

Test Anxiety and Study Habits of Students: A Correlational Study at University Level

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to explore the relationship between test anxiety and students study habits of Punjab University. The study was descriptive and correlational in nature. A sample of two hundred and fifty students was taken conveniently from five departments of University of the Punjab, Lahore. A self-developed questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect data for the study. The data collected for the research were analyzed and represented in the form of tables which were followed by their interpretation. After the collection of the data it were analyzed. Descriptive (frequency and percentages) and inferential (Pearson r , independent sample t-test, and one way ANOVA) statistical techniques were applied to analyze the data. It was found that there is a strong negative relationship between test anxiety and students study habits in university students. It is concluded that there was no significant difference in test anxiety and study habits of male and female students at university level. There is basic responsibility of teachers to overcome the test anxiety of students during learning and particularly in the examination by providing positive environment. Teachers do not create stressful environment.

Keywords: Test anxiety, study habits, students, and positive environment.

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1. Introduction

Education is an important need for the young generation and becoming day by day more important in the modern world. Its importance could be acknowledged by seeing how much the governments around the world spend on it, encourage people to study by providing good universities, scholarships, accommodation and other allowances. The valuable childhood is spent on education so that everyone could live a better life in future. The term anxiety has been divided into two categories by Lufi, Okasha, and Cohen (2004) state anxiety and trait anxiety. The trait anxiety is described as the individual's capability to perceive different situations from the environment like danger and threat. On the other hand, state anxiety is described as the perception of individual's emotional situation. There are four components of test anxiety which are worry, cognitive interference, emotionality and lack of self-confidence. But worry and emotionality are the major components of test anxiety. They have distinguished between worry and emotionality. Worry is cognitive distress which has effects on tests while emotionality is the affective distress on physical reactions as fear of tests.

Campos and Barry (2004) said that anxiety was considered as one of the major factors causing students to go down below their actual performance. Test anxiety is a problem that many students frequently experience. Some students find that anxiety interferes with their learning to such an extent that their grades are seriously affected. The test anxiety plays an important role for students to sustain the efficacy and usefulness of learning performance. Sansgiry and Sail (2006) defined test anxiety as the reaction to stimuli that are associated with an individual's experience of testing or evaluative situations. Putwain (2008) stated that test anxiety appeared in specific situation or environment in which performance was assessed. One of the most common anxiety types considered to be present among students, as one of the most pervasive reactions that individuals have to stress, is test anxiety (Burns, 2011).

Additionally, the emotional component describes the tension that students have during the test, which is manifested through muscle tension, accelerated heart rate, nervousness, or sweaty palms (Asgahari, Kadir, Elias, & Baba, 2012). While both components are considered to impact students emotionally, physically and cognitively. It is the cognitive aspect of test anxiety that has been significantly accounted for in the decline of academic achievement of adolescents and postsecondary students (Rana & Mahmood, 2010).

Habit is something that is done on a scheduled, regular and planned basis that it not regulated to a second place or optional place in one's life. There is no doubt that study habits can be improved step by step. Study habits are very easy to improve and habits are very important for the acquisition of knowledge. Even the most intelligent student cannot show their best if they do not possess sound study habits.

Generally, study habits can be classified into two good study habits, and bad study habits. Good study habits according to Katelyn (2013) are sometimes referred to as positive or productive study habits. As the name implies, they are those pleasant study habits which have the tendency to improve the academic performance of students or

that seem to produce good results. They are the study habits which make students successful in their studies after developing and applying them throughout their academic career. Good study habits occur as a result of practice and knowing what methods are most effective for you as a student. When studying, stay away from distractions, such as the computer. Instead of procrastinating, work on a long term assignment daily, instead of studying the night before, study a little each night. There is a very less research on the relationship between test and students study habits. That is why this research is being conducted on the relationship of these both variables so that their compatibility relationship could be measured.

2. Significance of Study

Students are the future of any society. Education system should produce the kind of changes according to the societal needs and then these changes should be implemented on the students. For this educational institutions may try to study and comprehend various difficulties of the society in specific areas from time to time and become the essential part of social development. The students may be involved in studies to attain the whole development. Educational institutions may take into interpretation basic human alterations in their studying, thinking to seek better means of modified education for more active studying. Higher secondary is a phase where the students can improve their study in different ways. A good classroom climate improves the study habits of the student and it should diminish the anxiety of facing the examination. Scoring marks in their higher examinations is very important because the grades or achievement direct the students for their future inclination. The future vocation of the students is mostly resolute by the higher secondary attainments. This leads to investigate the relationship between the study habits and test anxiety of higher secondary students.

3. Research Objectives

The study was conducted to achieve the following objectives to:

1. Find out the relationship between study habits and test anxiety of university students.
2. Compare the differences in views of respondents with respect to their demographics variables (gender, qualification, and semester) regarding study habits and test anxiety.

4. Research Methodology

Quantitative approach was used. This study was descriptive and survey type in nature. Correlational design was used in this study. The population of the study was consisted of students of different departments of Punjab University. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data. Sample of the study was drawn from five departments (IAS, IER, Political science, Mass communication, Economics) of University. Fifty students were selected from each five departments. Thus, two hundred and fifty students were selected as sample of the study.

