



A Study on Test Anxiety and Stress among College Students

Disha Kaushik, Masters in Arts, Psychology, Department of Psychology, IGNOU, Chandigarh,
India.

Email: dishakaushik52@gmail.com

Abstract

Test Anxiety is very common in students. Students have a lot of pressure about their career, and they feel constant anxiety and worry about their future goals. Anxiety can manifest in physical symptoms, cognitive symptoms, behavioral symptoms, and emotional symptoms. Test anxiety can be due to fear of failure or poor test experience, parents' pressure, or other factors. Stress can be short term or long term and further can affect an individual. Stress and Test Anxiety play a crucial role in students' academic performance. The scales that were used are Perceived Stress Scale and Westside Test Anxiety. The result found out that there is no significant relationship between test anxiety and stress among college students. It is suggested that there must be a counselor in every college so that students can go to a counselor in case they feel stress or test anxiety or any other mental health issues. Additionally, stress management trainings should be added in the curriculum.

Keywords: Test Anxiety, Stress, College Students

Introduction

Stress refers to change in our body due physically, mentally, or emotionally to some disturbance in life which can be due to financial problems, relationship problems or study pressure. Stress can be positive (eustress) as well as negative (distress). Eustress can be good as it motivates the individual or it can be unpleasant if it creates any harm to the individual physically or mentally further adding to low immunity, which is why distress is harmful to individuals.

Test anxiety is a type of worry about tests that are future oriented. Signs of test anxiety can vary from individual to individual. Test anxiety symptoms can include headache, nausea, stomachache, negative thoughts of failure etc.

According to Eman et al. (2016), a cross sectional study was conducted on 100 of sociology and business administration students, (50 Males, 50 Females) of University of Punjab of Lahore. The results found out that female students experienced higher levels of test anxiety than male students. Further, it was also found out that female students reported a higher level of need for family support than male students. According to Driscoll et al. (2022) a comparative study was conducted on 471 high school students and 298 nursing students. The result found out that nursing students have higher test anxiety than other students in different streams.

According to Zhang et al. (2019) a study was conducted on chiropractic students. The scale that was used Pre matriculation GPA, Perceived chiropractic college stress (PCCS), the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, and the Test Anxiety Inventory. The result found out that PCCS increased after 6 months. GPA was not a predictor of PCCS after 6 months. Additionally, PCCS correlated with test anxiety.

Stress

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stress is a “transactional process occurring when an event is perceived as relevant to an individual’s well-being, has the potential for harm or loss, and requires psychological, physiological, and/or behavioral efforts to manage the event and its outcomes.”

According to Selye (1959) “the word stress is used in physics to refer to the interaction between a force and the resistance to counter that force.” Additionally, it was Selye who incorporated this term into the medical lexicon to describe the “nonspecific response of the body to any demand.”

According to Misra et al. (2004) a study on academic Stressors on Americans and International students. Scales that were used included Gadzella’s Life stress inventory (Gadzella, 1992). Five categories of academic stressor (i.e., frustrations, conflicts, pressures, changes, and self-imposed) and four categories describing reaction of these stressors (i.e., psychological, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive) were examined. The result showed that American students have higher self- imposed stress and behavioral reactions to stress than international students.

According to Baghurst and Kelley (2013) a study on an examination of stress among college students was examined, over the course of a semester. The aim of the study was to determine stress reduction interventions could alter stress levels experienced by male and females in college. A sample of 531 students during 16- week focused on cognitive-behavioral stress management, cardiovascular fitness, and generalized physical activities. The result showed that stress management and physical activity groups had significantly lower levels of perceived stress, test anxiety and personal burnout at the end of semester. Additionally, the fitness score was significantly lower on perceived stress and personal burnout but no difference in test anxiety.

Test Anxiety

Test anxiety in simple laymen language can be understood as nervousness or worry about a test which is nearby. Test anxiety is kind of performance anxiety. Symptoms of test anxiety can be physical (sweating, nausea, dry mouth, butterflies in stomach), emotional (low self-esteem, depressed, low confidence, feel helpless) and cognitive and behavioral symptoms (missing the classes, dropping out of school).

According to Chapell et al. (2005) a study was conducted on undergraduate and graduate students. 4,000 undergraduate and 1414 graduate students participated to study the relationship between test anxiety and GPA (grade point average) between two groups. The result showed that there were no significant GPA differences between low and high test anxious male graduate students. Female undergraduate students have higher test anxiety and higher GPA than male undergraduate students and female graduate students have higher test anxiety and GPA than male undergraduate students. According to Rana and Mohmood (2010) a study was conducted for the relationship between test anxiety and academic achievement of students at the postgraduate level. A sample of 414 students were selected randomly. Test Anxiety Inventory by Spielberger was used in the study. The result showed that there was a negative relation between test anxiety and students' achievement and affective factors contribute less to test anxiety as compared to cognitive factors.

Purpose

The purpose is to study test anxiety and stress among college students.

Hypothesis

- There will be a positive relationship between Stress and Test Anxiety.

Method

Sample

A total of 40 people participated from Tricity (Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula). The age of the sample ranges from 18-25 years.

Measure

- **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS):** The scale as given by Cohen et al. (1983) which is used to measure psychological stress in which there are 10 questions about stress.
- **Westside Test Anxiety:** It is used to identify students with test anxiety as given by Driscoll (2007). The scale covers self-assessed anxiety impairment and cognition which can impair performance.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through Google forms; each participant was thanked for their cooperation. Standardized Psychological Tests were administered to the Participants.

Analysis of Data

Result

The responses of participants were analyzed using correlation to see the relationship between test anxiety and stress among college students. Mean and Standard deviation data is presented in Table 1, Table 2 shows correlation between test anxiety and stress.

Table 1*N, Mean and Standard Deviation*

		Stress		Test Anxiety	
N		40		40	
Mean		18.6		2.50	
Standard deviation		5.83		1.08	

Table 2*Correlation between Test Anxiety and Stress*

		Stress		Test Anxiety	
Stress		—			
Test Anxiety		0.237		—	

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion of Results

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of test anxiety and stress among college students. The result found that there is no significant difference between test anxiety and perceived stress among college students. Though, there is a positive correlation of ($r=0.237$) is seen, however, no results were found to be significant. According to Stankovska et al. (2018) a

study was conducted on 200 university students (100 male and 100 female). The scale that was used were Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SEIT), Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI), Student Academic Stress Scale (SAST). The results found out that there was no correlation between emotional intelligence and course of study but there was positive correlation between test anxiety, academic stress, and the course of study.

According to Varghese et al. (2015) a study was conducted on college students. The result found out that high perceived stress results in low academic performance and vice versa. According to Graves et al. (2021) a gender-based study was conducted on 448 University students. The scale that was used were the perceived stress scale and brief cope. The result found out that females have higher levels of stress than male. Additionally, the authors also found out that females utilize the emotion- focused coping dimension than males.

Conclusion

Students, especially those in college, frequently experience stress and exam anxiety because they are already under pressure to perform well academically and to choose careers that will benefit them in the future, and they are not receiving the necessary advice. Instructors ought to value each student's meager effort. There is no need for teachers to always assign a lot of work. Every minor exam should be announced in advance so that pupils have the time to get ready.

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