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ASSESSING IMPACT OF TESTOPHOBIA AMONG UNDERGRADUATE LEARNERS (THE CASE OF EASTERN ZONE OF HARYANA)

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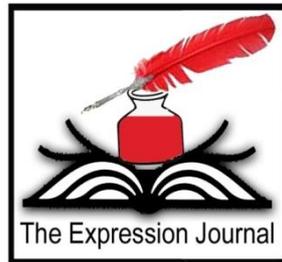
Abstract

The major purpose of this research study was to survey the level of testophobia among undergraduate students in Eastern Haryana. The study aims to explore the possible factors which reasons out why test proves as an impediment for the adult learners in the selected regions of Haryana. The data was collected on 200 sample subjects selected through purposive sampling techniques. As for the methods of data collection the study used questionnaire to gather primary data from the undergraduate learners in the colleges and universities located in Faridabad and Gurugram. Whereas the secondary data was collected through document analysis from different sources especially library resources and research papers in the related fields. As for the methods of data analysis, the study used descriptive statistics and analytical induction to analysis the collected data.

Keywords

Testophobia, Impediment, Undergraduate Learners, Haryana.

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Introduction:

Testophobia among students cause effects that could even impede their actual performance in the tests or assessments or exams. Having this as a backdrop, the research below is proposed and it presents a detailed study of background to the problem investigated by declaring the purpose of this study, drawing the objectives of this study and finally proposing the significance of this study. Basing all the suppositions grounded theoretically and conceptually, frameworks have been highlighted to make the study authentic and worth practicing. For better understanding, the operational definitions of key terms are also emphasized in this study.

Background to the Study:

Testophobia causes serious illness among the learners. For instance, many learners increasingly develop tears, eyes becoming red (which means that one is crying since a long time), hands shaking, sweating, body trembling continuously, breathing becoming shallow, increased palpitation and pulse rates. There is even vomiting throughout the day. Even there are students who try to take extreme steps liking taking away their lives by jumping from top of the building. This kind of allergic reaction is triggered among students in many ways especially with those who are appearing for exams that are difficult. It might seem common and reactionary as there is always a compression of family and peers, syllabus completion, competition for future, job orientation which is actually problematic to accomplish. Students grow some unwholesome ways of learning, sleeping, eating

which increases imbalance physically and mentally. There are motives for mounting nervousness like augmented strain level, undesirable self-talk, mistrustful thinking, and illogical claim from self. When all this worry is not managed or known then it develops full blown panic attack and test phobia. Students who are perfectionist, who procrastinate, students who face lot of pressure and expectations from parents, ambitious persons, persons with anxious personality may face the problem of testophobia.

The thoughts that come across students in exam or test phobia (which triggers a panic reaction) can be:

- 1) The thought I cannot do it
- 2) The thought I cannot manage this pressure.
- 3) The negative thought that I am not capable of doing this.
- 4) The thought that I should get full marks or that I should just not work for it.
- 5) The negative thought that I do not deserve to be happy and relax when I have an important exam ahead.
- 6) The negative confidence that I am a worthless person if I cannot pass this important exam.
- 7) The thought that life is not worth living if I don't achieve my goal.
- 8) The thought that I must pass this test or I am a hopeless person.
- 9) The thought that if I pass this exam then only people will give importance to me.
- 10) The negative thought that there is nothing worth living for in my life if I fail in this exam.

The exam or test does seem a matter of life or death for the students. If the student is too much preoccupied with these feelings then they are unconditionally not in a position to concentrate on the task at hand.

What is Testophobia?

Testophobia is conventionally demarcated as an uncharacteristic, unreasonable and insistent fear of appearing in tests during the course of academia. Basically meaning, Testophobia is the fear of appearing in tests or developing a failure mindsets in tests. Taking a test can be frightening to anyone particularly to one who has not completed the course of studying or have taken several assessments in a day.

Apprehension during tests could happen in two places: mentally and physically. A few signs of Testophobia include mental blank-out, racing thoughts, physical breakdown, and difficulty in concentrating, increase in negative thoughts or about-past performance. It also leads to think how everyone else is performing, avoiding the test or comparing yourself to others. It convulsively increases behavioral changes, substance abuse and evasion by keenly developing following symptoms; excessive feeling of fear, discontent, annoyance, despair, irrepressible tears or amusement, feeling of bleakness. physical- weakness, pain cramps, unbalanced and dissolute heartbeat, edgy muscles, extreme sweating, sickness or diarrhea, dry mouth, problem in uttering words, trembling, etc.

