

The Effect of Emotional Freedom Technique on Academic Anxiety and Stress in Nursing Students

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KEYWORDS

Anxiety Academic,
EFT, Stress
Academic, Nursing
Student

ABSTRACT

Due to their numerous academic responsibilities, students may experience elevated levels of stress and anxiety. EFT is a safe, non-pharmacological therapy that is simple to learn and use to reduce anxiety and stress. This study used a one group pre-post test design technique to examine the impact of the Emotional Freedom Technique on academic stress and anxiety in nursing students enrolled in pre-experimental research. This study's participants were nursing students. Using the Simple Random Sampling method, 57 responses made up the sample size. The study's variables included academic stress and anxiety, as well as EFT therapy. Students who exercise 1-2 times a week with meetings four times a month receive EFT therapy; sessions last an additional 15 minutes. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test with $\alpha = 0.05$ was utilized for data analysis. According to the findings, the majority of respondents (56.1%), or 32 people, had moderate anxiety levels before to receiving EFT therapy, and nearly all respondents (93%), or 53 people, had moderate stress. Following EFT therapy, the majority of respondents (56.1%), or 32 people, reported having moderate anxiety, and nearly all (84.2%), or 48 people, reported having moderate stress. It may be inferred from the pre- and post-test results, which showed a significant difference at the 0.05 level of significance and $p = 0.000$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), that EFT therapy had an impact on nursing students' anxiety and academic stress. Students who have academic anxiety and stress can benefit from EFT therapy.

1. Introduction

Students face many obligations that can potentially lead to increased anxiety and stress. Students, in fulfilling obligations and participating in activities on campus make students vulnerable to experiencing academic anxiety (Hulloli ET AL., 2021). Students have academic obligations such as carrying out various assignments with deadlines set by the lecturer, presentation of lecture material, discussions with lecturers and discussions in class, and examinations (Lemay et al., 2020). Giving lots of assignments or quizzes suddenly also causes students to feel afraid, depressed and stressed. Anxiety and academic stress among students can have an impact on poor academic scores (Sarfika, 2019). According to study, anxiousness is a common occurrence for nursing students in the United States throughout their clinical rotations (Cornine, 2020). (Yuhuan et al., 2022) provides support for this research by stating that 27,343 nursing students in China reported feeling anxious about their academics, with 23% reporting extreme stress and 91% having poor academic experiences. Among the various issues that students with high academic stress report include depression, anxiety, behavioral issues, and irritability (Reddy et al., 2018). Stress is a significant psychological element that can have an impact on nursing students' academic performance and health, as highlighted by (Yildirim et al., 2016).

Anxiety and stress are mental health disorders that impact disrupted thought patterns, physiological and behavioural responses, and poor performance when given academic assignments (Aristawati et al., 2020). The influence of stress can have an impact on the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual (Sasaki, 2012). The consequences that occur when students experience stress can impact the emergence of negative feelings and low self-esteem (Rachmawati & Mustikasari, 2020). It is anticipated that student achievement will not be at its best if anxiety and tension are not adequately treated; consequently, attempts must be made to overcome them using Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) measures. EFT is a non-pharmacological treatment that is simple to use, inexpensive, safe, and effective in lowering anxiety and stress (Blacher, 2023). This study attempts to examine the impact of the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) on stress and anxiety in nursing students based on the background information mentioned above. The Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is intended to help students achieve optimal academic success by lowering their anxiety and academic stress levels

(Aydin et al., 2021).

2. Materials and methods

Materials

Analytical pre-experimental methodology using a design-one group pre-post test design characterizes this kind of research. Under this approach, the respondent first completes a test measuring academic stress and anxiety; a follow-up test measuring academic stress and anxiety was conducted after receiving EFT therapy. This study's participants were nursing students. The Simple Random Sampling method was used to determine the sample size, which consisted of 57 respondents. The variables in this study were EFT therapy, and academic anxiety and stress levels. EFT therapy is applied to students with exercise intensity of 1-2 times with meetings 4 times a month. Exclusion criteria were students receiving professional treatment related to anxiety and stress disorders and students who had performed EFT regularly.

