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Research Article

The Relation Between the Future Anxiety, Belonging and Psychological Resilience Levels of Nursing Assistant Students in the Health Vocational High School

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between the nurse assistants' future anxiety, belonging and psychological resilience levels in the health vocational high school. The research was conducted with 282 nursing assistant students who trained in Istanbul at Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School. The study data were collected between December 2019 and January-2020 by Information Form, BECK Hopelessness Scale, the Child and Youth Resilience Scale, and the Belonging Scale. The data was analysed with descriptive, Pearson Correlation and Linear Simple tests in SPSS. There was a statistically significant negative correlation between the BECK Hopelessness Scale and the Child Youth Resilience Scale in nursing assistant students. There was also a significant negative correlation between BECK Hopelessness Scale and the Belonging Scale. There was a positive correlation between the Child-Youth Psychological Resilience Scale and Belonging Scale. Besides, belonging and psychological resilience explained 14.0% of the total variance in hopelessness (R: 0.385, R2: 0.148). When the standardized (β) coefficient and t value were examined; it was increased negatively.

Keywords: Belonging, Future anxiety, Hopelessness, Nursing assistant, Nursing students, Psychological resilience

Sağlık Meslek Lisesinde Okuyan Hemşire Yardımcılarında Gelecek Kaygısı, Aidiyet ve Psikolojik Sağlamlık Arasındaki İlişki

Özet

Araştırma; sağlık meslek lisesinde okuyan hemşire yardımcılarının gelecek kaygısı, aidiyet ve psikolojik sağlamlık düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Araştırma, İstanbul'da bir Meslek ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi'nde okuyan 282 öğrenci ile gerçekleştirildi. Araştırmanın verileri, Aralık-2019 Ocak-2020 tarihleri arasında, Çocuk Bilgi Formu, BECK Umutsuzluk Ölçeği, Çocuk ve Genç Dayanıklılık Ölçeği, Ait Olma Ölçeği kullanıldı. Veriler; tanımlayıcı, Pearson Korelasyon ve Linear Regresyon testleri ile SPSS programında analiz edildi. Sağlık meslek lisesi öğrencilerinin BECK Umutsuzluk Ölçeği ile Çocuklar ve Ergenlerde Psikolojik Sağlamlık puanları arasında negatif yönde ileri derece anlamlı bir ilişki

olduğu bulunmuştur. BECK Umutsuzluk Ölçeği ile Ait olma Ölçeği arasında da negatif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Çocuklar ve Ergenlerde Psikolojik Sağlamlık ve Ait Olma arasında pozitif yönde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu görülmektedir. Araştırmanın diğer sonuçlarından biri ise ait olmanın ve psikolojik sağlamlığın umutsuzluk üzerindeki toplam varyansın %14.0'ünü açıklamaktadır (R:0,385, R2: 0,148). Standardize edilmiş (β) katsayısı ve t değerini incelendiğinde; negatif yönde artışın olduğu görülmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Aidiyet, Gelecek kaygısı, Umutsuzluk, Hemşire öğrenci, Hemşire yardımcısı, Psikolojik sağlamlık

1. INTRODUCTION

Future anxiety among nursing assistant students is a pressing issue that has gained attention, particularly in the context of clinical education and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This anxiety is often rooted in various factors, including fear of medical errors, unfamiliarity with clinical environments, and the pressure to perform well academically. Studies indicate that nursing students frequently experience heightened levels of anxiety due to the demanding nature of their training, which can lead to significant psychological distress and impact their overall performance in clinical settings [1-3]. The prevalence of moderate to severe anxiety among nursing students has been reported as 19.4-37.8% this rate also higher in pandemic in meta-analysis studies, highlighting the urgent need for interventions to address these concerns [4-6].

Moreover, resilience plays a critical role in how students cope with future anxiety. Resilience, defined as the ability to bounce back from adversity, is essential for nursing students who face numerous challenges throughout their education [7,8]. Researchers have shown that students with higher resilience levels tend to report lower anxiety levels, suggesting that fostering resilience can be an effective strategy to mitigate future anxiety [8,9].

