

Test Anxiety among Board Exam Writing Students

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ABSTRACT

The quality and quantity of knowledge acquired by school students in Tamil Nadu is assessed primarily through written exams. This evaluative nature of the exam may lead to severe level of test anxiety which may ultimately result in attempting suicide. The main objective of this study is to measure and compare test anxiety among government school students & government-aided school students during SSLC board exams. The sample comprises of 60 students, 30 from government schools and 30 from government-aided schools on Madurai population those writing SSLC exam and their age level between 14-15 years. Westside Test Anxiety Scale (WTAS) was used for the evaluation and data collection was done by purposive sampling method, the independent t-test was used to analyse. The result shows that there is a significant difference between government school students and government-aided school students. The government school students have higher level test anxiety than government-aided school students because in government schools the students may affect by some factors such as lack of proper preparations, low self-esteem, lethargic nature of some teachers and family situations. Therefore, certain effective measures should be taken to diminish the factors associated with test anxiety for instance non judgmental attitude towards the students based on the mark or background and improving skill based education and evaluation rather than making evaluations only based on public exam scores. Further research can be done on gender difference in test anxiety and its effects during recruitment process.

Keywords: *Test Anxiety, SSLC board exams, Government schools and Government-aided schools.*

The quality of school children's education in Tamil Nadu is evaluated primarily through written exams. Students perceives exam as dangerous and threatening, thus it lead to higher level of anxiety while writing exams. Every year, the government of Tamil Nadu conducts two board examinations, otherwise known as general exams, 10th (Secondary Education) and 12th (Higher Education) standard but after the year 2018, the educational ministry has announced to conduct board exam in class 11. The number of students who have passed 10th grade, there is competition for high school admission, and when 12th board exams are completed, students leave the school and enter universities. Although there are many colleges in Tamil Nadu, only a few of them are preferred by students and making admission in some

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colleges is a highly competitive process. Therefore, board selection is a source of stress and anxiety for many students as it is a prerequisite for a successful future in higher education. For me, the 10th and 12th board exams were necessary, but don't force them to study and it makes students more anxious, stress, and depressed. Sometimes the severe level of test anxiety has extreme consequences such as tendency to attempt suicide. In my perception, the government school students have higher test anxiety than the private school students because there is a different teaching method and that makes students more anxious towards exam. It is not only caused by a single factor but a group of interconnected factors and it can occur at any phase even from the preparation of exams to finishing the exams. Some news about government schools in media reveals its improper teaching methods & guidance. The news about government schools are,

In Coimbatore, 164 year old school loosing students because of open urination near the school. It affects the students and they are unable to study peacefully ANI News, (August 23, 2018).

In Chennai, The school education department has in this academic year, following a statewide enumeration, identified 410 schools with less than five students and is likely to close them and merge them with nearby institutions next year. The Times of India (December 8, 2019). Public school teachers do not send their own children to public schools because they know the facilities available at school and the mismanagement of education. "Declining of basic facilities such as classrooms and teachers are key factors in reducing the strength of students. Moreover, studying in private schools has become a status symbol," said a government school teacher. A city school headmaster called for a long-term plan to develop state schools. "If the government provides a proper school with classrooms, subject teachers and non-teaching centers, a functioning toilet, a playground and transport, the strength of the students will be enhanced. Another headmaster said the government should stop freeing up and ensure that schools with the most students have the least number of teachers. "Parents are not willing to let their children into two-teacher or one-teacher schools. "“This has become a vicious circle where the government is reducing teachers due to lack of student strength and students are migrating due to lack of teachers” said (educationist prince Gajendrabab, n.d.). "Instead of merged schools, the government should create a program that will attract more students. They should try a model by providing all the facilities at a state school for a block." "Test anxiety levels of board exams going students in Tamil Nadu, India". Result shows that all board exam going students had increased level of anxiety and particularly higher among 12th standard board exam going students and boys. (Ann Mary, Marslin, Franklin, & Sheeba, 2014). "Anxiety among high school students in India: Comparison across gender, school type, social strata & perceptions of quality time with parents". Result shows that, Anxiety among gender the boys are more anxious than girls. Anxiety among schools, the Bengali medium school has more anxious than English medium school. Anxiety among perception of quality time with parents, Father-32.1% and Mother-21.3% and a large number of them are not feel comfortable to share personal problems with their parents. (Deb, Sibnath, Chatterjee, & Walsh, 2010)

Test Anxiety is a kind of anxiety of performance, a sensation that student have for the coming test, in which performances essential to the persons (Aderson, 2000). According to Sarason (1975), test anxiety can be interpreted as a form of self-preoccupation, which is characterized by objective thoughts of self-awareness, self-doubt and self-depreciation, which influence overt behavior and psychological reactivity. Culler and Holahan (1980) propose a learning deficit model, and suggest that high anxious students have ineffective study habits leading to

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deficiency in learning during preparation, in other words performance decrements of high anxious subjects are due to inefficient preparation caused by poor study related behaviors. According to the reaction-to-performance-model, test anxiety is more an effect than a cause of poor performance. The model predicts that inadequate preparation reduces the student's capacity to emit effective problem-solving thoughts, which reduces performance and through the student's awareness of failure, elicits anxiety during and after the examination. (Klinger,1977,1982)

The significance of this study is to highlight the need & importance of developing public sector schools equally to private schools.

