Influence of Test Anxiety and Mindfulness on Academic Performance among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to find out the influence of test anxiety and mindfulness on academic performance among adolescents. The present study consist sample of 100 adolescents (50 male and 50 female) selected through stratified random sampling method. The data were collected with the help of Westide Test Anxiety Scale developed by Richard Driscoll and Ketucnchy Inventory of Mindfulness Skills developed by Ruth. A. Bear. Correlation coefficient and t- test was applied for statistical analysis. Results revealed that there t a positive correlation between mindfulness and academic performance, negative correlation between mindfulness and test anxiety, negative correlation between academic performance and test anxiety. It is also found that male are high in mindfulness and academic performance while as female have more test anxiety. From the results it is inferred that there is significant relationship exist between mindfulness, test anxiety, academic performance and significant difference between mindfulness, test anxiety, academic performance based on gender.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Test anxiety, Academic Performance

Academic performance is one of the important criteria which decide student's higher education, career and various other important aspects in their life. Only through the academic performance the capability and the capacity in academics of student is been decided. Thus academic performance seems to play an important role in education which subsequently plays vital role in student's life. There are various factors which could highly influence the academic performance. To name few, factors like intelligence, reading style, interest, test anxiety etc. could influence academic performance.

Test anxiety seems to be an important factor that could highly influence the academic performance and it is one of the criteria for under performance too. It is an emotion which is

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characterized by an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, usually accompanied by nervous behavior with subjectively unpleasant feelings of dread over anticipated events especially during test situations.

The DSM- IV classifies test anxiety as a type of social phobia. "Test anxiety could be defined as the set of phenomenological, psychological and behavioral response that accompany concern about possible negative consequences or failure on an exam or similar evaluative situations" (Chapell *et al.,* 2005, p.268). It results in non productive covert and overt behaviors that accompany during test taking situations.

When a person is under test anxiety he/she may experience various physiological, cognitive, behavioral as well as emotions changes like headache, nausea, diarrhea, shortness in breath, over sweating, rapid heartbeat and feeling faint; anger, fear, helplessness and disappointment; concentration difficulty, thinking negatively and comparing themselves to others are common symptoms of test anxiety which occur as a behavior and cognitive symptoms. It can also lead to a panic attack, which seems to be an abrupt onset of intense fear or discomfort in which individuals may feel that they are not able to breathe or like having a heart attack under an evaluative situation.

There are various reasons found to be associated with test anxiety. Fear about failure, lacking in preparation, poor test history, parental pressure, irrelevant thoughts, procrastination are few among them. Thus it is very important to find out the reason which is contributing test anxiety as possible so as to reduce and even prevent overall test anxieties adverse effect and to improve the academic performance. Meanwhile, there are also many other factors which could contributes the academic performance where mindfulness is one among them. Mindfulness is a factor which plays a pivotal role in showing good academics and therefore there is a big need to understand them properly.

Historically mainstream psychology viewed mindfulness as falling under the umbrella of "states of consciousness". Mindfulness is present centered attention focused on the "here and now" of our experience. It is nothing but seeing clearly what is going in our lives when our perception is uncluttered by wishes, desires and needs. It is an antidote for the consciousness state that is governed by rule and routine which is called as a state of mindlessness. It makes one to focus on what is happening "right now". It does not mean living for the moment without regard for the future. In this respect, mindfulness is similar to the present centered awareness and activity focused attention described by Csikszentmihalyi as "flow experience".

According to Kabat Zinn (2003) mindfulness has been defined as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment". It is a potential avenue to greater autonomy

because it expands our awareness of choices by disengaging us from reflexive thought patterns and habitual/automatic responses. Mindfulness helps in reducing the stress, improves the working memory, gives more cognitive flexibility, less emotional reactivity; also contribute to more self-determined and autonomous actions which are highly necessary for good academic performance .Therefore successful goal pursuit in any aspects like high academic achievement, successful career, relationships in human life requires mindfulness. Thus it is highly important to get a clear idea about mindfulness so as to enhance one in those pursuits. The present study which is focusing on test anxiety, mindfulness and academic performance seems to be highly essential and relevant in the present educational scenario.

Problem of the study
The present study is an attempt to investigate the influence of test anxiety and mindfulness on academic performance among adolescents.

Objectives
1. To find out the relationship between test anxiety, mindfulness and academic performance among selected respondents.
2. To find out the differences in test anxiety on the basis of gender among selected respondents.
3. To analyze whether there is any significant difference between mindfulness and gender among selected respondents.
4. To study is there any significant difference between academic performance and gender among selected respondents.