Belongingness is another vital factor influencing nursing students' experiences. A sense of belonging within the academic and clinical environments can significantly enhance students' emotional well-being and academic performance [10,11]. When nursing students feel accepted and supported by their peers and instructors, they are more likely to engage actively in their learning and clinical practice, which can reduce feelings of anxiety [11,12]. Conversely, a lack of belonging can lead to isolation, decreased motivation, and increased dropout rates [11,13]. The teacher-student relationship is particularly important in fostering a sense of belonging. Positive interactions with faculty can enhance students' feelings of acceptance and support, contributing to their overall resilience and ability to cope with stress [7,10]. Additionally, peer relationships and friendships within nursing programs are crucial for building a supportive community that promotes belongingness [10,14].

Resilience serves as a protective factor against the challenges nursing students face, including academic stress and future anxiety. Studies have demonstrated that resilience can be developed through targeted interventions, such as resilience training programs and mentorship [15,16]. For instance, resilience training focusing on self-efficacy and self-regulation has shown positive outcomes in enhancing nursing students' resilience and coping strategies [16,18]. Furthermore, social support from peers and faculty has been identified as a critical component in building resilience among nursing students [17,18].

Addressing future anxiety, fostering a sense of belonging, and enhancing resilience are essential for supporting nursing students throughout their education. During the literature review, no study was found that explains the levels and relationship between future anxiety, sense of belonging and psychological resilience of students studying at health vocational high schools. Therefore, the study aimed to determine the levels and relationship between future anxiety, sense of belonging and psychological resilience of nursing assistants studying at health vocational high schools.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Aim and Design

This descriptive and correlational study was planned to determine the levels and relationship between future anxiety, sense of belonging and psychological resilience of nursing assistants studying at health vocational high schools.

2.2. Sampling

The universe of the study consisted of 382 students studying at Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School, in Istanbul. The sample of the study was calculated using the known universe sampling method and it was determined that 169 students were sufficient to be included in the study. Purposive sampling is used in this. Accordingly, the study was conducted with 282 students who had filled in the scale questions between December-2019 and January-2020 during the study period.

2.2.1. Participant characteristic

The average age of nursing assistant students was found to be 17.29±0.66 years. It was found that 67.0% of the students were female, 69.9% had equal income to expenses, 57.1% of their mothers and 49.6% of their fathers were primary school graduates, 91.1% of their mothers and fathers were living together, 50.0% had a democratic structure and 40.0% had 2 siblings.

The majority of the students participating in the study were senior students and 51.4% of them were found to have good academic success. It was found that the majority of the students (90.4%) were considering receiving education for a profession in the future, had chosen the health field willingly (79.7%) and were considering practicing their profession in the future (72.7%). The level of anxiety they experienced regarding their profession was found to be 5.07±3.00.

2.3. Measures

The data of the study were collected using an information form to determine the sample characteristics, the BECK Hopelessness Scale to measure future anxiety, the Child and Adolescent Psychological Resilience Scale to measure psychological resilience, and the Belonging Scale to measure the sense of belonging.

2.3.1. Information form

Information form included questions about gender, age, class, academic success, parents income, education level of parents, parental unity, attitude of parents, number of siblings, anxiety about the profession and whether or not the participant considered receiving further education regarding the profession.

2.3.2. BECK hopelessness scale

BECK Hopelessness Scale, which is used to measure the negative expectations of the individual for the future, was developed by Beck et al. [19] in 1974. The scale was adapted to Turkish culture by Durak and Palabıyıkoğlu [20] in 1994. The scale consists of a total of 20 items; the questions in it are answered in the form of "true-false, yes-no". According to the given points, a total score between 0 and 20 is obtained, which indicates the intensity level of hopelessness. As the score increases, the hopelessness score also increases. It expresses hopelessness and anxiety about the future. The scale has three sub-dimensions: feelings about the future, loss of motivation, and expectations about the future [19,20]. In the scale, 15-20 scores indicated high level of hopelessness and 9-14 scores indicated modarete level of hoplessness. In the adaptation study to Turkish culture, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.75-0.85. In our study, the internal consistency coefficient of the hopelessness scale was found to be 0.78.

