



EXAMINATION ANXIETY AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

Examination is a part of any education system across the globe. Examination always brings a sense of fear or anxiety in the mind of students of all ages. The anxiety associated with examination can be termed as Examination anxiety. Examination anxiety is a physiological condition in which people experience extreme stress, anxiety, and discomfort during 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. Hence the main aim of this study is to explore the area of examination anxiety among adolescents in depth and to understand the various factors associated with it. A sample of 1026 students was selected from both CBSE and State Board Schools by using Random sampling technique. The descriptive survey method was used for the study. The data were collected and analyzed using west side anxiety scale, academic anxiety scale and Test Anxiety Inventory. The result reveals that more than 85% students are suffering with high to very high level of anxiety. The major areas identified for examination anxiety are others views about self, concern about image and general test-taking anxiety, concern about future security, not prepared for test, bodily reactions and thought disruption etc.

Keywords: Examination anxiety, adolescents, factors of examination anxiety

Education that can equip a person with capacity to read, write and do some basic calculations is essential to lead a meaningful life. It provides tools to distinguish between right and wrong. The school and higher education provide better future and success in life. The education system of India is a subjective grade based examination system. Grade matters above all forms of achievements in education. Exams are necessary because they measure people's abilities and how much they have learned. Examination gives us potential for better learning. Without exams, there is nothing motivating the student to learn.

Examination immediately brings a sense of fear or anxiety in the mind of students of all ages. It is physiological and psychological aspect of human life. Most students are nervous or afraid of examinations, and a moderate nervousness is often an advantage when students have to perform at their best. In the school setting, anxiety is experienced often by students when being evaluated, such as when taking a test or giving a public performance. 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.

Some students experience more burdensome anxiety problems regarding their examinations – either when studying for the examination or at the examination itself. The competitive environment in performance in school and colleges coupled with uncertainties of future professional objectives leads to a high level of anxiety among students. Society in general at present is placing great emphasis on the results and better grades in the examinations rather putting stress on the overall knowledge improvement that also leads to higher anxiety.

Examination anxiety is a combination of perceived physiological over-arousal, feelings of worry and dread, self-depreciating 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 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.

Test 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, Irwin G. Sarason, they contributed to early investigation of test anxiety, clarifying the relationship between the focused effects of test anxiety, other focused forms of anxiety, and generalized anxiety. Exam anxiety has also 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 test 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 Exam anxiety. Students with disabilities and students in gifted educations classes tend to experience high rates of test anxiety. Students who experience exam anxiety tend to be easily distracted during a test, experience difficulty with comprehending relatively simple instructions, and have trouble organizing or recalling relevant information. In the majority of cases, examination and performance anxiety is not recognized easily in schools, in large part because adolescents rarely refer themselves for emotional concerns. Not wanting to risk teasing or public attention, an anxious adolescent suffer in silence and underperforms on school-related tasks.

Most adolescents cope with these situations well, but there are students who experience severe anxiety, a condition most often termed "exam anxiety." When exam anxiety is severe, it can have significant negative effects on a student's ability to perform at an optimal level. Over time, exam anxiety tends to generalize too many evaluative situations, contributing to more pervasive

underachievement. Additional consequences of chronic exam anxiety can include lowered self-esteem, reduced effort, and loss of motivation for school tasks. Other forms of anxiety that can be seen in the school include generalized anxiety, fears, phobias, social anxiety, and extreme social withdrawal.

Need of the Study

Adolescence is the most important period of life; it is characterized by innumerable and unique but many problems. With the globalization and numerous competition, the number of challenges faced by the students which leads them to prove themselves, leads to unexpected behaviour of the students. Expectations and pressure on self, of peer group and parents for excellent performance make them more vulnerable. This phase of life which is already complex and their own identity crises and role confusions enhance their frustrations to the extent that they end up reaching in depression and sometimes committing suicide. Thus, it is important for understanding the anxiety of students in the context to their school performance, is an important measure to cope up with their anxieties related to their career. The information obtained by this study will prove beneficial to parents, teachers and educators. The result can be utilized to develop school programmes associated with parental aspiration, encouragement in school activities, decision making and home work too, so as to remove the bridge between examination, its practices and improving student's academic achievement.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the anxiety related to examination among adolescents
 - a. General Anxiety (using Westside Scale of Anxiety).
 - b. Academic Anxiety (using the Academic Anxiety Scale for Children (AASC)).
2. To study the factors responsible for anxiety among adolescent.

