social anxiety among Saudi students enrolled in universities and colleges.

Conclusion: Students who are suffering from this insight are typically also dealing with various other health-related issues, especially smoking habits, eating disorders, perching disorders, sleeping pattern problems, and various other issues. It is the most developed component in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Saudi, Social Anxiety, Students, Social Phobia, Saudi Students.

Introduction

A person with social phobia is defined as having a chronic fear of one or more social or performance circumstances in which they may be exposed to new people or potential public scrutiny. The hallmarks of social phobia include widespread social shyness, social anxiety and avoidance on the part of some people, and difficulties engaging in basic social discourses [1]. It is the notion of an inability to maintain social discussions, a raised risk of failure, a low level of social interaction, and career choices based on the anticipation of social connections. It is a persistent aversion to one or more social or performance contexts in which one is exposed to strangers [1]. The person is afraid of acting in a way (or exhibiting anxiety symptoms) that will be embarrassing and humiliating; this could affect how they go about their regular lives. Social anxiety disorder, often known as "social phobia," is a significant cause of distress or functional impairment. It is characterized by a constant, paralyzing fear of being scrutinized, embarrassed, or

humiliated in social performance situations. There are two types of social phobia: non-generalized phobia, in which people dread only a specific set of conditions, and generalized phobia, in which people fear practically all social contexts [1].

The quality of life, social contacts, work performance, and self-esteem of those with social phobia were all significantly worse than those without it. Inability to interact socially, worse educational success, and worse academic performance are further effects of social phobia. Some bodily indicators of social anxiety include excessive sweating, slurred speech, palpitations, flushing, tremors, and nausea [1]. This is one of the most prevalent conditions in teens and young adults that, if left untreated, hinders their capacity to function. Additionally, due to the condition's high incidence rate, it is now third in prevalence among young people's mental disorders, behind drinking and depression [2]. Numerous investigations have revealed and administered the lifetime incidence of social anxiety

disorder (SAD), which ranges from 3 to 11%. Numerous studies have looked at the prevalence of SAD among college students. Family history, a lack of social support, low self-confidence, an impaired body personality, and poor academic achievement are the most frequent characteristics that have been linked to SAD in college students [2].

International studies on social disorder and insight have defined and categorized social anxiety under the assumption that people with social anxiety believe they are being evaluated by others, which causes them to be more self-conscious about their outward, physiological, and physical manifestations. However, there are several forms of social phobias, such as the phobia associated with outward appearances, the anxiety associated with how a person is perceived in terms of prestige and dignity, and the phobia associated with how a person feels about themselves as being inspired. All phobias heighten the sufferer's fear, stress, and anxiety, making them more susceptible to sensory deprivation and preventing them from attending this type of event [3]. Even though numerous academics from around the globe have amassed extensive data on this phobia and condition, Saudi Arabia still lags behind in the gathering and examination of such material. College students are the most likely to be affected by the disorder, and information about this would assist the authorities in maximizing the advantages for the students on the college grounds. Additionally, to deal with academic challenges, college students need to be in good physical and mental health, have strong personality features, and be motivated to develop improved communication skills. The purpose of the paper is to explore how social anxiety disorder affects Saudi college students' mental health [4].

Understanding the extent and nature of worry among the diverse students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the aim and objective of this literature review.

Methodology

Database Searching. Peer-reviewed articles were looked up on Google Scholar, Scopus, PubMed, and Research Gate in accordance with the review's goal. The only articles that were targeted were those that were released between 2017 and 2022. Key words like "social anxiety," "Saudi," "students," and "Saudi students" were used to search the literature. Similar to that, only English-language literature was targeted. The review of the literature was based on ten articles.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria. Only studies that satisfied the objectives of our literature review were included. Only studies from the previous five years were included. The current literature review did not include any studies that did not fit the keywords or that were older than 5 years. Literature written in languages other than English was also disqualified.

Study Characteristics. This study concentrated on articles that had undergone peer review and included both quantitative and qualitative research investigations. All studies that have Saudi Arabian students as their primary subject of study were targeted. Similarly, while searching for

literature, several issues, including literature on social phobias and anxieties, were kept in mind.

Assessment of Risk of Bias. In all articles, Saudi Arabian based authors conducted such studies in Saudi Arabia. All articles talked about different aspects of social anxiety and phobia development among school-, college-, and university going students. Most of the studies founded new triggering factors and elements in progressing social anxiety, such as physical appearances, family, and a home-based congested environment. Also, it was found that among medical students, social anxiety levels were observed to be higher than in the population of Saudi Arabia.

