

Anxiety and Stress of Final Examination on Secondary Level Students

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ABSTRACT

Students, the future of our nation and the agents of change in our societies, are flourishing and thriving in the educational institutions. They progress through a series of institutions facing changes time to time and year to year in schools, classes, teachers, peers, environment and activities. These changes may either help in developing abilities and skills to deal with the demanding situations and standards or vex or trouble them. Failure to negotiating these challenges can lead to stress and anxiety issues, retardation in educational achievements, school refusal or dropout. The aim of the present article is to determine the level of examination anxiety and academic achievement of secondary school students and to study examination anxiety in context to their academic achievement. A sample of 200 students was selected by random sampling technique from 10 Govt. and Private Secondary schools of Bhagalpur city in Bihar state. Pie diagram was plotted for graphic representation and F-value was calculated for one way analysis of variance. This study reveals that there is significant difference in examination anxiety of students of different academic achievement levels.

Keywords- Secondary school students, Examination Anxiety, Academic achievement

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is an essential, physical response that communicates the needs to pay attention something in the environment. Anxiety is an emotional and behavioural disorder caused by the activation of sympathetic nervous system. Anxiety disorders are rising among students (leta, 2001). But keep feeling anxiety could be interrupt student performance.

The higher secondary level is a milestone in the academic life of any student. During this period, the student and his/her parents take the crucial decisions of future career selection. Adolescents worried about their academic performance. Many students are under great parental pressure to get high mark. Anxiety in this case plays the role of giving a powerful signal to the individual he/she is unprepared for the impending event. Coon & Mitterer (2008). While quoting a report by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, (2006). Have stated that in any year, roughly 18% of the adult population suffers from anxiety disorder complications.

Wine (1971) presented an intentional model of test anxiety, According to this model, individual with test anxiety mostly focus on activities which are irrelevant to given test.

According to Cornell University. Academic anxiety is the result of bio chemical processes in the body and the brain that make your attention level increase when they occur. The chances happen in response to exposure to a stressful academic situation, such as completing school assignments, presenting a project in class or taking a test.

METHODOLOGY

This study followed quantitative non-experimental simple descriptive study. Design, assessing the level of anxiety among higher secondary school students. Also the investigator chosen Public schools at Namakkal (dist) for the survey method. The sample for the present investigation is selected by using convenience sampling method. The sample consists of 100 higher secondary students (50 Male and 50 female).

Questionnaire was administered to students. Participants filled the questionnaire in the presence of researcher.

In statistical method, the data was analysed using SPSS package. The collected data were subjects to statistical analysis. Normality of the data was tested using Shapiro-wilk test and the data were followed normal distribution. The Mean and standard deviation (SD) for the variables academic stress scores were computed for the entire sample, based on which t-test was calculated. χ^2 -test was used for association between level of stress and personal profile.

What is Anxiety?

Thus, anxiety will be defined as a state of arousal caused by threat to well being 'State' means a condition of involving the entire organism. Here 'Threat' refers to anticipation of pain or danger or serious interference with goal seeking activities.

Anxiety is an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, often accompanied by nervous behavior, such as pacing back and forth somatic complaints and rumination. It is the subjectively unpleasant feelings of dread over something unlikely to happen, such as the feeling of imminent death. Anxiety is feeling unrealistic fear, worry, and uneasiness, usually generalized and unfocused. It is often accompanied by restlessness, fatigue, problems in concentration, and muscular tension. Anxiety is not considered to be a normal reaction to a perceived stressor although many feel it occasionally. When anxiety becomes overwhelming and distressing to the sufferer, it may fall under the psychiatric diagnosis of anxiety disorder. Anxiety is not the same as fear. Fear is evoked by a realistic danger and is an appropriate response to a perceived threat, while anxiety is worry or overreaction to a situation that is only subjectively seen as menacing.

What is Examination Anxiety?

Examination anxiety is a combination of perceived physiological over-arousal, feelings of worry and dread, self-deprecating thoughts, tension, and somatic symptoms that occur during test situations. It is a physiological condition in which people experience extreme stress, anxiety, and discomfort during and/or before taking a test. These responses can drastically hinder an individual's ability to perform well and negatively affects their social emotional and behavioral development and feelings about themselves and school. Examination anxiety is prevalent amongst the student populations of the world, and has been studied formally since the early 1950s beginning with researchers George Mandler and Seymour Sarason. Sarason's brother, Irwin G. Sarason, then contributed to early investigation of examination anxiety, clarifying the relationship between the focused effects of examination anxiety, other focused forms of anxiety, and generalized anxiety.

Examination anxiety can also be labeled as anticipatory anxiety, situational anxiety or evaluation anxiety. Some anxiety is normal and often helpful to stay mentally and physically alert. When one experiences too much anxiety, however, it can result in emotional or physical distress, difficulty concentrating, and emotional worry. Examination anxiety has been shown to have a consistently negative relationship with test performance, and test-anxious students are found to perform about 12 percent below their non-anxious peers. Inferior performance arises not because of intellectual problems or poor academic preparation, but because testing situations create a sense of threat for those experiencing examination anxiety; anxiety resulting from the sense of threat then disrupts attention and memory function.

