

## Health Awareness among High and Average Achievers in Professional Psychologist Program

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### Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to identify health awareness degree among students attending the Professional Psychologist Program. The randomly selected sample consisted of students (n= 123, M= 83, F= 40) pursuing the Professional Psychologist Program at King Khaled University. The analytical descriptive approach was applied in the study and Health Awareness Scale developed by the author was administered to participants. Results indicated that:

- The health awareness among professional psychology program students was rated high.
- There were no statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) attributed to effect of sex on the health awareness overall degree.
- There were statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) attributed to effect of achievement on the health awareness overall degree, and differences were in favor of high achievers.
- There were statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between third versus first year students, from a hand, and between second year students from another, where differences were in favor of third year students regarding healthy nutrition, communicable disease, and overall degree.

**Keywords:** health awareness, high achievers, average achievers, achievement

### I. Introduction

Health awareness among students has become of special importance in higher education institutions in the years followed COVID-19 pandemic. World Health Organization (WHO) warns about the outbreak of many communicable diseases that are no less risky than the COVID-19 that necessitates fast responsiveness to the crisis beforehand by providing personal health protocols and apply strict health measures. Fortunately, raising health awareness among students at higher education institutions can minimize the risks associated with such uncontrollable diseases.

The initiatives to enhance public health targeting certain population of the community or the public at large represent a significant aspect of the biomedical research. Specifically, health awareness initiatives can be influential by providing effective activities, and use appropriate strategies (Alemany- Pagès et al, 2022).

Therefore, raising awareness to health problems and diseases has become paramount in the modern society, because new diseases are likely to appear with the increasingly accelerated developments in the globe (Al-Zaidy & Al Abody, 2022).

Health awareness can be viewed as the extent to which students would acquire the appropriate health cognitions, positive attitudes and healthy behaviors through programs and extracurricular activities developed by professional educators at different educational institutions for purpose of providing students with means of protection from the various diseases (Radwan & Qazaq, 2019).

However, Al-Enazi (2014) describes health awareness as the guiding process that is based on motivating students to embrace positive attitudes and adopt healthy practices in their daily life so as to leverage their health education levels about the communicable diseases and pandemics.

The research studies report that health education among students is considered a significant indication of community quality that it is important to provide for the means to alert students to health education and assist them acquire the core concepts about the health education issues and the flexible methods to take the appropriate decision regarding protective measures against the infectious and communicable diseases (Al-Rashidi, 2018).

On the other hand Abd (2021) described the health education as a strategic goal that world countries, in general, seek to accomplish higher levels of health education among it peoples. As an indication of development, health education has become a priority for educators to protect students from health and environmental problems they are exposed to as a result of the technological and industrial activities that penetrate through life of every human.

To enhance individual health, Wang et al (2018) suggests protective health education that is based on providing the public with protective health measures and creating in them positive attitudes regarding their health and awareness to communicable diseases.

Health awareness in a very important culture that forms the basis of healthy life for everyone that develops early at home, family and school. The social institutions instill in individuals the value of personal cleanse, personal care habits and positive attitudes towards one's body (Al-Marsumi, 2019).

The education on healthy hygienic habits and translate the health concepts held by individuals into behavioral patterns would increase the health awareness among students and contribute to create good citizenry using established educational methods (Connie, 2001).

On the other hand, Al-Rashidi (2018) considers that developing the health aspect in students is one of the essential goals of the teaching-learning process through guiding students to acquire health information, develop positive health attitudes among them, and assisting them make proper decision to protect from communicable diseases.

Health awareness is the level at which individuals realize the importance of avoiding risks threatening their health or causing diseases to them based on the health facts they have that impact the way they behave or pathogens that causes diseases to them (Melhem, 2019).

However, one can say that the greatest responsibility in spreading health culture is borne by various institutions in the community like family, mosque, school or university as well as non-governmental organizations that are required to perform their roles most effectively primarily with college and school students (Alhodhaibi, 2019).

The most important part of students' life is health education and the behavioral pattern is a critical factor in developing health awareness among individuals and lacking such behavioral pattern negatively impact the regulated activity level among students (Barnekow-Bergvist, G.Hedberg, 1998).

Health education includes a set of domains that is divided into a number of subsets like personal health that refers to general cleanness habit of individuals like body cleanness, clothes and home. Nutrition refers to the daily eat habits and reflection on growth. First-aids includes alerting individuals how to react in events of emergency to avoid abrupt accidents and risks, and make decision to reduce injuries related to accidents taking place in different places. Further, the environmental health means the availability of hygienic factors and instill environmental concepts regarding preserving of surrounding environment. Finally, mental health means achieving a level of psychological efficiency by controlling one's emotions and protect from the mental impairments (Fattah, 2017; Makki, 2017).

