

THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL ANXIETY AMONG
MALAYSIAN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN
KULLIYAH OF EDUCATION, IIUM

BY

WAN NUR NADIAH BINTI WAN AHMAD KAMAL

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for
the degree of Master of Education

Kulliyyah of Education
International Islamic University Malaysia

FEBRUARY 2020

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to measure the level of social anxiety (SA) based on gender, year of study, and academic achievement among Malaysian undergraduate students in the Kulliyah of Education (KOED), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). In addition, the focus of this study was to address the relationship between SA and the level of social interaction anxiety. In general, SA is a common mental health problem, especially among students. However, there are a few studies related to SA, especially among Malaysian undergraduate students. Thus, the results of this study could contribute to the development of research in SA among Malaysian undergraduate students. A quota sampling technique was used in this study. Gender and students' year of study were chosen for the strata (groups) of the sample. A total number of 200 respondents out of 784 volunteered respondents were undergraduate students in KOED. The Social Phobia Scale (SPS) with the reliability of ($\alpha=0.96$) and the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS) ($\alpha=0.90$) were used in this study. The demographic details in Section A were presented in percentages and table of frequencies. The current study revealed that the relationship between the level of SA and social interaction anxiety has a strong significant correlation and it was measured by using bivariate Pearson correlation coefficients. However, there was no significant difference in the level of SA due to gender using the independent samples t-test. There was also no significant difference in the level of SA due to two variables, namely students' year of study and academic achievement. Both were measured by using a one-way ANOVA test. Overall, the total number of Malaysian undergraduate students who were having social performance anxiety was higher than those who were not having it. On the other hand, the prevalence rate of those who were having low social interaction anxiety was higher than those with a high level of SA.

خلاصة البحث

الهدف الرئيس من هذا البحث هو قياس مستوى القلق الاجتماعي بناء على الجنس وسنة الدراسة والتحصيل الدراسي لدى طلبة المرحلة الجامعية الأولى الماليزيين من كلية التربية في الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية بماليزيا (IIUM). وكذلك يهدف البحث إلى دراسة العلاقة بين القلق الاجتماعي ومستوى القلق الاجتماعي التفاعلي. بشكل عام، يُعد القلق الاجتماعي مشكلة نفسية شائعة، خاصة بين الطلبة. ومع ذلك، يوجد عدد قليل من الدراسات التي تناولت القلق الاجتماعي، خاصة بين طلبة المرحلة الجامعية الأولى الماليزيين. وبالتالي، يُمكن لنتائج هذه الدراسة الإسهام في تطوير البحث في مجال القلق الاجتماعي بين طلبة المرحلة الجامعية الأولى الماليزيين. تم استخدام أسلوب العينة الحصصية لأخذ عينات هذا البحث، حيث تم اعتماد كل من متغيرات الجنس وسنة الدراسة لتشكيل مجموعات العينة. وتطوع 200 من طلبة كلية التربية البالغ عددهم 784 للمشاركة في البحث. وبلغت قيمة ثبات مقياس الرُّهاب الاجتماعي 0.96؛ بينما بلغت قيمة ثبات مقياس القلق الاجتماعي التفاعلي 0.90. تم عرض المعلومات الديموغرافية للقسم "أ" على شكل نسب مئوية وجداول تكرار. وأشارت نتائج البحث إلى وجود علاقة ذات دلالة عالية بين مستوى القلق الاجتماعي والقلق الاجتماعي التفاعلي باستخدام معامل ارتباط بيرسون. وأشارت النتائج إلى عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في مستوى القلق الاجتماعي يُعزى إلى متغير الجنس باستخدام اختبار (تي) للعينات المستقلة (t-test)؛ وكذلك عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في مستوى القلق الاجتماعي يُعزى إلى متغيري سنة الدراسة والتحصيل الدراسي للطلبة باستخدام اختبار تحليل التباين الأحادي (ANOVA). وبشكل عام، أظهرت الدراسة أن العدد الإجمالي للطلبة الماليزيين الجامعيين الذين يعانون من قلق الأداء الاجتماعي كان أعلى من أولئك الذين لم يكونوا يعانون منه. ومن ناحية أخرى، كان معدل انتشار الذين لديهم مستوى منخفض من القلق التفاعلي الاجتماعي أعلى من الذين لديهم مستوى عالٍ من القلق الاجتماعي.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Education.

