

TEST ANXIETY AND ITS VITAL ROLE IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract :

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. It helps one deal with a tense situation in the office, study harder for an exam, and keep focused on an important speech. In general, it helps one cope. But when anxiety becomes an excessive, irrational dread of everyday situations, it has become a disabling disorder. The term anxiety is usually defined as a diffuse, vague, very unpleasant feeling of fear or apprehension Sarason & Sarason, 2007. The study was an effort to measure and its vital role in Academic Achievement of High School Students in high school level students' views about fear of examination. The paper identifies problems and causes of examination test anxiety (fear of examination) among high school level students. The findings of the study reported that fear of examination affects the academic performance of the students in the examination and they could not perform according to their knowledge due to fear of examination as they forget the answers of some questions during examination due to nervousness and fear of examination. A significant number of students answered their mind go blank before start of examination and they could not depict their knowledge on paper due to limited time pressure allowed for paper. The study found out that fear of punishment from parents and fear of annoyance of teachers on poor performance in the examination, tough competition among class fellows for getting good grades, limited time pressure in attempting for examination questions, fear of repeating the same class and poor preparation of examination were the main causes of examination Anxiety. achievement in an environment fair enough to let them demonstrate their abilities to the fullest. The researchers have suggested various means to minimize test anxiety with managing external factors like environment of examination hall; behaviour of examiners etc. internal factors like organization of questions in a test, sufficient description of the context, clarity in instruction for students etc. Despite these measures to minimize test anxiety it is generally agreed that it has become most upsetting and a disruptive factor for high school students.

KEYWORDS :

Academic Achievement , Test Anxiety , environment , common phenomenon .

INTRODUCTION:

Today, anxiety is a common phenomenon of everyday's life. It plays a crucial role in human life because all of us are the victims of anxiety in different ways. Generally, anxiety can either be a trait anxiety or a state anxiety. Trait anxiety is a stable characteristic or trait of the person. State anxiety is one which is aroused by some temporary condition of the environment such as examination, accident, punishment etc. Academic anxiety is a kind of state anxiety which relates to the impending danger from the environment of the academic institutions including teachers, certain subjects like Mathematics, English etc (Rohen Meetei, 2012). The study investigated learning styles, school environment and test anxiety as predictors of learning outcomes among secondary school students. Among the students (learning styles, school environment and test anxiety). Schools are one important place where children have contacts with their peers, form friendship, and participate in social groups with other children. As children grow from infancy through adolescence, peers are increasingly important in their lives. Their interactions become more complex with age. In adolescence- peer relationship affect whole personality. Girls and Boys have different characteristics, needs etc. to each other, therefore people think that due to these differences it is must to provide different educational conditions and for this purpose tradition of uni educational emerges. But with the modernization of society people think that for development of an androgynous personality of individual or for better

development of individual, it is must to provide that type of educational condition in which individual easily understand the characteristics of their opposite sex and for reducing antagonism, the trend of co-educational emerges. Here the question arises if presences of both sex and single sex effect the development of Emotional maturity, anxiety and security - insecurity in adolescence. This research was undertaken to find answer to this problem.

Impact of Anxiety

A person who experience anxiety feels discouraged and his will power is completely lost. A whole range of inferiority complexes, guilt complexes, sexual troubles, obsessions, fixed idea come to light when a person undergoes depression. Anxiety complex is a frequent cause of nervous tension. The feeling of inferiority produces an inability to adapt oneself to different circumstances. It makes one feel powerless in handling the life situations. The personality of the sufferer is weak and becomes a prey to inner conflicts. Persons who experience anxiety have feelings of guilt and failure which is quite unbearable. Guilt can drive an individual to dangerous behaviour. These consist of feeling of possessing fear of being rejected, abandoned or believing that things are always going badly. One of the main fears of the individuals is not being able to rely on anything. A number of experiments suggest that people don't remember the anxiety lades material as readily as emotionally neutral material, just as Freud proposal (Guenthr, 1988). Thus, when you forget unpleasant things such as dental appointment a promise to help a friend more, or a term paper deadline, motivated forgetting may be at work Every one experiences anxiety from time to time. It is a neutral and common reaction to many of life's difficulties. For some people however, anxiety becomes a chronic problem. These people experience high levels of anxiety disorders are a class of disorders, phobic disorders panic disorders and obsessive compulsive disorders. Studies suggest that anxiety disorders are quite common, occurring in roughly 17% of the population (Robins and Regier, 1991).

