

TEST ANXIETY, SOCIAL ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN NORTH-WEST ZONE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This paper investigated the relationship among Test Anxiety, Social Anxiety and Academic Achievement of University Students in North-West Zone Nigeria. This research employed correlational design. The population of this study is made up of 11,225 300 level students. The sample of this study is 370 students from three selected universities. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the subjects of the study. Two instruments were used for data collection. The instruments are Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale, and Social Anxiety Scale (SAS). Students' CGPA was used as measure of academic achievement. Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale had an internal consistency of .804 while Social Anxiety Scale had an internal consistency of .768. The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significance. The findings of the study revealed that a significant negative relationship exists between test anxiety and academic achievement ($r = -0.575$, $p = 0.000$). The result also revealed that significant negative relationship exist between social anxiety and academic achievement ($r = -0.469$, $p = 0.002$). It was recommended that: psychologists and counsellors should be encouraged to use various counselling techniques in managing students with test anxiety issues as it affects their academic achievement; and university management should provide a functional guidance and counselling center that will cater for students with test anxiety and social anxiety issues in order to improve their academic achievement.

Keywords: Test Anxiety, Social Anxiety and Academic Achievement

Introduction

Test anxiety is an overwhelming feeling of disturbance and distress among the students around the world. It is a type of performance problem just like when some people get nervous speaking to large crowds or trying something new. Test anxiety can be a devastating problem for many college and university students, because it may impair their academic achievement and well-being in the long run. According to Porto (2013), test anxiety produces psychological symptoms that build up in students before a test which include restlessness, unusual body movements, difficulty in concentration, insomnia, fatigue, muscles contraction, abdominal pain and tremor (Parviz & Alemi, 2010). According to Linnenbrink (2007), there is evidence that negative cognitive process strongly relates to academic achievement, this evidence that

negative emotion are linked to this process is constant with the notion of mediation. Both anxiety and anger may drop student ability to recall relevant information or material.

Social anxiety is a situation whereby an individual is afraid of interacting socially, appearing incompetent and being negatively judged by others. These include fear of public speaking, eating or taking a test in the presence of others, talking to authority figures, interacting with opposite sex, making complains, becoming the centre of attraction, entering room where others are already seated, expressing disagreement or disapproval to strangers and using public bathroom (Siegel & Dickstein, 2011). It is considered as a chronic pathology capable of affecting the individual negatively and promoting the development of other psychological disorders such as depression, generalized anxiety disorder and agoraphobia. It is the most common anxiety problem and the third most frequent psychiatric disorder. Low socioeconomic status, being unmarried, unemployment, low level of education, and poor social support are to be identified as risk factor for social anxiety. Society's attitude towards shyness and avoidance as a measure of politeness is also an important factor associated with students' ability to build social interaction. Other factors that cause social anxiety include genetic factor, social experience, cultural experience and psychological factors.

Social anxiety affects individuals mostly at the adolescent period and may continue into adulthood if not taken care of. It may also affect various aspects of human lives. Social anxiety, if not treated or addressed, is capable of creating difficulties in the individual's interpersonal relationship (family and social interaction) and can lead to, low self-esteem, impairment in memory, perception and thinking processes. Students with social anxiety have difficulty of speaking in front of a group of people and fail or drop out of school due to fear. Students' attention to academic information may be distracted by an excessive focus on their social anxiety. The ability to monitor and modify communication with colleagues and teachers may be vague by fear of negative evaluation and when participating in a seminar, socially anxious students judge their competence poorly, which leads to academic underachievement. The individuals with early onset of social anxiety are also at risk of developing depression or alcoholism (Wibowo, 2017). It also affects the occupational, educational and social affairs of the individual. Strahan (2014) averred that social anxiety strongly relates with adolescents' social adjustment, social interaction skills, social performance and social competence.