Researchers suggest that between 25 to 40 percent of students experience examination anxiety. Students with disabilities and students in gifted education classes tend to experience high rates of test anxiety. Students who experience examination anxiety tend to be easily distracted during a test, experience difficulty with comprehending relatively simple instructions, and have trouble organizing or recalling relevant information.

Examination Anxiety is a type of anxiety that can affect an exam taker before, during or after an exam. It is an issue that many students deal with at one time or another. Slight exam stress can help by providing alertness, readiness and helping you to concentrate. However, excessive exam anxiety can result in stress and negatively affect performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Janette U. Shukla (2013) conducted a study of the Examination Anxiety among the Secondary School Students in the Context of some Variables. There is no significant effect of gender and standard on the examination anxiety of students. There is significant effect of area and educational achievement on the examination anxiety of students. There is no significant effect of interaction between gender and standard, gender and area, gender and educational achievement, standard and area, standard and educational achievement on the examination anxiety of students. There is significant of interaction between area and educational achievement on the examination anxiety of students. There is no significant effect of interaction among gender, standard and area; gender, standard and educational achievement on the examination anxiety of students. There is significant effect of interaction among standard, area and educational Achievement; among gender, area and educational achievement on the examination anxiety of students. There is significant effect of interaction among gender, standard, area and educational achievement on the examination anxiety of students.
- Tuncay Ergene (2011) conducted a research project on “The Relationships among Test Anxiety, Study Habits, Achievement, Motivation, and Academic Performance among Turkish High School Students”. A significant correlation was found between test anxiety and academic success. Significant correlation was found between scores of study habits and level of academic success. A positive relationship was found between study habits and level of achievement motivation. No correlation was observed between achievement motivation and academic success. Test anxiety and study habits were associated positively with academic success and there was no association with achievement motivation.
- Manish C. Parekh (2008) conducted “A Study of Examination Anxiety of Students of Secondary Schools” It was found that Girls had more examination anxiety than boys. Students of std-8 had more examination anxiety than students of std-9 and std-10. Students of social backward class had more examination anxiety.
- Ravi Chinta (2005) investigated “Exam Anxiety Effect on Exam Performance: An Empirical Replication in the Middle East” A significant relationship was not observed between expected course grade at the start of the academic term and the level of anxiety experienced at the time of the final exam. Significant relationships were observed between performance expectations at the time of the final exam and level of anxiety at that time. Positive relationships were found between test anxiety exhibited at the time of the final exam and the scores received on the first two exams.
- Jerrell C. Cassady and Ronald E. Johnson (2001) conducted a research on “Cognitive Test Anxiety and Academic Performance”. The Findings are as follow: i) Higher levels of cognitive test anxiety were associated with significantly lower test scores on each of the three course examinations. ii) High levels of cognitive test anxiety also were associated with significantly lower Scholastic Aptitude Test scores. iii) Procrastination in contrast, was related to performance only on the course final examination. iv) Gender differences in cognitive test anxiety were documented, but those differences were not related to performance on the course exams. v) Examination of the relation between the emotionality component of test anxiety and performance revealed that moderate levels of physiological arousal generally were associated with higher exam performance.
- M. Borinder (1985) “A Study of General Anxiety and Examination Anxiety in the Context of External and Internal Factors of Atmosphere” There was significant difference in general and examination anxiety of boys and girls. It was found that level of general anxiety and examination anxiety of girls was more than boys. It was found that the relation between general anxiety and examination anxiety was positive. There was no significant difference on general and examination anxiety of boys in the context of social economical status. There was significant difference in general anxiety of girls in the context of social-economical status. There was significant difference in examination anxiety of girls in the context of social-economical status. There was significant difference in general anxiety and examination anxiety of girls.

- M. Q. HUSSAIN (1977) studied academic attainment in relation to level of aspiration and anxiety. He found the academic performance of the group with moderate anxiety was significantly better than that of both the high and the low anxiety groups. High anxiety had adverse effect on academic performance. Low anxiety also showed a lack of drive and motivation in the students.
- P. N. Ray (1974) conducted "A Comparative Study of Higher and Lower Achievement of the Students in the Context of some Variables" It was found that personality related anxiety affected the educational achievement of students. It was found that lower level of anxiety motivated students in getting higher achievement whereas higher level of anxiety became obstacle in getting higher achievement. Positive relation between educational achievement and intelligence on anxiety was found whereas adjustment of students, anxiety, expected achievement were related to a person.

What Is Examination Anxiety?

Examination anxiety is a psychological condition in which people experience extreme distress and anxiety in testing situations. While many people experience some degree of stress and anxiety before and during exams, test anxiety can actually impair learning and hurt test performance.

Test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety. In situations where the pressure is on and a good performance counts, people can become so anxious that they are actually unable to do their best.