Health awareness is a continual process in community because it is a shared process among educational health institutions in different countries for purpose of protecting individuals and educating them to raise their awareness to physical and mental health through encouraging healthy nutrition, personal cleanness, practicing physical activities (Al-Marsumi, 2019).

The educational health awareness assists individuals avoid health and environmental problems and reduce arising risks to create a healthy life with minimal diseases and filled with vitality and activity (Karabati & Cemalicar, 2010).

According to Badawi and Fuad (2019), health awareness has a number of goals most importantly guiding individuals to acquire the health information and correct held misconceptions about communicable diseases by making available easy to understand health concepts that directly deal with health problems encountered in the community. Additionally, health awareness seeks to modify attitudes and behavioral habits of individuals and encourage them improve health level of themselves and their families and the community as a whole. The third goal is to enhance the role of health projects by ensuring collaboration of all community members with the government apparatuses.

A number of research studies have been conducted that focused on health awareness. For instance, Abd (2021) found that health awareness level among preparatory students in Iraq was rated as poor, and statistically significant differences attributed to gender, specialty and grade level were reported. Beder (2021) indicated that the general health awareness was higher than the educate level among elementary and preparatory school levels in Egypt. Further, there were statistically significant differences attributed to the school level attributed to the preparatory school level. Results also showed no statistically significant differences attributed to gender. On the other hand, Melhem (2019) reported that health awareness level among Mutah University students in Jordan was high in health personality and stature domains, and moderate in the nutrition and athletic activity domains. However, there were statistically significant differences in health awareness levels attributed to gender in favor of female students and to the cumulative average with differences being in favor of high averages, and to specialty in favor of scientific specialties. However, Radwan and Qazaq (2019) indicated that student estimated the school's role in developing health awareness at moderate rating. Findings showed statistically significant differences attributed to gender in favor of female students. Similarly, Al-Hudaibi (2019) found that the health awareness level among the community college students in Saudi Arabia was moderate (neutral) and reported statistically significant differences in the domains attributed to gender with differences being in favor of male students.

Al-Marsumi (2019) indicated higher level of health awareness among physical education female teachers. Al Nawasreh; Awas, & Al-Horani (2018). indicated that the health behavior level of talented was higher compared with the average students, and no statistically significant differences were found in the health behavior levels between talented compared with average students attributed to school level and gender.

Also, results from Fattah (2017) found that the health awareness level was rated high among Hael University students. Abddlhaq et al (2012) revealed that physical health awareness was higher among female than male students at the among students in universities.

A study conducted by Singht ,& Begnum (2010) indicated that more than 60 per cent of college students in Bangladesh were aware to the health information disseminated by the government compared only 14 per cent of college students in India. Further, results also indicated that healthy food, sportic activities and health education were the domains student preferred the most. Further, William & Angela (2010) found that there was ignorance among college students and instructors in private universities dominated by black students in Texas, USA regarding health awareness issues and that the health programs were obsolete and ineffective.

## **II. Study Design**

### **II.I Statement of the Problem**

Spreading health awareness and health education among individuals has become a significant issue addressed in the recent few years. Both psychological and educational professionals should work on enriching the health knowledge of students and how to deal with the large-scale change in life patterns and emergence of different diseases and environmental problems. So, disseminating health awareness reduces infectious diseases and encounters environmental and health problems and associated social and economic crises. In this context, World Health Organization stressed on the role of the educational institutions in enhancing health and the critical role they may take to increase the health awareness among individuals (Zjalic et al, 2022).

Based on the author's experience in higher education instruction, there is a felt need to raise awareness of Faculty of Education students regarding the health protocol applied with the communicable diseases. Hence, the current study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the health awareness degree among professional psychologist program students?
- Are there statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha \geq 0.05$ ) between health awareness degrees of professional psychologist students attributed to gender?
- Are there statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha \geq 0.05$ ) between health awareness degrees of professional psychologist students attributed to achievement?
- Are there statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha \geq 0.05$ ) between health awareness degrees of professional psychologist students attributed to year of study?

### **II.II Objectives of the Study:**

The current study seeks to achieve the following:-

- Identify health awareness degree among professional psychologist program students.
  - Identify differences in health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program students in light of gender, achievement and year of study.
- Study Procedures and Instrumentation

### II.III Methodology

The researcher used the analytical descriptive approach.