Data collection procedures

After receiving a research ethics letter, the stages of data collection carried out by the researcher are as follows:

a. Preparation

- 1) The respondent was informed of the researcher's goals and advantages by the researcher.
- 2) Informed consent forms were required to be signed by respondents who agreed to take part in the study.
- 3) Researchers approached the respondents by measuring the level of anxiety

b. Implementation

- 1) The data collected by the researchers included general data (name, initials, gender, and place of residence). The data obtained comes from primary data.
- 2) Researchers identified anxiety and stress in respondents before EFT therapy was carried out.
- 3) EFT therapy activities carried out \pm 15 minutes. Researchers, followed by respondents, carry out EFT therapy.
- 4) After the EFT therapy was carried out, it identified anxiety and stress again in the respondents.

The data collection instrument used by the researcher is an observation sheet which contains general data and deep specific data *google form*. General data contains (respondent number, gender, and place of residence), while special data contains results of observations of anxiety before and after EFT therapy. Academic Anxiety Scale and Perceived Academic Stress.

Data analysis

The statistical test Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, which uses the SPSS version 26 program and has a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, was the analytical test employed in this study. If the statistical test findings indicate that $p < \alpha 0.05$, then EFT therapy has an impact on academic stress and anxiety.

3. Results and discussion

General data

Characteristics of respondents based on gender

Table 1. Distribution of Frequency by Gender at Unusa in May 2023

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Woman	50	87,7
Man	7	12,3
Total	57	100,0

Source: Primary Data, May 2023

Based on table 3.1, it shows that almost all of the 57 respondents (87.7%) or as many as 50

respondents were female.

a. Characteristics of respondents based on place of residence

Table 2. Frequency Distribution Based on residence at Unusa in May 2023

Place	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Transit House	44	77,2
House	13	22,8
Total	57	100,0

Source: Primary Data, May 2023

Based on table 3.2, it shows that almost all of the 57 respondents (77.2%) or as many as 44 respondents live at home

Differences in EFT therapy on the level of student anxiety before (*Pre-test*) and after (*Post-test*)

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Differences in academic anxiety before and after EFT Therapy for students in May 2023

Anxiety Level	<i>Pre-Test</i>		<i>Post-Test</i>	
	n	Percentage (%)	n	Percentage (%)
No anxiety	3	5,3	4	7,0
Mild anxiety	13	22,8	20	35,1
Moderate anxiety	25	43,9	32	56,1
Severe anxiety	16	28,1	1	1,8
Total	57	100	31	100
<i>p-value</i>	0,000			

Source: Primary Data, May 2023

Based on the data in Table 5.5, it shows that almost half of the 57 respondents (43.9%) or 25 respondents, before being given EFT therapy experienced moderate levels of anxiety. After being given EFT therapy, it was shown that 32 respondents or almost half (56.1%) experienced moderate anxiety levels.

Differences in EFT therapy on the level of academic stress of students before (*Pre-test*) and after (*Post-test*)

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Differences in academic Stress Levels Before and After EFT Therapy at the Kalipecabean Health Center in May 2023

Stress Level	<i>Pre-Test</i>		<i>Post-Test</i>	
	n	Percentage (%)	n	Percentage (%)
Low stress			9	15,8
Moderate stress	53	93,0	48	84,2
High stress	4	7,0		
Total	57	100	57	100
<i>p-value</i>	0,000			

Source: Primary Data, May 2023

The data in Table 5.6 shows that of the 57 respondents before being given EFT therapy, almost all (93.0%) or 53 respondents experienced moderate stress levels. After being given EFT therapy, almost all (84.2%) or 48 respondents experienced moderate stress levels.