2.3.3. Belonging scale

Belonging Scale was developed by Ersanlı and Koçyiğit in 2013 to determine the belonging levels of students. Belonging scale consists of three sub-dimensions as Family (min:6-max:30), Friends Group (min:7-max:35), Occupation (min:9-max:45). It consists of 22 questions in 5-point Likert type. As the score obtained from the scale and sub-dimensions increases, it is seen that belonging is high. As the score obtained from the scale and sub-dimensions increases, it is seen that belonging is high. The highest score is 110 and lowest score is 22. As a result of the analyses conducted to test the reliability of the scale, Cronbach Alpha was calculated as α=0.90 [21]. In this study, the internal consistency coefficient of the Belonging scale was found as 0.87.

2.3.4. Child and youth resilience scale

The Child and Youth Psychological Resilience Scale short form development by Liebenberg et al. [22] and the scale has 12-item. The adaptation of the scale to Turkish and the reliability-validity study were conducted by Arslan in 2015. The total score that can be obtained from the 5-point Likert-type scale is 60. A high score indicates high resilience. The internal consistency coefficient was found to be 0.91 in the adaptation study [23]. In this study, the internal consistency coefficient of the Child and Adolescent Psychological Resilience scale was found to be 0.81.

2.4. Ethical Process

This study was approved by the İstanbul Okan University Clinical Research Ethics Committee dated 11.12.2019 and numbered 116. Since the students participating in the research were under the age of 18, written and verbal consent was obtained from the guardians or parents of the children. After the ethics committee approval was obtained, institutional permission was obtained from the institution where the research would be conducted. Since the students participating in the research were under the age of 18, written and verbal consent was obtained from the guardians or parents of the children. During the collection of the research data, an explanation was made before the children started the research that this research data would not be given to third parties, any institution or company, and that they could leave the research at any time. The surveys prepared for the research were distributed to the children who agreed to participate in the study, and the data were collected within 20 min.

2.5. Statistical Analysis

Data were examined with descriptive analyses, correlation analyses and regression analyses in SPSS 21 program. Socio-demographic characteristics of students were calculated by taking the arithmetic mean of frequency and scale score averages. Pearson Correlation was used to examine the relationship between scale score averages. Simple linear regression analysis was performed to explain the hopelessness levels of psychological resilience and belonging status of assistant nursing students.

3. RESULTS

The BECK Hopelessness Scale and its sub-dimensions mean scores were found as 8.36±3.78 from the total scale, 1.30±1.36 from the Feelings About the Future sub-dimension, 4.09±1.66 from the Loss of Motivation sub-dimension, and 2.20±1.38 from the Future Expectations sub-dimension. The mean score of the Belonging Scale was 87.79±14.55, the mean score of the Friends Group sub-dimension was 28.44±5.78, the mean score of the Family sub-dimension was 33.68±8.23, and the mean score of the Occupational sub-dimension was 33.68±8.23. The mean score of the Child and Youth Resilience was found as 48.86±8.094.

Table 1. Average scores from scales (n=282)*

Scales	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
BECK hopelessness	8.36	3.78	2	19
Feelings about the future	1.30	1.36	0	5
Loss of motivation	4.09	1.66	1	8
Future expectations	2.20	1.38	0	5
Sense of belonging	87.79	14.55	46	110
Friends group	28.74	5.78	12	35
Family	25.35	4.98	6	30
Occupational	33.68	8.23	10	45
Child and youth resilience	46.86	8.09	16	60

*SS: Standard deviation, Min.: Minimum, Max.: Maximum

It was found that 5% of the students were extremely hopeless, 42.9% were moderately hopeless, 39.7% were slightly hopeless, and 12.4% were not hopeless.

Table 2. Distribution of BECK hopelessness levels (n=282)

Hopelessness levels	n	%
Not hopeless	35	12.4
Slightly hopeless	112	39.7
Moderate hopeless	121	42.9
Extremely hopeless	14	5.0

A highly significant negative relationship was found between the BECK Hopelessness Scale and the Belonging Scale (r:-0.327) and Friend Group Belonging (r:-0.201), Belonging to Family (r:-0.344), Belonging to Occupation (r:-0.228) sub-dimensions (p<0.01).