#### II.IV Sample

The randomly selected sample (n= 123 , M= 83 , F= 40 ) consisted of professional psychologist program students attending Faculty of Education/King Khaled University during the first semester of the academic year 1443/1443.

#### II.V Instrumentation

Secondly: Health Awareness Scale

Based on the review of the related literature (Melhim, 2019; Abd, 2021; Al-Marsumi, 2019), the researcher developed Health Awareness Scale that covered three domains (personal health, healthy nutrition, environmental health). The instrument consisted of 30-item scale and items were evaluated based on Likert 5-item scale, and responses were given the following weighs (1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree)

#### II.VI Validity Test:

The scale used in the current study was validated based on:

First: Surface Validity: the surface validity of the Health Awareness Scale was validated by showing the scale to a number of judges (n=10) selected from university professors and health professionals, where the percentage of 85% or higher agreement among judges was considered appropriate for the accepted items, domains and overall instrument.

#### II.VII Second: Construct Validity:

Correlation coefficients for the scale items and the overall degree were computed using a pilot study opted out of the original sample consisted of 925) male and female students. The scale items were analyzed and correlation coefficients for each item, where the correlation coefficients of the items with the overall instrument ranged between (0.37-0.71) and with the domain ranged between (0.37-0.79). Noteworthy, all correlation coefficients were statistically significant and acceptable that no one item was omitted.

The correlation coefficients for the domain with the overall degree were computed as well as inter-domain correlation coefficients as shown by table (1).

**Table (1) Inter-domain Correlation Coefficients and the overall degree**

	<i>Nutritional</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Overall Degree</i>
<i>Nutritional</i>	1			
<i>Environmental</i>	** .573	1		
<i>Personal</i>	** .499	* .438	1	
<i>Overall Degree</i>	** .642	** .838	** .7941	

\*Statistically Significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) \*\*Statistically Significant at ( $\alpha=0.01$ )

Table (2) shows that all correlation coefficients were appropriately statistically significant indicating to an appropriate degree of construct validity.

#### II.VIII Reliability Test

Reliability was tested using internal consistency Cronbach's alpha, where the reliability coefficient for the overall scale (0.84)

### III.Results of the Study and Discussion

#### III.I Results related to Question One:

*"What is the health awareness degree among professional psychologist program students?"*

To answer this question, means and standard deviations of the awareness degree among professional psychologist program students. Table (2) below shows the related results.

**Table (2) Means and Standard Deviations of health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program students in descending order by means**

Rank	No.	Domain	M	SD	Degree
1	1	Personal Health	4.12	.227	High
2	2	Healthy Nutrition	3.99	.302	High
3	3	Communicable Diseases	3.82	.351	High
<b>Overall Degree</b>			3.98	.229	High

Table (2) shows that the mean scores ranged between (3.82-4.12), where the personal health domain was ranked first (M=4.12), and the communicable diseases domain was placed in the last rank (M=3.82), and the overall degree of health awareness among professional psychologist program students was rated at (M=3.98).

To account for the result that professional psychologist program students had high degree of health awareness is that professional psychologist program students eventually have health awareness because of the health information and cognitions related to physical and mental health issues they acquire as psychology students at the Faculty of Education. The presumed role of the professional psychologist would have crystallized their awareness on the importance of benefiting from such knowledge in form of healthy habits.

However, the expose to different academic courses related to health awareness, particularly *Clinical Interviewing Skills* including theory and practice and field training at specialized health centers enhanced the positive attitudes towards health practices and application. In addition, this result can be highlighted by the commitment with global health protocols as well as health protocols implemented at the universities and other health institutions during COVID-19 crisis by students who find in such protocols an optimal way to preserve good health, follow nutrition regimen and personal care habits and keep away from places of pandemic and communicable diseases.

The personal health domain had the highest rating due to interest of professional psychologist program students in healthy behaviors, and apply health habits. The expose to coursework related to psychological disciplines enhances the health activities of individuals and improves functionality of bodily systems. The lack of health information by student increases probability of being inflicted by a disease common in the community like blood high pressure, diabetes, stress, anxiety and tension.

In light of the available data, we find that health awareness was perceived among students without precluding difficulties or problems and this would be a major reason why they accept responsibility to themselves and the community regarding protection from diseases and pandemic which ultimately contribute to health enhancement.

This result is consistent with al-Hadaibi (2019) that found that the domain related to individual health and personal cleanness was rated high; and with Melhem (2019) that revealed that health awareness level was high among participants in such domains as personal health and stature, but moderate in nutrition and athletic activities domain; and with results from Al-Nawasreh et al (2018) that showed high level of healthy behaviors among talented and average students; and finally is consist with Fattah (2017) that showed that students in general had high health awareness level.

