Socio-Demographic Corelates of Examination Anxiety and Time Management among Tertiary Institutions in Kaduna State

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Abstract

Examination or test anxiety is a phenomenon that affects all category of learners regardless of one's level of preparedness. Ability to manage time effectively and subdue anxiety pangs are however influenced by various factors. This study examined socio-demographic characteristics that affect time management and examination anxiety among students of tertiary institutions in Kaduna state. The population consisted of 270 final year psychology students conveniently sampled from Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and Kaduna State University. Time management questionnaire and test anxiety scale were used to collect data from respondents. Analysis was done using frequency and percentage, independent sample T – test and ANOVA. Findings revealed that age significantly affects the experience of examination anxiety while age had no significant influence on time management. Gender and marital status did not significantly affect time management and examination anxiety. Course instructors are urged to adopt various confidence-boosting techniques in the course of lesson delivery, as well as, maintaining positive disposition expressed in choice of words to students.

Key words: Examination anxiety, Time management, and Socio-demographic characteristics

Introduction

The feeling of unease in the face of an approaching event can be understood as a normal feeling in humans regardless of one's level of preparedness or unpreparedness toward that event. Anxiety comes in various forms such as worry and restlessness, and it expresses itself as a major emotional component of human disposition. When this emotion becomes evident; with relation to an examination or appraisal, it is called examination anxiety. Anxiety is a state of exaggerated fear, restlessness, misery or fear of a forthcoming danger that triggers various behaviors as a form of defense mechanism. Anxiety is accompanied by some physiological implications which can amplify heart rate, sweating palms, shivering with various reactions which can endanger self-confidence or self-worth, which affect university students in a given examination (Adewuyi et al., 2012). Anxiety can also be referred to as a heightened state of unpleasant feeling synonymous to extreme fear, including sensation of threats, unclear meaningless fear, a situation of restlessness

and a general sensation of nervousness (Syokwaa et al., 2014). Anxiety could also be viewed as a situation where a person is apprehensive about uncertainty or set of circumstances (Huberty, 2009).

According to Elazizi et al., (2012), examination anxiety can be considered as the psychological and emotional reactions to a possibly unpleasant consequence as a result of performance on examination or in an evaluative situation. Examination anxiety could also be seen as the combined effect of physiological, over-arousal, tension and somatic symptoms in addition to worries, dread, and fear of failure that happens prior to or during examination situations (Okogu et al., 2016). Anxiety before an examination is a normal feeling, however, when it becomes too much, it may be harmful (Dobson, 2012). Examination anxiety comes with various symptoms; that includes insomnia or lack of appetite, palms become sweaty, craving for different food, and lack of concentration (Huberty, 2009). There are certain symptoms that result from examination anxiety which could be due to the fact that they are not well prepared, memorizing the day prior to the examination date, inadequate studying pattern, lapses in keeping, or the test not being properly organized (Akanbi, 2013).

Managing time refers to the arrangement, organization, making of schedules and planning one's time with the goal of achieving added effective work and output. This can be the deliberate allocation, distribution and structuring of time among competing demands based on priority because, we cannot store time and its accessibility cannot be amplified over twenty four hours (Adebayo, 2015). To Aduke (2015), time management refers to a set of values, practice, ability, tools and structure that are combined to help the individual achieve more values out of their timeframe with the goal of advancing the excellence of their lives. Daily life should not be taken as a gamble and time allocation to every activity will be of tremendous benefit. In contrast to other things, time lost is never regained, and time management is usually an individual challenge.

Time is perceived as a valuable commodity. It is one asset which remains constant and will not be purchased or kept. A key factor that determines living a successful life is effective time management possessed equally by everyone, which brings much emphasis on adequate planning (Walters et al., 2021). Although the task performed determines how effective and efficient time will be used and varies accordingly, a huge demand is expected from modern world employees

to further increase their level of knowledge and skill necessitating effective time planning. The competitive environment in existence today encourages people from a tender age as far back as their elementary education to take time management seriously (Razali, et al., 2018).

Time management performs an important task in increasing the scholar's academic performance and achievements. Every student is expected to have the ability to manage time effectively, which includes prioritizing activities in line with one's goals, and scheduling of daily activities for efficient time usage. Self-motivation in this case is a prerequisite to effective time management (Yener et al., 2021).

