Study the relationship between classroom management styles and pupils’ exam anxiety

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ABSTRACT
The present study aimed at studying the relationship between classroom management styles and pupils’ exam anxiety. The population of the present study was all the students at grades 5 and 6 of district 10 in Tehran who attended school at the academic year of 2013-2014. Sample of the study includes 121 students who were randomly selected from 3 schools. Research instruments included questionnaires, class management and examination anxiety. Data were analyzed by statistical methods of regression and Pearson correlation coefficient. Findings indicated that the class management method based on teaching and behavior management is significantly related with the examination anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a natural and predictable phenomenon of the modern age. According to Freud, anxiety is the price paid by the modern human. So, it seems that in this modern age, human difficulties are increasing (Graham, 2005, p. 58). The general expression of examination anxiety refers to a type of anxiety with social fear which makes a person to doubt about his abilities and results of which is lack of ability in facing difficult conditions such as examination. So, it can be said that an anxious person knows the subject very well but the intensity of anxiety is so high that he cannot show his knowledge. Therefore, examination anxiety is a kind of mental occupation which leads to self-humiliation, negative self-evaluation, lack of concentration and improper physical reactions such as high heartbeat, faint, dry mouth, sweaty palm and others (Miranda and others, 2007, p. 494). The evidence showed that about 10 million students experience the examination anxiety every year which is 25 percent disabling (Hill, 1984, quoted by Abulghasemi, 2000). Burk believes that examination anxiety can appear soon at the primary school while Schwazer believes that it appears between 10 to 11 years old, becomes fixed and continues to adulthood. He stated that the scores of examination anxiety is increasing in primary schools as children grow older (Jafari, 1999). Since in present societies, measuring and evaluation are one of the main principles of every educational system and the researches show the negative correlation between examination anxiety and children performance. So, dealing with the causes of anxiety is the main task of researchers. Cognitive theories believe that no event can be the reason for anxiety by itself but personal understanding of different conditions leads to anxiety. As all the reflections and feelings are byproducts of his thoughts, they cause the person to feel anxious in different condition (Mirzaiee, 1997). According to the beliefs of cognitivists, negative thoughts are the reasons for anxiety (Brenz, translated by Gharache daghi, 1994).

Based on the theories of this school, external events cause anxiety and negative feelings are working in all conditions. In order to worry about an event, it should be first analyzed. This is important practically, since feelings can be controlled by changing the thoughts (Cash, 2003, 13).

One of the effective factors in examination anxiety is the class management of the teachers. Quality and quantity of the interactions and relations between students and teachers and the methods for controlling class activities and teaching methods all are the factors affecting the students’ anxiety.

These variables are in sum known as class management which creates the psychological and social environment of the class which can affect the learners differently and help them in controlling the personal system and lead to different levels of anxiety. Therefore, since education and training is one of the main social institutes which is responsible for training human force, proper education needs an efficient system the members of which should cooperate to obtain the goal. On the other hand, teaching and education has the nature of interactive system and school is an active group which makes people ready to enter the society in a more
comprehensive level (Pardakhchti, 2000, p. 13). Class is one of the small social groups and the smallest social
subsystem which has unique features to be distinguished from other organizations and social institutes. This
subsystem wants to obtain the educational goals and so needs to be managed (Rug, 2004, p. 54).

Generally, class management means leading the classroom through planning, organizing the work process,
organizing the environment to improve the control over students advances and predicting potential problems
(Azevedo, 2009, 90). Teachers face important challenges in the class room including: motivating students,
group works, supporting the students behaviors, monitoring the advancement of students and correct
management can double the teachers’ ability (tujalldin, 2004, p. 43). Correct class management based on
student-orientation and smart relationship makes order, motivates the internal desires for better performance on
learning (Dembo, 2001,p. 25). One of the techniques for effective management is how to speak. A teacher faces
classroom and should have good speech ability and listening. So, he can understand feelings and information
of his students. Listening faces the obstacles such as mind transportation, emotional obstacles, transporting
proper methods of class management and correct relationship at the beginning of academic year, leading
students to grow and make them ready for daily affairs. Class environment is a logical, clam and safe context in
which mental pressure is reduced and teachers and students cooperate (Hoy, 2001, 430).

