

CODEN [USA]: IAJPBB

ISSN: 2349-7750



INDO AMERICAN JOURNAL OF  
**PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES**

Available online at: <http://www.iajps.com>

Research Article

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEST ANXIETY AND  
PARENTING IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, MALEKSHAHI,  
ILAM**

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**Abstract:**

*Test anxiety, which is one of the main obstacles of education systems at different levels, is one of the most common phenomena among students. Regarding the effect of test anxiety on academic performance, this study was conducted to determine the relationship between test anxiety and parenting in Malekshahi city of Ilam. The present research is a descriptive cross-sectional study and the statistical population includes all male and female students of high school in Malekshahi city. The subjects were randomly selected from female students and graduated students. For this purpose, Sarason's test anxiety questionnaire was used, which has 25 questions. The data collected were analyzed by SPSS version 18 through using descriptive-analytical statistics and chi-squared statistical test. 100 high school students, 50 males and 50 females, with mean age of  $48.78 \pm 1.74$  for the fathers and  $40.94 \pm 1.60$  years for the mothers, participated in the present study. There was a significant relationship between the decisive method of childbearing and test anxiety ( $P < 0.05$ ). Also, there was a significant relationship between the level of test anxiety and parenting education ( $P < 0.05$ ). According to the findings of the present study, there is a direct relationship between parenting, education, and occupational status of parents with test performance of students; therefore, strict parenting, low level of education, and unemployment can be considered as predisposing factors in increasing the amount of test-anxiety. Therefore, holding counseling and distributing brochures for parents can help reduce test-anxiety.*

**Key words:** *Test Anxiety, Parenting, High school students, Malekshahi, Ilam.*

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Please cite this article in press as Mohamad Reza Havasian and Zohreh Havasian, *The Relationship between Test Anxiety and Parenting in High School Students, Malekshahi, Ilam, Indo Am. J. P. Sci, 2017; 4(11).*

**INTRODUCTION:**

In all human societies, anxiety is considered as an appropriate and consistent response in everyday life. Lack of anxiety or ill-health may end up with many problems and dangers [1]. The balanced anxiety forces the individual to make his weight more durable and efficient in order to do his or her work in a timely and appropriate manner [2]. In the course of their growth, children and adolescents experience a wide range of anxieties, and these anxieties are so intense that might make their everyday and academic life quite difficult. One of the most common and complicated forms of anxiety is test anxiety [3]. Test anxiety involves emotional and mental distress in situations where a person feels that his or her performance is being evaluated [4]. Actually, test anxiety is applied to a case where the individual is afraid of his ability to perform a task, and the result is a reduction in the ability to cope with such expectations [5]. One of the most common concerns and obsessions of the educational system is the problem of student and student anxiety, which is difficult for many to tolerate [6]. One of the most important factors influencing the individual's behavior is the family. Family environment is the first and most important factor affecting the person's personality. The child inherits characteristics from his own, thus giving parents the opportunity to grow their children [7]. The influence of parents on children is not limited to hereditary aspects; rather, parents play crucial role in providing necessary skills for the child to lead a normal social life. The social status of the family, the situation, their level of education, their thoughts and beliefs, the rules of practice, the ideas and wishes of the parents, their level of education, and their attitudes toward child behavior are very influential [8]. Given the key roles and responsibilities of parents in raising children, it is important to assess the impact of this approach on children's disorder. The purpose of this study was to

investigate the relationship between exam anxiety and education in Maleshahi city, Ilam.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

The present research is a descriptive cross-sectional study and the statistical population includes all male and female students of high school in Maleshahi city. The subjects were randomly selected from female students and graduated students. For this purpose, Sarason's test anxiety questionnaire was used, which has 25 questions [9]. If a certain question was answered correctly, a positive score was considered; so, the score of subjects would vary between 0 to 25, with three levels of mild (scores lower than 8), moderate (Scores lower than 12) and intense (scores higher than 12). There was also a parenting questionnaire containing 77 questions of 5 options, with a minimum of 35 and a maximum of 175 points. The data collected were analyzed by SPSS version 18 through using descriptive-analytical statistics and chi-squared statistical test [10-12].