However, results from the current study are inconsistent with Begnum & Singh (2010) that found that 60 per cent of Bengali students were alert to government health information compared with 14 per cent of Indian students who were unaware to health information. Further, our results also are inconsistent with William & Angela (2010) that revealed ignorance regarding health awareness issues among students and instructors at private universities dominated by black in Texas State.

### III.II Results related to the second question:

*“Are there statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) in health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program students attributed to gender?”*

To answer this question, means and standard deviations of health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program students by gender. To demonstrate statistical differences among mean scores, T-test was computed and related results are shown in the table below.

**Table (3) Means, standard deviations and T-test results of the effect of gender on health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program students**

	Gender	Count	M	SD	T-Value	Freedom Degree	Significance $\alpha$
Personal Health	M	83	4.10	.223	-1.236	121	.219

	<i>F</i>	40	4.16	.232			
Healthy Nutrition	<i>M</i>	83	3.97	.305	-1.185	121	.238
	<i>F</i>	40	4.04	.295			
<i>Communicable Diseases</i>	<i>M</i>	83	3.85	.336	1.477	121	.142
	<i>F</i>	4	3.76	.375			
<i>Overall Degree</i>	<i>M</i>	83	3.97	.237	-.177	121	.860
	<i>F</i>	40	3.98	.213			

Table (3) shows no statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.050$ ) attributed to effect of gender on all domains and the overall degree of the health awareness scale.

This result can be accounted for by the similarity in the socialization process to which males and females are exposed, and to the availability of adequate health awareness due to the cognitions students acquire about the health care issues in school textbooks.

In addition, the author attributes this result to the fact that participants are in the college pursuing the professional psychologist program. During these years, students would have curiosity to explore accurate health information and learn about positive health behaviors and healthy habits, and to develop the physical self-concept and reduce the probability of health problems such as malnutrition and diseases related to unhealthy habits as students in this stage prefer streamlined body due to integrated health awareness.

These results are in agreement with Abd (2021), and Beder (2021) that found no differences attributed to gender.

In addition, these results are in agreement with Al Nawasreh et al (2018) that found no statistically significant differences in overall health behavior degree and its dimensions among students attributed to gender. However, results disagree with results from Melhem (2019) and Radwan & Qazaq (2019) that demonstrated that health awareness among females was higher than in males. Results from the current study also disagree with Al-Hdaibi (2019) that showed that health awareness among males was higher than in female students.

Results related to Question Three:

*“Are there statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) in health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program students attributed to achievement?”*

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were computed for health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program students by achievement variable. To demonstrate statistical differences among means, t-test was used and the table below shows the results.

**Table (4) Means, standard deviations, and T-test results of the achievement effect on health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program students**

		<i>Count</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T Value</i>	<i>Freedom</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Personal Health	<i>High Achievers</i>	47	4.20	.188	3.157	121	.002
	<i>Average Achievers</i>	76	4.07	.236			
Healthy Nutrition	<i>High Achievers</i>	47	4.09	.340	2.856	121	.005
	<i>Average Achievers</i>	76	3.93	.261			
Communicable Diseases	<i>High Achievers</i>	47	3.98	.382	4.278	121	.000
	<i>Average Achievers</i>	76	3.72	.290			
Overall Degree	<i>High Achievers</i>	47	4.09	.250	4.621	121	.000
	<i>Average Achievers</i>	76	3.91	.184			

Table (4) shows statistically significant differences ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) attributed to effect of achievement on all domains and the overall degree, where differences were in favor of the high-achieving students.

This result can be explained by the fact that academically high-achieving students have a set of features and characters that distinguish them average students. So, health awareness greatly associates with student achievement level and their health habits to maintain their body shape and physical health. High achievers have greater awareness in enhancing emotional and social skills and would be improved by learning about health habits and its impact on the physical vital functions.

Additionally, academically high achievers usually are curious about consulting references and prior studies related to health issues in general, and because their secondary background was in the scientific track their health information would be more meaningful.

The related literature reviewed affirm this result. For instance, Tiaprapong et al (2021) found that academic high performance and professional distinctive are critical in spreading the health awareness among individuals, so there should be concentration of development and improvement of health guidance and consultation services especially during the times of pandemic break out and the resulting social and economic aftermath.

This result agrees with Melhem (2019) that revealed that health awareness among university students was higher among high achievers than among low and average achievers, and consistent with Al Nawasreh et al (2018) that showed a positive association between the positive health behavior and academic achievement.

