

Research on the Current Situation of Chinese College Students' Test Anxiety

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Abstract: Comparing the study pressure of today's students with those of the past, it is obvious that there are heavier bags, more homework, and less sleep time. Students' learning pressure is getting heavier and heavier, and there is more and more anxiety about learning. In a specific time period every year, this pressure and anxiety will reach an explosive point, and this time period is often a period of time for students to take exams. This paper focuses on the overall degree of Test Anxiety among Chinese college students and conducts a Chinese-style questionnaire survey of the Test Anxiety Scale. Most Chinese students have a high or very highest anxiety index. This paper analyzes the current situation at the different examination stages for students, namely, before, during, and after the examination. It also provides different relief plans for different students with different test anxiety indexes, such as how to better prepare for exams or adjust their mentality.

Keywords: test anxiety, college students, grades, mental, physical

1. Introduction

Since the 1950s, "stress" has been the subject of substantial psychological research, and today we have a better understanding of its causes, effects, and mediators [1]. According to Zoller, U., & Ben-Chain, D., people live in a test-conscious era where test results not only have a significant impact on many people's lives, but also determine them [2]. It is so understandable why the majority of college students perceive test situations as dangerous and exhibit increased state anxiety, which is actually their transitory emotional state, during (or just before) testing [3]. The impact of academic pressure, exams, and other school-related stressors on the levels of anxiety and stress have been studied in student populations [4,5]. Exam-related stress has been studied as a source of stress and is acknowledged as being distinct and only lasting a short period of time, yet it can still negatively impact wellbeing and academic achievement [6,7].

This paper realized that test anxiety isn't new, it's been around for a long time. In a new study, Tan and Pang mentioned that Research in test anxiety has been pursued under two traditions - the test anxiety and achievement motivation research traditions—more or less independently [8]. For many students, just after the college entrance examination, they think that the study pressure in college is less, but there are still many important exams related to the future in college. So, in the latest study, researchers looked specifically at examination stress in college. According to Mofatteh's risk factors associated with stress, anxiety, and depression among university undergraduate students, he wrote in his study academic grades influence multiple academic pressures associated with university life can

cause SAD (stress, anxiety, depression) in students [9]. At the same time, he also believes that the future that matters most to students can exacerbate their worries about grades. Student prospects, such as employment success rate or admission to postgraduate programs, may be influenced by their academic achievement throughout undergraduate education, which can also decide the degree classification. Therefore, students pay more and more attention to exams, which leads them to have more and more SAD (stress, anxiety, depression) about exams. The purpose of this paper is to study the degree of test anxiety of contemporary college students and to compare it with the former students. The purpose of this paper is to study the method of online questionnaire survey in the middle and late period before the examination. It is designed to help college students understand their level of test anxiety and use different methods to alleviate this anxiety at different stages of the exam (before, during, and after the exam).

2. Research Design

2.1. Accuracy Test

As for the reliability of Test Anxiety Scale (TAS), the work done by Professor Wang is adopted here [10]. Wang found that the Chinese version of TAS has high retest reliability, broken-half reliability, and internal consistency reliability, indicating that TAS has high reliability, stability, and homogeneity. Therefore, TAS can be popularized in future research and diagnosis work.

2.2. Scale

This article uses the Test Anxiety Scale developed by Professor Irwin G. Sarason in 1978, which is one of the most well-known test anxiety scales widely used internationally [11]. In 1999, Wang Caikang, a professor in the Department of Psychology of South China Normal University, translated this scale into Chinese and tested its validity specifically for college students [10]. This scale was used to determine the accuracy of experimental data collection.

2.3. Method and Design

In this experiment, participants need to fill a scale which in a questionnaire.

This questionnaire (Qualtrics) was used to investigate college students. A total of 75 students were surveyed, and 75 valid data were collected.

Newman proposed in his article that test anxiety with TAS score below 12 is a low level, 12 to 20 is a medium level, and more than 20 is a high level. A score of 15 or above indicates that the subject is experiencing a significant level of discomfort associated with taking the test. This article follows this standard.

2.4. Scoring Method

Whether to score points, “Yes” get 1 point, “No” get 0 points.

However, the items of questions 3,15,26,27,29 and 33 are scored in reverse, that is, 0 points are scored for “Yes” and 1 point is scored for “No”.

3. Results

In Wang’s research, 100 subjects were tested for the second TAS test 7 days later, and there was a high consistency between the two tests, $r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$ indicates that the retest reliability of TAS is good [10]. In addition, the homogeneity reliability of TAS is also high, with an α coefficient of 0.64. TAS has a broken half confidence of 0.60 (with Spearman-Brown formula correction, $p < 0.001$,

n = 293). It is evident that this survey has high accuracy. It will allow the research to take the next step.

There's a hypothesis here, suppose that Chinese students' anxiety about exams is getting higher and higher, and they are increasingly worried about exams.