Review and Discussions

Anxiety as a phenomenon. Anxiety is a phenomenon that affects people's behavior and performance on a regular basis. Global studies have shown that anxiety disorders do affect students. Test anxiety is one of the most common anxiety categories that characterize reactions to stress [5]. Recent literature has conducted a great deal of research on this sort of anxiety. This is especially true for university students who exhibit significant levels of exam anxiety. Particularly compared to their counterparts in other comparable faculties, health students have reportedly reported higher levels of anxiety. The anxiety that some health students face deserves serious consideration [5].

Social anxiety is one of the illnesses and mental disorders that kids and teenagers in Saudi Arabia experience the most. It is widely acknowledged that young people's potential to develop economically and socially depends on the education they get [5]. Over the years, Saudi Arabia's higher education system has advanced significantly. Other studies showed that particularly poor academic performance was brought on by higher levels of social anxiety [5]. Additionally, there are around 49% of pharmacy students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who suffer from social phobia, with mild instances making up 25% of cases, moderate cases making up 14.1% of cases, and severe cases making up 8.8% of cases. It is claimed that in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, half of pharmacy students suffer from internal problems, whereas other countries using the same solutions have noticed a similar trend [6]. When compared to gender differences, the prevalence rate of social anxiety disorder in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the idea that females are more prone to anxiety. Similar to this, and other research on the prevalence of this, it is the gender that suggests that the male gender is more likely to link with the prevalence of inciting social dilemmas, family nurturing, the dominant member of the family, and various other factors in this male individual, which is considered to be the dominant gender of the society, entangled with their social anxiety disorder [7].

Impact of Social Anxiety on Students. Due to the demanding workload, demanding academic schedule, test stress, limited working capacity, peer pressure, social pressure, parental style, interest in diverse activities, and other factors, including the individual capacity to work the inquiry, students are subject to working inside. The educational sector, which works for long-term benefits and is viewed as the future of the nation, is most important to students [8]. Social anxiety among the student is associated with various

other factors, especially in the classroom situation where the students perform various educational activities together and usually belie their notions and ideology regarding constructs that are studied in the classroom. Especially social pressure and peer pressure in the classroom are one of the most important dilemmas regarding social phobia among students [3]. Students are vulnerable to work-minute changes in attitude, perception, and understanding regarding the educator and friends in the class special the classmates. Moreover, the gender difference is also associated with them invitees in classroom activity participation. Some research suggested that boys are more prone to work the social anxiety while discussing various new and innovative ideas in class as compared to girls [9].

In the classroom, where students participate in a variety of educational activities together and frequently contradict their beliefs and ideologies surrounding concepts being studied, social anxiety among students is linked to a number of different aspects [3]. One of the most significant problems with social phobia among adolescents is social pressure, particularly peer pressure in the classroom. Students' attitudes, perceptions, and comprehension of the teacher, their classmates, and their classmates' friends are all subject to last-minute alterations. Additionally, the gender gap is linked to the invitees' participation in classroom activities. According to certain research, boys are more likely than girls to experience social anxiety when discussing numerous novel and creative ideas in class [9].

Furthermore, the individual was linked to a similar attitude regarding their use of the Persian language in the class welder's performance based on social pressure and reception. When considering numerous occurrences as a parameter linked to individual likelihood, students are frequently observed to be apprehensive. Therefore, a common viewpoint among students regarding the utility of language suggests that students incorporate various language skills that make them more guarded when using incorrect word pronunciation, incorrect pronunciation of words, incorrect word identification, and incorrect word usage in the wrong scenario [10,11]. Furthermore, the individual was linked to a similar attitude regarding their use of the Persian language in the class welder's performance based on social pressure and reception. When considering numerous occurrences as a parameter linked to individual likelihood, students are frequently observed to be apprehensive. Therefore, a widespread perspective among students on the usefulness of language is that students develop a variety of language abilities that make them more cautious when employing improper word pronunciation, incorrect word identification, and inappropriate word usage in the wrong circumstance [10, 5]. Anxiety and stress are rather typical, especially in females and college students. Students' overall performance, as well as their physical and mental welfare, may be impacted by stress. There are numerous aspects of life that are impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic, which is also linked to significant psychological anguish. It has had a significant impact on education both locally and globally, causing a switch from in-person to online learning [12].

