



Examination phobia and related psycho-somatic problems among the class X board examinees

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken with the aim to know about examination phobia and related psycho-somatic problems among the Class X Board Examinee. The data was collected from the students of Class X (Boys = 60, Girls = 60) from four selected schools recognized by the Central Board of Secondary Education, India. A self made questionnaire ($r = 0.64$) having two sections consisting of the courses of examination phobia, and the related psycho-somatic problems were used. The response was made in three point scale (always, sometimes, never). The data was analysed by using Chi Square test. The finding of the study reveals that, examination phobia is caused by different personal, parental and teacher related factors. Some of the major personal factors are nervousness, poor preparation, fear of parents and teacher, punishment, not getting admission in a reputed institution in future, tough competition among the class mates etc. The study also found that too much parental pressure like pressure of securing more than eighty percent, too much parental involvement of parents during study, parent's social prestige and the teacher related factors like scolding for not getting good marks, too much class test, to keep the reputation of the institution high as well as teacher's discouragement to some extent causes examination phobia. A significant number of students reported they due to examination phobia, they suffer from different psycho-somatic problems like nausea, loss of appetite, sleep disturbances, irritability, restlessness, inability to recall, confusion etc. Examination phobia though natural to some extent but too much phobia may become barrier for good performance. In extreme stage it may bad the student for committing suicide. Hence parents and teachers should try to help the students to cope with this type of phobia instead of creating 'do or die' situation or getting good grade or marks. In case of extreme phobia, the help of a counselor should be taken.

Keywords : Examination phobia, examination anxiety, psycho-somatic problem and examination phobia.

1. Introduction

Examination phobia is very common in children from primary to higher level these days. It is experienced by more or less every student which is very painful and is a state of uneasiness about the future uncertainties. Though difficult, but it can be defined as some changes in behaviour associated with the feeling of being examined in written test related to courses of study. The term 'Phobia' is described as an 'unreasonable' fear. This fear is based on some

perceived event that yet to has taken place. In that way examination phobia can be defined as having extreme examination pressure which help the student realize that the pressure could be the causes of failure. Different researcher defined 'examination phobia' in different way. According to Sylvia (2005), "Fear of examination is viewed as a State having considerable significance for academic performance". D. Ruwan M. Jayantunge (2008) defined, "Examination phobia as a self damaging factor which negatively affects the

student and their performances. The student is unable to give maximum productivity and the end result would be critical”.

Examination phobia is real and destructive. It is very natural as well as healthy way to approach examination. Examination pressure, to some degree is needed for the students for ensuring them to perform better, but too much pressure for obtaining high marks by the parents and teachers sometimes becomes barrier for developing mental blockage and low performance. When the exam stress or pressure become ‘phobia’ students worry excessively, lack self confidence, develop different psychological reaction like frequent urination, fatigue, dizziness, sleep disturbances, headache, diarrhoea and a number of sudden disability. Research studies on exam phobia have been conducted by different researcher taking different variables as well as to find out the causes of such problems. Some worth mentioning studies are, Sufiana Khatoun, Farhat Parven studied on “Exam Phobia among secondary students”. Astrid Gregoh, “Examination Anxiety lives it with, control it or make it worst for you?” Donna L. Mealey and Timoy R. Host, “Copying with test anxiety”. Dubi Lufi, Susan Okasha and Aric Cohn, “The anxiety and its effects on the personality of students with learning disabilities”.

Examination phobia is an important area of study in these days. It is really unfortunate that our present society giving too much weight-age to the marks obtained by a student, as a result most of the student developing examination phobia, due to excessive pressure given by the parents and teachers. As a result the students who are adolescents and not quite matured cannot cope with these tremendous pressure and suffers different psycho-somatic disorder and in extreme stage committed suicide. On the above mentioned background, the investigator designed a study on — Examination Phobia among Class X Board Examinees of Assam with the following objectives :

1. To find out the causes responsible for developing examination phobia in respect to
 - a. Personal factors

- b. Home related factors
 - c. Teacher related factors.