There was a negative weak correlation between the Feelings about the Future sub-dimension and the Belonging Scale (r:-0.172, p<0.01), Family Belonging sub-dimension (r:-0.205, p<0.01), Occupational Belonging sub-dimension (r:-0.141, p<0.05).

There was a negative weak correlation between the Loss of Motivation sub-dimension and the Belonging Scale (r:-0.305, p<0.01), Friend Group Belonging (r:-0.232, p<0.001), Family Belonging sub-dimension (r:-0.322, p<0.01), Occupational Belonging sub-dimension (r:-0.180, p<0.05).

There was a negative weak correlation between the Future Expactation sub-dimension and the Belonging Scale (r:-0.280, p<0.01), Friend Group Belonging (r:-0.166, p<0.001), Family Belonging sub-dimension (r:-0.278, p<0.01), Occupational Belonging sub-dimension (r:-0.210, p<0.05).

A significant negative weak correlation was found between the BECK Hopelessness Scale and Children Youth Resilience Scale (r:-0.354, p<0.01).

A highly significant positive moderate correlation was found between the Belongigng Scale and Children Youth Resilience Scale (r:0.572, p<0.001).

Table 3. The Relation between the BECK hopeless, belonging and child youth resilience scales (n=282)*

		FF	LM	FE	BHS	FGB	FB	OB	BS	CYR
FF	r	1								
LM	r	0.308**	1							
FE	r	0.494**	0.519**	1						
BHS	r	0.737**	0.782**	0.822**	1					
FGB	r	-0.056	-0.232**	-0.166**	-0.201**	1				
FB	r	-0.205**	-0.322**	-0.278**	-0.344**	0.402**	1			
OB	r	-0.141*	-0.180**	-0.210**	-0.228**	0.379**	0.324**	1		
BS	r	-0.172**	-0.305**	-0.280**	-0.327**	0.749**	0.686**	0.827**	1	
CYR	r	-0.252**	-0.291**	-0.287**	-0.354**	0.449**	0.544**	0.366**	0.572**	1

*FF: Feeling about the future, LM: Loss of motivation, FE: Future expectation, BHS: BECK hopeless scale, FGB: Friends group belonging, FB: Family belonging, OB: Occupational belonging, BS: Belonging scale, CTR: Child youth resilience, r: Pearson correlation, *p<0.05, **<0.01

In the multiple linear regression analysis, it was found that belonging and psychological resilience have a high level and significant relationship with hopelessness. According to the analysis, belonging and psychological resilience explain 14.0% of the total variance on hopelessness (R: 0.385, R2: 0.148). When the standardized (β) coefficient and t value are examined; it is seen that there is a negative increase.

Table 4. Multiple linear regression analysis on the prediction of BECK hopelessness with belonging and child youth resilience (n=282)

Model	B	SD	β	t	p	R	R^2
Constant	18,021	1.412	-	12.736	0.000**	0.385	0.148**
Belonging scale	-0.048	0.018	-0.185	-2.746	0.006**	0.327	0.107*
Child youth resilience	-0.116	0.032	-0.248	-3.681	0.000**	0.354	0.125*

β: Beta, t: t test, R: Coefficient of determination, SD: Standard error, **p<0.05 *r<0.01

4. DISCUSSION

The main aim of the study was carried out to determine the relation between the future anxiety, belonging and psychological resilience levels of the nurse assistants in the health vocational high school and the analysis yielded significant findings. Since studies conducted with health vocational high schools are limited, the research results will be discussed in the light of some studies conducted with nursing students.

When the hopelessness levels of the students participating in the study were examined; the mean score for feelings about the future was 1.30±1.36; the mean score for loss of motivation was 4.09±1.66; the mean score for "future expectations" was 2.20±1.38; and the mean score for hopelessness was 8.36±3.78. It was found that there was mostly a moderate level of hopelessness in students in the nursing vocational high school.