Hallmarks of Anxiety. Hallmarks of anxiety include stress, uncertainty, and worry about unimportant aspects of daily life and implausible future events. These feelings are frequently brought on by exaggerating negative circumstances. A widespread and pervasive mental health problem is anxiety. It was a fairly prevalent ailment among medical professionals, college students, and women during the COVID-19 epidemic [12]. According to a recent thorough study, the incidence of anxiety among college and high school students in Saudi Arabia ranged from 34.9% to 65% before the COVID-19 epidemic. Students of both sexes do worse academically when their anxiety levels increase, according to evidence from the literature. Numerous studies have looked at how the epidemic has affected college students psychologically and discovered that worry is more prevalent in this population, despite the fact that worry impairs a student's ability to learn as well as their way of life and physical health, which promotes misbehavior and social isolation. Students who live alone or have family members infected with COVID-19 suffer noticeably higher anxiety [12]. It is expected and accurate, according to a different study, that women experience social anxiety at a higher rate than men. This conclusion is consistent with the finding that SAD is more prevalent in women and that this difference is more pronounced in adolescents [2]. As a result, it is linked to every person, their situation, the value they recognize, and the dignity they experience. Since these components are present in both the individual and society, it is crucial for us to understand the numerous perspectives that are connected to and linked to their identification. With its negative effects on social contact and physical activity, anxiety is the most revealing and enhancing component in a person's life. Particularly in this student life where the learning process is dependent on the interaction based on one-to-one interaction and community-based interactions that improve their competency and develop greater understanding to work the learning perspective [10,2].

Summary and Conclusion

Due to the social perspective of peer and family groups, which is related to the practice tips that are based on comparisons among the various students and population of the curve, health-related issues were prevalent among students, especially since it is the most developed component in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Most students who experience this insight also struggle with other health-related difficulties, particularly those who smoke, have eating disorders, perching syndrome disorders, sleeping pattern challenges, and other issues. These studies reveal the prevalence of social anxiety disorder among Saudi college students. The findings showed that college students are less mindful and more prone to cognitive deviation in social circumstances. College students experience social anxiety and stress because they are sensitive to criticism and input from others, including the general public and even their superiors. They are more common in these circumstances, so better improvements should be made to ease their suffering. The study's conclusion advises mental health professionals and staff to pay more attention to SAD teenagers and satisfy their psychological needs. Students should get theoretical support, and treatments relating to the systematic psychological and all-encompassing nature of college students should be introduced.

Table 1: Reviewed Articles in Saudi Arabia on Social Anxiety.

Author & Year	Study Design	Total Sample	Types of Participants	Findings and Outcomes	Conclusion
Anxiety as a Phenomenon					
Alyoubi, A., Halstead, E. J., Zambelli, Z., Dimitriou, D. (2021). [5]	A cross-sectional online survey	582	Undergraduate students at any university in Saudi Arabia	Undergraduate students during the pandemic showed low levels of resilience and high levels of sadness, anxiety, and perceived stress (p 0.001). Additionally, pupils mentioned having sleeplessness. According to a hierarchical regression analysis, low resilience, excessive sleepiness, a history of mental illness, and learning disabilities (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or dyscalculia) were all strongly linked to high levels of stress and depression. High degrees of anxiety were also strongly correlated with lower resilience, a high level of insomnia, and pre-existing mental health issues. Last but not least, elevated levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among university students were substantially correlated with lower levels of psychological resilience and high levels of insomnia.	Insomnia and a lower level of psychological resilience were linked to mental health issues among undergraduate students in Saudi Arabia, according to this study's findings. As a result, improving psychological resilience and sleep and mental health interventions are essential to support student well-being outcomes throughout the pandemic.
Bensalem, E. (2021) [6].	Mixed-method research design	487	English as a foreign language (EFL) student	The levels of FLE and FLCA were equivalent for male and female students. The correlation between students' FLE and FLCA was significantly negative, according to the analysis.	The causes of FLCA and FLE were identified through a qualitative study of individuals' learning experiences. EFL students in Saudi Arabia
Elhadad, A. A., Alzaala, M. A., Alghamdi, R. S., Asiri, S. A., Algarni, A. A., & Elthabet, M. M. (2017) [7].	Cross-sectional study	580	Medical students in KKU	According to this study, social phobia was more prevalent in men and affected 59.5% of KKU medical students. Additionally, there were notable depressive symptoms in the kids who scored highly on social phobia.	Social anxiety is very common among KKU medical students. Risk factors can be changed. In this situation, it is essential to raise social phobia awareness among medical students. To assist them, early detection and intervention are strongly advised.
Impact of Social Anxiety on Students					
Asif, S., Mudassar, A., Shahzad, T, Z., Raouf, M., Pervaiz, T. (2020) [8].	Survey research method	500	University Students	The corresponding means for stress, anxiety, and depression are M = 18.24, M = 19.02, and M = 15.08, respectively. University students reported experiencing depression, anxiety, and stress 75%, 88.4%, and 84% of the	In the current sample, moderate to extremely severe anxiety and stress symptoms