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Testophobia, test anxiety has steadily and slowly caused disorder on the students' mentality. College studies after higher secondary is the vital node of a student's life as the credits they acquire would regulate the upcoming pathway of education and job assurances. One of the ways to get this fixed is rote learning as it practices obsolete, inflexible and thin testing approaches. Rote learning keeps the school mindset from the able innovators. The high school officials coerce instructor to teach pupils to remember than exercise communication skills to improve scoring because marks are seen by organizations as billboards to bait potential students at the time of admission.

Literature Review:

Horwitz, E.K.; Horwitz, M. B. and Cope, J. (1986) specified that "anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (p. 125-132). Anxiety is a kind of mental problem that may not be found or noticed easily. According to MacIntyre, P.D. (1995) anxiety as "the transient emotional state of feeling nervous that can fluctuate over time and vary in intensity". It is an idiosyncratic sensation of pressure, anxiety, tenseness that is related to an increase of the automatic breakdown of nervous structure and would interject the standard operation of the psychological and bodily composition, affecting the process of language learning. In reviews of earlier literature about foreign language anxiety, both psychologists and linguists reiterate the association between anxiety scales and procedures of accomplishment. Horwitz, E.K. (1988) defined foreign language anxiety as a "distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process". It infers that foreign language anxiety would take place only in foreign language learning situations, such as in an EFL or ESL classroom. This suggests an implication that anxiety is a kind of situation-specific anxiety (Foss & Reitzel, 1988; Ellis, R. (2004).

Test anxiety levels are measured to vary during the course of study at the university. A great number of research studies present data that most psychological disorders students. According to a research study carried out by Cooke, R., B.M. Bewick, M. Barkham, M. Bradley, and K. Audin. 2006, it has been identified that first year students most commonly reveal psychological changes, that often times correlate with students' financial concerns, and the academic pressure which they encounter. Moreover, according to Wright, R. A. (1984) it has been established that students 'signs of stress are also most prevalent in those students experiencing difficulties in adjusting to university life. Professors' teaching and evaluating methods are also considered to be factors of influence in the academic performance and the anxiety in students. According to Davis (1999), exams and high volume projects are considered to be inadequate forms of evaluation that may negatively impact students' motivation and their increased experience of anxiety. The most stressful factors influencing students, identified in educational institutions, are evaluations and competitions between students, students' academic failures, unhealthy relations between students, and course instructors (Fairbrother, K., & Warn, J. 2003). According to Ericksen, S. C. (1978),

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many students respond more positively to better organized courses, led by enthusiastic instructors, who awake students' interest in the subject and succeed in influencing the students' learning process. Moreover, it is perceived that constructive learning methods help students take responsibility in learning and enables them to become independent and develop their own concepts pertaining to the subjects being taught (Hyseni-Duraku, 2014).

Other factors of influence in students' anxiety level comprise the lack of compliance with the university academic infrastructure, semester functioning methods, and the limited capacity of academic institutions to support the academic efforts of their students (Awino JO, Agolla JE 2008)

Research Question:

Given this the paper poses four pertinent research questions as follows:

1. What is the psyche of students towards test?
2. Is testophobia an impediment in learning?
3. Why do learners develop testophobia?
4. How can testophobia be overcome?

Need of the Study:

In the mechanical and fast life of modern era, the most pretentious and vulnerable are the adolescence. Anxiety impedes their mental and physical health. This in turn affects their academic routine. Students take utmost stress about their career, future, appearance, friendship, money, desire to be the best, have the best and so on. There is tension, stress and worry in their minds, about almost all things that make up their lives. Since their education and health is at stake and they are the immediate future generation, it has become very important, to know their level of anxiety.

Research Methodology:

This chapter presents a description of the research design to be espoused for the study by defining variables, place of the study, target learners and sampling procedures, and research instruments. It begins with Pilot study, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, logistical and ethical considerations shall also be described.