**FINDINGS:**

100 high school students, 50 females and 50 males, with mean age of  $48.78 \pm 1.74$  for the fathers and  $40.94 \pm 1.60$  years for the mothers, participated in the present study. The majority of fathers were self-employed and the majority of mothers, 90%, were housewives (Table 1). Regarding educational level of parents, the majority of fathers, 31%, and mothers, 45%, were illiterate (Table 2). The most frequent parenting method was decisive, 60%, and the least frequent one was leniency, 12%. 16 percent of studied subjects turned out to have mild anxiety, 36% had moderate and 48% had intense anxiety. There was a significant relationship between the decisive method of childbearing and test anxiety ( $P < 0.05$ ). Also, there was a significant relationship between the level of test anxiety and parenting education ( $P < 0.05$ ).

**Table 1: Frequency of occupation in parents.**

Parents	Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Fathers	Unemployed	1	1 %
	Free Jobs	60	60 %
	Employee	24	24 %
	Teacher	4	4 %
	Driver	4	4 %
	labor	7	7 %
	Total	100	100 %
Mothers	Housewife	90	90 %
	Employee	4	4 %
	Teacher	6	6 %
	Total	100	100 %

**Table 2: Frequency of education in parents.**

Parents	Education	Frequency	Percent
<b>Fathers</b>	<b>Illiterate</b>	31	31 %
	<b>Elementary</b>	22	22 %
	<b>Guidance School</b>	10	10 %
	<b>High school</b>	1	1 %
	<b>Diploma</b>	18	18 %
	<b>Pre-Bachelor</b>	11	11 %
	<b>Bachelor</b>	7	7 %
	<b>Total</b>	100	100 %
<b>Mothers</b>	<b>Illiterate</b>	45	45 %
	<b>Elementary</b>	24	24 %
	<b>Guidance School</b>	12	12 %
	<b>High school</b>	1	1 %
	<b>Diploma</b>	6	6 %
	<b>Pre-Bachelor</b>	7	7 %
	<b>Bachelor</b>	5	5 %
	<b>Total</b>	100	100 %

**DISCUSSION:**

Anxiety and its related topics have been one of the most prolific territories for research in recent decades. Recent studies have shown that anxiety disorders, one of its components being test-anxiety, have the highest frequency in the total population [13]. This phenomenon is a major problem in science, experienced by millions of students every year across the globe. 30-50% of college students almost always experience test-anxiety in North America and 18% of students incur disability and overweight as a direct result of severe anxiety and more than 16% of them somewhat struggle with the disorder [14]. This disorder is reported to occur in 17.2% of Iranian students [15]. The relationship between test anxiety and parenting was examined in the city of Malekshahi, Ilam. The results of the present study showed that there is a direct relationship between the way of parenting and anxiety in students, so that the authoritative parenting method can be a factor in increasing test anxiety in students. On the other hand, an easy-going parenting method can play a role in reducing the disorder; however, this can be a factor in student drop-outs. The results of Kazemian Moghadam et al research (2012), which was conducted in order to test the relationship between the simple and multiple test anxiety and its components with the academic performance of female students in the third grade of Behbahan's secondary school, showed that test anxiety and its components have a negative significant relationship with academic performance [16], which confirms the assumptions of the present research. Based on the results of Bahramian et al research (2010), which was conducted to evaluate the

effect of descriptive assessment method on academic achievement and test anxiety in students, showed that students' test anxiety level has been reduced by descriptive evaluation method [17]. The results of Narimani et al study (2006), which was conducted to investigate the causes of the test anxiety among the students and the ways to cope with it, showed that the lack of concentration, distraction, and inadequate test environment affects the students' performance in test; additionally, cognitive-behavioral strategies, such as praying and mentioning God's name, is introduced as one of the most effective ways to overcome test anxiety [18].

**CONCLUSION:**

According to the findings of the present study, there is a direct relationship between parenting, education, and occupational status of parents with test performance of students; therefore, strict parenting, low level of education, and unemployment can be considered as predisposing factors in increasing the amount of test-anxiety. Therefore, holding counseling and distributing brochures for parents can help reduce test-anxiety.

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