The main objective of this study is to measure and compare test anxiety among government school students & government-aided school students during 10th standard board exams.

Hypothesis in this study, there is a significant difference in test anxiety among students studying in government school and government-aided school.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample were 60 students of 10th standard board exam writing students (30 Government-aided school students and 30 Government school students) from South Indian (Tamil Nadu-Madurai) population. Purposive sampling method was used to collect data. In this study the inclusion criteria were age (14-15: early adulthood), level of education (SSLC students of Tamil Medium schools).

Tool Used

The tool used for this study is Westside Test Anxiety Scale, this scale was designed by Richard Driscoll in the year of 2004. It was used to measure test anxiety impairments, with most items asked about performing impairment or about worrying. This scale consists of 10 items. Memory loss & cognitive process- 6 items, Worry- 4 items and physiological symptoms have no items.

Procedure

This study was conducted with 60 SSLC students in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. The researcher got consent from the institution to collect data from their students. Next, they were provided with Westside Test Anxiety Scale (10 questions). The researcher explains the questions one by one to make the participant to understand the meaning. After completion the sheet were collected from the participants. The researcher ensures that their information and result will be kept confidentially and used only for research purpose.

Design

The study adopted the ex-post facto design. Ex-post facto design is defined as an empirically based investigation which does not involve the researcher's direct control over the independent variables because they have already led to effects which can no more be manipulated. Ex-post facto is a study conducted to examine events that have occurred and then trace back to find out the factors that can cause these events. This study uses a quantitative approach by involving two sample groups, namely government school students & government-aided school students. The data analysis technique in this study uses the Independent sample t-Test is a test used to determine whether two unrelated samples have significant different. So the purpose of this statistical method is to compare the average of

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two groups that are not related to each other. The question that is trying to answer is whether the two groups have the same average or not sign the same.

RESULT

The analysis in this study was to determine the Test Anxiety among government school students and government-aided school students in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. The research results is explained as follows:

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	.099	.755	-2.413	58	.019	-3.933	1.630
Equal variances not assumed			-2.413	57.999	.019	-3.933	1.630

Table1. Mean and standard deviation among government school students and government-aided school students

Schools	N	M	SD
Government-aided school students	30	29.90	6.326
Government school students	30	33.83	6.298

Based on the output table it is known that the amount of data on 30 government-aided school students has a mean value of 29.90 and standard deviation of 6.326, while 30 government school students received a mean value of 33.83 and std. deviation of 6.298. Thus, statistically descriptive it can be concluded that there are average differences between government-aided school students and government school students. Furthermore, to prove whether the difference is significant or not, it is necessary to interpret the independent samples test output as follows Test Anxiety are also have a difference between government-aided school students and government school students.

Table 2. Independent samples test

Based on the independent sample test output on the equal variance assumed a part, it is known that the significant value, p is $0.019 < 0.05$, given a Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, $F = 0.099$, so as the basis for making decision in the independent t-test it can be concluded that the assumed hypothesis of Test Anxiety is satisfied. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between government school students and government-aided school students in Test Anxiety.

DISCUSSION

The present study exposed that there is a significant difference in test anxiety among government-aided & government school students. The researcher evaluated the test anxiety level among public exam writing students in Madurai, using a Westside Test Anxiety Scale. The result supported the stated hypothesis i.e. there is a significant difference in test anxiety

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among students studying in government schools and government-aided schools. The public schools were more liberal, which results in increased absenteeism among students. Therefore, those students were unable to prepare enough for their examination that leads to increase level of test anxiety. In contrast, aided schools have little more control over their students in exam preparations, which results in reduced level of test anxiety than the government schools. There are no proper teaching methods for students that make them more anxious while appearing in exams. It is not only caused by a single factor but a group of interconnected factors and it can occur at any phase even from the preparation of exams to finishing the exams. Being afraid of failure may also be a cause for test anxiety. Test anxiety develops from fear of alienation from parents, family, and friends due to poor marks. It can be caused by timed test and the fear of not finishing the test, even if one can do all the problems. The interventions for test anxiety are - be prepared for examination, don't be afraid about exam and maintain timing during examination. Attending classes and doing home works regularly may reduce test anxiety and teaching methods are needed to change in government schools. Some government school teachers do not go to schools regularly, they go either sign the attendance register or record their attendance and go out, after a long time they return in the evening to complete their routine day or they are using mobile phones during class hours, it affects students and lead to test anxiety.(DT NEXT NEWS, 2019) Health issues may also affect students to prepare for exam so the basic facilities for students are required such as toilets and water facilities. Students are required to learn some relaxation techniques to reduce test anxiety. Talk with a professional counselor or educational psychologist if necessary. These may help to reduce test anxiety. Limitation- Many of the private schools didn't give permission for collecting data. Therefore, the researcher unable to collect data from the private schools and ended up with comparing government & government-aided schools.

CONCLUSION

This study proves that there is a significant difference in test anxiety among public & aided school students. The students may get affected by some factors such as lack of proper preparations, low self-esteem, lethargic nature of some teachers, and family situations. Therefore, certain effective measures should be taken to diminish the factors associated with test anxiety, for instance, non-judgemental attitude towards the students based on the mark, improving skill-based education and evaluation, rather than making evaluations only based on public exam scores and all schools need a psychologist according to government rules. Frequent class test should be conducted to reduce the test anxiety. Further research can be done on gender difference and comparing test anxiety in private & government school students.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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