

The Effect Of Psychotherapeutic Methods On Students' Psychological Recovery And Anxiety Levels

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a theoretical and empirical analysis of the effect of psychotherapeutic methods on students' psychological recovery, emotional stability, and anxiety levels. The study was conducted among first-year students of Fergana State University; the total sample included 32 respondents. At the initial diagnostic stage, the Anxiety Level Measurement Scale was used. In the next stage, psychotherapeutic sessions were organized for 12 students who demonstrated high and moderately high anxiety levels. The sessions included relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, autogenic training, positive thinking methods, emotional release exercises, and group support. The results showed that after the intervention the participants' mean anxiety score decreased from 27.67 to 18.42 points. The findings are interpreted from a psychological perspective, and practical recommendations are proposed for supporting students' mental health in higher education institutions.

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Introduction

In contemporary society, the accelerating pace of life, increasing information load, social competition, and pressure within the educational process have a direct impact on young people's mental health. This is particularly relevant for first-year university students, who encounter emotional tension and anxiety while adapting to a new social environment, making independent decisions, managing academic workload, and finding their place in interpersonal relationships. Therefore, supporting students' psychological recovery, strengthening their stress resistance, and developing emotional stability are among the key tasks of psychological services in higher education institutions.

Psychotherapy is a system of psychological assistance aimed at helping individuals understand inner conflicts, process negative emotions, develop adaptive thinking strategies, and improve social adjustment. In the scientific literature, psychotherapy is interpreted not only as a means of reducing clinical symptoms but also as a process that activates internal resources, improves emotional self-regulation, and strengthens psychological stability (Freud, 1920; Rogers, 1961).

The purpose of this article is to theoretically and practically substantiate the effect of psychotherapeutic methods on students' psychological recovery and anxiety levels. The scientific and practical significance of the study lies in the fact that anxiety states among students were identified through initial screening, followed by a comparative analysis of the results obtained before and after psychotherapeutic sessions.

Literature Review

The history of psychotherapy includes several major approaches: psychoanalytic, humanistic, cognitive-behavioral, group-based, relaxation-oriented, and integrative. While S. Freud conceptualized

internal conflicts and unconscious experiences as key objects of psychotherapeutic analysis, C. Rogers emphasized unconditional positive regard, empathy, and an authentic therapeutic relationship as the main conditions for psychological recovery (Freud, 1920; Rogers, 1961).

Representatives of the cognitive-behavioral approach, including A. T. Beck and A. Ellis, argued that emotional distress often arises not from the event itself but from the individual’s interpretation of it. In Beck’s cognitive therapy, identifying negative automatic thoughts and replacing them with more constructive interpretations is viewed as an effective mechanism for reducing anxiety and depressive experiences (Beck, 1976; Ellis, 1962).

H. Selye’s theory of the general adaptation syndrome and R. Lazarus’s concept of cognitive appraisal are also important for understanding stress and psychological recovery. Selye interpreted stress as a general response of the organism to external or internal demands, whereas Lazarus emphasized that whether a person evaluates a situation as a threat or an opportunity determines the emotional outcome (Lazarus, 1966; Selye, 1956).

In the field of group psychotherapy and training, I. Yalom’s theory is of particular relevance. He identified universality, mutual support, empathy, and social learning within the group as significant therapeutic resources for psychological recovery. In the Uzbek psychological tradition, the works of E. G. G’oziyev, V. M. Karimova, and M. G. Davletshin address emotional states, psychological assistance, communication culture, and the role of training in strengthening psychological well-being (Davletshin, 2005; G’oziyev, 2010; Karimova, 2007; Yalom, 1970).

Research Methodology

The study was conducted among first-year students of Fergana State University. The total sample consisted of 32 respondents. The research employed observation, interview, psychodiagnostic screening, and comparative analysis. At the initial stage, the anxiety level of all participants was assessed using the Anxiety Level Measurement Scale. Subsequently, psychotherapeutic sessions were organized for 12 students who demonstrated high and moderately high levels of anxiety.

The sessions were conducted twice a week, each lasting 30–40 minutes. The program included relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, autogenic training, positive thinking methods, emotional release exercises, group discussion, and elements of psychological support. The study had an educational-practical and pilot character; therefore, the results were interpreted not as clinical diagnosis but as indicators for psychological assessment of students’ emotional state and for identifying directions of preventive psychological assistance.

Table 1. Methodological design of the study

| Indicator | Description |
|-------------------------|---|
| Research site | Fergana State University |
| Participants | First-year students |
| Total sample | 32 students |
| Intervention group | 12 students with high and moderately high anxiety indicators |
| Method | Anxiety Level Measurement Scale |
| Content of the sessions | Relaxation, breathing exercises, autogenic training, positive thinking, group support |

Results

The results of the initial diagnosis showed that anxiety manifested at different levels among students. Of the 32 participants, 9 students (28.1%) had anxiety within the normal range, 11 students (34.4%) showed slightly elevated anxiety, 8 students (25.0%) showed high anxiety, and 4 students (12.5%) showed moderately high anxiety. These findings indicate that first-year students experience emotional tension related to adaptation, assessment situations, public speaking, and interpersonal relationships.

