

## TEST ANXIETY IN RELATION TO EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### Abstract

*The present study investigates the Test Anxiety in Relation to Emotional Competence of senior secondary school students. The initial sample of 100 students was drawn from XI class taken from two different schools of Phagwara city in Punjab. Emotional competence scale by Sharma and Bhardwaj (1998) was administered on both boys and girls of XI class. Test Anxiety inventory by Spielberger (1980) was adapted by investigator and administered on both boys and girls of XI class. The data obtained was analyzed statistically with the help of mean, standard deviation and analysis of variance. An analysis of variance (2×2) was used and it was found that: (i) There exists significant difference in Test Anxiety between boys and girls of XI class, (ii) There exists no significant difference in Test Anxiety of boys and girls at high and low Emotional Competence, (iii) No Significant interaction effect was found between gender and Emotional Competence on Test Anxiety, (iv) There exists significant relationship between Test Anxiety and Emotional Competence of XI students.*

**Keywords:** Test Anxiety and Emotional Competence

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the most important period of human life. The word 'adolescence' comes from a Latin word 'adolescere', which means to 'grow to maturity'. The Period of adolescence is exemplified by deep anxieties, conflicts, disruptions, upheavals, cognitive restructuring, emotional outbursts and physical changes. As a result, their needs and aspirations are increased considerably. The problem which an adolescent will face throughout his life beginning from child till adult is the test anxiety and its effect on one's performance.

Test anxiety is actually type of performance anxiety - a feeling someone might have in a situation where performance really counts or when the pressure is on to do well. Test anxiety is almost universal. In fact, it is unusual to find a student who doesn't approach the big test without a high level of anxiety. Test anxiety can cause a lot of problem in students, such as upset stomach, headache and loss of focus, irritability, anger and even depression.

### TEST ANXIETY

Test anxiety is characterized by apprehension, panic, and ruminating thoughts of

potential failure that are experienced during an exam situation. Test-conscious students are significantly affected by their test performance (Spielberger & Vagg, 1995). Tests are an important part of society where they are used to measure and determine thresholds in education, career placement and advancement. As society continues to grow, test performance will probably become an increasingly greater factor in determining success e.g., admission to college, admission to graduate school, and professional exams (Zeidner, 1998). Possibly due to pressure to perform well, among other factors, students often experience heightened stress and anxiety during tests; thus, test anxiety has become a pervasive problem over the years (Spielberger & Vagg, 1995).

Williams (1996) studied test anxiety among academically talented high school students, assessing cognitive and psychological components. Results indicated that students suffered from test anxiety, with higher anxiety related to lower science performance. Aysan, Thompson, and Hamarat (2001) stated that experiencing test anxiety has various widespread impacts on a person's

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performance during the test. Whitaker Sena, Lowe and Lee (2007) found that test anxiety involves many negative effects including poor performance, low motivation, negative self-evaluation beliefs, and low concentration, as well as an increase in school dropout rates and general anxiety. Bembenutty (2008) stated that the effect of test anxiety on motivation can also influence the success expectancy. Consequently, students with higher test anxiety might minimize the success expectancy's level and relegate significant learning outcomes protectively. Basso, Gallagher, Mikusa and Rueter (2011) claimed that gender, which is connected to many developmental trends, affects the growth and exposure of anxiety in evaluative encounters. In the middle years of elementary school, gender differences in test anxiety start to appear, and constantly female students tend to mention higher test anxiety levels compared to male students since elementary school through high school and college. The prevalence of anxiety disorders in women has clearly increased, and compared to men are two times more likely to develop the disease. Arezou Asghari, Rusnani Abdul Kadir, Habibah Elias and Maznah Baba (2012) studied that test anxiety has a significant role in one's educational, professional and emotional life. Therefore, it is not surprising that the testing environment generates anxiety for a number of individuals.