Academic achievement is the attainment obtained by a child in the lesson taught, which may include experience, knowledge, skill and the likes. The knowledge and skill are measured in student's Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), the child's good or poor performance does not depend solely on attribute the child is born with, but his family background, social contacts, teachers and overall climate in his school and assessment procedure. Academic achievement may be defined as excellence in all academic disciplines, in class as well as co-curricular activities. However, excellence in sport activities, communication skills, punctuality, arts, culture, and the likes, which can be regarded as good performance only when an individual is well adjusted and motivated. Cohen and Garcia (2006) define academic achievement as knowledge attaining ability or degree of competence in school. Tasks are usually measured by standardized test and expressed in a grade or unit based on students'

performance/ achievement. Cohen and Apfel (2009) refer to academic performance as “the knowledge obtained or skill developed in the school subjects usually designed by the test scores or marks assigned by the teacher.

Achievement of students in the classroom and university takes a central role in the academic development of the students. Parents, teachers and school administrators alike take cognizance of the academic well - being of the students. Yardsticks are set by school authorities to measure performance, the standard set by the university will determine whether a student is performing well or not. In the assessment of performance, Pekrun and Elliot (2006) argued that achievement is the behaviour of an individual that can be directly observed by another individual. Therefore, academic achievement has been seen as a term used for student based on how well they are doing in studies and classes. Academic achievement for university students is also seen as the extent to which a student has achieved his educational goals. This means that, the student’s academic performance is measured by the extent to which he/she has reached the educational goal he has set for himself. The university measures academic achievement in several ways which include Continuous Assessment Test (C.A.T) and a number of standardize test and examination (Pekrun & Perry, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Every human being in one interaction or the other have experienced anxiety, hence anxiety occurs when our bodies secrete hormones and adrenaline that eventually overload our physical and emotional responses. The prevalence of both social and test anxieties can be witness throughout in an academic institution like universities. University is an open system where all members including students, teachers and administrators interact with one another. There is the need, therefore, to establish conducive social environment, a healthy school environment where there is collective responsibility and effective interpersonal relationship among the different groups of members of the university community (teachers, students and administrators). Several factors have been identified as contributory to students’ academic achievements which include anxiety, motivation, home background, personality and intelligence, social environments and societal norms, while poor physical, psychological and social aspect of school environments may have effects on academic achievements of students. Social and test anxiety among university students may be a function of many factors which include fear, worry of not performing well, expectation of parents, teachers, counselors and peer groups among others. Consequently, with these issues, the goals of university may be jeopardized. However, teaching staff and other stakeholders are known to strive hard in providing enabling school atmosphere to stimulate good academic achievement of students.

In this regard, there is the need to establish a qualitative social and motivating environment, where there is collective responsibility and effective interpersonal relationship in the schools. However, it is observed that social and test anxiety is increasing on daily basis among university students and this may be as a result of mutual distrust and suspicion among various diversities of students, poor recreational facilities in the institutions to help cope with the anxiety events of life among others. This situation may in turn have effect on students’ academic achievement, especially at universities where level of collectiveness and cordial

academic relationship are to be created so as to enhance learning among students. It is against this background that, there is need to find out the relationship among test anxiety, social anxiety and academic achievement among undergraduate students in North-West Universities, Nigeria.

Objectives

The following objectives guided this study:

1. To examine the relationship between Test Anxiety and Academic Achievement Among undergraduate students in North-West Zone Universities, Nigeria.
2. To determine the relationship between Social Anxiety and Academic Achievement Among undergraduate students in in North-West Zone Universities, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between Test Anxiety and Academic Achievement Among undergraduate students in North-West Zone Universities, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between Social Anxiety and Academic Achievement among undergraduate students in North-West Zone Universities, Nigeria.