.....
Aishah Hanim Abd Karim
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Education.

.....
Syarifah Rohaniah Syed
Mahmood
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education.

.....
Siti Kholijah Kassim
Head, Department of Educational
Psychology and Counseling

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyah of Education and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education.

.....
Ainol Madziah Zubairi
Dean, Kulliyah of Education

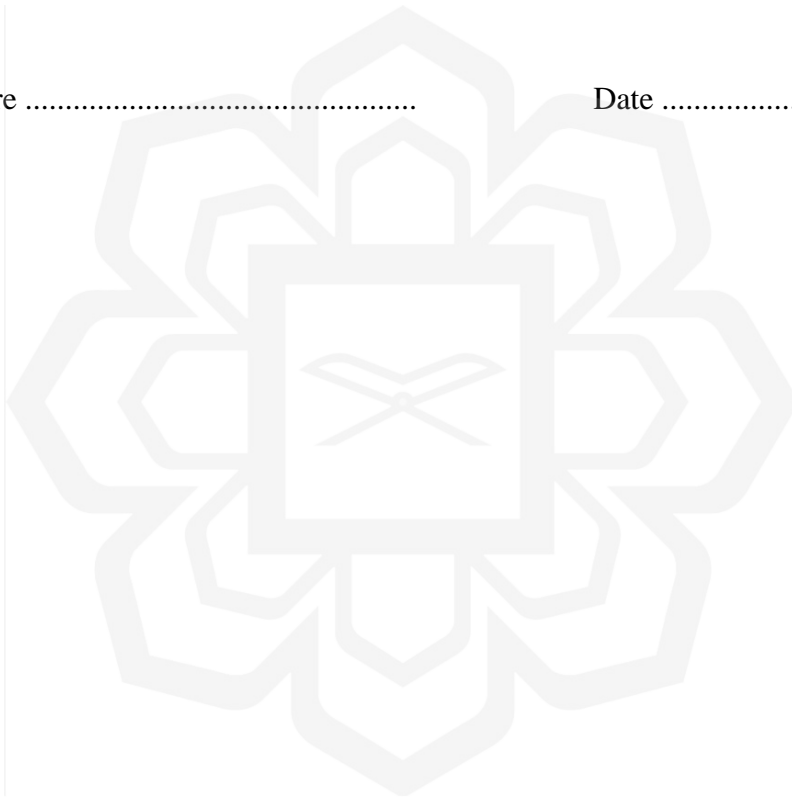
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Wan Nur Nadiah Binti Wan Ahmad Kamal

Signature

Date



INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF
FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL ANXIETY AMONG MALAYSIAN
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN KULLIYAH OF
EDUCATION, IIUM**

I declare that the copyright holders of this dissertation are jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Copyright © 2020 Wan Nur Nadiah Binti Wan Ahmad Kamal and International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieved system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understand the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialization policy.

Affirmed by Wan Nur Nadiah Binti Wan Ahmad Kamal

.....
Signature

.....
Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my Creator, the Almighty Allah for allowing me to write this thesis. I could never have done this thesis without the faith I have in you, the Almighty.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Assistant Professor Dr. Aishah Hanim Abd Karim who has supported me throughout my research study with patience, knowledge, and encouragement. Her excellent guidance, suggestions, and experiences helped me to understand and develop my research study. Her efforts are greatly appreciated.

The completion of this dissertation could not have been possible without the participation from all respondents, the undergraduate students from Kulliyah of Education (KOED), IIUM. Their participations are sincerely appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. Last but not least, I would like to give appreciation to my parents and family members, friends and fellow course mates for their support throughout my study.