A number of symptoms of Anxiety disorders are recognized and a feature of many of these is panic attacks. A panic attack is a period of intense fear or discomfort commencing suddenly and peaking within 10 minutes. It will have many of the following symptoms: Palpitations or fast hear rate, sweating, trembling, sensation of difficulty in breathing, chest discomfort or pain, nausea, dizziness or light-headedness feelings of unreality, fear of cosing, control or dying, numbers or tingling, chills or hot flushes. According to Mandlor and Sarason (1952) "A learned anxiety drive is a function of anxiety reactions previously learned as a response to stimuli present in the testing situations". A test anxious child is he who derogates his own worth and tends to direct aggression towards himself rather than others. Test-anxiety is the mental distress and fear experienced by persons. When they have to face testing situations of any kind. Test anxiety is actually a type of performance anxiety-a feeling someone might have in a situation where performance really counts or when the pressure's on to do well. For example, a person might experience performance anxiety when he or she is about to try out for the school play, sing a solo on stage, get into position at the pitcher's mound, step onto the platform in a diving meet, or go into an important interview.

Test anxiety and its vital role in Academic Achievement of High School Student is composed of three major components: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. Students who experience test anxiety from the cognitive perspective are worriers lacking self confidence. They may be preoccupied with negative thoughts, doubting their academic ability and intellectual competence (Sarason & Sarason, 1990).

The five causes of test anxiety

Test anxiety is a learned behaviour.

The association of grades and personal worth causes test anxiety.

Test anxiety can come from a feeling of a lack of control.

Test anxiety can be caused by a teacher embarrassing a student.

Being placed into course above your ability can cause test anxiety.

Students are born with test anxiety.

Test anxiety is a mental illness.

Test anxiety cannot be reduced.

Any level of test anxiety is bad.

All students who are not prepared have test anxiety.

Students with test anxiety cannot learn math.

Students who are well prepared will not have test anxiety.

Very intelligent students and students taking high-level courses, such as calculus, do not have test anxiety.

Attending class and doing my homework should reduce all my test anxiety.

Being told to relax during a test will make you relaxed.

Doing nothing about test anxiety will make it go away.

Reducing test anxiety will guarantee better grades.

The test anxiety construct is considered as a situation-specific trait accounting for individual differences in the extent to which people find examinations threatening (Spielberger & Vagg, 1995). Within this general conceptualization there are broad and narrow definitions. Narrow definitions focus on fear of failure (emphasising how performance is judged), or evaluation anxiety (emphasising how test anxiety can be located with other, so called, subclinical anxieties including sports performance, public speaking, and so forth). These emphasise a social dimension where the performance is judged by others. Spielberger's (1966) notion of 'ego threat' offers a potentially broader definition by including threats to self-esteem and the consequences of performance success or failure, in addition to potential derogatory judgement by others. required abilities and skills and it expected that students should achieve required abilities and skills in different cognition, affective,

personality aspects to achieve development and ascendancy on the other hand should recognize factors that caused better education and efflorescence of student capacities, and after given them achievement and development Zeidner (1998) Almost everyone feels nervous or experiences some anxiety when faced with a test or an exam. In fact, it is unusual to find a student who doesn't approach a big test without a degree of anxiety. Many students experience some nervousness or apprehension before, during, or even after an exam. It is perfectly natural to feel some anxiety when preparing for and taking a test. Too much anxiety about a test is commonly referred to as test anxiety. Test anxiety is very common among students! It can interfere with your studying, and you may have difficulty learning and remembering what you need to know for the test. Further, too much anxiety may block your performance. You may have difficulty demonstrating what you know during the test.