Statement of the problem

Examinations are a test of the extent to which an individual has acquired the desired learning required or expected of him or her over a specified period. Besides serving as criteria for promotion to a higher level or certification, an examination should also be to the student or examinee; a personal evaluation exercise to know the areas that need more studies/ practice as well as areas of strength/ proficiency as one pursues a career or skill acquisition path. If understood in the light of the latter, anxiety serves a positive function to spur an individual towards devoting more time to study and be adequately prepared. However, examinations in Nigeria and particularly to students of higher institutions, have become akin to a "verdict administration exercise" where failure to pass at a sitting sometimes results in repeated sittings throughout ones years and extra years in school. This situation has made examinations to be a time of much anxiety for students which pushes them to engage in all forms of malpractices just to pass.

Anxiety itself does not operate in isolation in relation to examination because; several factors bothering on the state of a person's socio- demographic characteristics could also affect anxiety levels and time management ability. Improper time management and anxiety contribute to poor performance in academics among university students which is a social problem to the society. The perpetuation of this status quo would result in demoralization of both students and teachers towards learning and teaching, and this in turn will affect the educational process.

Objectives

The general aim of the study is to investigate the extent to which socio-demographic characteristics influence anxiety and time management among university students in Kaduna state. The specific objectives are:

i. To find out the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, marital status, income) and examination anxiety.
ii. To examine the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and time management strategy.

Research questions

i. What is the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and examination anxiety?
ii. To what extent do socio-demographic characteristics influence time management strategy?

Literature review

Conceptual clarification

Anxiety: Adewuyi et al., (2012) defined anxiety as a state of exaggerated nervousness, restlessness, misery or fearing an unavoidable danger which triggers sets of behaviors which includes defense strategies. Anxiety is experienced by people when faced with events beyond their control. Sometimes unpredictable, threatening or dangerous events can also trigger anxiety. Anxiety could be caused by factors which range from neurobiological / genetic, psychological or social. Neurobiological/ genetic causes stem from inherited genes which are transmitted to individuals and are beyond their control. Such individuals are more prone to anxiety disorders than others. Psychological factors come from an individual's internal conflict with regards to perceived ability to control or predict events. Socially, anxiety could be triggered by certain social events occurring in an individual's life at a point in time, or could be a result of the social interactions and patterns established in a cultural setting.

Examination anxiety: Sunday et al., (2018) defined examination anxiety as a feeling of unease or apprehension-experienced prior, during, or after an examination due to concern, worry or fear. Examination anxiety is a psychological and physical condition with somatic features, emotions,

cognition and behavioural consequences. It can also be seen as excessive worry experienced before, during and after a class test or examination (Adewuyi et al., 2016).

According to Ayodele, et al., (2022) examination anxiety can interfere with academic performance to bring about low self-esteem, and lack of self-efficacy. Lentz, (2017), sees anxiety as a physiological state experienced by people; and leads to extreme stress, anxiety, and discomfort during or prior to examination. Weda & Juanda (2019) define examination anxiety as a form of reaction to stimuli which has to do with the person's experiences of test or evaluations. Other factors associated with examination anxiety as suggested by Sitzmann & Ely (2011) include uncomfortable examination halls, the examiner's unfriendly behavior among others and internal factors like preparing poor test questions, insufficient description of the context, lack of clarity in exam instructions, lack of lecturers' dedication and resourcefulness, lack of appropriate use of suitable teaching methods and lack of teaching experience on the part of the lecturers. However on the side of the students, poor test taking skills, backward students' knowledge base, inadequate problem solving skills, inability to effectively manage time, poor study habits, among other things could cause anxiety in students during examinations.

Time management: Ogundele & Afolabi (2015) define time management as a process of coordinating, planning, directing and controlling the time devoted for specific activities, programs and responsibilities to enhance efficiency and competence in an organization. Time management can also be understood as a method utilized by students to manage their time to be able to gain superior academic performances as a key factor to success in their academy. Therefore, Students need to realize that giving priority to important matters is the first step of time management. Remaining focused on issues essential for success is very important. (Hamza et al., 2014). Time management behaviors include: short-range planning, long- range planning and time attitudes (Nasrullah & Khan, 2015). Short-range planning is the systematic assignment of responsibilities within a short period of time. Short-range planning has been defined as time management activities involving daily or weekly time frame that cover activities in the form of setting daily objectives at the beginning of the day, by creating work contents based on priorities (Ahmad, et al., 2019). Short range planning has been shown to be associated with good performance when fully optimized. (Mammadov, 2022). Long-range planning on the other hand implies having long-range objectives accompanied by disciplined routines. Time attitudes have

to do with the individual's consciousness and attitude about time management and can be compared to the opinion of having control over time. Hence, time attitudes comprise of the view of the individual that has control over time, compared to the perception that the person is managing time efficiently (Karim & Kandy, 2011).

