

Academic Anxiety among the Junior Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety is a serious biochemical changes in our brain and body, such as an increase in adrenaline causing our heart to beat faster and a decrease in dopamine a brain chemical that helps to block pain. These changes result in a state of heightened attention to the source of the anxiety. High level of anxiety interferes with concentration and memory, which are critical for academic success. Without any anxiety it would create a boredom in class hours, lack of motivation in preparing for exams, etc. A moderate amount of anxiety among the students actually helps in academic performance by creating motivation. Contributing to the student's success this research paper explores the academic anxiety among the 11th grade students who are yet to appear their new stream of board exam pattern *i.e.* their state of anxiety before board exams. The objectives of the study are as follows. The research was carried out with the help of West Side Test Anxiety scale. The sample comprised of 50 junior secondary school students selected randomly from two groups of students *i.e.* Science and Arts junior secondary school students. Using simple random sampling a group of 50 students containing 25 boys and 25 girls from 11th grades participated in the study and their state of anxiety before board exams was measured using the scores allotted by the Academic West Side Test Anxiety scale. Analysis of various demographic variables of the students and their influences will be discussed in the full paper.

Key Words : Academic Anxiety, Junior secondary school students, 11th grade students

INTRODUCTION

Children and adolescents with mental health challenges sometimes experience difficulty at school for a variety of reasons. Children differ from adults in whom they experience many physical, mental, and emotional changes as they progress through their natural growth and development. Anxiety is a heightened emotional and behavioral problem caused by the external and internal state of human being. At present it been experienced by most of school going children that too high level of anxiety is often experienced by students during their performance related activities such as, incompleteness of class works, exams, and even at the time receiving their test papers. A small level of anxiety is normal, which should be present as a part of normal healthy human being, but severe anxiety may create serious problem in life. As a student's suffer in their academic performance, the anxiety level increases. If a student suffers from social anxiety, he/

she may not be able to complete group tasks or might not feel comfortable asking for help in class.

The four major streams of academic anxiety classification:

Personal:

They are the factors which focus on poor study habits, low achievement, low level of intelligence, no self determination etc.

Family:

They are the factors which include poor family environment, low social and economic status, single parent as the case may be, more number of children, family issues etc.

Institutional:

They are the type of school environment, teacher relationship, content taught, infrastructure facilities etc.

Behavioural:

They are the factors which include adamant in character, too much of pampering from the parent side, Adjustmental problem, feeling of loneliness etc.,

Students can feel anxiety related to every academic task and some may only feel anxiety related to test taking or other specific tasks. Anxiety is not always negative. Therefore contributing to the students success, this research paper explores the academic anxiety among the 11th grade students who are yet to appear their new stream of board exam pattern *i.e.* their state of anxiety before board exams.

Review of literature:

Students with high levels of anxiety may also have more difficulty when learning a new language than students with lower levels of anxiety. Anxiety can also lead to problems with reading comprehension. Some students are so worried about failing an assignment or test that the students cannot retrieve information or store new information.

The researcher Bensoussan (2012) found that teachers' willingness to work with their students to repair poor test scores has a positive effect on reducing test anxiety. In a quantitative study of 265 students learning English as a second language, researchers found when students were given the choice of different repair behaviors; students rated all choices higher than not changing anything. Students rated the following choices (listed from highest rated to lowest rated): correct incorrect responses to improve grade, answer extra credit questions, take a different test, any of the listed choices, have a one-on-one discussion with the teacher, discuss the test as a class, Academic anxiety and coping with anxiety nothing, and correct incorrect responses without improving the grade.

The results of this study indicated that the emotional aspects of anxiety should be addressed along with the cognitive aspects. The data show that students put the highest preference on improving their grades. When students felt they were getting the attention and support of their teachers, they felt less anxiety. Many students suffer from test anxiety because of a lack of study skills. Teaching test taking skills and study skills address the issues before becoming big problems. Through this study it is also found that students felt less anxiety about testing when a class discussion was held about the test. Additionally, students felt better about testing when given

the opportunity for extra credit, such as bonus questions.

Motivation can be an important factor in reducing test anxiety and increasing motivation. This study was carried out by Marszal-Wicniewska *et al.* (2011). They found that students feel positive and negative emotions before, during, and after a test. Students who practiced motivational strategies had higher levels of emotional functioning when faced with stress or anxiety during a test.

It was a quantitative, non-experimental study. Totally 135 college students participated in a personality assessment and mood measurement before and after a test. The participants answered questions Academic anxiety and coping with anxiety regarding their situation. They rated each question on a scale using the Mood Adjective Check List. Students with high emotional reactivity did not show a significant increase in hedonic tone (pleasure) after completing an exam. Students with low emotional reactivity showed a significant increase of hedonic tone after completing an exam. Students with high emotional reactivity reported higher levels of anxiety than students with low emotional reactivity.

METHODOLOGY

Research means a search for facts, answer to question and solution to problems. It is an "organized inquiry. The descriptive research design is been used for the present study which describes the various socio-economic factors of junior secondary student who are yet to attend their board exam and also West Side test Anxiety test Scale by Driscoll (2007). West side Test Anxiety Scale Validation. 6pp. ERIC onsite. is also been used long with questionnaire.

Sampling size and sampling technique:

The universe of the study covers all the junior secondary board exam students in a school in Coimbatore city. The researcher has adopted simple random sampling procedure by lottery method for drawing the respondents. 50 Samples *i.e.* (1/3rd sampling) is totally drawn from 149 students. The research was carried out with the help of questionnaire which consist of some demographic variables as the first part and West Side Test Anxiety Scale" as the second part for collecting the data.