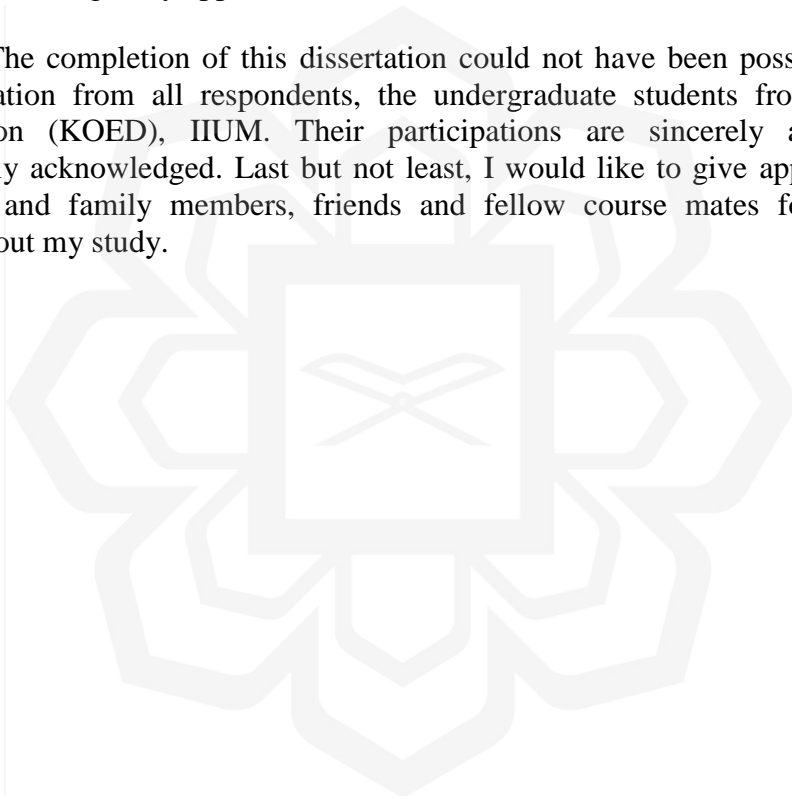


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration	v
Copyright	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
List of Abbreviations	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.1.1 Social Anxiety among College Students	3
1.2 Statement of Problem.....	4
1.3 Research Objectives	8
1.4 Research Questions	8
1.5 Significance of Study	9
1.6 Delimitations of Study	11
1.7 Definition of Terms.....	12
1.7.1 Social Anxiety (SA).....	12
1.7.2 Social Interaction Anxiety	13
1.7.3 Malaysian Undergraduate Student of Kuliyyah of Education	13
1.7.4 Academic Achievement.....	14
1.8 Chapter Summary.....	15
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1 Introduction	16
2.2 Social Anxiety (SA)	17
2.3 Theoretical Framework	19
2.4 Conceptual Framework	23
2.5 Islamic Perspectives	26
2.6 Systemic Review of Related Literature.....	28
2.7 Chapter Summary.....	35
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	36
3.1 Introduction	36
3.2 Population	36
3.2.1 Population Setting.....	36
3.3 Sample.....	38
3.3.1 Sampling Technique	38
3.4 Instrument	39
3.4.1 Reliability	41
3.5 Research Procedure.....	42
3.5.1 Pilot Test.....	42
3.5.2 Data Collection	42

3.6 Data Analysis	44
3.7 Chapter Summary.....	46
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE STUDY.....	47
4.1 Introduction	47
4.2 Demographic Information of the Respondents	47
4.3 Results.....	50
4.3.1 Research Question One.....	51
4.3.2 Research Question Two.....	51
4.3.3 Additional Results	59
4.4 Chapter Summary.....	62
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	63
5.1 Introduction	63
5.2 Discussion	63
5.2.1 Results on Research Question One.....	63
5.2.2 Results on Research Question Two	65
5.2.2.1 The Level of Social Anxiety and Gender	66
5.2.2.2 The Level of Social Anxiety and Year of Study.....	68
5.2.2.3 The Level of Social Anxiety and Academic Achievement	69
5.2.3 The Level of Social Anxiety and Demographic Variables	71
5.2.4 Social Anxiety Items.....	72
5.3 Conclusion	73
5.4 Limitation and Recommendation.....	76
5.5 Chapter Summary.....	77
REFERENCES.....	78
APPENDIX A: SURVEY OF SOCIAL ANXIETY	87