Methodology

The study is descriptive survey in nature in which 1026 students studying in class 8th to 11th from four different schools of Nagpur city in the state of Maharashtra India were taken as sample. The schools included both CBSE and State Board. The medium of instruction is English in CBSE schools and Marathi in MS Board schools. The level of anxiety was measured using Westside Scale of Anxiety and Academic Anxiety Scale for Children (AASC) and factors associated with anxiety were identified using Test Anxiety Inventory.

Table 1 - Sample of the Study

Sr. no.	Name of the school	Type of school	Medium of instruction	No. of students
1	Modern School, Koradi road, Nagpur	CBSE	English	354
2	Kendriya Vidyalaya, Ajni, Nagpur	CBSE	English	134
3	New Apostolic English High School, Wanjari Nagar, Nagpur	MS Board	Marathi	265
4	Manavta High School, Bhagwan Nagar, Nagpur	MS Board	Marathi	233
TOTAL				1026

1. a To study the anxiety related to examination among adolescents

For achieving this objective the researcher used Westside Scale of Anxiety and Academic Anxiety Scale for Children (AASC). The Westside Test Anxiety Scale is a brief, ten item instrument designed to identify students with anxiety impairments who could benefit from an anxiety reduction intervention. The five point scale items cover self-assessed anxiety impairment and cognitions which can impair performance. Correlations between anxiety reduction as measured by the scale and improvements in test performance were used as the validation criteria. Rating from extremely or always true, to not at all or never true on the scale with five to one marks. Accordingly scoring was done and on this basis the level of examination anxiety of adolescent students was observed.

Table 2 - Showing the level or anxiety of students as per westside anxiety scale

Sr. no.	Levels of anxiety	No. of students	%
1	Comfortably low	64	6.24%
2	Normal or Average	79	7.70%
3	High normal	143	13.94%
4	Moderately high	242	23.59%
5	High	280	27.30%
6	Extremely high	218	21.25%
TOTAL		1026	

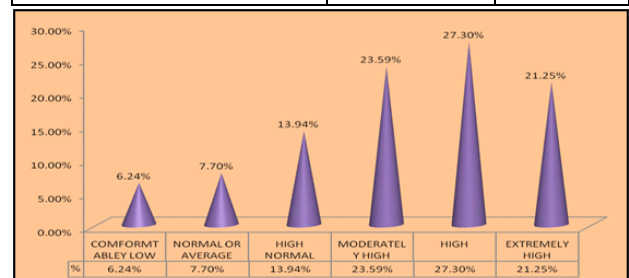


Fig 1 - Showing the level or anxiety of students as per westside anxiety scale

Inference

According to the table 2, the result indicates that 6.24% students show comfortably low level of examination anxiety. 7.70% adolescent students show normal average level of anxiety. It was also found that 13.94% students show high normal level of anxiety. In moderately high level of examination anxiety of adolescent student was 23.59%. Also, 27.30% and 21.25% students show high and extremely high level of examination anxiety. It can be said that 72.14% students were found to have high level of anxiety and low level of anxiety 27.88% students were found.

Conclusion

Out of 1026 adolescents of age group 13-18 were having different levels of anxiety. 48.55% were having very high level of anxiety where as 37.53% moderate and 12.94% low level of anxiety.

1.b. To study the anxiety related to examination among adolescents (using Academic Anxiety Scale for Children (AASC))

The scale is standardized scale by Prof. A.K. Singh, and Dr. A. Sen Gupta, The number of items is 20 with each item of the test scored as either +1 or 0. There are two types of items positive and negative.