Empirical review

Tsegay et al., (2019), investigated the relation between test anxiety and academic performance, they found no significant connection between test anxiety and academic output. The statistical result showed that there is no significant relationship between test anxiety and academic output in university science students. This finding disagreed with previous studies which have showed that high test anxiety influences academic performance. They therefore, concluded that academic performance of university science students depends on other factors like intelligence, school facilities and discipline and not so much on test anxiety. Similarly, Alemu & Feyssa (2020) conducted a study with a sample of 187 English undergraduate students to examine the relationship between test anxiety and academic accomplishments; he realized that students with good academic accomplishments produce low test anxiety scores and the other way round also.

Nasrullah & Khan (2015) carried out an investigation on the impact of time management in relation to the student's academic achievement, and they found statistically significant result which revealed that time management and academic achievement are related; they concluded that successful students are good managers of time. Sayari et al., (2017) also studied the relationship between time management and academic performance; they concluded that time management is significantly related to the student's academic performance; students should consider that as a priority, because it proved to be significantly correlated.

Theoretical framework

This study rests on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory which posits that, individual have a range of needs to satisfy and until the basic needs which occupy the bottom of the pyramid and are very essential for the individual's survival are satisfied, the tendency to aspire higher is diminished. In this case, a student whose needs for food, accommodation, and the like are not met would not be able to manage his/her time in studying but, would be carried away

with struggles to settle those needs. Without adequate time devoted to studying, anxiety likely sets in and tis could affect performance examinations.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach using a correlational study design that provides a basis for studying relationships among naturally occurring variables that are assessed with the goal of identifying predictive relationships. The population comprised of students of two universities in Kaduna state, that is, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Kaduna state university, Kaduna. Convenience sampling technique was used to select 270 psychology students who were in their final year from the two universities. Instruments used consisted of cognitive test anxiety scale on 4-point Likert scale responses and time management scale on a 5-pont Likert arrangement. SPSS version 21 was used for data analysis and presentation was done using frequency and percentage. Independent sample T – test and ANOVA for comparison and Pearson correlation test was used to measure the relationship between examination anxiety and time management.

RESULTS

Table 1.
Socio-demographic variables of the sample

		n (%)
Age	17 and below	13(4.8)
	18 – 24	125(46.3)
	25 – 30	96(35.6)
	31 and above	36(13.3)
Gender	Female	113(41.9)
	Male	157(58.1)
Marital Status	Single	218(80.7)
	Married	44(16.3)
	Others	8(3.0)

Accommodation	live with my parents	23(8.5)
	live in a flat or house alone	43(15.9)
	live in flat or house with my friends	168(62.2)

Table 2.
Comparison of anxiety scores according to the gender of the participants

	N	Mean	Sd	T	P
Female	113	59.09	11.87	0.560	0.514
Male	157	58.32	10.83		

Table 2 related to the comparison of anxiety scores according to the gender of the participants using t-test method revealed that there was no statistical significant difference between the anxiety scores and gender of the participants (t = 0.560, P > 0.05)

Table 3.
Comparison of anxiety scores according to the age of the participants

	N	Mean	Sd	F	P
17and	13	60.69	11.61	3.089	0.028
18 – 24	125	60.08	10.74		
25 – 30	96	58.29	12.44		
31and above	36	53.86	8.17		

Comparison of the anxiety scores according to the age of the participants using ANOVA revealed that there is a statistical significant difference between anxiety and age of the participants (F =3.089, P < 0.05). An advanced analysis using turkey method revealed that the anxiety scores of ages 17 and below (60.69 ± 11.61) is significantly higher than the score of ages 18 – 24 (60.08 ± 10.74), 25 - 30 (58.29 ± 12.44) and 31 and above (53.86 ± 8.17).