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
2.1	Review of Empirical Studies of SA	34
3.1	Distribution of Population	37
3.2	The Total Number of Respondents Needed in Each Stratum	39
3.3	Content of the Questionnaires	40
3.4	Summary of Data Analysis	45
4.1	Frequency counts for demographic variables (N=101)	49
4.2	Psychometric characteristics for SPS and SIAS (N=101)	50
4.3	Statistical Tests Based on the Research Question (RQ)	50
4.4	Intercorrelations among Selected Variables (n=101)	51
4.5	Independent t-test for the Scale Means Based on Gender (n=101)	52
4.6	Frequency counts of both score scales (SPS and SIAS) and gender (n=101)	53
4.7	One-way ANOVA Test for the Scale Scores Based on Year of Study (n=101)	54
4.8	Frequency Counts of Both Scales (SPS and SIAS) Based on Year of Study (n=101)	56
4.9	One-way ANOVA Test for the Scale Scores Based on Academic Achievement (n=101)	57
4.10	Frequency Counts of Both Scales (SPS and SIAS) Based on Academic Achievement (CGPA) (n=101)	59
4.11	Intercorrelation among Selected Variables (n=101)	60
4.12	Frequency rate of selected items (the highest and the lowest) in both scales (SPS and SIAS) (n=101)	61
5.1	Summarization of Results of Research Question Two	66

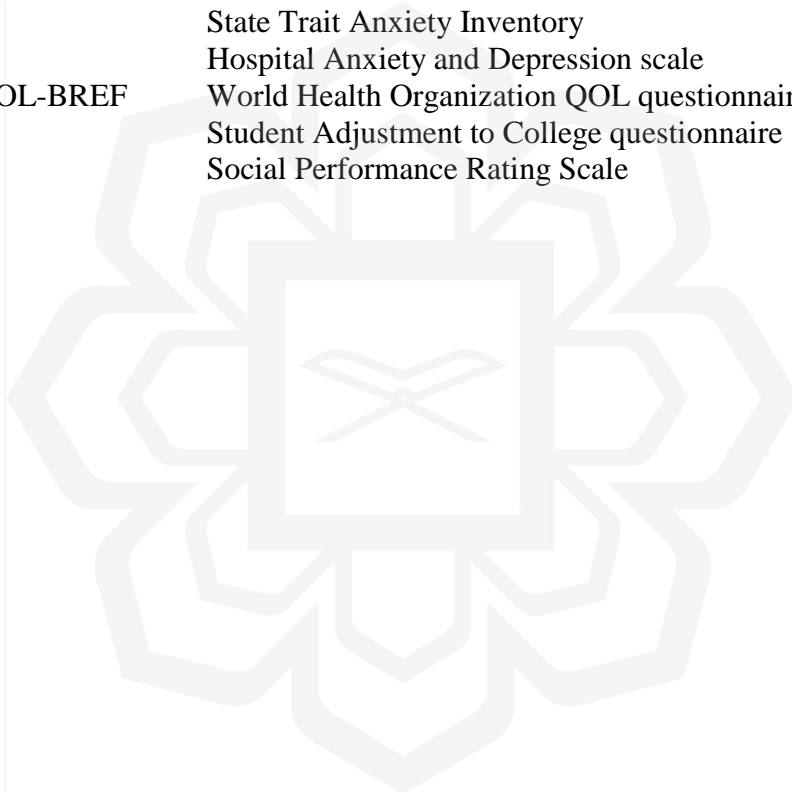
LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
2.1	Clark and Wells' (1995) Cognitive Model of Social Anxiety	21
2.2	Conceptual Framework of Study	24



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASI	Anxiety Sensitivity Index
LSAS	Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale
SA	Social Anxiety
SAD	Social Anxiety Disorder
SAQ	Social Anxiety Questionnaire
SAS	Self-Rating Anxiety Scale
SIAS	Social Interaction Anxiety Scale
SPIN	Social Phobia Inventory
SPDQ	Social Phobia Diagnostic Questionnaire
SPS	Social Phobia Scale
STAI	State Trait Anxiety Inventory
HADS	Hospital Anxiety and Depression scale
WHOQOL-BREF	World Health Organization QOL questionnaire
SACQ	Student Adjustment to College questionnaire
SPRS	Social Performance Rating Scale



