

Involvement of Parents and Teachers in managing Test Anxiety among Secondary School Students in Rawalpindi

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ABSTRACT

Test anxiety is a major psychological challenge that affects the academic performance and emotional well-being of secondary school students. This study aimed to measure the level of test anxiety among secondary school students and examine the involvement of parents and teachers in managing test anxiety in Rawalpindi. A quantitative descriptive survey design was employed and a purposive sampling technique was used to select 248 respondents, including 104 students, 40 teachers, and 104 parents. Three self-developed questionnaires were used to collect the data. The collected data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The findings revealed that secondary school students experienced moderate to high levels of test anxiety, with fear of poor examination performance, nervousness before examinations, and fear of making careless mistakes identified as the major sources of anxiety. The results further indicated that both parents and teachers played a positive role in managing students' test anxiety by providing emotional support, encouragement, guidance, and a supportive learning environment. The study concludes that stronger parent-teacher collaboration and school-based counselling initiatives can effectively help reduce test anxiety and improve student's academic and emotional well-being.



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Introduction

There is test anxiety that affects millions of students across the globe, and it especially occurs when they are in secondary school. Test anxiety refers to fear, tension, nervousness, and worries that learner experience when undertaking exams. Test anxiety that is too intense can result in lack of concentration and memorization abilities and thus affect a student's academic performances negatively. This is due to the increased importance placed by school on academic achievements and exam results, which makes many learners to have a lot of pressure to succeed.

Therefore, test anxiety is becoming a broader problem, and those with intense test anxiety tend to perform poorly compared to other students and have low self-esteem (von der Embse et al., 2018).

Test anxiety is very common among secondary school students due to the fact that this is an age when many things happen simultaneously, such as changes academically, emotionally, and socially. Test anxiety may increase among secondary school students due to the fear of not performing well in academic and performing wise. The anxiety of getting low grades may further demotivate learners from the process of learning. Research proves that the level of test anxiety increases while transitioning into secondary education due to the challenges that come along academically and the performance pressures (Fréchette-Simard et al., 2023).

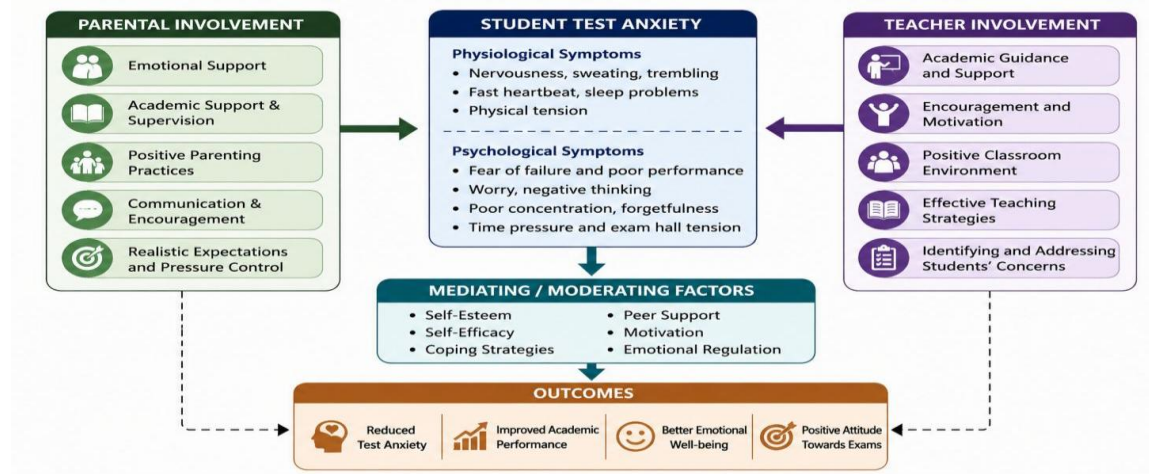
The parents and teachers contribute to the experiences of their students at school at schools and emotional adjustment. The parents provide the emotional encouragement, inspiration, and guidance to their kids, which make them develop self-confidence and ability to cope with academic pressure. Teachers influence the process of learning through their style of teaching, classroom atmosphere, and feedback. Positive relationship between teachers and students, and between parents and their kids motivates them to succeed and makes them psychologically resilient, but excessive pressure may have negative impact and provoke anxiety. (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Thus, parental and teacher's support is extremely important for coping with examination stress and achieving success.

The significance of a positive and encouraging atmosphere of school and family environment has been highlighted by recent research with regard to student's academic performance and psychological well-being. Cooperation and encouragement of parents and teachers in guidance, motivation and support of the child will make him/her able to handle the stress of examinations. Positive interaction between teachers and students have been related to academic achievement as well as emotional adjustment of adolescents. Thus, knowledge role of parents and teachers in managing test anxiety of students can provide appropriate foundations for intervention programs. However, only a few studies have examined this issue among secondary school students in Rawalpindi, which constitutes the research gap of the current study (Sainio et al., 2023).

Objectives of the Study

1. To measure anxiety level among secondary school students.
2. To look into the role of teachers in identifying and addressing test anxiety among secondary school students.
3. To assess parent's involvement in helping their children cope with test anxiety at the secondary level.

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Significance of the Study

The findings of this research will be of significance to the pupil, parents, teachers, school management and policy makers. This is because the findings of this study will highlight the factors contributing to the test anxiety among secondary school pupils, its effects on the learners, and why parental and teacher intervention is crucial in reducing exam anxiety.