				time, respectively. The study's conclusions revealed that depression was more common than expected in the ranges of normal (25%), mild (16%), moderate (35.7%), severe (14.6%), and extremely severe (8.6%). Anxiety was shown to range in prevalence from low (4.4%) to moderate (19.4%), severe (17.8%), and extremely severe (44.8%). Normal (15.6%), mild (33.8%), moderate (35.4%), severe (13.2%), and extremely severe (2.8%) stress levels were all recorded.	are more common than depressive symptoms. These results point to the urgent need for various preventive actions and interventions to enhance students' mental health.
Hakami, R. M., Mahfouz, M. S., Adawi, A. M., Maha, A. J., Athathi, A. J., Daghreeri, H. H., Najmi, H. H., & Areeshi, N. A. (2017) [3].	cross-sectional study	500	Undergraduate students	For SAD, 25.8% of the sample tested positive. A little over half of the students (47.2%), 42.3%, and 10.5% exhibited mild, moderate, or severe SAD symptoms, respectively. Numerous clinical manifestations that had an impact on the students' functional and social lives were reported.	Rigid efforts are required for the early detection and treatment of SAD because the present study shows a considerable prevalence of SAD among students, increased disability, and a reduced quality of life.
Samreen, S., Siddiqui, N. A., & Mothana, R. A. (2020) [9].	Cross-sectional study	170	Students enrolled in the second, third, and fourth years of King Saud University's bachelor programs in pharmacy (Bpharm) and doctor of pharmacy (PharmD) programs.	Among pharmacy students, anxiety was common (48%; 83 students); mild anxiety affected 44 (24.9%), moderate anxiety affected 24 (14.1%), and severe anxiety affected 15 (8.8%) of the students.	The results of this study showed that half of the pharmacy students experienced anxiety during their undergraduate education. But most of them just have mild to moderate symptoms.
Rasheed, A. (2021) [10].	Descriptive quantitative design	138	Health college students	According to the results, the CEA that the health students experienced was at a moderate level. At a 0.05 value, the findings also indicated that there was no appreciable gender- or study-system-based variations in the anxiety levels of students.	By including a study that was relevant to CEA during COVID-19, the study added to the body of literature. Using the findings as a foundation, the study listed implications and suggestions.
Luan, Y.-S., Zhan-ling, G., Mi, L., Ying, L., Lan, B., & Tong, L. (2022) [11].	Qualitative interpretive study	7	College students who were diagnosed with social anxiety disorder (SAD)	The results of the interviews' analysis were divided into four themes and a number of primary categories, including distorted self-awareness (three), dread of others' negative reactions (two), unfavorable physical and mental reactions (four), and a strong desire to seek treatment.	The study's findings serve as a guide for clinical psychologists and medical professionals and offer a scientific foundation for the treatment of

					social anxiety disorder.
Hallmarks of Anxiety					
Alshammari, T., Alseraye, S., Alqasim, R., Rogowska, A., Alrasheed, N., & Alshammari, M. (2022) [12].	Convenient sampling and snowballing strategies	418	Health Sciences College Students	A risk of moderate-to-severe GAD was identified by more than half of the group (51.44%). Women (72.09%) were more likely than men (27.9%) to report having anxiety. revealed a link between marital status and anxiety, with single people having a higher incidence of GAD (compared with married ones).	The study emphasizes the requirement for gender-specific prevention-focused mental health support services. The study's findings also suggest that organizations provide platforms and programs that enable students to connect and seek advice in a secure environment, especially those who are more likely to experience stress, such as females and first-year students.
Al-Johani, W. M., AlShamlan, N. A., AlAmer, N. A., Shawkhan, R. A., Almayyad, A. H., Alghamdi, L. M., Alqahtani, H. A., Al-Shammari, M. A., Gari, D. M. K., & AlOmar, R. S. (2022) [2].	Cross-Sectional Study	5896	Saudi Medical Students	Nearly 51% of the 5896 Saudi medical students who took part in the study had SAD. while, respectively, 8.21% and 4.21% experienced severe and very severe SAD. Students beyond the age of 18 had a decreased probability of acquiring SAD. However, within the sampled population, female students who are enrolled in SAD are more common, and many associated characteristics have been found. The current findings might encourage faculty members and healthcare professionals to identify and handle these cases early on. The risk was greater for private colleges and colleges using non-problem-based learning.	The sampled population has a high prevalence of SAD, and several contributing factors have been found. The current findings might encourage faculty members and healthcare professionals to identify and handle these cases early on.