Among the 75 college students in this study, 35 had high anxiety level (more than 20 points), accounting for 46.7% of the total sample, and their average score on TAS was 27.63. In the 2001 experiment conducted by Professor Wang, the number of people with higher anxiety levels (more than 20 points) accounted for 21.8%, and their average score was 24.35, a significant improvement. It can be seen that Chinese students' anxiety about exams is on the rise, they are more and more worried about exams, and their nervousness about exams is also getting higher and higher.

Students with a lower test anxiety index (<12) Students account for 12%, which is too small. They have lower levels of test anxiety. Such people are often slightly nervous in the face of exams, with only a little anxiety, but it is still normal, which will not have a greater impact on students' study and life. There are two reasons for this situation. First, students have sufficient preparation for the exam, have a good grasp of knowledge, can skillfully use knowledge, and can correctly view the exam, are calmer, and the level of exam anxiety is low. It is also the case that students ignore the test too much and do not care about the results of the test, so their levels of test anxiety are naturally low.

At the same time, students (12-20) with high exam anxiety index accounted for 41.33%, nearly half of the students have high exam anxiety, and they are often nervous before the exam. Such anxiety will cause them to lose confidence in the exam, lose their attention when reviewing, and have low learning efficiency. As a result, often simple tasks take much longer to complete. In addition, they often have a lot of physiological reactions during the exam, such as the rapid heartbeat mentioned in the questionnaire, sweating, and other physiological symptoms, and this symptom often makes them play abnormally in the exam and cannot play at their due level, resulting in a test score that is far from the usual score.

Additionally, those students with a high test anxiety index (>20) accounted for 46.7% of the total students, which is the largest number of students as we can see in figure 1. Often, in daily life, one can clearly feel the pressure brought by the exam. Often, when the exam is coming, there will be mental and physiological conditioning reflexes, like in the questionnaire, like not eating before the exam and mental tension caused by mental depression (more serious than those students who scored between 12 and 20). This will produce an involuntary fear of the exam; this feeling often makes the student fail even if the exam is well reviewed, but also very confident. These tests and the end of the exam will seriously affect the student's normal psychological state and daily life.

So why is there such a higher and higher test anxiety index?

In this survey, we can find that nearly 90% of Chinese college students now suffer from exam anxiety, and nearly half of them have a high exam anxiety index, which has increased significantly compared with Wang at that time [10]. It can be seen that Chinese college students have more and more exam pressure on campus, and they are subjected to more and more exam pressure. First of all, nowadays, in China, the scale of higher education has a tendency to further exaggerate. According to the press conference held by the Ministry of Education, PRC in 2022, the enrollment rate of higher education in 2022 will be 59.6%, 1.8 percentage points higher than that of the previous year, and a total of 10.1454 million students will be enrolled in general and vocational colleges nationwide. An increase of 6.11% over the previous year. Among them, regular undergraduate enrollment was 4.679,400, an increase of 5.25 percent over the previous year. Vocational undergraduate enrollment was 76,300, an increase of 84.39 percent over the previous year. A total of 1.242,500 graduate students were enrolled nationwide, an increase of 5.61 percent over the previous year. Among them, 556,100 are doctoral students, and 3,097,500 are studying for master's degrees. It can be seen that the number of students with original degrees and above is increasing, and the competition between

college students is becoming more common. Students with test anxiety often appear in these people; the frequency of emergence is getting higher and higher, and the degree of test anxiety is becoming more and more serious. If there is a test, there will be test anxiety Especially when encountering big exams, as scheduled in the final exam, the most English CET-4 and CET-6 exams are still in the postgraduate entrance examination qualification exam, etc., exam anxiety increases with the number of exams.

Second, and more important, is the length of the anxiety contagion period. Students with test anxiety often suffer from test anxiety before, during, and after the test. For example, some students will also appear a month before the exam and begin to feel nervous; by the end of the exam, they have not recovered from the situation. Such cases are not uncommon.

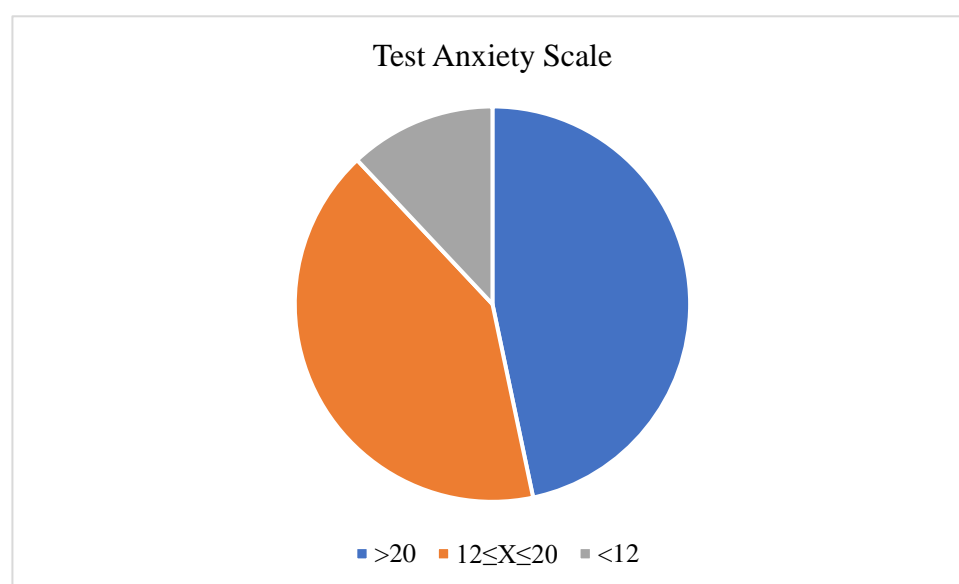


Figure 1: Test Anxiety Scale.

