STUDENTS' EXAM ANXIETY IN THE CONTEXT OF TEACHER'S BEHAVIOUR AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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Abstract

It is an admitted fact that teacher's behavior influences students' performance and leaves a deep impact on them. Many studies have talked about teacher's behavior in different ways but it has never been studied with respect to students' exam anxiety. Therefore, the main objective of the present study wasfinding the relationship of teacher's behavior withstudents' exam anxiety in the subject of English and the other objective was to find the gender wise relationships of teacher's behavior and students' exam anxiety. Tenth grade studentsfrom the public sector schools in the province of the Punjab Pakistanwere selected as a sample using cluster sampling technique. Student-Reported Teacher Behavior Scale and Exam Anxiety Scalewere used for collection of data. Major findings of the study werethat relationshipof teacher's behavior (instructional, socio-emotional and organizational)with students' exam anxietywas significantly negative. It was concluded that teacher's behavior in the classroomplays a reverse role instudents' exam anxiety. Therefore, teacher should avoid any extreme in their behavior.

Keywords: teacher, anxiety, behavior, classroom,relationship

Introduction

Role of school teachers in Pakistan, especially in government sector, is usually criticized for not performing the required job properly. Exceptional cases,however, are also there. Data provided by the past studies about teachers showed that school teachers in Pakistan arelow paid, they do not have much social respect and are ill-treated (Ahmad, Rehman, Ali, Ali, & Badshah,2013). Generally, those who do not get any other job join teaching field(Idara-e-taleem-o-Agahi, 2013). In the aspect ofprofessional knowledge,Pakistani teachers are unaware of national curriculum, taxonomies and assessment techniques and do not have enough opportunities for in-service training (SAHE, &Alif Ailaan, 2014). Even more tragedy is that they often have to perform irrelevant tasks like duties in general elections (Ghazi, Ali, Khan, Hussain, & Fatima, 2010) which have no link with their teaching profession but they are engaged in these activities. It is very difficult for them, in this situation, to concentrate on their students' academic learning and psychological needs(Ahmad, et al 2013 & Ghazi, et al 2010). Throughthe given context, it seems thatteachers might have some specific behaviours as there is a general conception about a public sector teacher's behavior. Due to such behaviors, learning lessons and passing exams might bea problem for studentsunder the supervision of these teachers.

Generally, teachers are supposed to help their students in fulfilling their academic and psychological needs as well as in meetingthe requirements of exam by teaching effectively.Enhancing

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students' learning and enabling them to perform well in exams is the major duty of their profession. Any unmet need in the teaching learning process may become the essential underlying background for students' reactions to their examination. It is also established fact that many decisions of students' academic progress, career and life are made on the basis of their exams results. Due to the importance of exams, students always remain extraordinary conscious about it. It has been found that, "negativity and unclear structuring of the class established by the teacher are the identified dimensions for increasing students' anxiety" (Hassan 2014).

"Teachers' behavior has remarkable effects on individual student"(Nye, Konstantopoulos & Hedges 2004). Effective teachers use positive behaviors andpraise students for their good work. Therefore, teachers are required to reduce reprimands and increase praise when interacting with children (Weyns, Verschueren, Leflot, Onghena, Wouters, &Colpin, 2017). Positive, encouraging and supportive teacher behavior is conducive for learning (Spivak, &Farran, 2012). On the other hand, threatening, forcing, pressurizing and coercive behaviors undermine the psychological needs (Hein, 2012).Because "teachers are largely responsible for shaping the classroom milieu; the classroom climate may mediate the association between observed teacher characteristics and students' test anxiety" (Zeidner 1998). Learning outcomes are affected by test-anxiety and environment provided for learning (Ogundokun, 2011).

Exam anxiety upsets body and mind and affects students thinking, reasoning and learning; their feelings about themselves and schools; and their reaction towards learning and school (Mayer, 2008). It affects negatively before, during and after the exam. A high level of anxiety interferes with concentration and memory, which is critical for academic success (Abderrezzaq, 2010). Simple description of test anxiety is "the conditions experienced by the individual before, at the time and after the test" (Dewi&Mangunsong, 2012). It is also taken as "negative effect, worry, physiological arousal, and behavioral responses that accompany concerns about failure or lack of competence on an exam or similar evaluative situation" (Benedict, 2014). Incorporating study skill strategies in or out of the classroom can help students master the content and reduce anxiety (American Dental Education Association, 2011).So many other factors related to individual like, specific teaching and instructions provided to him, his classroom situation, school environment add in the test anxiety and each of these factors plays a different role for different students (Salend, 2011).