#### III.IV Results related to Question Four:

*“Are there statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) in health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program attributed to the year of study?”*

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were computed for health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program students by variable year of study and the table below shows the related results.

**Table (5) Means and standard deviation of health awareness by the educational level**

	Year	Count	M	SD
Personal Health	1	9	3.88	.186
	2	48	4.11	.220
	3	66	4.16	.218
	Total	123	4.12	.227
Healthy Nutrition	1	9	3.82	.233
	2	48	3.90	.272
	3	66	4.08	.303
	Total	123	3.99	.302
Communicable Diseases	1	9	3.64	.321
	2	48	3.75	.287
	3	66	3.90	.379
	Total	123	3.82	.351
Overall Degree	1	9	3.78	.199
	2	48	3.92	.201
	3	66	4.05	.226
	Total	123	3.98	.229

Table (5) shows superficial variance in the means and standard deviations of health awareness degrees among professional psychologist program students due to disparity in year of study variable categories. To demonstrate significance of the statistical differences among means, one way analysis of variance ANOVA was used and table (6) shows the related results.

**Table (6) One way analysis of variance ANOVA of the effect of educational level on the health awareness**

	Source	Total Squares	Freedom Degrees	Mean Squares	F-Value	Significance $\alpha$
Personal Health	Intergroup	.625	2	.313	6.652	.002

	Intragroup	5.642	120	.047		
	Overall	6.267	122			
Healthy Nutrition	Intergroup	1.254	2	.627	7.609	.001
	Intragroup	9.886	120	.082		
	Overall	11.140	122			
Communicable Diseases	Intergroup	.979	2	.490	4.188	.017
	Intragroup	14.031	120	.117		
	Overall	15.011	122			
Overall Degree	Intergroup	.843	2	.421	9.136	.000
	Intragroup	5.534	120	.046		
	Overall	6.376	122			

Table (6) shows statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) attributed to effect of the year of study on all domains and the instrument as a whole. To demonstrate statistically significant even differences among means, Scheffe post-hoc comparisons were used and table (7) shows the results.

**Table (7) results from Scheffe's test for post hoc comparisons educational level of the health awareness**

		M	th Year3	2rd Year	3rd Year
Personal Health	1 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3.88			
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	4.11	*.233		
	3 <sup>th</sup> Year	4.16	*.280	.047	
Healthy Nutrition	1 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3.82			
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3.90	.074		
	3 <sup>th</sup> Year	4.08	*.261	.187*	
Communicable Diseases	1 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3.64			
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3.75	.101		
	3 <sup>th</sup> Year	3.90	*.257	.156*	
Overall Degree	1 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3.78			
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3.92	.136		
	3 <sup>th</sup> Year	4.05	*.266	.130*	

(\*) statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ )

**Table (7) demonstrates that: -**

There were statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between first year students, from a hand, and second- and third-year students from another, where differences were in favor of the second- and third-year students.

There were statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between third year students, from a hand, and first- and second-year students from another, where differences were in favor of third years students in healthy nutrition and communicable disease domains and the overall degree.

To account for this result, third year students had clearer conception about the health awareness concept because they are familiarized with it in their major field of study. In addition, there involvement in health activities implemented by the department, faculty, the university, or public and private health institutions would provide them the necessary knowledge about health problems and risks affecting their life whether in campus, at home or the surrounding environment which make them more familiarized with health awareness issues more than first- and second-year students.



Further, this result can be explained by the higher skills of third year students in terms of exploration, analysis, and spontaneity. The perceptual level in the health awareness domain is greatly impacted by their transition into new-year of study and increased maturity that results in increased health awareness, greater positive personal health habits and healthy nutrition. As a result, they become more control of the health awareness and these factors collectively would lead students to become socially responsible towards themselves and the surrounding environment. Further, professional psychologist program students are endowed certain social, behavioral, and learning characteristics and features that enable student to think reasonable and provide them the ability to get more health knowledge and expertise and improve their skills of instruction, deduction, analysis and explanations as well as employ problem solving skill in health situations which enable them acquire richer health educational background information.

This result is consistent with Beder (2021) that indicated that health awareness degrees among senior school level were higher. However, these results weren't different from Abd (2021) that found no statistically significant differences in health awareness attributed to the year of study.

### III. Recommendations

In light of the study goals and results, the author recommends the following:

- To capitalize on the elevated health awareness among professional psychologist program students in order to assist them acquire the health education information.
- Enhance the health positive attitudes in theoretical and practical lives.
- The study recommends conduct further studies in this field with different age groups, from other scientific and humanistic faculties.
- Educational courses that enhance the healthy positive behavior among students are encouraged.
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