Other examples of performance anxiety:

- A businessman freezes up and forgets the information he was going to present to his co-workers and manager during a work presentation.
- A high school basketball player becomes very anxious before a big game. During the game, she is so overwhelmed by this stress that she starts missing even easy shots.
- A violin student becomes extremely nervous before a recital. During the performance, she messes up on several key passages and flubs her solo.

Identifying Examination Anxiety

While people have the skills and knowledge to do very well in these situations, their excessive anxiety impairs their performance. The severity of test anxiety can vary considerably from one person to another. Some people might feel like they have "butterflies" in their stomach and while others might find it difficult to concentrate on the exam.

A little bit of nervousness can actually be helpful, making you feel mentally alert and ready to tackle the challenges presented in an exam. The Yerkes-Dodson law suggests that there is a link between arousal levels and performance. Essentially, increased arousal levels can help you do better on exams, but only up to a certain point.

Once these stress levels cross that line, the excessive anxiety you might be experiencing can actually interfere with test performance. Excessive fear can make it difficult to concentrate and you might struggle to recall things that you have studied. You might feel like all the information you spent some much time reviewing suddenly seems inaccessible in your mind.

You blank out the answers to questions to which you know you know the answers. This inability to concentrate and recall information then contributes to even more anxiety and stress, which only makes it that much harder to focus your attention on the test.

Symptoms of Examination Anxiety

The symptoms of test anxiety can vary considerably and range from mild to severe. Some students experience only mild symptoms of test anxiety and are still able to do fairly well on exams. Other

students are nearly incapacitated by their anxiety, performing dismally on tests or experiencing panic attacks before or during exams.

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, symptoms of test anxiety can be physical, behavioral, cognitive, and emotional.

Physical Symptoms

Physical symptoms of test anxiety include sweating, shaking, rapid heartbeat, dry mouth, fainting, and nausea. Sometimes these symptoms might feel like a case of "butterflies" in the stomach, but they can also be more serious symptoms of physical illness such as nausea, diarrhea, or vomiting.

Cognitive and Behavioral Symptoms

Cognitive and behavioral symptoms can include avoiding situations that involve testing. This can involve skipping class or even dropping out of school. In other cases, people might use drugs or alcohol to cope with symptoms of anxiety.

Other cognitive symptoms include memory problems, difficulty concentrating, and negative self-talk.

Emotional Symptoms

Emotional symptoms of test anxiety can include depression, low self-esteem, anger, and a feeling of hopelessness. Fortunately, there are steps that students can take to alleviate these unpleasant and oftentimes harmful symptoms. By learning more about the possible causes of their test anxiety, students can begin to look for helpful solutions.

Causes of Examination Anxiety

While test anxiety can be very stressful for students who experience it, many people do not realize that is actually quite common. Nervousness and anxiety are perfectly normal reactions to stress. For some people, however, this fear can become so intense that it actually interferes with their ability to perform well.

So **what causes test anxiety?** For many students, it can be a combination of things. Poor study habits, poor past test performance, and an underlying anxiety problem can all contribute to test anxiety.

A few potential causes of test anxiety include:

- **Fear of failure:** If you connect your sense of self-worth to your test scores, the pressure you put on yourself can cause severe test anxiety.
- **Poor testing history:** If you have done poorly on tests before, either because you didn't study well enough or because you were so anxious, you couldn't remember the answers; this can cause even more anxiety and a negative attitude every time you have to take another test.
- **Unpreparedness:** If you didn't study or didn't study well enough, this can add to your feeling of anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Stress is marked by overly high performance standards, with high levels of worry, self-criticism of attention while preparing for or taking exams (Altmaier, 1983, p. 52). Too much stress can interfere with how a student prepares, concentrates, and performs. It was found in the study that examination stress is highly correlated with level of anxiety in college students. Among the students of Arts, Science and Commerce stream, the students of arts feels highest level of examination stress and anxiety followed by the students of Commerce stream. The least amount of examination stress and anxiety was found among students of science stream. When the level of stress and anxiety before and during the examination was compared between undergraduate and post graduate students, it was found that graduate and post graduate

students feel more or less equal level of stress and anxiety during examinations. Some college students do not know how to properly prepare for a test and will perform poorly and are anxious as a result. More emphasis is needed on understanding the impact of examinations on students, on identifying vulnerable individuals, and on the appropriateness of the current examination process (Fisher, 1994).

Educational implication of the study:

- It will provide knowledge of examination anxiety level of the students.
- It will provide an opportunity to explore the measures for removal of examination anxiety of the students.
- The performance and achievement of the students will be improved.
- Recall ability and expression potentialities will be improved by debate and discussion.
- It will help in making students emotionally stable.
- It will help in developing interest in curricular and co-curricular activities.
- It will be helpful in creating social-emotional environment in the schools.
- It will help in developing classroom communication and interactions.
- Opportunities will be provided to develop speech and writing ability.
- It will help in undertaking future research.
- It will provide measures to reduce examination anxiety of the school students.
- It will help in developing the physical, social, educational, moral and intellectual aspect of the students.

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