Table 3 - Showing the level or anxiety of students (AASC)

Sr.no.	Levels of anxiety	No. of students	%
1	Very Anxious	246	23.98%
2	Anxious	285	27.78%
3	Average	206	20.08%
4	Less Anxious	160	15.60%
5	Very Less Anxious	129	12.57%
TOTAL		1026	

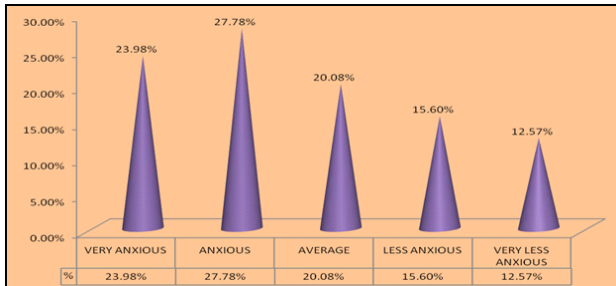


Fig 2 - Showing the level or anxiety of students as per AASC (Academic Anxiety Scale for Children)

Inference

From table 3, the 23.98%, 27.78% and 20.08% students show that they are very anxious, anxious and average anxious about examination. The student's who are less anxious and very less anxious show 15.60% and 12.57%. Therefore, the students are anxious before and during the examination.

Conclusion

Out of 1026 adolescents of age group 13-18 were having different levels of anxiety. 51.76% very anxious, 35.68% average anxious and 12.57% are very less anxious.

2.0 To study the factors responsible for anxiety among adolescents.

To achieve the above objective the researchers used A Test Anxiety Inventory. In this inventory there are fifty questions, in which the questions are grouped according to the factors which are responsible for anxiety. The seven items are related with study sets for which no weightage is given and the maximum score for the inventory is 1 for each item. The highest the score of item, the factor is more responsible for anxiety.

Table 5 : Showing level of anxiety to their related factors

LEVEL OF ANXIETY	FACTORS							Total
	Others view about self	Concern about self image	Concern about future security	Concern about not prepared for test	Bodily reaction	Thought disruption	General test-taking anxiety	
High	87	81	60	65	51	57	97	498
Moderate	70	63	50	52	39	42	69	385
Low	25	23	19	15	17	18	26	143
Total	182	167	129	132	107	117	192	1026

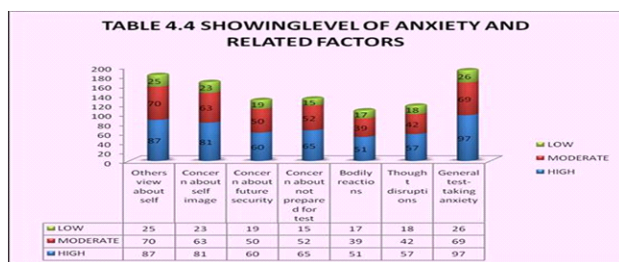


Fig 4 - Showing level of anxiety to their related factors

Table 4 - Showing the factors responsible for anxiety of students

Sr. no	Factors	No. of students	%
1	Others view about self	182	17.74%
2	Concern about self image	167	16.28%
3	Concern about future security	129	12.57%
4	Concern about not prepared for test	132	12.87%
5	Bodily reactions	107	10.43%
6	Thought disruptions	117	11.40%
7	General test-taking anxiety	192	18.71%
TOTAL		1026	

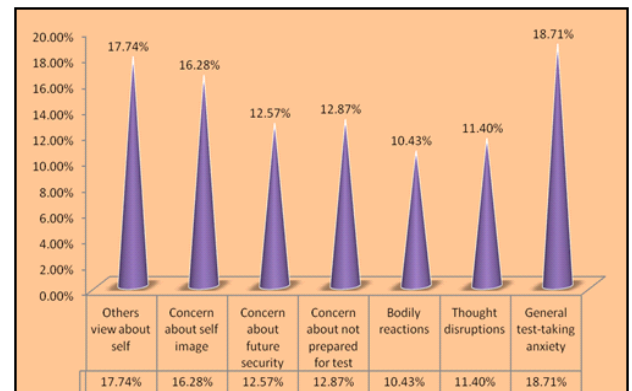


Fig 3 - Showing the factors responsible for anxiety of students

Inference

From the above table 4, it has been observed that the factor others view about self show 17.74%. 16.28% show that the students are concern about self image. The factor concern about future security and not prepared for test show 12.57% and 12.87%. The bodily reaction shows 10.43%. The factor thought disruption and general test-taking anxiety show 11.40% and 18.71%.

The Test Anxiety Inventory was also used to group the students according to their level of anxiety, in which the questions are grouped according to the factors which are responsible for anxiety. The highest the score of item, shows that the factor is more responsible for anxiety. The factors were taken into consideration according to the level of anxiety.