Acknowledgement

The primary author would like to express his great appreciation to his supervisor and adviser, Dr. Gil M. Parentela. Without his supervision and guidance, this work would not have come to fruition. Also, the same gratitude is expressed towards the other faculty of the College of Nursing - King Saud University for their minor support and the institution for allowing the use of library and research facilities.

Conflict of interest/ Competing interest:

No conflict interest and no competing interest to declare.

Author Contribution

FSA-Article gathering, literature review and summarization, and manuscript writing.

GMP-Review of materials and discussion flow, and manuscript review and final editing.

References

1. Abadi, A. M., Albaggar, M. A. A., Ahmed, R. A., Mahmood, S. E. (2021). Prevalence of social phobia and its risk factors among students at King Khalid University, Abha city, Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical Research*. 13 (2), 3471- 3477.
2. Al-Johani, W. M., AlShamlan, N. A., AlAmer, N. A., Shawkhan, R. A., Almayyad, A. H., Alghamdi, L. M., Alqahtani, H. A., Al-Shammari, M. A., Gari, D. M. K., & AlOmar, R. S. (2022). Social anxiety disorder and its associated factors: a cross-sectional study among medical students, Saudi Arabia. *BMC Psychiatry*, 22 (1).

3. Hakami, R. M., Mahfouz, M. S., Adawi, A. M., Maha, A. J., Athathi, A. J., Daghreeri, H. H., Najmi, H. H., & Areeshi, N. A. (2017). Social anxiety disorder and its impact on undergraduate students at Jazan University, Saudi Arabia. *Mental Illness*, 9(2), 42–47.
4. Khoshaim, H. B., Al-Sukayt, A., Chinna, K., Nurunnabi, M., Sundarasan, S., Kamaludin, K., Baloch, G. M., & Hossain, S. F. A. (2020). Anxiety Level of University Students during COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11.
5. Alyoubi, A., Halstead, E. J., Zambelli, Z., Dimitriou, D. (2021). The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Students' Mental Health and Sleep in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 18 (17), 9344.
6. Bensalem, E. (2021). Classroom enjoyment and anxiety among Saudi undergraduate EFL students: does gender matter? *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, (18), 9-34.
7. Elhadad, A. A., Alzaala, M. A., Alghamdi, R. S., Asiri, S. A., Algarni, A. A., & Elthabet, M. M. (2017). Social phobia among Saudi medical students. *Middle East Current Psychiatry*, 24(2), 68-71.
8. Asif, S., Mudassar, A., Shahzad, T, Z., Raouf, M., Pervaiz, T. (2020). Frequency of depression, anxiety and stress among university students. *Pak J Med Sci*. 36 (5), 971-976.
9. Samreen, S., Siddiqui, N. A., & Mothana, R. A. (2020). Prevalence of anxiety and associated factors among pharmacy students in Saudi Arabia: A Cross-Sectional Study. *BioMed Research International*, 2020.
10. Rasheed, A. (2021). Investigating the relationship of computerized examination anxiety with other variables at the university level: A case of health college students in Saudi Arabia. *J Edu Health Promot*. 10, 371.
11. Luan, Y.-S., Zhan-ling, G., Mi, L., Ying, L., Lan, B., & Tong, L. (2022). The Experience among College Students with Social Anxiety Disorder in Social Situations: A Qualitative Study. *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment*, 18, 1729–1737.
12. Alshammari, T., Alseraye, S., Alqasim, R., Rogowska, A., Alrasheed, N., & Alshammari, M. (2022). Examining anxiety and stress regarding virtual learning in colleges of health sciences: A Cross-Sectional Study in the Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Saudi Arabia. *Saudi Pharmaceutical Journal*.