Subjects of the Study/Population/Sample:

All the subjects in this research fragment are from South- Eastern Haryana. They are all first year undergraduate students studying in Senior Secondary institutions. 200 selected low-performing first year undergraduate students were taken as the sample from four different colleges and universities of South- Eastern Haryana.

Area of the Study/Research Setting:

The study was conducted in four rural senior secondary institutions of South- Eastern Haryana. There are two institutions from Faridabad named A and B and two institutions from Gurugram named C and D provinces are in the South-Eastern part of Haryana. The reason for selecting these reputed institutions was because the researcher is a resident of Haryana and these places were easily

accessible to her. The names were not disclosed as the institutions restricted to disclose the information.

Sampling Techniques:

For the primary data collection, a convenient sampling was chosen. It was possible to collect data in person because the research area was in Haryana – especially the south eastern part and there could be physical access to the institutions. The Eastern Haryana was chosen as I belong to that part of the state with a good human networking. A close ended Questionnaire was set and made filled by students in person. Among 200 participants 200 were able to fill up the questionnaire. All the 200 students belonged to the four institutions and took part in this study voluntarily. 72.77% were male and 27.22 % were female.

Methods of Data Collection:

For the Primary data collection, the techniques included both administrations of Questionnaire and Interview on the undergraduate students of four different institutions in Haryana. The secondary data was collected through document analysis from different sources especially from the library and e-resources and from the research paper published in the journals and book chapters in the related field. The hard copies of the questionnaire were printed for circulation among the students with a sheet giving instruction along with the questionnaire. In addition, a written permission of the Dean of the faculty was attached to the questionnaire, explaining the purpose of the survey and its utility.

Analytical Methods:

Once the data was collected, the results were analyzed through descriptive statistics find mean, frequency and Standard Deviation using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). For subjective point of view and qualitative data analysis the discourse analysis method was used to indicate and find out how significant was the effect of testophobia among students.

Research Design: The recent study belongs to the category of descriptive field survey type of research. Table 3.1 Population Sample Distribution

Colleges/ University	Total 1 st year undergraduate students	Students who participated in the study(frequency)	Sample (%)
Institution A	500	50	10%
Institution B	500	50	10%
Institution C	120	50	41.67%
Institution D	800	50	6.25%
Total	1920	200	10.42%

The findings of Table 3.1 present the total population of 1st yr. undergraduate students of 4 different colleges and universities. 50 students from each institution participated in the study.

Fig: presents the findings that 10.42 % of the students were taken as the sample, from the total population, for the study