A self-developed questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect data for the study. To develop a questionnaire researchers thoroughly studied the literature on relationship of test anxiety and study habits of students. The questionnaire was consisted of 35 items. The instrument was divided into two sections. The part first consisted of questions related to test anxiety and the other half contained questions related to students study habits. The instrument had a likert scale, strongly agree to strongly disagree. For the validity of the instrument it has been shown to three of the experts.

Table 1

Reliability of Instrument

Number of students	Cronbach alpha
30	0.82

Pilot testing was done on 30 students for obtaining reliability. The reliability of instrument was 0.82. For data collection researchers consulted directly to the respondents. They were told that this information provided by them is only for research work and they were assured that it would not be misused in any case. Response rate during the research was 90%.

The data collected for the research were analyzed and represented in the form of tables which were followed by their interpretation. After the collection of the data it were entered into the SPSS. Descriptive (frequency and percentages) and inferential (Pearson r , independent sample t-test, and one way ANOVA) statistical techniques were applied to analyze the data.

5. Data Analysis

The detail of data analysis is given below.

Table 2

Demographic Profile of Sample

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	182	72.8
	Female	68	27.2
	Total	250	100.0
Qualification	Bs honors	116	46.4
	Masters	104	41.6
	M.Phil.	30	12.0
	Total	250	100.0

Table shows the percentage of the total sampled which were used in this study (Male 73% & female 27%). Table show that out of 250 responders of university 46% are of BS honors, masters 42%, Mphil 12% to fill the questionnaires.

Table 3

Semesters of Students

Semester	Frequency	Percent
1	24	9.6
2	66	26.4
3	30	12.0
4	68	27.2
5	32	12.8
6	5	2.0
7	19	7.6
8	6	2.4
Total	250	100.0

Table shows that out of 250 responders 10% are of 1st semester, 26% of 2nd semester, 12% of 3rd semester, 27% of 4th semester, 13% 5th semester, 2% of 6th semester, 8% of 7th semester and 2% of 8th semester to fill the questionnaires.

Table 4

Correlation between Test Anxiety and Students Study Habit

Variables		Test anxiety	Study habit
Test anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	-.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.220
	N	250	250
Study habit	Pearson Correlation	.078	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.220	
	N	250	250

In table, it is indicated that the relationship between test anxiety and students study habit was investigated by using Pearson *r*. The results showed that there was a strongly negative relationship between two variables with insignificant *p* value.

Table 5

Independent Sample t-test to Check Gender Difference between Male and Female Respondents Regarding Test Anxiety and Students Study Habits

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Test anxiety	Male	182	46.96	11.257	.463	248	.644
	Female	68	47.71	11.476			
Study habit	Male	182	44.76	10.065	-.332	248	.740
	Female	68	44.28	10.816			

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare test anxiety and students study habits scores regarding gender at university level. The result showed that there was statistically no significant difference in test anxiety and students study habits scores of male and female students. Thus, it is concluded that there was no significant difference in test anxiety and students study habits of male and female students at university level.

Table 6
One way ANOVA for Qualification Difference

Variables		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	df	F	Sig.
Test Anxiety	Between Groups	106.578	53.289	2	.415	.660
	Within Groups	31679.698	128.258	247		
	Total	31786.276		249		
Study Habit	Between Groups	246.817	123.408	2	1.175	.311
	Within Groups	25939.327	105.018	247		
	Total	26186.144		249		

One way ANOVA was applied to check the qualification difference regarding test anxiety and study habits of students. The results showed that there was no significance difference in test anxiety and study habits of the students in terms of their qualification level.

Table 7
One way ANOVA to Check Difference in the Perceptions of Students of Different Semesters Regarding Test Anxiety and Study Habits

Variables		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	df	F	Sig.
Test anxiety	Between Groups	1689.871	241.410	7	1.941	.064
	Within Groups	30096.405	124.365	242		
	Total	31786.276		249		
Study habit	Between Groups	1393.551	199.079	7	1.943	.044
	Within Groups	24792.593	102.449	242		
	Total	26186.144		249		

One way ANOVA was conducted to check difference in the perceptions of students of different semesters regarding test anxiety and study habits. The results showed that there was no significance difference in test anxiety but there was significant difference in study habits of the students in terms of their different semesters.

6. Conclusion

On the basis of findings, following conclusion is drawn. It is indicated that the relationship between test anxiety and students study habit was investigated by using Pearson *r*. The results showed that there was a strongly negative relationship between two variables with insignificant *p* value. It was observed that there is no significance among test anxiety and student study habits at university. Test do not create anxiety for those who study well before exam. They can easily give a calm attempt and can score good results. Secondly it was observed that there were no discrimination in the results of male and female students. No matter it is a girl or a boy, if they have prepared well then test will not create anxiety for them at university level. Student at university level either belong to masters field, or doing BS honors, or MPhil, if they have developed good study habits, test will not create anxiety for them. The results showed that there was no significance difference in test anxiety and study habits of the students in terms of their qualification level. The results showed that there was no significance difference in test anxiety but there was significant difference in study habits of the students in terms of their different semesters.

7. Recommendations

Following recommendations are made on the basis of the study findings:

1. As this study was conducted at university level, future researchers may conduct this study at college or secondary school levels.
2. Students may pay attention on study habits to overcome the test anxiety. Because it is found that students do not feel test anxiety, if they are well prepared in learning.
3. There is basic responsibility of teachers to overcome the test anxiety of students during learning and particularly in the examination by providing positive environment. Teachers do not create stressful environment.

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