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Social anxiety (SA) is also known as social phobia. It is one of the most common psychological problems among those who experience overwhelming anxiety and excessive self-consciousness in everyday social situations. SA is often associated with an intense fear of social situations, especially related to the humiliation or embarrassment in front of others (Scully, 2014; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). An individual with social anxiety tends to have specific fears such as speaking in front of a crowd or generalized fears in social situations such as starting a conversation and having group interactions. Their fear could be viewed as excessive or unreasonable by some people. Thus, daily social interactions of an individual with social anxiety could be difficult to handle because it affects their thinking, feeling and behaviour (Malaysian Mental Health Association, n.d.). The problems in social interactions here refer to the feeling inferior of others, fear of appearing incompetent, fear of interacting socially, and fear of being judged by others (Villiers, 2009).

There were many studies conducted on social anxiety among young adults or college students. It can be said that the level of social anxiety among college students is high (Pecoraro, 2006; Bifulco, 2011; Mustafa et al., 2015). Social anxiety is one of the mental problems that gradually takes the top rank of mental health issue in Malaysia (Malaysian Mental Health Association, n.d.). It could affect anyone regardless of genders, ages, ethnicities, socioeconomic status, and religions. Based on the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS IV) conducted in 2011, it was

reported that adults aged 16 years old and above with Generalized Anxiety Disorders (GAD) reached about 1.7% (0.3 million) (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2011).

In 2015, the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) 12 was used to assess and detect the mental health problems among 20,940 Malaysian citizens who was 16 years old and above. The result showed that 29.2% (6,115) of Malaysian young adults aged 16 years old and above having mental health problem (Noor Ani et al., 2015). In term of gender, the prevalence was higher among females (30.8%) than males (27.6%), but it was not significant (Noor Ani et al., 2015). In addition, the Health Ministry's Institute for Public Health (IPH) conducted a National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) in 2017 on Malaysian adolescents. They found that mental health of 50% of 120,420 students with personal problems being affected negatively (Lee, Menon & Rajaendram, 2018). The Star Online reported that the Health Ministry's Institute for Public Health stated that since the NHMS 2012, the number of adolescents who portrayed suicidal behaviour keeps increasing. Furthermore, the national survey also revealed that Malaysian adolescents were suffering from mental health problem and it has reached to the worrisome state (Lee, Menon & Rajaendram, 2018).

Generally, mental health problems are higher among younger adults. It is estimated that one-third of the total clinical population studied by the Ministry of Health Malaysia has mental health problems including anxiety and depression. This shows that mental health problem is gradually increasing in Malaysia, especially among young adults. SA could be a part of this mental health problem because it falls under the anxiety problem. It could be worse and lead to social anxiety disorder (SAD) if it is not treated properly. Thus, in the current study, the researcher assessed and determined the level of social anxiety among Malaysian undergraduate students

in Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) by using several questionnaires that would be explained later in Chapter Three.

1.1.1 Social Anxiety among College Students

As mentioned earlier, the level of social anxiety among college students is high. It can be due to several factors such as low self-esteem, high-stress level, experienced certain trauma cases or low educational attainment (Erwin, 2002; Austin 2003; Shahrouri 2016). Basically, the risk of increasing mental health problem, especially social anxiety may be due to multiple life changes during a student's life (Maley, 2003). Gan et al. (2011) conducted a study of four public and private Malaysian universities. They reported that the prevalence of depression, stress and anxiety were 29.3%, 21.6% and 55.0% respectively. Based on the findings of the study, anxiety is one of the major problems among college students in Malaysia.

