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A Study of Anxiety level of Student-Teachers

Introduction

Every student in a teacher education program is expected to do various tasks like preparing projects and assignments, studying the theoretical subjects and to imply the theories in the best possible way in the real classrooms during the practice teaching. Practice teaching serves as the pre-service teacher's initiation into the real-life world of the school.

Several studies have also looked at the nature of student teacher anxieties related to practice teaching. It was seen that student teachers experience anxiety from factors such as evaluation, pupil and professional concerns, classroom management and teachingpractice requirements pedagogical staff relations factors (Hart, 1987; Morton et al., 1997; Capel, 1997). Researchers have noted that student teachers' potentialsources of anxiety can vary greatlyfrom individual to individual. Apart, from the aspects related to the pre service teachers' training program mentioned above student teachers may also have anxiety related to their own personality attributes and aspects of their personal life like culture, tradition or even sex. (Fontana &Abouserie, 1993; Magnusson, 1982).

In the Indian context the females student teachers are bound to have anxiety not only due to the components of the teacher education curriculum but also due to the heavy responsibility household put on them at this age of their life. Majority of the women student teachers in India join the B. Ed. course after marriage so along with the B. Ed. course they have to simultaneously take care of the relatives at home and the household chores. Even the unmarried females also have such responsibilities to some extent. Due to all these reasons the student teachers especially the women student teachers may fall short of time to prepare

for their lessons. Along with these aspects the student teachers if the student teachers lack personal attributes like good communication, ability to take initiative ability to lead the class good command over language required for becoming a good teacher, the anxiety increases. A combined effect of the household factors and the personal factors may lead to high level or low level of anxiety in the female student teachers which leads to ineffective teaching learning activities in the class (Morton et al., 1997).Thus a need arises to counsel and guide the female teachers to maintain a moderate level of anxiety level in the class.

Significance of Anxiety

Anxiety (also called **angst** or **worry) is a** psychological and physiological state characterized by emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components (Seligman, Walker, E.F. & Rosenhan, 1999). It is the displeasing feeling of fear and concern. (Davison, Gerald C. 2008).Anxiety is a multidimensional experience that can weaken academic performance and professional performance (Onwuegbuzie& Wilson, 2003). The hyper anxious state may,lead to certain physical and behavioral outcomes like depression, frustration, panic, worry, headaches, physical tension, perspiration. A person with low anxiety experiences disruption of thinking process, weakening of academic or professional performance, diminishing information process skills and inattention, negative thoughts (Onwuegbuzie, Slate & Schwartz, 2001).Though hyper anxiety or low anxiety may have its roots in the psychological, physiological, cognitive and emotional state of the human being it has its expression in terms of behavior. For a student teacher their behavior in front of the students is an important component of the teaching learning process. The above stated symptoms and behaviors exhibited by the hyper and low anxious person implies such behaviors may have a negative impact on the students learning if a teacher exhibit this. Thus it is necessary that the anxiety level of the student teachers should be moderate for a proper channelization of the learning. Anxiety is considered to be a normal reaction to a stressor. It may help an individual to deal with a demanding situation by prompting them to cope with it(NIMH,USA). However, when anxiety becomes overwhelming, it may fall under the classification of an anxiety disorder and it may affect the daily routine and important tasks.

SCAT

Sinha's comprehensive Anxiety test abbreviated as SCAT was designed by A.K.P Sinha and L.N.K Sinha for college students. The test has ninety items that aims to find information like communicative ability, occasions when they get nervous, behaviors exhibited during nervousness, mental status during the anxious situation, decision-making abilities and tolerance abilities during unusual situations and physical and physiological symptoms

exhibited during anxiety. The interpretation of the obtained scores is given based on the percentiles given for the five categories namely: Extremely High Anxiety (scores between P_{80} toP_{99}), high anxiety (scores at P_{75} andP_{70}), Normal anxiety level (P_{40} to P_{60}) Low anxiety level (scores at P_{25} andP_{30}) extremely low anxiety (scores between P_5 toP_{20}). The scores are divided based on the median (19.94) and the quartile deviation calculated on its basis of that Q3was found at score 29 and Q_1 was found at score 14.

Review of Related Literature

Mnicholas and Lewiensohn (1998) conducted a study on the anxiety on the basis of gender differences. The data indicates that at age 6, females are already twice more likely to have experienced anxiety disorders than males. Bryme (2000) conducted a study on anxiety, depression and coping strategies in adolescents. Results suggested that males present significant decrease of anxiety and fear in 12th grades instead of girls who show increase in anxiety and by this time both males and females use different coping strategies in order to deal with fear and anxiety. Pomerantz et al., (2002) in a study on, "Gender Differences in Academic Performance and Internal Distress." Girls out performed boys across all four subjects but were more prone to internal distress than boys were. Girls doing poorly in school were the most vulnerable to internal distress. Yousefi et al. (2010) determined the relationship between test- anxiety and academic achievement among adolescents in Iran and found that there was a significant correlation between test anxiety and academic achievement. In addition, there is a significant difference of academic achievement between male and female adolescents where by females score higher in their academic achievement. Thus studies indicate that female students are more prone to suffer from extremely high or high anxiety symptoms. Hence they require support and guidance to maintain stability during the high or low anxiety stage.