### **EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE**

Emotional competence refers to personal and social skills that lead to superior performance. Although our emotional intelligence determines our potential for learning practical skills, but our emotional competence shows how much of that potential we have realized by learning and mastering skills and translating intelligence into job capabilities for the star performance in all jobs. In every field emotional competence is more important than our cognitive abilities. It is the ability to recognize and successfully manage own emotions and also of others, it affects our job performance. Emotional competence is the ability to understand, manage and express the emotional aspect of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems and adopting to the complex demands of

growth and development. It is efficiency acquired by the individual to deal with emotional situations effectively. It plays a vital role in the manifestation of human behavior by which one attempts to deal with different emotive situations and meets his needs including the efforts to maintain harmonious relationships with the environment. A teacher can perform his real job only when he/she is mentally sound and emotionally stable. According to Goleman (1995), "Emotional competence is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work." Elias (1991) defines emotional competence as the ability to understand, manage and express the emotional aspect of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationship, solving everyday problems, and adopting to the complex demands of growth and development. Bhardwaj and Sharma (1995) studied emotional competence among Handicapped and Non-handicapped Children. It was found that there was significant difference in the emotional competence of handicapped and non-handicapped children. Arti and Rathna Prabha (2004) studied the influence of family environmental on the emotional competence of adolescents. It was found that family environment as a whole has significant positive influence on emotional competence of adolescents.

Patricia and Mark (2008) studied classroom teachers, social and emotional competence in relation to students and classroom outcomes. The researchers proposed a model of the pro-social classroom that highlights the importance of teachers' social and emotional competence and well-being in the development and maintenance of supportive teacher-student relationships, effective classroom management, and successful social and emotional learning program implementation.

Test performance has probably become an increasingly greater factor in determining success. Possibly due to pressure to excel in the examination, students often experience heightened anxiety and stress during test, thus test anxiety has become a pervasive problem over a decades. Students with test anxiety often experience thoughts about potential failure accompanied by emotional distress and physiological arousal that is frequently

interpreted as threatening and dangerous. But heightened degree of test anxiety will lay adverse effect on student and leads to negative cognition which prevent successful test taking by distracting the student's attention from the test itself and interfering with the student's ability to analyze the questions and formulate correct answer and interfere their learning which leads to poor performance. Best performance and poor performance in test depends on the emotional competence of a student that how well he/she is able to cope up with negative and ruminating thoughts of failure arising out of test anxiety. There is a need and significance to carry out the study of test anxiety of students in relation to their emotional competence. The study may reveal the relationship between test anxiety and emotional competence of students, which further enable to understand to test anxiety in a better way and come out with the remedies.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To study the difference in Test Anxiety between boys and girls of XI class.
- To study the difference in Test Anxiety of boys and girls at high and low emotional competence.
- To study the interaction effect of gender and Emotional Competence on Test Anxiety.
- To study the relationship between Test Anxiety and Emotional Competence of XI students.

#### METHOD

##### SAMPLE

In order to conduct the present study, two private schools affiliated to CBSE and PSEB were

selected from Phagwara city randomly. The initial sample of the study was restricted to 100 students of class only. After that, the test of emotional competence was administered and high and low groups on this variable were formulated by taking up top 30% and bottom 30% students as constituting the high and low groups respectively. So, the final sample was consisted of 60 students.

#### DESIGN

2×2 factorial design was employed on the scores of test anxiety which was studied as dependent variable. Emotional Competence and Gender was studied as independent variables used for the purpose of classification into boys and girls as well as for high and low Emotional Competence.

#### MEASURES

- Test Anxiety inventory by Spielberger (1980) was adapted by investigator.
- Emotional Competence scale by Sharma and Bhardwaj (1998) was used by investigator.

#### PROCEDURE

The Emotional Competence scale and Test Anxiety inventory was administered on the selected sample. Collected data was studied and statistical treatment has been given.

#### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

##### • Analysis of Descriptive Statistics

The obtained data were analysed to determine the nature of distribution of scores by employing mean and standard deviation. The analysis of variance (2×2) was used to test the hypotheses. The mean and standard deviation of test anxiety scores of boys and girls have been presented in table-1.