Test anxiety can cause a host of problems in students. At the same time it was also identified that students were familiar with the importance of the examinations and they answered that examination provide them chance to depict their abilities of thinking and decision making. Students may be given frequent tests so that they may take examination as routine work. Healthy competitive environment among students, remedy teaching to low achievers, Parents' encouragement for children to better performance in the exams, Examination Anxiety on students individual differences among regarding examination test anxiety relationship of examination anxiety. and its vital role in Academic Achievement of High School Students. Although each person will experience a different collection of symptoms with differing degrees of intensity, the symptoms fall into a few categories:

Physical - headaches, nausea or diarrhea, extreme body temperature changes, excessive sweating, shortness or breath, light-headedness or fainting, rapid heart beat, and/or dry mouth.

Emotional - excessive feelings of fear, disappointment, anger, depression, uncontrollable crying or laughing, feelings of helplessness

Behavioral - fidgeting, pacing, substance abuse, avoidance

Cognitive - racing thoughts, 'going blank', difficulty concentrating, negative self-talk, feelings of dread, comparing yourself to others, difficulty organizing your thoughts.

Stressful emotions can inhibit a student's ability to absorb, retain and recall information. Anxiety creates a kind of "noise" or "mental static" in the brain that blocks our ability to retrieve what's stored in memory and also greatly impairs our ability to comprehend and reason.

Research has shown that providing students with tools and strategies that build both emotional skills and healthy physical habits when preparing for a test can help them overcome test anxiety and the associated symptoms, while improving their ability to prepare for and perform on critical testing. 1. Being well prepared for the test is the best way to reduce test taking anxiety. Space out your studying over a few days or weeks, and continually review class material, don't wait until the night before and try to learn everything the night before.

2. Try to maintain a positive attitude while preparing for the test and during the test. Exercising for a few days before the test will help reduce stress. Get a good night's sleep before the test.

3. Show up to class early so you won't have to worry about being late. Stay relaxed. If you begin to get nervous take a few deep breaths slowly to relax yourself and then get back to work.

4 Read the directions slowly and carefully. If you don't understand the directions on the test, ask the teacher to explain it to you.

5. Skim through the test so that you have a good idea how to pace yourself. Write down important formulas, facts, definitions and/or keywords in the margin first so you won't worry about forgetting them.

6. Do the simple questions first to help build up your confidence for the harder questions.

7. Don't worry about how fast other people finish their test; just concentrate on your own test.

8. If you don't know a question skip it for the time being (come back to it later if you have time), and remember that you don't have to always get every question right to do well on the test.

CONCLUSION:

Although cognitive aspects are seen as greater reason of text anxiety and its vital role in Academic Achievement of High School Students but emotional (affective) factors also contribute reasonably. The feeling student experience on or before the text also make him/her anxious. As students have reported that they feel uneasy, upset, nervous, tense and panic. These feelings arise irrespective of the extent of preparation of examination on the part of the student; therefore, can be assumed as not specific to tests, but anxiety we all experience during any unseen endeavour of life we go through. Students can be trained to minimize affective test anxiety by providing opportunities to handle unforeseen problem situations and letting them experience test situation more often. It is evident that feelings (affective) and worry (cognitive) related anxiety are sources of drop in student achievement. Student achievement can be improved by training/educating students about handling stress situations in academic life. If students can manage their emotional anxiety it can assist in improved achievement. Teacher can benefit from popularly used techniques to handle both cognitive and emotional anxiety among students. Teacher does not have high expectation from the students of lower socio-economical backgrounds. Their neglect of these students engender in them highly changed negative attitudes towards learning. The teacher is mostly responsible for the emotional climate of the classroom. A friendly, pleasant and enthusiastic teacher creates an enthusiastic atmosphere. It is a pattern of behaviour which student learn from their elders and is fostered by misunderstanding and frustration. It is believed of some people that teaching is a creative, dynamic but intuitive activity and only a born teacher can feel the right moment to

encourage her/his student in a precisely right activity to ensure their progress.

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