

A Study on Students Test-Taking Attitude in Relation to their Self Concept



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Abstract

Reading, as the most important academic skill, receives the special focus in academic achievement. In addition, tests are regularly applied to evaluate academic performance. There are several psychological factors which affect the test performance of a person. One such important factor is test-taking attitude. This study was set to probe the level of Test-taking Attitude among the college students and the relationship with their self concept. The Sample consisted of 100 college students (50 Arts and 50 Science students) pursuing their undergraduate course in St. Joseph's College of Arts and Science (Autonomous), Cuddalore. The data were analyzed by SPSS. Statistical techniques used include 't' test and correlation. Results showed significant impact of gender, discipline, family type and the residence on test-taking attitude.

Keywords: Academic, Test-taking Attitude, Test Performance

Introduction

Education is the process of preparing the individual to become successful in a specific society or culture. In education, the tests become inevitable one by which the academic success is measured. Reading, as the most important academic skill, receives the special focus in academic achievement. In addition, tests are regularly administered to evaluate academic performance. There are several psychological factors which affect test performance of a person. One such important factor is Test-taking attitude.

Test-taking attitude is an approach of a student towards her examinations. A positive attitude suggests that they want to take a test and desire to be better of themselves on their academic performances knowing that education is one of the ways to get ahead in life. Keeping that, as a focus will ensure that their attitude remains positive. If they believe that a test is unimportant, then their attitude will remain negative. It is believed that extreme levels of Test-taking attitude (e.g., high level of anxiety and/or low level of motivation) may have detrimental effects on test performance, resulting in

scores that may not accurately reflect an individual's true abilities (Arvey et al., 1990).

Several studies have probed the impact of test-taking strategies on test performance (e.g., Cohen, 1984; Nevo, 1989; Phakiti, 2008; Radojevic, 2009; Rezaee, 2005). In his study, Rezaee (2005) investigated the impact of knowing and applying test-taking strategies on the test performance taking an achievement and whether the degree the testees use test-taking strategies vary in different sections of the test.

Scharnagl (2004) also conducted an experimental study to examine the impact of additional instruction of test-taking strategies on reading achievement of low-performing third-grade students. The results revealed that the experimental group which received additional instruction in test-taking strategies outperformed the control group which received regular instruction only.

The self-concept is essentially private even though it is in part translated into action by the beliefs we express. Sidhu (1987) defined self-concept as those perceptions, beliefs, feelings, attitudes and values which the individual

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views on describing himself. A person's self-concept is the fundamental core of his entire personality and determines the quality of behavior. In this modern society, students are highly exposed to various external factors like media and technological development. This contributes a maximum level towards one's academic performance which in turn shows more impact on their future and career. This study was set to probe the level of Test-taking attitude among the college students and the relationship with their self-concept.

Method

Sample: The sample of this present study comprised of 100 College students studying their under graduate courses at St. Joseph's college of Arts and Science (Autonomous), Cuddalore. The subjects were among the Arts (n=50) and Science (n=50) disciplines. They come from different backgrounds. Simple random sampling was used in this study.

Tools: Test-taking Attitude Questionnaire (Ellen Brehmer, 19**) was used to assess the test-taking attitude. This scale assesses the test-taking attitude in terms of test anxiety. It consists of 16 statements each followed by two alternative responses viz. True or False. The subject has to blacken one alternative as applicable to him/her. A score of 1 is given for each 'True' except for statements 10 and 13. A score of 1 is given for 'False' for statements 10 and 13. Sum of the scores of all 16 statements gives the level of test anxiety. Total scores from 1 to 7 indicate low level of test anxiety; and from 8 to 16 is considered high level of test anxiety. A score of 12 or more indicates high level of test anxiety.

The self-concept scale (Singh and Singh, 1988) was used to assess the level of self concept. It consists of 22 statements, in which 18 statements were positive and 4 statements were negative which had to be checked on five point continuum. For each statement the numerical values '5', '4', '3', '2' and '1' were given for five responses namely, strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree respectively in case of positive statements. The scoring was reversed in case of negative statements. The scores are summed to obtain the total score. Higher is the score, greater the degree of self-concept. A maximum score of '110' and minimum of '22' could be obtained on this scale.

About 100 printed questionnaires were given to the students with proper instructions by the investigator and all the filled-up questionnaires were received. The subjects were assured of the secrecy of their responses.

Objective

The objective of the present study is to examine the impact of self concept and demographic variables like gender, residence, family type, and the discipline (Arts/Science) on test-taking attitude of under graduate students.

