

Abstract

The present research was conducted to explore the phenomena of test anxiety, study habits and academic achievement of undergraduate students. A series of three studies was carried out. Mixed method approach was used. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw the sample in all the studies. The quantitative study was conducted to investigate the effect of study habits and gender on test anxiety and academic achievement. The sample was comprised of 180 undergraduate students (84 boys and 96 girls). Test Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1980b) and Study Skills Inventory (Congos, 2010) were used to collect data. MANOVA indicated that study habits and gender had a significant main effect on academic achievement and test anxiety. It was revealed that students having effective study habits experience low level of test anxiety and perform better academically than students having ineffective study habits. It was also indicated that girls experience high level of test anxiety and excel more academically than boys. The result of *t*-test revealed that girls have better study habits than boys. Correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationship between study habits and academic achievement and test anxiety is negatively correlated with academic achievement and study habits. Regression analysis indicated that study habits and gender predict test anxiety and academic achievement. The second study was conducted to explore the stimuli causing test anxiety and to make a hierarchy of these stimuli. Open-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from 120 students. Frequency count and bar charts were used to make a hierarchy from the least test-anxiety-provoking stimulus to the most. By using multidimensional scaling two dimensions of test-anxiety-provoking stimuli were emerged i.e. prior to performance versus performance phase and appraisal versus

reappraisal. The qualitative study was conducted to explore the experience of having ineffective study habits and test anxiety. Four semi-structured interviews were conducted. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to assess data. Fourteen major themes were emerged that included academic procrastination, ineffective study orientation, cramming, examination malpractice, poor concentration, test preparation setting, emotional reactions, worry cognitions, exam anxiety during preparation, performance phase, reflection phase, coping strategies, insight about problem and seeking professional help. The study concluded by summarizing the main findings, highlighting the implications of the research and directions for future research.

Keywords: test anxiety, study habits, academic achievements, multidimensional scaling