Furthermore, Mohammed, Hayati and Salmiah (2015) revealed in their study that the relationship between anxiety and gender showed to be inconsistent because gender is a non-modifiable risk factor of social anxiety. In addition, various studies concerning the relationship between gender and social anxiety also showed a small or no significant difference between these two variables (Schjeldahl, 2013; Caballo et al., 2014; Noor Ani et al., 2015). On the other hand, social anxiety could be a major predictor of low academic performance among students (Vitasari et al., 2010). Apart from that, the level of social anxiety also could be affected by the year of study because students commonly undergo many social performances in higher institutions such as seminars, group projects, presentations, work experiences, and employment interviews (Topham & Russell, 2012).

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Malaysian Health Minister, YB Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly bin Ahmad, stated that according to the National Health and Morbidity Survey in 2015, 29.2% or 4.2 million of the total population of Malaysian adults above 16 years old were having mental health issues. He also added that this percentage refers to those who are having mental health problems, not a mental illness (Carvalho, Sivanandam & Shagar, 2018). The statistic of Malaysian having a mental illness such as depression and anxiety disorder has increased from 12% in 2011 to 29% in 2017. This statistic was based on the National Health and Morbidity Survey in 2017 conducted by the Patron of the Malaysian Psychiatric Association (MPA) (The Star Online, 2018).

Based on the above issue, it is possible for those who are having a mental health problem, including those who do not get any proper diagnosis, to get a mental illness. This mental illness could be one of critical health problems by the year 2020. It can be said that social anxiety is a part of anxiety problems that could be included in this arising issue. There were some Malaysian studies on mental illness, particularly on anxiety disorders. One of them was done by Al-Naggar, Bobryshev and Alabsi (2013). They conducted the study at a private university, namely Management and Science University (MSU). In this study, the number of female students was more than half out of 250 students (69.6%) and 52.4% of students aged 21 years old or younger were involved. From this study, it was found that 42.8% of the sample population suffered from severe anxieties.

Almost similarly, Radeef et al. (2014) found that 51.5% of undergraduate students from Kulliyyah (Faculty) of Science, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) have anxiety, which is higher than depression (13.9%) and stress (12.9%). They also noted that emotional disturbances in the form of depression,

anxiety and stress, which exist among those undergraduate students are at a high level. On top of that, a recent study by Gan and Hue (2019) also found that 33% of 149 students had anxiety symptoms and 14% had significant anxiety. Based on their study, they revealed that anxiety was significantly related to the quality of life. Hence, it can be concluded that those who are having anxiety problems have a high possibility of having a low quality of life.

From all of these studies, it could be seen that anxiety disorder keep increasing among Malaysian undergraduate students. Although these studies did not specify a certain type of anxiety in their findings, social anxiety could be a part of it. A study by Azhar, Gill and Sulaiman (2017), for instance, found that 35% of 90 psychiatry Master Degree applicants were suffering from social anxiety symptoms. The participants included medical doctors pursuing a master degree program. The study specifically revealed that medical doctors were significantly related to social anxiety.

Social anxiety could be developed since adolescence or even childhood. Following this disorder, the condition of a person with social anxiety could be better or worse during his or her study at higher institutional levels. It would depend on his or her experiences during the students' life. People with social anxiety have certain characteristics such as over-thinking about their social performance and anxious about negative outcomes of future occasions (Topham & Russell, 2012). These types of characteristics may cause an obstacle for them to participate in any social situations and inhibit the reinforcement beliefs about their personal true ability and competency. Students who are suffering from persistent social anxiety could lead to a significantly impaired quality of life and unable to interact socially with other people (Topham & Russell, 2012).

On several occasional situations, the development of social anxiety could be triggered if someone had encountered a particularly humiliating or stressful event which causes them to feel socially anxious to move forward. For example, in the educational context, social anxiety could be developed among students if they had psychological symptoms such as feeling anxious before starting a presentation, an overwhelming sudden fright, unable to focus and give attention, feeling loss while doing group assignments, or uninterested in the challenging subjects (Shahrouri, 2016). When social anxiety gradually developed among the students, it could affect their academic performance.

Social anxiety is a part of the predictor of academic performance (Mustafa et al., 2015). It is because, at the higher education level, students are engaged in the formative assessments, which include group work or presentations. McCarty (2012) stated that people with social anxiety could have a disruption in their brain before performing something in front of others. They were unable to comprehend or recall the information, thus, it could obstruct their ability to perform well or solve the questions that required thinking. Hence, it could affect the student's academic performance badly.