Analysis and Interpretations:

The statistical package for social science (SPSS Statistic 17) was used to analyze the data. Simple

percentage T- test and ANOVA was used to study the academic anxiety test level among the junior secondary board exam students. These are the following results based on the study.

The Table 1 reveals that 56% of the students are Females and 44% of the students are Male students. As part of the group is concern 54% of the students belong to the science group and 46% are Arts students.

Relating to Earning members of the family 48% of students, both parents work and earn for the family and 38% of students father only earn for the family and 14% of the students mother only earn for the family.

The Table 2 denotes that 26 % of the total respondents have extremely high test anxiety and 20% of the total respondents have normal or average test

anxiety.

Since P- value (0.984) is greater than (0.05) which means there is no significant relationship between the anxiety test score and the gender. But when compared to the mean value of males (32.7273) have more level of academic anxiety than the female (32.6786) (Table 3).

Since P- value (.433) greater than (0.05) which means there is no significance difference between the anxiety test score and the Group. When compared to the mean value of the Science group (4.1481) students have more academic anxiety than the Arts group students (3.7826). (Table 4)

Since the P- value (0.748) is greater than (0.05) there is no significant difference among the Earning members of the Family and the academic score. But when

Table 1 : Distribution of the respondents based on the Gender, Group, and Earning member of the family

Sr. No.	Variables		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	22	44
		Female	28	56
		Total	50	100
2.	Group	Science	27	54
		Arts	23	46
		Total	50	100
3.	Earning member of the family	Father	19	38
		Mother	7	14
		Both	24	48
		Total	50	100

Table 2 : Westside Test Anxiety scale scores distribution of the respondents

Sr. No.	Anxiety test score	Frequency	Per cent
1.	Comfortably low test anxiety	5	10
2.	Normal or average test anxiety	10	20
3.	High normal test anxiety	6	12
4.	Moderately high test anxiety	7	14
5.	High test anxiety	9	18
6.	Extremely high test anxiety	13	26
	Total	50	100

Table 3 : T- test between the anxiety test score and gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	P-value
Total_level	Male	22	32.7273	7.75323	.220	.984
	Female	28	32.6786	9.16133		

Table 4 : T- test for significance difference between the anxiety test score and the group

	Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation	t- value	P- value
Total_level	Science	27	4.1481	1.74761	.791	.433
	Arts	23	3.7826	1.47576		

Table 5 : ANOVA test for significant difference among the earning members of the family and the academic test

Total score	N	Mean	Std Deviation	F - value	P – value
Father	19	31.7368	8.51693		
Mother	7	34.5714	5.91205	.292	.748
Both	24	32.9167	9.25445		
Total	50	32.7000	8.48588		

compared to the mean value of mothers (34.5714) the students have more anxiety whose mother only earns for their family (Table 5).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

– 26 % of the total respondents have extremely high test anxiety and 20% of the total respondents have normal or average test anxiety.

– 20% of the Science Group respondents experience Extreme high test anxiety and whereas only 6% of the Arts Group respondents experience Extreme high anxiety.

– Three fourth of the respondent's parents have completed only 10th and 12th std, and among them, 20% of their children experience the Extreme high test anxiety.

– Since P- value (0.984) is greater than (0.05) which means there is no significant relationship between the anxiety test score and the gender. But when compared to the mean value of males (32.7273) have more level of academic anxiety than the female (32.6786).

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– Since the P- value (0.748) is greater than (0.05) there is no significant difference among the Earning members of the Family and the academic score. But when compared to the mean value of mothers (34.5714) the students have more anxiety whose mother only earns for their family.

Recommendations:

In view of this study, it could be recommended that:

– The present research reflects that the girls are experiencing extreme high level of test anxiety than the boys. They may vary in reasons, but proper guidance should be given to the parents about the state of their children in order to achieve their desired goal.

– The management can give guidelines as well as can facilitate stress management sessions that help students to cope with exam stress.

– Parents and teachers should understand the internal and external part of the students regarding physical conditions, mental status and psychological needs of the youngsters which may play positive role in dealing with exam anxiety.

– Teachers can be educated about the warning signs of behavioral and psychosocial impairment to help assess the severity of the problem at early stages.

– Students should be given time to relax their mind and their body. Systematic in planning for their examinations can be made by providing them the training of time management so that last minute rushes can be avoided.

– Many children suffer from test anxiety because of a lack of study skills. Teaching them to take up test and skills in studying method would address the issues before becoming big problems.

Social work Intervention:

The social workers play a vital role in the school setting. They play a role of a school counsellor as well as a teacher. School counselling is a student centered process that demands confidentiality. The student counsellor also provides helping services for those who are unable to make proper use of the opportunity and who find it difficult in carrying out their day-to-day activities effectively. As part of social work intervention case work plays a major role as student counselling. Through this the students are able to share their personal inner feeling which is ventilation for the students. The Group work method can also be practiced for developing the relationship among the peer group. Through this behaviour modification can be carried out for the growth of better citizens. Apart from this even social work research can also be carried out with 10th and 12th grade of students.

Conclusion :

The educational system can be changed as focus is

only on academics with encouragement can be given to the entire student community. The educational approach can become skills oriented rather than grade oriented. Every child has potentials and talents which have to be identified and enhance it. Proper care should be given to the students in order to facilitate and motivate them to hold a positive approach within oneself. This in turn makes the students to reduce the academic anxiety with oneself.

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