2. To investigate the psycho-somatic problems faced by the students of the Class X Board examination.

1.1. Null Hypothesis

1. Examination phobia is not related to any (a) Personal, (b) Parent related and (Teacher related factors.
2. The students having examination phobia do not suffer from any psycho-somatic problems.

1.2. Procedure of the Study

The major objective of the study was to investigate the factors related to examination phobia as well as to study the psycho-somatic problems faced by the students suffering from examination phobia. Hence the study is descriptive in nature.

1.3. Population and Sample

The population of the study included all the boys and girls studying in Class X of Secondary Education Board of Assam (SEBA).

A total 120 numbers of students were boys (60) and girls (60) were selected from four English Medium Secondary Schools of Guwahati City under Central Board of Secondary Education, India.

2. Tools and Techniques

The investigator developed a questionnaire regarding the examination phobia. The questionnaire was consisted of two (2) parts. Part A consists of the questions regarding the personal, home related and the school related factors responsible for developing examination phobia. Part B consists of the questions pertaining psycho-somatic problems related with examination phobia. The responses will be in three point scales — ‘Always’, ‘Sometimes’ or ‘Never’. The reliability of the questionnaire was found by test retest method, ($r = 0.64$). The validity of the questionnaire was ascertained by the school head master / mistress as well as the educational

psychologist and experienced faculty members of Psychology Department, Gauhati University.

3. Delimitation of the Study

- (a) The study was delimited to the students of the English Medium schools of Guwahati city.
- (b) Sample for the study selected from the recognized schools of the Secondary Education Board of Assam (SEBA).

(c) Only the student's views regarding the causes of examination phobia and the related psycho-somatic problems were undertaken.

(d) The data was collected just before 1 months of the Board Examination 2012.

4. Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

H_{01a} = Examination phobia is not related to any personal, parent related and school factors.

Table - 1(a) : χ^2 values of the personal factors related with the examination phobia

Sl. No.	Personal factors	$\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} = \chi^2$	Level of significance
1.	Nervousness	8.22	*
2.	Lack of confidence	6.10	*
3.	Poor preparation	6.17	*
4.	Can not cope with the subjects	8.00	*
5.	Lack of concentration	9.05	*
6.	Unwillingness to study hard	6.00	*
7.	Tough competition among class mates	26.92	**
8.	Fear of parents	35.86	**
9.	Fear of teachers	20.20	**
10.	Fear of not getting admission in reputed institution	80.12	**

$$\text{d.f.} = (2 - 1) (3 - 1) = 2$$

$$* P > 0.05 = 5.991$$

$$** P > 0.01 = 9.210$$

Tables - 1(a) reveal that, the calculated values of χ^2 under most of the personal factors are found to be significant at 5% level. However factors like fear of not getting admission in reputed institution ($\chi^2 = 80.12$), is followed by fear of parents ($\chi^2 = 35.86$), tough competition among class mates ($\chi^2 = 26.92$), fear of teachers ($\chi^2 = 20.20$) are found to be significant at 1% level of significance. Hence the hypothesis "Examination phobia is not related to any personal factors" is rejected. Examination phobia thus influence by some personal factors of the students.

H_{01b} = Examination phobia is not related to any parent related factors.

Table - 1(b) : χ^2 values of the parent related factors related for developing examination phobia

Sl. No.	Personal related factors	$\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} = \chi^2$	Level of significance
1.	Put pressure for securing good scores	26.12	**
2.	Compare with the class mates	16.64	**
3.	Compare with other brother / sister	9.99	**
4.	Enquire about the study	12.24	**
5.	Enquire about the daily progress	64.74	**
6.	Remind about social prestige	57.07	**
7.	Remind about the competition in getting admission in a good institution	62.20	**
8.	Parents remain tense for their performance	45.62	**
9.	Scold for getting less marks	46.82	**
10.	Cannot satisfy parents	75.20	**

* $P > 0.05 = 5.991$ ** $P > 0.01 = 9.210$

Table - 1(b) shows that the calculated values of χ^2 under all the parent related factors are found to be significant at 1% level. Hence, the null hypothesis that Examination Phobia is not related to any parent related factors is rejected. It can be said that parent related factors are highly significant for developing examination phobia among the students.