On top of that, the level of social anxiety among students could have changed during their year of study because of several reasons mentioned earlier. For that reason, students need to undergo various assessments. Previous studies in the 1990s revealed that women have a higher possibility to develop social anxiety throughout their lifespan than men (Regier et al., 1990; Angst & Dobler-Mikola, 1985). In contrast, some recent studies found that both genders have equal possibility to develop social anxiety since the beginning of childhood or early adolescence (Roberts et al. 2011; Scully, 2014). Although men and women are equally possible developing social

anxiety, it is possible for women to have a higher social anxiety level compared to men (Caballo et al., 2014; McLean & Hope, 2010).

To put all of this together, knowing the fact that social anxiety (SA) could be developed among undergraduate students, the researcher conducted this study to find out the prevalence rate of SA among Malaysian Muslim undergraduate education students, especially at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). This type of mental problem is high among college students, thus, it is crucial to carry out the study related to this problem to reduce social anxiety prevalence among the students. The main reason the researcher choose to conduct this study on undergraduate education students is that most of these students ought to be teachers in the future. Hence, if these students are suffering from SA, it could give a bad impact on their future students, which indirectly may affect our future generation in a negative way.

Thus, if the researcher could identify the level of SA among undergraduate students at IIUM, early intervention could be done to help these students. In addition, the university or lecturers could help these students in preventing and minimising the exert effect of mental, emotional and physical student's morbidity through the early detection of symptoms of social anxiety. Another reason why the researcher wanted to conduct this study is that there are a few studies related to SA among Malaysian undergraduate students. There were lots of studies conducted in the United States (US) focusing on SA either among the school students or college students. However, there were a few studies found related to SA among Malaysian students.

In the Malaysian context, most of the studies generally focused on anxiety disorder instead of focusing on social anxiety among undergraduate students (Al-Naggar, Bobryshev & Alabsi, 2013; Gan & Hue, 2019; Ranita, Sohana & Marhaini 2019). There were also a few studies on SA conducted on Malaysian Muslim undergraduate students.

Most of the studies were conducted among non-Muslim students or mixed up of both Muslim and non-Muslim students (Radeef et al., 2014; Fuad et al., 2015). Thus, in this study, the researcher wanted to focus only on Malaysian Muslim undergraduate students so that the researcher could contribute the result of this study for both developments of Malaysian research in regards to SA and the Muslim world

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study was to discuss the level of social anxiety among Malaysian undergraduate students in Kulliyah of Education (KOED), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Specifically, this study set out to address the following objectives:

- i. To identify the relationship between the level of social anxiety and social interaction anxiety.
- ii. To measure the level of social anxiety (SA) among Malaysian undergraduate students in KOED, IIUM based on the following construct:
 - a. Gender
 - b. Year of study
 - c. Academic achievement

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the above research objectives, the following research questions were addressed:

- i. What is the relationship between the level of social anxiety and social interaction anxiety?
- ii. What is the level of social anxiety (SA) among Malaysian undergraduate students in KOED, IIUM based on the following construct?

- a. Gender
- b. Year of study
- c. Academic achievement

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The level of social anxiety among college students has been studied in many countries. Social anxiety is one of major problems among college students on campuses (Villiers, 2009; Ahmad, Faque & Seidi, 2017; Thompson et al., 2019). A person with social anxiety who experienced a specific impairment and the level of distress is difficult to evaluate in the presence of comorbidities such as depression, anxiety or stress. Hence, the researcher focused on college students with possible social anxiety problems without comorbidity. There were some related studies of social anxiety conducted in Malaysia, but the majority of them included other parts of common mental health issues such as depression or stress.

Studies on social anxiety among college students in Malaysia are particularly low compared to the studies on mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, and stress among college students in Malaysia. In particular, there was one study on social anxiety among IIUM students conducted by Nur Farhanah (2016). However, she only studied the role of gender differences in social anxiety among university students. Hence, this study is a continuation of her study whereby several factors such as the influences of social anxiety towards student's academic achievement and gender were added as new constructs.