Researchers face the teachers’ behavior and report different methods of class management and knowing the
differences that which method is more effective for class management. It is important for researchers to pay
attention to three variables of class management that is: teaching management, behavior management and
personnel management in three approaches of non-interventional, interventional and interactional approaches. In
non-interventional approach is based on the fact that they behave based on their nature and training is a way for
emerging the talents.

It is believed that to have a qualitative control on students’ activities. One of the advocates of this approach
is Gordon (1991) and Haim Ginott (1972). The interventional approach instead is based on behavior change.
This approach has a lot of control over the students so that Counter (1992) considers order as an example of
interventional approach.

Other advocates of the approach are Lee Kunter (1992) and Jones (1987). Interactional approach is among
the two mentioned styles which affects the activities for changing the environment and people. In such as
condition, the chance for students and teachers interaction is more and students have more chance for
controlling the activities (Martin and Baldovin, 2000). Teachers apply different management methods for
teaching and growth and so their management style is determined by their bellies. Each style creates different
conditions in the class environment and has different effects on anxiety level of students at examinations. There
have been differences among boys and girls in terms of gender, so that girls are more anxious than boys and
expressing anxiety is more acceptable by the girls (Greg and Dubson, 1995).

Wang, Walberg and Herbert (2003) did a cognitive analysis about students, class management, teaching
quality and student-teacher interactions and considered them as the most important factors for learning.
Different methods and styles used by teachers have different effects on students’ performance and considering
the negative effects of examination anxiety on students’ performance, the goal of the present study is to study
the relationship between class management methods and children anxiety. So, the research questions are:
1. Is there any significant relationship between class management methods (interventional, interactional and
non-interventional) and students’ examination anxiety?
2. Is the students’ examination anxiety predictable based on class management methods (Interventional,
interactional and non-interventional)?

Research Method:

The present research is ex post facto which one of the methods of descriptive research is and it is
correlational. The population of the present study is all the students at grades 5 and 6 of district 10 in Tehran
who attended school at the academic year of 2013-2014 who were totally 11921 including 6310 girl and 5611
boys. 3 boys and 3 girls schools were selected randomly from among 51 primary schools of district 10. 10
students of grade 5 and 10 students of grade 6 are selected and finally answered the three questionnaires. The
questionnaires are entered to the computer and necessary analysis was done on them.

Measurement instruments:
1. Questionnaire of teachers’ classroom management styles: this questionnaire was built by Yazdi and Allie
(2008) based on theoretical bases of Wolfgang, Glikmann and modeling the questionnaire of teachers beliefs
about class control (ABCC) of Martin and others (1998). The questionnaire has 25 items in three Likert scales
(behavior management, people and teaching). Reliability of the questionnaire is calculated in two ways: a) asking
the experts about the correctness of the questionnaires and coordination with different dimensions. In this
method, questionnaire is composed of explanations about the variable and its dimensions and also the items
related to each dimension which is given to the educational management and psychologists.
Generally, considering the frequency of proper responses the correctness of the items was approved. B) Performing analysis of the data for construct validity shows that factor 9 has the higher level than 1 and determines 70 percent of the variance. In next step, based on the scary chart, 3 factors were determined. Studying the building factor after varimax showed that the first factor measures the teaching management variables, second factor measures the people management and the third factor measures the behavior management. So, all the items of the questionnaire load on the loading factors. In addition, the meaningful correlation among factors 1 and 2 (r=0.31), 2 and 3 (r=0.56), and 1 and 3 (r=0.18). Correlation coefficient among people and behavior is higher compared to higher educational management. The reason is that both dimensions of people management and human behavior are measured in the classroom. Cronbach alpha was calculated for reliability of the questionnaire and it is 0.68 which is acceptable.