Based on the study's results, it was shown that students who received EFT were proven to reduce academic anxiety and stress levels. This research is almost the same as research (Idris & Idris, 2019), which found that most nursing students experienced moderate stress levels. This study shows that

nursing students are prone to stress. One of the factors that causes students to be at a moderate level of stress is the age factor. In this study, nursing students had an age range between 17-20 years; according to WHO, this age range is the late adolescent phase. Late adolescents usually have great energy and emotions that are still not controlled, while self-control is not perfect. Late adolescents also often experience feelings of insecurity, unrest and loneliness. In addition to the age factor, stress is also associated with gender. Another factor that affects the stress on students is living far from family. This study showed that most students lived in boarding houses (77.2%), and a small number lived in their own homes/lived with their parents. (Yuhuan et al., 2022) Explains that many things from within the family are needed by students in the process of their social development, namely the need to feel safe, valued, loved, accepted and free to express oneself. Students' stress worsens when problems such as lecture assignments cannot be completed on time and test scores do not match expectations. This follows (Reddy et al., 2018), which shows as many as 93% say that what is stressful is thinking about many lecture assignments that must be completed in a short time.

By tapping the meridian points on the hands, neck, and face, EFT relieves psychological illnesses like stress and anxiety (tapping). Using EFT to process emotions concentrates on the affective plane. Negative emotion approaches, such as wrath and terror, are projected via tapping. EFT has the potential to boost lymphocyte proliferation in terms of immunology. More proliferation is thought to be linked to stronger immunity, and EFT has been shown to raise IL-17 in the peripheral circulatory system (Lataima et al., 2020). EFT can directly alter the HPA in the central nervous system to balance the release of ACTH and cortisol hormones, which can reduce anxiety levels. Another study found that EFT can reduce anxiety by 57% and blood cortisol levels by 43% (Dincer & Inangil, 2021). Physical and psychological therapy are combined in the EFT therapy model. According to Zainuddin et al. (2012), the mechanism of EFT therapy in lowering anxiety might enhance the relaxing impact derived from an attitude of attention, sincerity, surrender, confidence, and thankfulness. Since EFT therapy doesn't include the use of equipment or needles, it is risk-free, quick, straightforward, and uncomplicated, according to Rashmawati & Aristina (2019). We only lightly tap (tape) the index and middle fingers at several bodily meridian locations. After receiving EFT therapy for their anxiety, respondents' anxiety levels are often modest. When EFT is used in conjunction with a sincere and surrendered heart, the body will become peaceful and relaxed, breathing will regularize, the heart rate will stabilize, and blood circulation will improve. You can induce relaxation by stimulating specific body areas, which will help you feel more at ease and serene. Based on the findings of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test pre- and post-tests conducted using SPSS for Mac version 26, it was determined that EFT therapy had an impact on students' levels of anxiety and academic stress. EFT therapy enhances a person's mental, emotional, and behavioral states by working with the body's energy system. Through techniques including tuning in, setting up, and tapping (knocking on) certain locations at strategic points in the body's nine energy pathways, this therapy integrates spiritual therapy with the body's energy system. The goal of this study's application of EFT therapy is to help students become more relaxed so they can produce reactions that lessen tension and anxiety. According to (Aulianita, 2015 in Nurrohmah, Firda Ikhsan & Rinaldi Martaria Rizky, 2022) revealed that EFT therapy can improve one's state of mind, emotions, and behavior and can neutralize psychological resistance in the form of negative thoughts, which then turn into positive thoughts by neutralizing it with prayer and submission. Additionally, the application of EFT therapy in this study can maintain blood pressure stability, slow breathing, slow pulse rate, reduced heart oxygen consumption, and muscle tension.

4. Conclusion

Nursing students' levels of academic stress and anxiety are affected by the application of the EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique). Anxiety and academic stress levels are significantly impacted. These changes can be seen from the scale of anxiety and stress as well as physical signs. It is hoped that academic institutions will be able to apply this method, considering that this therapy does not require a lot of equipment or materials and can improve the quality of nursing care to deal with anxiety and stress, and this therapy can be taught so that respondents can do it independently.

Acknowledgment

The researcher expresses gratitude to all participants who gave their consent to participate in the study, and thanks to Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya for providing the facilities. This study was supported by the Nahdlatul Ulama University in Surabaya.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest in this manuscript

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