High or low level of anxiety is harmfulwhile a moderate level is considered healthy but this cannot be maintained until all the sources are understood and taken into account. Literature mentions a few of them but teacher's behavior has never been studied in this context. Therefore, students' views regarding their teachers' behavior become important to study following constructivists' point of view of students' independent construction of knowledge and perception in varying learning situations (Den Brok, Bergen, Stahl, &Brekelmans, 2004). Moreover, "studies are needed to examine the effects of students' perceptions of teachers' classroom behavior on students' test anxiety" (Hassan 2014). Because "in addition to traditional academic measures, it is important to examine behavioral factors for better signaling of student risk" (ACT Research and Policy, 2013).Keeping thestudents anxiety risk and critical background of Pakistani teachers in view, studying teachers' behaviorin classroom, where they are main authority and students are totally dependent on them, is very essential. Therefore, this study was carried out to find out the relationship between teacher's behaviors and students' exam anxiety.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study was to find out the relationship of teacher's instructional, socio-emotional and organizational behavior with students' exam anxiety. Another objective was to determine the relationship of male and female teacher's instructional, socio-emotional and organizational behavior with students' exam anxiety.

Hypotheses

Following null hypotheses were formulated keeping in view the objectives of the study.

Ho1   Teachers' instructional behavior has no significant relationship with secondary   school students' exam anxiety in English subject.

Ho2   Teachers' organizational behavior has no significant relationship with secondary schoolstudents' exam anxiety in English subject.

Ho3   Students' exam anxiety in the subject of English has no significant relationship   with theirteachers' socio-emotional behavior at secondary level.

Ho4   There is no significant relationship of male and female teachers' behavior with their students 'exam anxiety.

Methodology

Present study was quantitative in nature for which correlation design was used.To test the null hypotheses of the study data was collected through survey. All 10thgrade male and female students (M=299,323, F=264,822) from public sector schools in the province of the Punjab comprised the population of this study.Sample was selected in multiple stages using cluster sampling.At first, from Punjab province, four districts were selected randomly, then, one male and one female secondary school of identified districts were randomly selected.In the third stage, all sections of 10th graders in the identified schools were taken as sample and all the students in these sections were selected. Thus, 1526students were found overall to participate in the study and were included in the sample for collection of data about teacher's behavior and exam anxiety.

Two instruments developed by researchers, a scale for measuring teachers' behaviors and another for exam anxiety were used for collection of data. After taking the expert opinion about the validity of the items, exploratory factor analysis were conducted to finalize the instruments. Overall, reliability of finalized scale for measuring teacher's behaviorwas .855 (while for sub-scales i.e instructional, organizational and socio-emotional, it was .846, .753 and .704 respectively)whereas reliability of exam anxiety scale was.908.

Results

The study determinedrelationshipsof teacher's instructional, socio-emotional and organizational behavior with students' exam anxiety in English subject. Data were analyzed through descriptive (Mean & SD) and inferential statistics i.e Pearsonproduct moment Correlation Coefficient. Results of all hypotheses were presented in the following paragraphs followed by correlations matrix given in the last part of this section.For the first null hypothesis, computed Mean scores, SD values and correlationare presented in table 1.

Table No.1 *Exam Anxiety and Instructional Behavior*

Variables	Mean	SD	r	Sig
Exam Anxiety	32.18	9.97	$-.111^{**}$	.00
Teacher Instructional Behavior	40.59	7.84		

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of exam anxiety scale and students-reported instructional behavior scale scores. The Mean and SD computed were (M=32.18, SD=9.97) on exam anxiety & (M=40.59, SD=7.84) on teacher instructional behavior scales. The relationship between student-reported instructional behavior of teachers and exam anxiety was found significant (P<.01) and negative (-.111) which indicated that students who found their teachers instructional behavior highly positive had very exam anxiety and vice versa.

Table No. 2 *Exam Anxiety and Organizational Behavior*

Variables	Mean	SD	r	Sig
Exam Anxiety	32.18	9.97	$-.211^{**}$	.00
Organizational Behavior	42.07	6.40		

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table No.2 provides Mean and SD values for the variables of students' exam anxiety and students' reported teachers' organizational behavior. Students-reported organizational behavior of teachers had (42.07)Mean score and (6.40) SD. The negative relationship (-.211**) between exam anxiety and organizational behavior as the students reported was found significantly (P<.01) negativewhich means these variables have revers relationship.

Table No. 3 *Exam Anxiety and Socio-emotional Behavior*

Variables	Mean	SD	r	Sig
Exam Anxiety	32.18	9.97	$-.176^{**}$	.00
Socio-emotional behavior	27.54	5.96		

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above given table 3, reflects that on socio-emotional behavior scale Mean score was (27.54) with SD (5.96) value. Teachers socio-emotional behavior and exam anxiety were found significantly

(P<.01) negatively correlated (-.176**) which indicated that students-reported socio-emotional behavior contributes in their anxiety in reverse order.