4. Discussion

In the face of this situation, we have two ways to relieve exam anxiety, one is from the physiological level, the other is the psychological level. From the physiological level alone, before the exam, to avoid too much anxiety, you should cultivate your own good and regular habits, and prepare exam supplies in advance, so that you can adjust to the best physical condition on the day of the exam. In addition, in the diet, we also need to pay attention, especially the day before the exam, to eating light and remembering to avoid too much oil and too much spice. It will cause unnecessary stimulation to the stomach, lead to nausea, and so on. In the face of other physical discomforts, such as tinnitus, methods for relieving mild anxiety include listening to soothing music, practicing meditation, or taking a walk. For serious ailments, you can use regulation, wrist-ankle acupuncture point stimulation, or ear acupressure before an exam, all of which can relieve physical discomfort to some extent [12,13,14]. When physical discomfort occurs during the exam, such as breathing too fast, sweating a lot, shaking hands, etc., you can first fold the exam paper and let yourself lie on the desk to calm your thoughts before completing the exam. You can also use methods to adjust your breathing rhythm. This method allows the brain to stop thinking for a while, and then the candidate relaxes the whole body, closes the eyes, focuses on breathing, takes deep breaths several times and exhales evenly, and the brain is best to exclude other distractions when breathing, which can quickly alleviate anxiety to some extent. When physiological discomfort occurs after the exam, different methods can be taken

according to different degrees, such as listening to music, walking or massage, and you can often eat some food like desserts and candy with a lot of sugar that makes you happy [15,16].

In addition, how to relieve anxiety from the psychological aspect is more important. Have a good attitude to get a good test result. Before the exam, those candidates with mild psychological anxiety can make some positive mental adjustments to themselves, such as giving themselves some psychological suggestions. As early as 1898, Sidis said that psychological suggestions are the spontaneous characteristics of human beings [17]. We can increase our confidence through this method and make students more confident in their own strength. Not to be so anxious or even inferior to their own strength or can make themselves become less concerned about the results of the exam, so that students realize that this is just a simple exam. And if there is a more serious psychological anxiety, the most important thing is to face the exam anxiety, not to escape, to face it. It is clear that it is because of the worry about the results of the test that it will lead to exam anxiety, then at this time psychologically you can tell yourself as long as you can be fully prepared, the review materials are prepared to improve, then the exam naturally is not a thing that can cause anxiety. Secondly, before exams, schools should also help students to solve this problem, such as setting up a special psychological counseling group to relieve it, just as Ju & Zhang found that psychological group counseling can improve college students' coping styles for exams, effectively regulate pre-exam anxiety, and improve sleep quality and daily stress to a certain extent. In the exam psychology is very anxious, you can take the above mentioned deep breathing method and simple rest method, at the same time in order to get a better state of mind in the exam, we can use the first to complete the simple question and then complete the difficult, so that you can give yourself a more positive and optimistic psychological suggestion to help you complete the exam [18]. After the exam, if you are still worried about the exam, you can find close parents, relatives or friends around you to talk about the exams, and share your worries and anxieties with them, they will listen to your anxiety and help you relieve it. Or you can choose to eat some favorite food or dessert to brighten your mood [15,16].

5. Conclusion

Although this experiment can prove that the vast majority of Chinese college students have exam anxiety, this anxiety has reached a high degree. However, there are only 75 valid data points in this experiment, and the valid data points are too few, so the subsequent experiments can be further adjusted. At the same time, in this experiment, most of the students were from Wenzhou Kean University, a Sino-foreign cooperative university, and the proportion of students from traditional Chinese universities was too small. In subsequent experiments, the ratio should be adjusted.

In general, it can be found from the above experimental data and elaboration that the test anxiety index of college students is generally high, and college students are often too nervous and anxious about the test, which generally affects their test scores. In future studies, the researchers may specifically look at how to help students build up enough confidence to take the test. From the perspective of school psychological counseling, what specific psychological counseling methods should be adopted to help students alleviate this problem? Or from the point of view of parents, what methods can be used to let children treat the exam more effectively? These things don't just change with one person, one class, or one school. This is relevant to the world, this country, and this society. If students are no longer tested for life, exams no longer define a student. Or even if the students who do not do well in the exam are still looking forward to the future, their life is not a visible despair. These should not only be changed from the students' and parents' exam mentality but also pay more attention to the changes in government policies and regulations to give students more and more opportunities in addition to exams.

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