Table 2. Distribution of students by anxiety level (n=32)

| Anxiety level | Number of students | Percentage (%) | Psychological interpretation |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Normal | 9 | 28.1 | Relatively good emotional stability |
| Slightly elevated | 11 | 34.4 | Internal tension is observed in some |

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|------|---|
| | | | situations |
| High | 8 | 25.0 | Stress and anxiety are frequently manifested |
| Moderately high | 4 | 12.5 | Pronounced signs of anxiety and emotional instability require psychological attention |

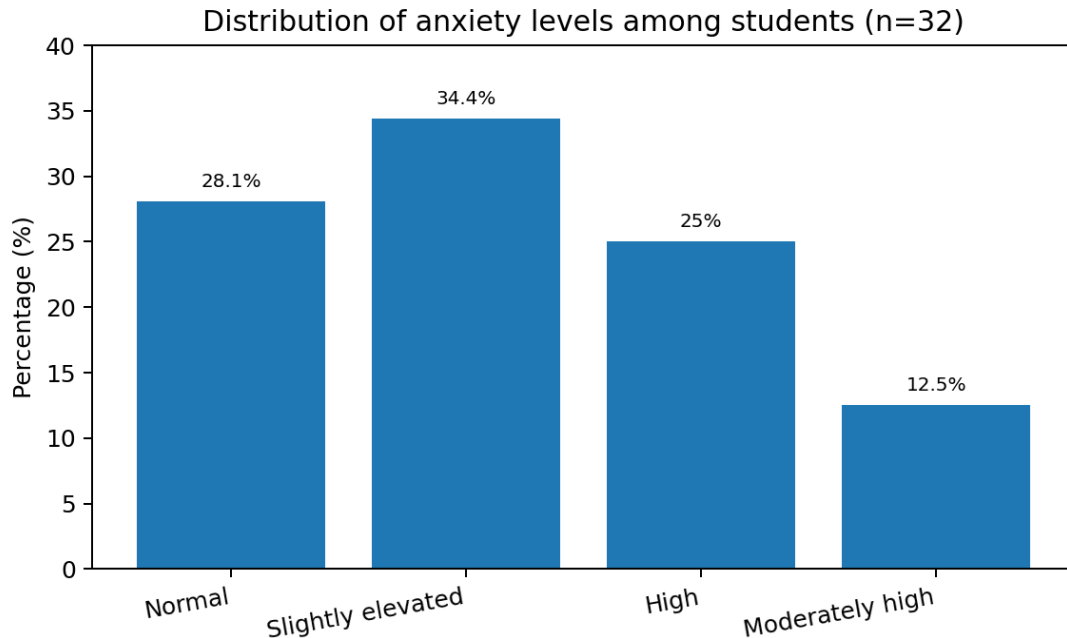


Figure 1. Distribution of anxiety levels according to initial diagnosis

The results of psychotherapeutic sessions conducted with students who had high and moderately high anxiety indicators demonstrated positive dynamics. In the group of 12 participants, the initial scores ranged from 25 to 30 points, whereas after the sessions the scores decreased to the range of 16 to 21 points. The mean score decreased from 27.67 to 18.42, with an average reduction of 9.25 points. This corresponds to an approximately 33.4% positive change. According to the paired-samples t-test, the difference between pre- and post-intervention scores was statistically significant ($t(11)=42.51$; $p<0.001$). However, because the study was conducted with a small sample and without a control group, the findings should be interpreted as pilot results.

Table 3. Results before and after psychotherapeutic sessions (n=12)

| No. | Participant | Pre-intervention score | Post-intervention score | Change |
|-----|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Student 1 | 29 | 18 | -11 |
| 2 | Student 2 | 27 | 17 | -10 |
| 3 | Student 3 | 30 | 20 | -10 |
| 4 | Student 4 | 26 | 17 | -9 |
| 5 | Student 5 | 28 | 19 | -9 |
| 6 | Student 6 | 25 | 16 | -9 |
| 7 | Student 7 | 29 | 20 | -9 |
| 8 | Student 8 | 27 | 18 | -9 |
| 9 | Student 9 | 26 | 18 | -8 |
| 10 | Student 10 | 28 | 19 | -9 |
| 11 | Student 11 | 30 | 21 | -9 |
| 12 | Student 12 | 27 | 18 | -9 |
| | Mean | 27.67 | 18.42 | -9.25 |

Pre- and post-intervention scores of high/moderately high anxiety group (n=12)