H_{01c} = Examination phobia is not related to any School related factors.

Table - 1(c) : χ^2 values of the School related factors for developing examination phobia

Sl. No.	School related factors	$\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} = \chi^2$	Level of significance
1.	Fear of scolding from teachers	42.75	**
2.	Fear of punishment by the teacher	24.50	**
3.	Teacher remind me regarding the reputation of the school	16.20	**
4.	Put pressure for getting more than eighty percent marks in all subjects	74.26	**
5.	Strict discipline in the school produces fear for examination	56.24	**
6.	Pressure of class test decreases the efficiency	70.12	**

7.	Teacher create do or die situation for performing better	69.15	**
8.	Teacher's annoyance of getting less marks	64.00	**
9.	Teacher compares with other students	34.75	**
10.	Teacher's discouragement when secure low grade.	62.00	**

*P > 0.05 = 5.991, (d.f. = 2), **P > 0.01 = 9.210

Table - 1(c) shows that the χ^2 values related to all the school related variables influencing examination phobia are found to be significant at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis that Examination phobia is not related to school factors is rejected.

The result shows that, school related factors are highly significant in developing examination phobia.

5. Results of the objective no. 2

Students having examination phobia do not suffer from any psycho-somatic problems.

Table - 1(d) : χ^2 values of perceived psycho-somatic problems associated with examination phobia

Sl. No.	Statement	$\frac{\sum (fo - fe)^2}{fe} = \chi^2$	Level of significance
1.	Unable to relax	6.20	*
2.	Tense	9.02	*
3.	Difficult breathing	6.12	*
4.	Nausea	12.08	**
5.	Diarrhoea	8.70	*
6.	Dizzy feeling	53.40	**
7.	Confusing	59.75	**
8.	Inability to recall	62.04	**
9.	Lack of sleep	48.64	**
10.	Unsteady	4.12	N. S.
11.	Irritability	26.86	**
12.	Restlessness	45.20	**
13.	Lack of appetite	64.00	**

*P > 0.05 = 5.991, d.f. = 2, **P > 0.01 = 9.210

Table - 2 explains that, the calculated values of χ^2 under the perceived psycho-somatic problems are found to be significant either at 5% or 1% level of significance except one i.e. unsteadiness ($\chi^2 = 4.12$). Hence the null hypothesis that, Students having examination phobia do not suffer from any psycho-somatic problems, is rejected. It was found that due to examination phobia the students suffer from different psycho-somatic problems.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

From the above interpretation it has been observed that majority of the students of the Class X Board Examination suffers from examination phobia and psycho-somatic problems related with it. It is very common to have some exam stress to perform better, but too much stress is really harmful. The students of this grade are very immatured adolescence who sometimes find difficult to cope with this type of examination phobia. As a result this phobia can become the barrier in performing better. In extreme case student become so helpless that they commit suicide.

Educational psychologist also viewed that too much examination phobia can hamper the

mental health of students. Hence the parents and teacher should try to help their children in coping with examination phobia. They should try to help the students in building confidence to make prepared for examination in an organized way, help them in finding out the actual causes of that types of phobia, help them in doing some 'Yoga' or meditation to make them calm. They should also try to help the students to learn how to relax, to take healthy food and to have a good sleep.

Teacher should try to create a healthy competitive environment in the classroom. Frequent class test should be arranged and some remedial teaching or class should be arranged for the low achievers. In extreme case the students should be referred to a counselor for help.

Parent and teachers are the most important factors for creating examination phobia among the students. So they should be very much careful with the students of Class X Board Examination. They should not create 'do or die' situation for performing well in the examination. Moreover they should not try to materialize their own dream through the students, rather they should try to deal with the students with utmost care love, cooperation so to help them for better future.

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