Table No. 4 *Gender wise Results of Exam Anxiety and Teacher Behavior analysis*

| Gender	Variables	Mean	SD	r	Sig
Male	Exam Anxiety	29.83	9.46	-.187**	.00
	Instructional Behavior	40.24	8.00		
Female	Exam Anxiety	34.78	9.88	-.059	.11
	Instructional Behavior	40.96	7.64		
Male	Exam Anxiety	29.83	9.46	-.302**	.00
	Organizational Behavior	41.02	7.11		
Female	Exam Anxiety	34.78	9.88	-.226**	.00
	Organizational Behavior	43.22	5.29		
Male	Exam Anxiety	29.83	9.46	-.253**	.00
	Socio-emotional Behavior	26.73	6.00		
Female	Exam Anxiety	34.78	9.88	-.185**	.00
	Socio-emotional Behavior	28.44	5.79		

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 presents gender wise data of exam anxiety and teacher instructional, organizational and socio-emotional behavior. The Mean and SD computed on the exam anxiety scale for both genders were (M=29.83, SD=9.46) & (M=34.78, SD=9.88) respectively for male and female. This indicates that female students Mean anxiety was more than males. On the instructional behavior scale female students had more (Mean= 40.96, SD=7.64) score as compared to male (Mean=40.24, SD=8.00) which showed that male and female had different opinions about their teachers' instructional behavior. The computed relationship was significant (P<.01) and negative (-.187**) on male side. However, the computed correlation (-.059) between the same variables i.e instructional behavior and exam anxiety for the female students was although insignificant yet negative.

Male students-reported organizational behavior of teachers had (41.02) Mean score and (7.11) SD. On the other side, female had (43.22) greater Mean score and (5.29) SD on the same variable. The relationship between exam anxiety and organizational behavior as the male (-.302**) & female (-.226**) students reported was found significant (P<.01) and negative. This also showed that students who reported their teachers poor organizational behavior had high exam anxiety and vice versa.

On socio-emotional behavior scale, male students Mean score was (26.73) with SD (6.00) value and female students Mean score and SD values were (28.44), (5.79) respectively, which is again greater on female side. Male teachers socio-emotional behavior and exam anxiety were found significantly (P<.01) negatively correlated   (-.253**) similarly female students-reported socio-emotional

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behavior of their teachers had also significant (P<.01) negative correlation (-.185**) with their exam anxiety.The following figure presents the summary of the results of relationships among all variables.
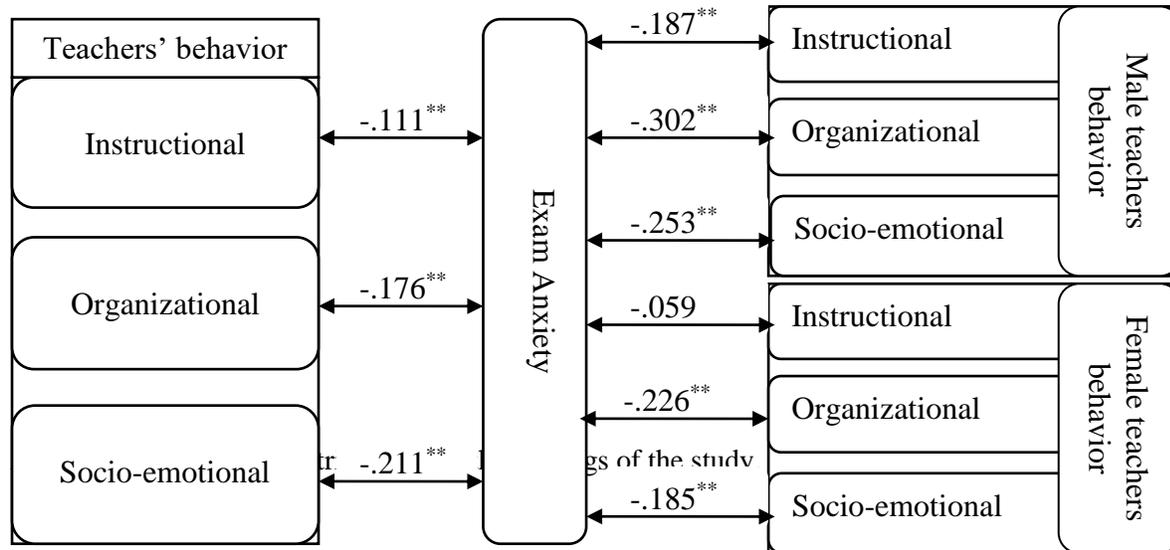
Findings and Discussion

The major finding is that all the null hypotheses tested in this study were rejected on the basis of significant negative relationships in the given variables. Although the relationships were not strong but significantly negative relationships in all these variables indicated teachers' behaviorswere associated withstudents' exam anxiety conversely. This highlights that if students feel teacher's behavior is on a positive extreme they have very low anxiety. Whereas if they think that teacher behavior is extremely negative, they have high anxiety and both these conditions i.e having very low anxiety or high anxiety are dangerous for students' performance. Having moderate anxiety is considered beneficial in exam situations, therefore teacher's reasonable behavior is useful in this matter and following extreme patterns ofbehavior should be avoided.