The list of examination anxiety by Abulghasemi and colleagues (1993): Abulghasemi and colleagues build the test in 1993 with 25 items and multiple-choice answers (never to most of the time). This list is used to measure the examination anxiety in children and teenagers. Obtaining a score higher than 43 scores show the existence of anxiety which is abnormal and lower scores show that the person has no anxiety (Abulghasemi and colleagues, 1993). Validity of the questionnaire was reported as 0.57, 0.68 and 0.43 for girls and boys respectively. Cronbach alpha is 0.71 for the sample and for high and low anxiety group is 0.69 and 0.70 respectively.

Findings:
The information related to test analysis showed that 55.9 percent of the participants were boys and 44.1 of them were girls. 48.6 of them were in grade 5 and 51.4 of them were in grade 6. The results showed that 33.3 percent of the participants have been 12 years old, 43.2 percent were 13 and 23.4 percent were 14 years old.

Table 1: The statistics related to anxiety and class management styles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam anxiety</td>
<td>50.07</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>17.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>10.19</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>11.24</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 1, the mean and standard deviation of the participants are shown for examination anxiety and class management.

Table 2: Classroom management styles and exam anxiety/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>behavior management</th>
<th>people management</th>
<th>educational management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>0.192</td>
<td>examination anxiety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 studies the relationship between examination anxiety and class management styles. Findings show that there is a positive relationship between teaching management style and behavior management at the level of p <0.05. that is by increasing the class management based on teaching and behavior management, the anxiety scores of the students in increased and vice versa. But no meaningful relationship was found between the students’ anxiety and class management style.

Table 3: Predicting exam anxiety by Classroom management styles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variable</th>
<th>independent variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>educational management</td>
<td>examination anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behavior management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is shown in table 3, based on the results of regression analysis with inter method, correlation coefficient of multiple variables for linear combination of class management styles and examination anxiety of the students equal MR=0.128 which is meaningful at the level of p=0.001 and hypothesis is approved. The authoritative behavioral management style with t= - 0.262 and significance level of p=0.005 is meaningful and has a significant role in preventing anxiety and is more meaningful comparing to other styles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All of us feel anxious in different conditions of life. Some of the events make us to feel that we are in a hazardous condition and in these conditions; anxiety is a natural reaction for facing problems but continuing the condition lead to big challenges. In this condition a student who has learnt teaching materials cannot use them in exam and so it is expected that there is a negative correlation between anxiety scores and test scores (Mikaieeli,
Increasing the anxiety among children and teenagers made various researches to be done in this field which are toward knowing the factors affecting the examination anxiety and its effect on different personal, training and educational dimensions. One of the effective factors on students’ anxiety is class management (Biabangard, 2007).

Results of the hypotheses are in line with the studies of Morris and Libert (1967) which considered two distinguished factors for determining anxiety effects. The important part of examination anxiety is worry and cognitive activity related to homework which includes cognitive worry about the consequence of failure on examination and negative thoughts about it. Excitement factor points to the nervous reactions, self-understanding, physiologic relations and excitement and emotional moods along with anger. In addition factors of worry and excitement are considered as interventional by Baukher and Hazalious (1985). The interventional factors point to the fact that a person is ready for not focusing on homework and disability in solving the problems and self-thinking are parts of this factor. It can created in every condition form low to high stress.

Limitation of the Study:

Only the primary school students of district 10 of Tehran participated in this study. So, the age ranges of 12 to 15 did not participated in the study and all the students were healthy and normal ones.

Suggestion:

Finally it is suggested that the research domain can be developed to more samples except the student samples and can include other schools and groups. It is also suggested that 1) based on the research findings, people with lower examination anxiety have higher life quality and can be the training experts, 2) examination anxiety should be studied in other conditions and since this psychometric construct is related to personality components, it can be used as treatment and informing tool.

REFERENCES


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