Table 3.2 Gender Distribution in the Sample

Gender	Institution	Institution	Institution	Institution	Total	%
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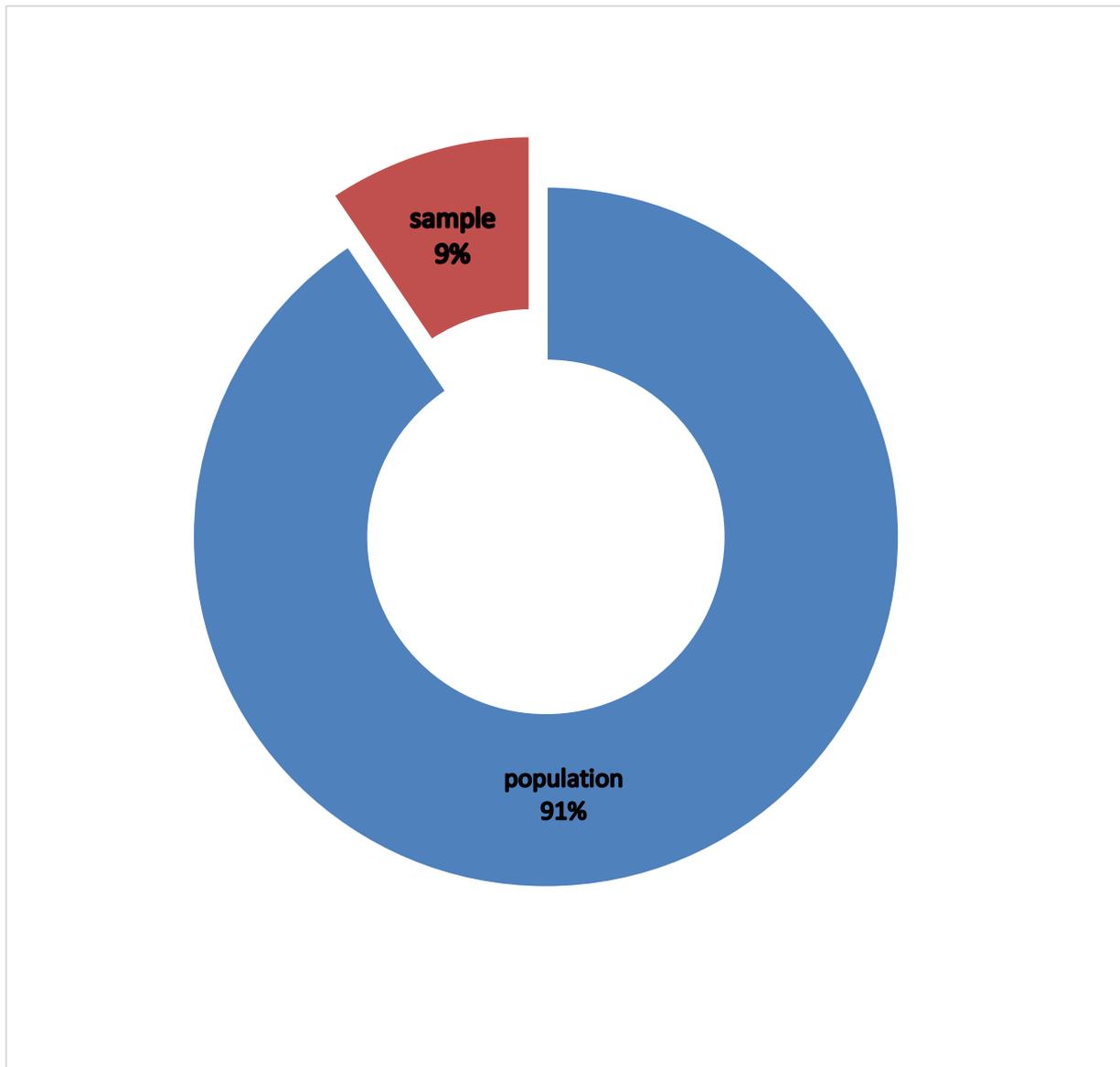
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	A	B	C	D		
Boys	24	40	50	25	139	72.77%
Girls	26	10	0	16	52	27.22%
					191	

The findings of Table 3.2 present that 139 boys and 52 girls participated in the study. 72.77% were boys and 27.22 % were girls.