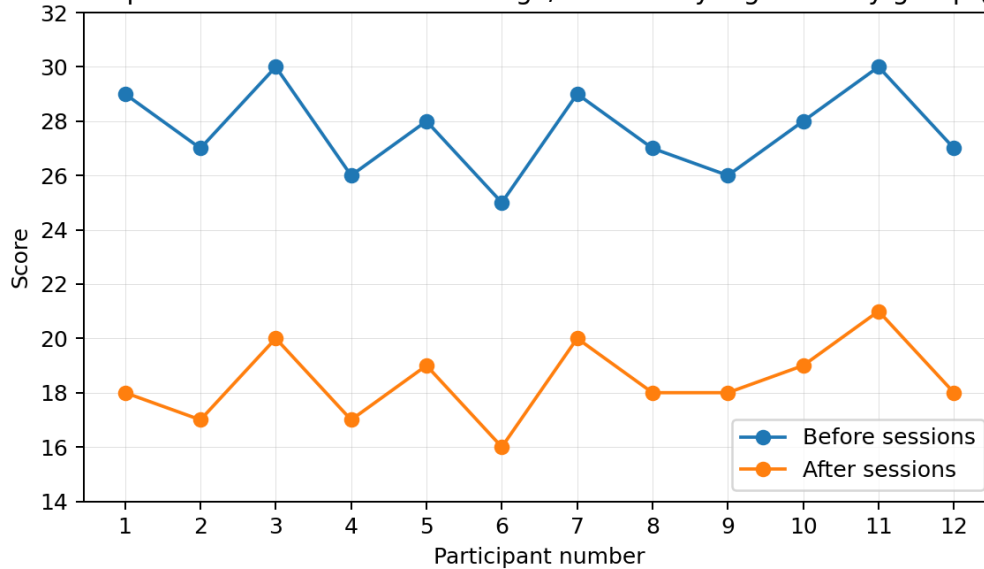


Figure 2. Pre- and post-session scores by participant

Decrease in mean anxiety score after psychotherapeutic sessions

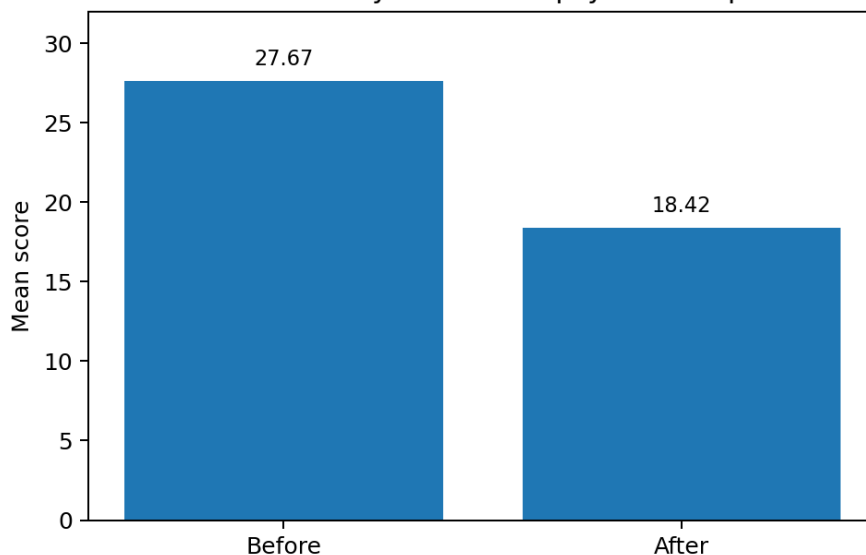


Figure 3. Decrease in mean anxiety scores

Discussion

The obtained results support the conclusion that psychotherapeutic sessions had a positive effect on students' psychological recovery. The reduction in anxiety scores may be explained by the combined impact of relaxation exercises, breathing techniques, emotional release, and positive thinking methods, which helped students reduce internal tension. Group communication and a supportive environment also contributed to the formation of the psychological belief that "I am not alone with this problem," which strengthened emotional relief and social adjustment.

A key methodological point is that the applied scale served as an educational-practical screening tool. Therefore, the results should not be interpreted as a clinical diagnosis or as definitive proof of therapeutic efficacy. Rather, they should be considered pilot indicators for identifying the need for psychological support and assessing the short-term impact of preventive psychotherapeutic sessions. Future research should include a control group, a larger sample, and validated instruments appropriate for the university student population in order to increase scientific reliability.

Practical Recommendations

It is recommended that higher education institutions organize short-term psychological training sessions for first-year students during the adaptation period. Such sessions can help stabilize students' emotional state, support stress management, and facilitate communicative adaptation.

University psychological services should systematically introduce preventive programs based on relaxation, breathing exercises, emotional release, positive thinking, and reflective conversations. At the same time, individual counseling and group support should be combined for students with elevated anxiety levels.

When working with students, it is essential to strictly observe the principles of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and psychological safety. Psychotherapeutic sessions do not replace clinical treatment; in cases of severe emotional distress, students should be referred to a qualified specialist.

Conclusion

The results of the study demonstrated that psychotherapeutic methods have important practical significance in supporting students' psychological recovery, emotional stability, and the reduction of anxiety levels. While the initial diagnosis showed above-normal anxiety indicators in 62.5% of participants, after psychotherapeutic sessions with 12 students who had high and moderately high anxiety levels, the mean score decreased by 9.25 points.

The psychotherapeutic sessions helped students activate resources related to emotional release, self-awareness, positive thinking, stress management, and social support. Thus, short-term psychological training may serve as an effective auxiliary tool in higher education institutions for strengthening students' mental health, facilitating adaptation, and preventing anxiety.

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