Hypotheses

1. There is significant difference between males and females with regard to their test-taking attitude.
2. There is significant difference between rural and semi-urban students with regard to their test-taking attitude.
3. There is significant difference between students coming from joint and nuclear family with regard to their test-taking attitude.
4. There is significant difference between Science and arts students with regard to their test-taking attitude.

Results and Discussion

Table – 1 Showing the Demographic Characteristics of the sample

Sl. No	Demographic Characteristics	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Sex	Male	50	50
		Female	50	50
2	Discipline	Arts	50	50
		Science	50	50
4	Residence	Rural	69	69
		Urban	31	31
5	Family Type	Joint	25	25
		Nuclear	75	75

In the present study, 50 per cent of the respondents were male while other 50 per cent of the respondents were female. 50 per cent of the respondents were from Arts discipline while other 50 per cent of the respondents were from science discipline. 69 per cent of the respondents are from rural area while 31 per cent of them are from Semi-urban location. 75 per cent of the respondents are from Joint family while 25 per cent of the respondents are from nuclear family.

Table – 2 Shows the Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of their Test-taking Attitude

Sl.No	Attitude	No.of respondents (n=100)	Percentage (100%)
1	Low	92	92.0
2	High	8	8.0

Table – 2 shows that 92 per cent of the respondents have low level of test anxiety and 8 per cent have high level of test anxiety.

Table – 3 Shows the Distribution of the Respondents and their Level of Self-Concept

Sl.No	Level of Self Concept	No. of respondents (n=100)	Percentage (100%)
1	Low	46	46.0
2	Medium	33	33.0
3	High	21	21.0

Table – 3 shows that 46 per cent of the respondents have low level of self-concept, 33 per cent are medium level and 21 per cent of them have high level.

Table - 4 Shows the difference between males and females on their test anxiety

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t Value	LS
Male	50	9.90	2.589	3.549	0.05
Female	50	8.08	2.538		

Table 4 shows that the mean score of male students (9.90) is higher than the mean score of female students (8.08). In order to find out the statistical significance, t – value was computed through SPSS. The obtained t-value indicates that the difference is significant at 0.05 level. The results show that there is significant difference between males and females with regard to their test-taking attitude. Therefore the hypothesis that there is significant difference between males and females with regard to their test-taking attitude is accepted. The result indicates that male students have higher level of test-taking attitude when compared to female students.

Table - 5 Shows the difference between the Rural and Semi-urban students on their test anxiety

Residence	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	LS
Rural	69	9.48	2.682	2.778	0.05
Semi-urban	31	7.90	2.481		

Table 5 shows that the mean score of rural students (9.48) is higher than the mean score of semi-urban students (7.90). The statistical significance was tested through t-test. The obtained t-value indicates that the difference is not significant at 0.05 level. The result shows that there is no significant difference between rural students and semi-urban students with regard to their test-taking attitude. Therefore the hypothesis that there is significant difference between rural and semi-urban students with regard to their test-taking attitude is rejected.

Table - 6 Shows the difference between the students coming from Nuclear family and Joint family on their test anxiety

Family Type	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	LS
Joint Family	25	8.64	3.121	0.2	NS
Nuclear Family	75	9.11	2.571		

Table -6 shows that the mean score of joint family students (8.64) is lower than the mean score of Nuclear family students (9.11). Statistical significance of the difference was tested through t-test. The obtained t-value indicates that the difference is not significant at 0.05 level. This result shows that there is no significant difference between students coming from Joint and Nuclear family with regard to their test-taking attitude. Therefore the hypothesis that there is significant difference between students coming from joint and nuclear family with regard to their test-taking attitude is rejected. The result indicates that there is no significant difference between students coming from nuclear family and joint family on their test-taking attitude.

Table - 7 Shows the difference between Arts and Science students on their test anxiety

Education	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	LS
Science	50	9.34	2.662	1.296	NS
Arts	50	8.64	2.739		

Table 7 shows that the mean score of Science students (9.34) is higher than the mean score of Arts students (8.64). Attempt was made to find out the level of significance of the difference through t-test. The obtained t-value indicates that the difference is not significant at 0.05 level. The obtained result shows that there is no significant difference between Science and arts students with regard to their test-taking attitude. Therefore the hypothesis that there is significant difference between Science and arts students with regard to their test-taking attitude is rejected. The result indicates that there is no significant difference between students belonging to Arts and Science discipline with regard to their test-taking attitude.

Conclusion

1. There is significant difference between males and females with regard to their test-taking attitude. More precisely males have higher level of test anxiety when compared to female students.
2. There is significant difference between rural and semi-urban students with regard to their test-taking attitude. It was found that students coming from rural areas have higher level of test anxiety when compared to students coming from semi-urban areas.

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