Some of researchers found that, the hopeless level was moderate [24], and high level [25] among the Turkish nursing students. In a study examining Iranian students during the COVID-19 pandemic, the mean hopelessness score was reported as 6.20 out of 20, with approximately one-third of students indicating a minimum level of hopelessness [26]. One of the study conducted among nursing students in Indonesia found that those experiencing hopelessness had a 4.448 times higher risk of suicidality compared to their peers without such feelings [27]. This highlights the critical need for mental health support within nursing education programs.

When the belonging levels of the students participating in the study were examined, it was seen that the mean score of the Belonging Scale was 87.79±14.55, the Friends Group sub-dimension was 28.44±5.78, the Family sub-dimension was 25.35±4.989, and the Occupation sub-

dimension was 33.68±8.23. Considering that the highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 110, it is seen that the level of belonging is above average. Belongingness is defined as the feeling of being accepted, valued, and included within a group or community. In the context of nursing education, it encompasses the emotional connections students develop with their peers, instructors, and clinical environments [28]. Research indicates that a sense of belonging is essential for fostering positive learning experiences and promoting psychological safety among nursing students. When students feel secure and valued, they are more likely to engage actively in their education and clinical practice [12]. Given the critical role of belongingness in nursing education, it is essential for educational institutions to prioritize creating inclusive and supportive environments. Strategies to enhance belongingness may include implementing mentorship programs, fostering positive faculty-student relationships, and promoting peer support networks [29,30]. Additionally, incorporating belongingness into the curriculum and clinical training can help students develop a stronger sense of identity and connection to the nursing profession [31].

The average Child Youth Resilience score of the students participating in the study was found to be 48.86±8.094. Considering that the highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 60, it is seen that the psychological resilience of the students is high. It has been stated that the reason for the high psychological resilience scores of nursing students is the directly proportional increase between both their autonomic personality traits and emotional intelligence [32]. The resilience levels of nursing students are critical for their success and well-being throughout their educational journey. Resilience, defined as the ability to adapt and recover from stress and adversity, plays a significant role in how nursing students cope with the challenges of their training, including academic pressures, clinical responsibilities, and emotional demands associated with patient care.

In the study, it was observed that there was a highly significant negative correlation between the hopeless and resilience and belonging. Besides, belonging and psychological resilience explain 14% of the total variance on hopelessness. Research has shown that a lack of belonging can lead to increased feelings of hopelessness among nursing students. Students who perceive themselves as isolated or unsupported in their academic environments often report higher levels of hopelessness [33]. This is particularly concerning in nursing education, where the emotional and psychological demands can be overwhelming. The sense of belonging is crucial for students to feel accepted and valued, which can mitigate feelings of hopelessness [7]. Resilience plays a critical role in how nursing students cope with feelings of hopelessness and their sense of belonging. Studies have indicated that students with higher resilience levels are better equipped to manage stress and adversity, leading to lower levels of hopelessness McDermott et al. [8] found that resilience training positively impacted nursing students, helping them cope with academic distress and enhancing their overall well-being. This suggests that resilience may serve as a buffer against hopelessness, allowing students to maintain a sense of belonging even in challenging circumstances.

5. CONCLUSION

Given the interplay between hopelessness, resilience, and belonging, it is essential for nursing education programs to implement strategies that promote resilience and foster a sense of belonging among students. This can include mentorship programs, peer support networks, and resilience training initiatives [14]. By creating a supportive educational environment, nursing programs can help students develop the resilience needed to cope with the challenges of their training, ultimately reducing feelings of hopelessness and enhancing their overall well-being. In conclusion, while there is evidence supporting a negative correlation between hopelessness and belonging, resilience plays a crucial mediating role in this relationship. By fostering resilience and a sense of belonging, nursing education programs can better support students in navigating the complexities of their training and promote their mental health and well-being.

Ethics Committee Approval
This study was approved by the İstanbul Okan University Clinical Research Ethics Committee dated 11.12.2019 and numbered 116.

Authors Contribution
Esma Bingül: Conception, Design, Literature review and Data collection; **Özge Sukut:** Conception, Design, Literature review, Data analysis, Writing and Supervision.

Conflict of Interest
The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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