Table 4.
Comparison of anxiety scores according to the marital status of the participant

	N	Mean	Sd	F	P
Single	218	58.42	11.04	0.909	0.404
Married	44	58.79	12.11		
Others	8	63.88	12.59		

Comparison of anxiety scores according to the marital status of the participants using ANOVA revealed that there is no statistical significant difference between the marital status scores of the participants single (58.42 ± 11.04), married (58.79 ± 12.11) and other participants (63.88 ± 12.59) (F=0.909, P> 0.05).

Table 5.
Comparison of anxiety score according to accommodation of the participants

Accommodation	N	Mean	sd	F	P
Live with parents	23	62.30	13.88	1.846	0.139
Live in flat or house alone	43	60.56	12.56		
Live in a flat or house with friends	168	58.14	10.61		
Stay in the dormitory	36	56.36	10.39		

Comparison of anxiety scores according to accommodation of the participants using ANOVA reveal that there is no statistical significant difference between the scores of the participants who live with parents (62.30 ± 13.88), live in flat or house alone (60.56 ± 12.56), live in a flat or house with friends (58.14 ± 10.61) and those who stay in dormitory (56.36 ± 10.39) (F = 1.846, P > 0.05).

Table 6.

Comparison of time management scores according to the gender of the participants

	N	Mean	Sd	T	p
Female	113	46.27	10.68	0.423	0.673
Male	157	46.79	9.26		

comparison of time management scores according to the gender of the participants using ttest method reveal that there was no statistical significant difference between the anxiety scores and gender of the participants (t = 0.423, P > 0.05)

Table 7.

Comparison of time management scores according to the age of the participants

	N	Mean	Sd	F	P
17 and below	13	47.08	11.66	0.045	0.987
18 – 24	125	46.49	9.29		
25 – 30	96	46.76	10.74		
31 and above	36	46.17	9.03		

Comparison of time management scores according to the age of the participants using ANOVA method reveal that there was no statistical significant difference between time management scores and age of the participants (f = 0.045, P > 0.05).

Table 8.

Comparison of time management scores according to the marital status of the participants

	N	Mean	Sd	F	P
Single	218	46.00	9.45	2.000	0.137
Married	44	48.70	10.77		
Others	8	50.38	14.23		

Comparison of time management scores according to the marital status of the participants using ANOVA reveal that there is no statistical significant difference between the marital status scores of the participants single (46.00 ± 9.45), married (

48.70 ± 10.77) and other participants (50.38 ± 14.23)   (F=2.000, P> 0.05).

Table 9.
Comparison of time management according to the accommodation of the participants

	N	Mean	Sd	F	P
Live with parents	23	48.52	10.54	0.884	0.450
Live in a flat or house alone	43	47.81	11.91		
Live in a flat or house with friends	168	46.34	9.36		
Stay in dormitory	36	44.94	9.05		

Comparison of time management scores according to accommodation of the participants using ANOVA reveal that there is no statistical significant difference between the scores of the participants who live with parents (48.52 ± 10.54), live in flat or house alone (47.81 ± 11.91), live in a flat or house with friends (46.34 ± 9.36) and those who stay in dormitory (44.94 ± 9.05) (F = 0.884, P > 0.05).

Discussion

Time management and examination anxiety are critical factors in the determinants of success in academics and other endeavours. This study examined the relationship between examination anxiety and time management, and the relationship between the students' demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, monthly income and accommodation) with examination anxiety and time management. Findings of this study revealed that males and females experience examination anxiety in similar degrees and managed their time in similar ways though this disagrees with Adewuyi et al., (2012) who found that females experienced heightened levels of anxiety compared with their male counterparts. Significant variation in anxiety levels according to age was also established by results of the study which corroborates findings of previous studies that younger people of ages 17 and below display higher levels of anxiety compared to older ones. Also no significant differences were observed in anxiety levels and time management practice according to marital status, income level and accommodation type. The results of this

investigation show that there is no significant correlation between examination anxiety and time management by age, marital status, income and accommodation. This therefore suggests that other factors may be responsible for causing examination anxiety and improper time management. Further studies should be conducted to explore factors associated with anxiety and time management among other tertiary institutions in the state as well as across various faculties and specializations.

Conclusion

Instructors, teachers, supervisors, parents and all close associates of students should encourage a more relaxed disposition to tests and examination while students inculcate proper time management skills to ensure adequate preparation.

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