Methodology

This research employed correlational design. The population of this study was made up of 11,225 300 level students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Federal University, Gusau, Zamfara State and Federal University, Kebbi State. The sample of this study is 370 students from the three selected universities. Out of seven (7) federal universities in the north-west, the researcher employed balloting technique to arrive at three (3) universities, namely; Ahmadu Bello Universities, Zaria, Federal University, Gusau, Zamfara State and Federal University, Kebbi State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the subjects of the study. Two instruments were used for data collection. The instruments are Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale and Social Anxiety Scale (SAS). Students' CGPA was used as measure of academic achievement.

Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale was adapted from Taylor (2002) while Social Anxiety Scale was adapted from Yahya and Nyarko-Sampson (2016). The instruments were face validated by experts in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The instruments were pilot tested in order to determine their reliability. Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale had an internal consistency of .804 while Social Anxiety Scale had an internal consistency of .768. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics to test the null hypotheses which measured relationship among the variables at 0.05 alpha levels of Significance.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between Test Anxiety and Academic Achievement among undergraduate students in North-West Universities, Nigeria

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics on relationship between Test Anxiety and Academic Achievement among undergraduate students in North-West Universities, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	Std	r	df	P-value
Test anxiety	370	50.2593	8.92115		369	
Academic achievement	370	18.7920	2.06869	- 0.575		0.000

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Findings reflected in Table 1 showed that a significant relationship exists between test anxiety and academic achievement. This is because the calculated significant (p) value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 alpha levels of Significance at a correlation index r value of - 0.575. This implies that there was a significant negative relationship. That is, the higher the level of test anxiety the lower the academic achievement. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Test Anxiety and Academic Achievement among undergraduate students in North-West Universities, Nigeria is rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between Social Anxiety and Academic Achievement among undergraduate students in North-West Universities, Nigeria

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics on relationship between Social Anxiety and Academic Achievement among undergraduate students in North-West Universities, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	Std	r	df	P-value
Social anxiety	370	165.4243	11.6842			
Academic achievement	370	18.7920	2.06869	- 0.469	369	0.002

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Results of Table 2 revealed that a significant relationship exist between social anxiety and academic achievement. This is because the calculated significant (p) value of 0.002 is lower than the 0.05 alpha levels of significance at a correlation index r value of - 0.469. This implies that significant negative relationship, that is, the higher the level of social anxiety the lower the academic achievement and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Social Anxiety and Academic Achievement among undergraduate students in North-West Universities, Nigeria is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study revealed that significant negative relationship exists between test anxiety and academic achievement. This implies that the higher the level of test anxiety and

lower the academic achievement. This finding agreed with that of Linnenbrink (2007) who emphasized that there is evidence that negative cognitive process strongly relates to academic achievement, this evidence that negative emotion are linked to this process is constant with the motion of mediation. Both anxiety and anger may drop student ability to recall relevant information or material. Also, the finding is in line with the view of Porto (2013) who indicated that test anxiety produces psychological symptoms that build up in students before a test which include restlessness, unusual body movements, and difficulty in concentration, insomnia, fatigue, muscles contraction, abdominal pain and tremor.

Finding of this study also revealed that significant negative relationship exists between social anxiety and academic achievement. This implies that the higher the level of social anxiety the lower the academic achievement and vice versa. This finding agreed with the view of Chagas (2017), the author revealed that individuals with early onset of social anxiety are also at risk of developing depression or alcoholism. It also affects the occupational, educational and social affairs of the individual. The finding also goes in line with that of Aletan and Akinso (2014) who found that social anxiety strongly relates with adolescents' social adjustment, social interaction skills, social performance and social competence.

Conclusions

Results from this study revealed an inverse relationship exists between test anxiety and academic achievement, as test anxiety increases, academic achievement decreases. The result also revealed an inverse relationship exists between social anxiety and academic achievement as social anxiety increases, academic achievement decreases and vice versa.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

5. Psychologists and Counsellors should be encouraged to use various counselling techniques in managing students with test anxiety issues as it affects their academic achievement.
6. University authority should provide a functional guidance and counselling center that will cater for students with social anxiety issues as it affects their academic achievement.

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