Inference

From the above table 5, it is observed that the student's anxiety level increases due to certain factors responsible, i.e. student's show more concern about others view, concern about self image and also general test-taking anxiety. Out of 1026 students, 498 students were having high level of anxiety, 385 with moderate and 143 students of adolescent stage were having low anxiety level. The factor general test-taking anxiety show highest number of 192 students, then 182 students'



show others view about self, next 167 students which are more concern about self image. The other factors were concern about not prepared for test, concern about future security, thought disruption and bodily reaction showing 132, 129, 117 & 107 students.

4.2. a. Factors responsible for anxiety among adolescents of CBSE and State Board Schools

For the above objective, to find the factor responsible for examination anxiety among both the schools, CBSE and State Board School, A Test Anxiety Inventory was used.

Table 6 - Showing the factors responsible for anxiety among adolescents of CBSE and state board schools

Sr. no	School type	Cbse				State board			
	Gender	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Factors		%		%		%		%
1	Others view about self	42	16.28%	47	17.41%	41	16.14%	40	16.39%
2	Concern about self image	40	15.50%	45	16.67%	39	15.34%	40	16.39%
3	Concern about future security	35	13.57%	28	10.37%	39	15.34%	33	13.53%
4	Concern about not prepared for test	34	13.18%	39	14.44%	33	12.99%	32	13.12%
5	Bodily reactions	27	10.47%	27	10.00%	26	10.24%	28	11.48%
6	Thought disruptions	32	12.40%	35	12.96%	31	11.42%	26	10.66%
7	General test-taking anxiety	48	17.83%	49	18.15%	45	17.72%	45	18.44%
TOTAL		258		270		254		244	
TOTAL		528				498			

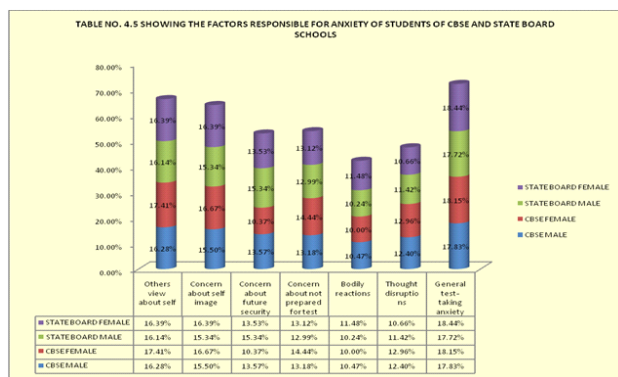


Fig 5 - Showing the factors responsible for anxiety among adolescents of CBSE and state board schools

Inference

From the above table 6, it is observed that from both the schools males and females show different factors responsible for increasing the examination anxiety level among them. In CBSE School, males show 16.28% and females show 17.41% others view about self. The factor concern about self image show 15.50% male and 16.67% female. The factor concern about future security and concern about not prepared for test show 13.57% and 13.18% in males and in females show 10.37% and 14.44%. In males and females other factor responsible bodily reaction, thought disruption and general test anxiety show 10.47%, 12.40%, 17.83% and 10.00%, 12.96%, 17.72%. In State Board School, the factor others view about self, concern about self image, about future security and about not prepared for test show 16.14%, 15.34%, 12.99% and 15.34% in males, 16.93%, 16.39%, 13.12% and 13,53% in females. Other factors like bodily reaction, thought disruption and general test taking anxiety in males show 10.24%, 11.42% and 17.72% which is highest in males and in females 11.48%, 10.66% and 18.44%. The factor responsible more is general test-taking anxiety in females.

Conclusion

It has been identified that major areas are others views about self, concern about image and general test-taking anxiety with 52.73% and other factors were concern about future security, concern about not prepared for test, bodily reactions and thought disruption with 47.27% i.e students are more anxious with their self image, view about self and test anxiety. Factors responsible for increasing anxiety level among CBSE and State Board Schools were 33.69% and 32.53% with other view about

them, 32.17% and 31.73% concern about self image and 35.98% and 36.16% with general test-taking anxiety and The students with high level of anxiety showed 48.54%, with moderate and low anxiety level showed 37.52% and 13.94% which were more responsible for increasing level of examination anxiety among adolescents of CBSE School.

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