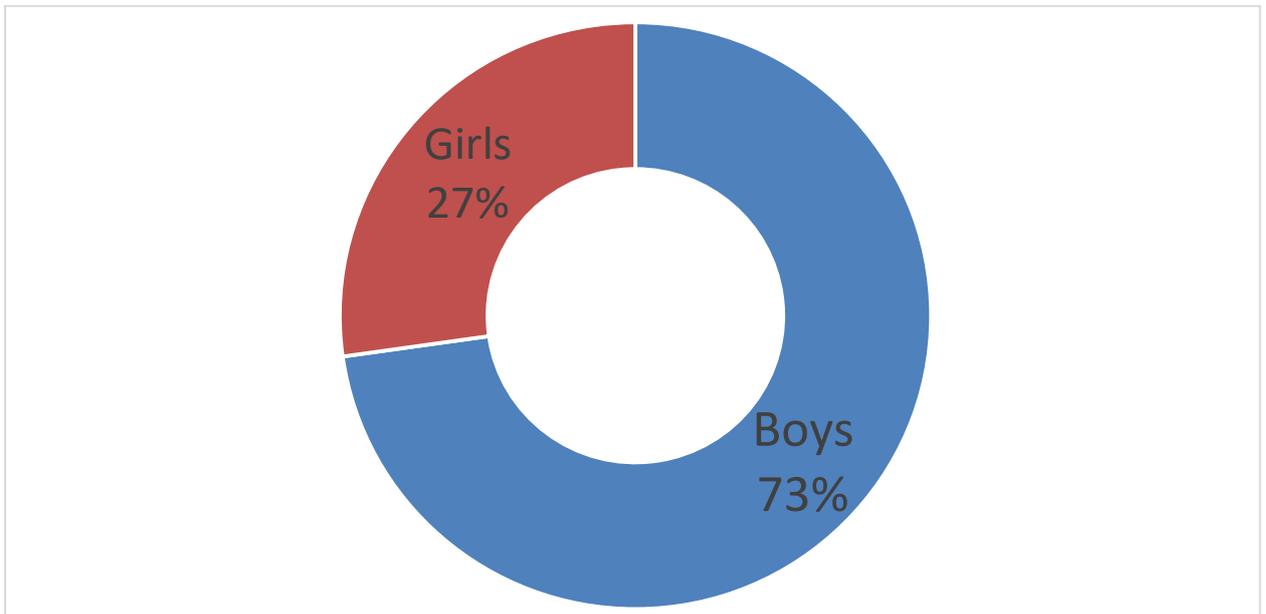


Fig. 3.2 Pie Chart showing Gender Distribution in the Sample PHASE I (Qualitative Analysis)

The first phase of the study, was qualitative in nature. It covered the objective:

Objective: To develop an anxiety scale for undergraduate students.

The above objective was fulfilled through the following steps:

Exploring views about anxiety: To find out the views and understanding of undergraduate students, about the construct anxiety, an close – ended questionnaire was developed. It was framed to elicit the views on testophobia. This questionnaire consisted of the following questions:-

1. Do you think testophobia is an impediment for all?
2. Do you support excluding test from the curriculum?
3. Do you make unwanted errors during a test?
4. Do you think of some past failures during a test?
5. Does your mind go blank, even when you are well prepared during a test.

This questionnaire was administered on a sample of 200 students.

Table 3.3 Sample of close – Ended Questionnaire

INSTITUTIONS	STUDENTS
A	50
B	50
C	50
D	50

The Table 3.3 presents the sample of 200 students. There were 50 students from each institution who participated in the study

Procedure of administering the questionnaire:

Permission was permitted from the authorities concerned. First and foremost the goal of the study was well explained to the students with their

consent. Then the questionnaire was shared with each student and space was provided to write down the answers. The following instructions were given to them:

The survey is conducted is on the problems of testophobia. A set of 5 open ended questions is provided in the questionnaire. Read the questionnaire and the instruction very carefully and then answer honestly and be free according to your personal feelings. Writing of names was not mandatory .No answer is treated as right or wrong. Do not leave any question unanswered. Responses will be kept strictly confidential and used only for research purposes. Your cooperation will help in knowing your problems.

Result and Discussion:

This chapter presents a detailed account, of the construction process. The results obtained from the data in the **two phases** have been analyzed and interpreted, objective wise. There were 72.77% males and 27.22%female's respondent took part from age group of 18-20. The second phase was constructed on 5 close ended questions.

1. Do you think testophobia is an impediment for all?

Institutions	Yes	No
A	56 %	44 %
B	39 %	61 %
C	80 %	20 %
D	73 %	27 %

2. Do you support excluding test from the curriculum?

Institutions	Yes	No
A	16 %	84 %
B	53 %	48 %
C	26 %	74 %
D	24 %	76 %

3. Do you make unwanted errors during a test?

Institutions	Yes	No
A	58 %	42 %
B	59 %	41 %
C	68 %	32 %
D	76 %	24 %

4. Do you think of some past failures during a test?

Institutions	Yes	No
A	43 %	57 %
B	73 %	27 %
C	54 %	46 %

D	45 %	55 %
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5. *Do your mind goes blank, even when you are well prepared during a test.*

Institutions	Yes	No
A	54 %	46 %
B	46 %	54 %
C	34 %	66 %
D	29 %	71 %

Conclusion:

The findings of this study exposed that undergraduate learners are enormously filled with anxiety. To get through the problem, the teacher has to be aware of the encouraging influences in order to reveal confident believes. Correspondingly, to lessen the anxiety level, the instructor could communicate in alternate technique than the conservative process of teaching. Furthermore, the teacher could generate sympathetic classroom atmosphere and decrease the classroom pressure. In recent days, use of games and virtual learning improves learners' attention. Rather than role-play, virtual presences results in reduced of apprehension and embarrassment. It is suggested for further research to conduct comparative study with the beginner and advance level learners whether the anxiety level increased or decreased.

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