Table - 1: Mean and S.D. of Test Anxiety scores

| Variables                 | Gender |       |       |       |       |      |      |       |      |
|---------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|------|
|                           | Boys   |       |       | Girls |       |      | N    | Total |      |
|                           | N      | Mean  | SD    | N     | Mean  | SD   |      | Mean  | SD   |
| High Emotional Competence | 15     | 43.87 | 10.38 | 15    | 39.33 | 9.15 | 30   | 41.60 | 9.89 |
| Low Emotional Competence  | 15     | 46.87 | 6.17  | 15    | 42.40 | 9.52 | 30   | 44.63 | 8.21 |
| Total Sample              | 30     | 45.37 | 8.53  | 30    | 40.87 | 9.31 | N=60 |       |      |

The Table – I shows that the mean scores of boys (M=45.37) was higher than that of girls (M=40.87). This shows that more Test Anxiety was found in boys as compared to girls.

- **Analysis of variance of Emotional**

##### Competence and Gender on Test Anxiety

The mean of different sub groups, sum of squares, degree of freedom, mean sum of squares and F-ratio have been presented in table - 2.

Table - 2: Summary of Analysis of Variance (2×2) factorial design

| Source of Variance       | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Sum of Squares | F-ratio |
|--------------------------|----------------|----|---------------------|---------|
| Emotional Competence (A) | 138.02         | 1  | 138.02              | 1.72    |
| Gender (B)               | 323.75         | 1  | 323.75              | 4.04*   |
| A × B                    | 0.02           | 1  | 0.02                | 0.00    |
| Error Term               | 4486.40        | 56 | 80.11               |         |

\*Significant at 0.05 level (Critical Value 4.00 at 0.05 and 7.08 at 0.01 level, df 1/56)

### MAIN EFFECTS

#### • Gender

Table- 2 reveals that F-value of difference in mean of gender is 4.04 which in comparison to the table value was found significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis  $H_1O$ : There exists no significant difference in Test Anxiety between boys and girls of XI class, is rejected. It means there exists significant difference between boys and girls on test anxiety. The finding is supported by Basso, Gallagher, Mikusa and Rueter (2011).

#### • Emotional Competence

Table -2 reveals that F-value of difference in mean of emotional competence is 1.72 which in comparison to the table value was not found significant at both levels. Hence, the null hypothesis  $H_2O$ : There exists no significant difference in Test Anxiety of boys and girls at high and low Emotional Competence, is accepted. There exists no significant difference between high and low Emotional Competence on

test anxiety.

#### • Interaction effect of Emotional Competence and gender on Test Anxiety

Table - 2 reveals that the F-value for interaction between Emotional Competence and gender is 0.00, which in comparison to the table value was not found significant even at 0.05 level. It indicates that the variable of emotional competence do not interact with gender to yield significantly different in respect of test anxiety. Hence, the null hypothesis  $H_3O$ : There exists no significant interaction between gender and Emotional Competence on Test Anxiety, is accepted. It is concluded that there is no difference in the test anxiety due to interaction between emotional competence and gender.

#### • Relationship between Test Anxiety and Emotional Competence

The relationship between Test Anxiety and Emotional Competence has been presented in Table -3

Table - 3: Showing the Coefficient of Correlation between Test Anxiety and Emotional Competence

| Variables            | Test Anxiety | Emotional Competence |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Test Anxiety         | 1            | -0.274*              |
| Emotional Competence | -            | 1                    |

\*Significant at 0.05 level (Critical Value 0.250 at 0.05 and 0.325 at 0.01 level, df = 58)

Table- 3 reveals that the correlation between Test Anxiety and Emotional Competence is -0.274 which in comparison to table value is found significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis  $H_4O$ : There exists no significant relationship between Test Anxiety and Emotional Competence of XI students, is rejected. It means there exists significant relationship between Test Anxiety and Emotional Competence. The negative sign shows the negative correlation between two variables. The relationship may exists due to intervening of some other factors.

### EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Significant difference was found in Test Anxiety between boys and girls. So, teachers must integrate appropriate strategies to reduce test anxiety of students. There should be Counsellor in each and every school to overcome the test anxiety of students because anxiety has bad effects on health of students.

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