Findings of this study provided an initial understanding about the relationship between teacher's behavior and students' exam anxiety. Although, the strength of relationship is weak but this is quite understandable in the context that there are a number of other reasons of students' exam anxiety for example, family background or family characteristics (Salend, 2011), low self-concept (Ahmed, Minnaert, Kuyper, &Werf, 2011), lack the necessary skills and knowledge to do well in a subject (Trifoni and Shahini, 2011), inadequate preparation or study skills (American Dental Education Association, 2012) and environmental factors (Davies, 1986) etc. But negative relationship of anxiety with teacher behavior means that, in spite of presence of so many other causes of anxiety, there is, still, a role of teacher behavior in students' exam anxiety. It may also be due to the reason that everything, from creation of conducive learning environment to students' psychological condition, learning and exam performance requires the involvement of teachers and teachers role is also there in all other anxiety provoking factors apart from this direct finding.

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Negative association between teacher's instructional behavior and students' exam anxiety in the subject of English was the key finding of the first null hypothesis which illustrates that students develop anxiety due to teachers' behavior as Fournier (1983) reported that teacher's instructional method has great influence on students test anxiety. Because, "routine instruction remains fail to prepare several students to fulfill the unique requirements of tests. Thus, their poor command of learned contents may be the source of their test-anxiety"(Hill &Wigfield, 1984). So overall, it revealed that teachers' instructional behavior was associated with exam anxiety and that "possible triggers of testing anxiety include factors related to classroom, and teaching practices"(Salend, 2011). The finding of the secondnull hypothesisis the significant negative correlation between teachers' organizational behavior and students' exam anxiety. As Fournier (1983) depicted that students developed low anxiety in traditional class settings than that of less structured class environment. So students need organized classroom which provides them opportunity to learn effectively because(Xenos 2012) "academic time is wasted in class where teacher, most often, remains busy in maintaining the discipline and solving other issues".

Finding about the third null hypothesis about teacher's socio-emotional behavior and students' exam anxiety was a significant negative relationship between these variables. This helps us in understanding that "students develop exam anxiety due to school related factors and not having good relations with teacher also cause exam anxiety in students" (Mayer 2008). It also means supportive socio-emotional behavior of the teachers in class provides the students a feeling of belonging whereas when they have to face a careless, insulting and threatening behavior of their teacher they remain occupied by the feeling of stress. It does not let them communicate with their teachers to get their study related problems solved and eventually results in the form of exam anxiety.

For the last null hypothesis of this study, findings of association of male-participants' anxiety with their teacher behavior make us realize that the instructional behavior of teachers is necessary to address for further dealing with male-students exam anxiety issues. However, female-students have some other sources behind their exam anxiety and teacher instructional behavior is comparatively less related to their anxiety. While socio-emotional and organizational behavior have more strong association on male side as compared to female. This highlights that these two aspects of teacher's behavior need more attention on male side than female.

Conclusions

After analysis, on the basis of findings of this study about teachers' behavior and students' exam anxiety following conclusions were drawn.

1. Teachers' instructional, socio-emotional and organizational behavior have a significant negative association with students' exam anxiety.
2. Male as well as female-students show anxiety before their English subject exam due to their teachers' behavior.
3. Students'positive and negative opinions about their teacher's behavior are important to consider and address because they are associated with their exam anxiety.

Recommendations

Following recommendations were made on the basis of findings and conclusions of this study.

1. It is suggested for the teachers to realize that their instructional, socio-emotional and organizational behavior are associated negatively with students'anxiety. Therefore, they must exhibit properbehavior to help controlling the students' exam anxiety and should avoid being on any extreme in behavior.

2. Students should be aware that their views about teachers' behavior are negatively associated with their exam anxiety. Therefore they need to be careful about developing biased or wrong opinions about their teachers.

3. Students can be counseled to have a right judgment about their teachers because they may suffer due to wrong views they develop about their teacher's behavior.

4. Similar study focusing the private sector is needed to clarify the results because teachers' behavior is monitored strictly by administration and academic needs of individualsare taken more seriously in that set up. Therefore, it will give more understanding of students' exam anxiety in the context of teachers' behavior.

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