Hypotheses
1. There is a significant relationship between test anxiety, mindfulness and academic performance among selected respondents.
2. Selected respondents differ in the test anxiety on the basis of gender.
3. There is a significant difference between mindfulness and gender among selected respondents.
4. There is a significant difference between academic performance and gender among selected respondents.

METHODOLOGY
Sample
The sample in the present study comprises of students studying in Annamalai University five year integrated course of arts and education.
Sample size
The sample size was 100 which comprised of both male and female 50 in each belonging to the age of 17 to 19.

Sampling technique
Stratified random sampling method was adopted as sampling technique for the present study.

Tools
The investigator used Westide Test Anxiety Scale developed by Richard Driscoll for the measurement of anxiety. The scale consists of 10 items and all the items are in the form of questions. Also Ketucnchy Inventory of Mindfulness Skills developed by Ruth A. Bear was used to assess 4 mindfulness skills like observing, describing, acting with awareness, accepting without judgment. The inventory consists of 39 items. These items are positively and negatively framed. Items are rated on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never or very rarely true) to 5 (almost always or always true). High scores reflect more mindfulness**.** Personnel information schedule was used to obtain the demographic details**.** Percentage of marks obtained by the respondents in their semester exam was used to obtain the academic performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Showing the correlation coefficient between Mindfulness, Test Anxiety and Academic Performance among selected respondents

	Mindfulness	**Test Anxiety**	**Academic Performance**
Mindfulness	-	-.803**	.742**
Test Anxiety	-.803**	-	-.920**
Academic Performance	.742**	-.920**	-

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows the values of correlation coefficient between Mindfulness, Test Anxiety and Academic Performance among selected respondents. It is clear from the table that mindfulness is significantly and positively correlated with academic performance (r=.742) and negatively correlated with test anxiety (r= -.803). It is also found that test anxiety is negatively correlated with academic performance (r= -.920). These results imply that when mindfulness is high, academic performance is high, test anxiety is low and when test anxiety is high the academic performance is low. The present finding is line with the study conducted by Altari (2014). Rezazadeh & Tavakoli (2009) also supports the present finding that test anxiety is negatively correlated with academic performance. Therefore from the present study results the formulated hypotheses, there is a significant relationship between Mindfulness, Test Anxiety and Academic Performance among selected respondents is accepted.

Table 2: Showing the Mean, SD, and t value of test anxiety scores of selected respondents on the basis of Gender

Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**t value**
Male	50	2.558	.5466	
Female	50	2.912	.8572	2.462

Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 shows the mean, SD, and t value of test anxiety scores of selected respondents on the basis of gender. The obtained mean value and standard deviation value for male is 2.558 and .5466 and for female is 2.912 and .8572 respectively. The obtained mean value shows that female have more test anxiety than male. This result is consistent with the previous researches on gender effects on test anxiety (Rezazadeh &Tavakoli 2009, Lashkaripour, 2006). The obtained t value is 2.462 which is significant at 0.05 level, therefore the formulated hypothesis, selected respondents differ in the test anxiety on the basis of gender is accepted.

Table 3: Showing the mean, SD, and t value of mindfulness scores of selected respondents on the basis of gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Male	50	121.36	23.441	3.084
Female	50	106.56	24.532	

Significant at 0.05level

Table 3 shows the mean, SD, and t value of mindfulness scores of selected respondents on the basis of gender. The obtained mean value and standard deviation value for male is 121.36 and 23.441 and for female is 106.56 and 24.532. The mean value shows that male have more mindfulness than female. The obtained t-value is 3.084 which is significant at 0.05 level, therefore the formulated hypothesis, selected respondents differ in the mindfulness on the basis of gender is accepted.

Table 4: Showing the mean, SD, and t value of academic performance scores of selected respondents basis of gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Male	50	68.84	5.219	
Female	50	66.08	6.928	2.250

Significant at 0.05level

Table 4 shows the mean, SD, and t-value of academic performance scores of selected respondents on the basis of gender. The obtained mean and standard deviation value for male is 68.84 and 5.219 and for female is 66.08 and 6.928. The mean value shows that male have high academic performance than female. The obtained t-value is 2.250 which is significant at 0.05 level, therefore the formulated hypothesis, selected respondents differ in the academic performance on the basis of gender is accepted.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study was undertaken to find out influence of test anxiety, mindfulness on academic performance among adolescents. From the results it is found that there is a significant positive

relationship between mindfulness and academic performance, significant negative relationship between mindfulness and test anxiety, significant negative relationship between test anxiety and academic performance. Female have more test anxiety than male and male are high at mindfulness and academic performance than female. Thus on the basis of our findings we may say that female are more prone to undergo test anxiety and less at being mindful which are the negative qualities which suppress the academic performance.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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