Rationale

The future of the country is shaped in the classroom (The Education Commission, 1964-66) The future of the country implies the students whose all-round development is foundation for nation's development. Their all-round development lies in the hands of the teachers teaching them. Hence it becomes imperative to equip the teachers with all the skills, knowledge and personality attributes required for addressing the needs of the present day students.one such personality attribute is anxiety which plays a vital role in maintaining the vigor of the teaching learning process if it is moderate. The variation in the anxiety level of female teachers is high or low, due to various reasons. This variation hinders the teaching learning process (Zalta&Chambless, 2012).The variations in anxiety should be channelized by

providing proper guidance to the student teachers.With the aim to provide guidance to the female teachers having high or low anxiety in the R. N. Pittie B.Ed. College for Women (Vadodara District-Karelibaug) the investigators conducted this study. This college was selected purposely due to the ease of access.

Specification of the research problem

Statement of the Problem

A Study of Anxiety level of Students-Teachers of Vadodara

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the anxiety level of student-teachers

2. To study the causes of anxiety level of student-teachers

3. To provide the guidance to the student teachers for maintaining a moderate level of anxiety

Operationalization of the terms

Anxiety Level: The anxiety level is considered as per the percentile scores mentioned in the SCATS.

Delimitation of the study

The study was delimited to the R.N.Pittie B.Ed. College for Women (Vadodara District-Karelibaug), affiliated to S.N.D.T Women's University, Mumbai

Methodology:

Research Design

The study was adescriptive survey,since it was describinganxiety level of B.Ed. students.

Population of the Study

All the 60 female student teachers studying in the R.N.Pittie B.Ed. College for Women – during the academic year 2011-12 constituted the population of the study.

Sample of the study

According to the feasibility of the investigators and the permission granted by the 60 student-teachers of the R. N. Pittie B.Ed. College for Women were selected purposively as the sample. The SCAT test was administered to 60 student teachers. A focused group discussion was carried out with all the student teachers having high and low anxiety and using purposive sampling technique.

Tool and techniques for Data Collection:

I. SCAT (Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test)

SCAT a Standardized Tool prepared by A.K.P. Sinha and L.N.K. Sinha was used to find the anxiety level of Student teachers.

The anxiety scale was consisted of two parts, part one consisted of oral instructions & space for collecting personal data of B.Ed. students. Part two had items seeking information about the various situations wherein the student teachers could experience anxiety.

II. Focused Group Discussion

After administering SCAT (Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test) the investigators conducted focused group discussion to find out the causes of the hyperanxiety and low anxiety level of the students-teachers.

Procedure for Data Collection

The data was obtained by administering SCAT (Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test) on the student teachers of the institute. The duration of given to complete the tool was one hour. After the analysis of the SCAT, the investigators conducted the focused group discussion with the student teachers having high anxiety and low anxiety level.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from SCAT was analysed and interpreted based on the interpretation criteria given by Sinha and Sinha. Data from the focused group discussion was analysed qualitatively. After finding the causes for high and low anxiety of student teachers the investigators provided the guidance from the professional guidance personnel.

Percentile Equivalents of test scores for girls (N=60)

Percentiles	Percentile scores	Interpretation	Number of students
P_{99} P_{95} P_{90} P_{80}	71 41 36 29	Extremely High Anxiety	**40**
P_{75} P_{70}	28 27	High Anxiety	**6**
P_{60} P_{50} P_{40}	25 23 20	Normal Anxiety level	**10**
P_{30} P_{25}	16 15	Low Anxiety	**2**
P_{20} P_{10} P_{5}	13 9 4	Extremely Low Anxiety	**2**

Findings and Discussion

The above results show that 40 student teachers fall under the extremely high anxiety category. The focused group discussion with all the 40 student teachers having extremely high anxiety revealed that they got anxious due to the various things to be managed like taking care of kids and parents at home, completing the household chores and then planning for their practice teaching classes. They opined that a theyplanned a good lesson and based on that they expected a good performance in the class, but due to different workload, they were unable to achieve the planned target.Four student teachers with low anxiety and extremely low anxiety level expressed that the lack of communication ability and decision-making abilities made them less anxious. They expressed that their sluggish and inactive behaviour during practice teaching. They also opined that neither couldtake initiative nor could communicate well in the classroom.

Guidance Session

Investigators provided the guidance to student teachers (with high and low anxiety level) with the support of special guidance professional. The professional gave some tips to the student teachers to reduce anxiety like to make a proper plan for the household and professionalactivities and follow it. Guidance was given to create awareness about the negative effects of high anxiety on health and to overcome that some relaxation techniques were taught. The guidance professional taught the strategies to make futuristicgoals and to achieve it timelyto the student teachers with low anxiety.Some CDs and books on meditation was also provided to the student teachers.

Conclusion

Maintaining moderate level of anxiety helps the student teachers to create a climate of zeal and enthusiasm in the classroom, which helps the students to learn properly. Moderate level of anxiety helps the student teachers to plan the lessons properly and achieve the set objectives for the class. In the long run the moderate level of anxiety will help the student teachers to achieve their goals of life. It would help them to reduce the negative effects of anxiety on their health.

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