Furthermore, the relationship between social anxiety and social interaction anxiety and the influence of year of study towards students' social anxiety were also studied. Thus, the result of this study may be helpful for counsellors, educators, and

psychologist in designing and developing some intervention programs to help these students. In addition, it could also support the Kulliyah (Faculty) to be proactive in their daily approaches with students. It is expected that the Kulliyah would be able to develop some strategies to control the social anxiety level among students in IIUM in order to help increase their academic achievement as well as their general performance in the daily social interactions.

In addition, the results of this study could also help the staff and lecturers to understand the students better. They are the people who interact with the students on a regular basis and try to help them in gaining confidence to perform a simple task in social interaction. These people directly deal with the students in formal or informal manners. Thus, by knowing the results of this study, it could help them identify students who have difficulties or emotional problems. By doing so, the staff and lecturers could influence the students to break away from their negative stereotypes, such as fear of social judgment.

As a matter of fact, students who attend 4-year colleges and universities usually stay far away from their families because they live in a dormitory or a rented house. Thus, most students stay connected and rely on their friends rather than their families. Through a monthly campaign in the faculty, for instance, student associations could notify the rest of the students in regards to their mental condition statistic. Indirectly, it could spread the awareness of SA and the students could help each other to improve their social interactions. The result of this study may also be helpful in enhancing the awareness of the mental problems among young adults. Thus, they could seek for personal help or treatment or go for counselling sessions in the university or college during their academic years.

Simpson (2014) mentioned that if social anxiety is not treated, it could lead to pervasive of other mental health symptoms and it may limit an individual's general health and psychological well-being. Hence, if there is no intervention done, the trajectory of SA would continue and propagate throughout the individual's life. Finally, the results of this study could also help education students to be aware of this issue and try to improve their condition by sorting out several interventions to reduce the level of social anxiety among them. As future educators, they should be able to have positive mental health and physical well being before facing any challenges.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF STUDY

In this study, the researcher only addressed Malaysian undergraduate student's population. The population of foreign students was not included in this study because the researcher's interest is only towards Malaysian students and indirectly contributes a valuable outcome to the country. More specifically, only undergraduate students from Kulliyah of Education were involved in this study because the researcher is only interested to know about students who choose teaching profession and education courses as their first degree. In this case, the researcher did not want to compare students from different courses and solely focused on those who are in the education program.

Furthermore, this study was conducted only in IIUM Gombak. Other IIUM's branches were not included in this study because the researcher may face difficulties in obtaining the Dean's permission to get students' personal information. Based on the demographic details in the questionnaire, the researcher is concerned with the CGPA rather than GPA (Grade Point Average). It is because the GPA only

demonstrates student's academic achievement in that particular semester and it is not enough to evaluate student's academic achievement holistically.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.7.1 Social Anxiety (SA)

Social anxiety (SA) can be distinguished when individuals have difficulties to live their daily life due to their own fear to face one or more social performance or situation (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Week, 2014). Their own fear could be excessive or unreasonable which indirectly cause them to be more nervous and self-conscious (Week, 2014). SA is a complex physiological process and it results from the perception of a significant threat such as a negative social interaction or embarrassment. This threat develops cognitive responses that the individual interprets as fear and other negative emotions such as worry or sadness (Bögels et al., 2014).

Hence, people with social anxiety tend to exaggerate their worries about uncertain outcomes in the future. Based on their worries or negative perceptions towards those specific social situations, they tend to engage in protective behaviours such as avoiding any social situation and social relationship (Noltemeyer et al., 2012; Heimberg et al. 2014). This protective behaviour could be a part of avoidant behaviour because it causes individuals to isolate themselves and withdraw from society (Churchland & Winkielman, 2012). This condition would hide their capabilities to dominate any skills in the social realm, thereby limiting their function and contribution to society (Iverach & Rapee, 2014).

In this study, those with SA refers to students who have difficulties such as feeling nervous, self-conscious or getting tense when they are in the midst of a crowd or in front of other people. They tend to get worried ahead of certain social situations.