Literature Review

Test anxiety is one of the most frequently experienced psychological disorders by students in their academic setting. It refers to the tension, apprehension, nervousness and fear which develop before and during examination and affect performance negatively. Test anxiety has been explained by Spielberger (1980) as being composed of two components: cognitive and emotional, which interfere with concentration, memory, and reasoning skills. The secondary level students are vulnerable to test anxiety as a result of increased academic work load and examination pressures.

Understanding test anxiety

Test anxiety is one of the most prevalent psychological conditions affecting secondary school students because it contributes to poor academic outcomes, lack of self-esteem, emotional disturbances, and ill-being. Students who suffer from a high level of test anxiety are not able to exhibit their true capabilities during examinations because this may lead to poor academic performance. According to recent research, parental and teacher support has been identified as a key factor that may help reduce the level of anxiety and increase academic resilience among students (Fréchette-Simard et al., 2022; Feige and Waterman, 2024).

Parental and teacher support for test anxiety management

A great deal can be done to reduce academic stress and foster emotional well-being through support from parents and teachers. Those students who receive encouragement, guidance, and support both at home and in school will do better under academic pressure and exam stresses.

They develop confidence and stable copying skills as a result of this, which in turn ensure that stress and anxiety levels stay low. Such an environment is very conducive to ensuring psychological adaptation and improved performance among students. According to Hoferichter et al. (2024), parental and teacher support together function as a protective factor against academic stress. Parental mediation and teacher stress-coping skills may help students manage emotional difficulties (Bukhari et al., 2025; Bukhari et al., 2026).

Perceived social support and academic resilience

The notion of perceived social support is important in terms of coping with exam anxiety. If students feel like they receive emotional, academic, and motivational support from their parents and educators, then they become confident and find it easier to pass test and exams. This social support makes them resilient in the face of academic adversity and helps them overcome any setback. Besides, it fuels academic buoyancy and enables students to have a positive attitude towards learning despite examination pressures. Students who receive more social support from their parents and educators experience less exam anxiety and perform better psychologically and academically. Li et al. (2025) saw this as an indication of the effectiveness of parental and educator involvement in reducing exam anxiety. Social and emotional support strengthens adolescents' resilience and coping abilities (Bukhsh et al., 2025). Academic resilience also supports mental health and learning outcomes (Ameer et al., 2026).

Test anxiety during secondary school transition

Test anxiety may increase during the transition period into secondary school because of increased academic workload, different settings, and high examination pressure. Students who have difficulties in adapting to the situation are prone to test anxiety, which might affect their performance and psychological conditions. Regular assistance from the side of parents and teachers plays an important role in this case, since advice, motivation, and encouragement help students get adopted to new conditions. They feel more confident and develop strategies to deal with the examination anxiety. Thus, the participation of parents and teachers is crucial in this matter (Fréchette-Simard et al., 2022).

Parental involvement and academic stress

The parents have a profound influence on the amount of academic stress and anxiety experienced by their children. In cases where the parents themselves become anxious over how their kids are doing in school, then this anxiety transfers to the kids and causes them to be scared of taking examination. The expectation placed on the kids, coupled with excessive worry about the outcomes, erode the wellbeing of the students. Encouragement and support are helpful for children to be able to cope with academic challenges. It is through a positive environment that the students are able to handle examination pressure and make test anxiety less severe (Tayyab et al., 2023).

Emotional support from parents and teachers

Emotional support from both teachers and parents plays an essential role in helping students relieve exam stress. Once students realize that they have a listening ear and the willingness to offer assistance on the part of the adult, they began to believe in themselves academically. It helps them build resilience and cope with exams. Therefore, socially supported students often

show low levels of exam anxiety and adapt well academically (Li et al., 2025). Family protection can build adolescents' emotional strength during stressful situations (Bukhsh et al., 2025). Emotionally competent teachers may also provide more effective student support (Bukhari et al., 2025).

Academic guidance and test anxiety management

Proper preparation and counseling from teachers and parents assist students in coping with test anxiety. Students who receive academic counseling and positive reinforcement end up being well prepared for examinations and, consequently, more confident in taking exams. Such interventions reduce the uncertainty and anxieties associated with examinations, which in turn result in better performance. Parents and teachers are therefore instrumental in enabling their students to develop effective coping mechanisms for examination anxieties. (Nwosu, 2022).

Teacher closeness and students' academic achievement

The level of proximity felt by pupils to their teachers not only influences their emotion but also their academic outcomes. In cases where the relationship between the pupil and teacher is close, adolescents get the feeling of value, understanding and motivation. Pupils who have a sense of closeness to teachers normally experience positive academic emotion and perform better academically. This is especially applicable to those who are having problems with learning as they derive self-confidence and interest from the relationship. Teacher closeness acts as a protective factor in this case (Sainio et al., 2023).

Parental pressure and test anxiety

Parental expectation and pressure greatly influence exam anxiety. Students who go through secondary school have been noted to be under great stress due to having the perception that their parents have very high expectations of them in terms of grades. This may result in anxiety and fear of failure among other negative results. When parents approach the children encouragingly and with emotional support, then they perform better and are less anxious about exams (Awais et al., 2025).

Parental educational anxiety and students' academic stress

It is evident that parental concern about the performance of a child in education might transfer to the emotional wellbeing of the child. This implies that when parents have high levels of anxiety regarding academic performance, students have higher levels of stress and anxiety in relation to failure. Conversely, parents who encourage their children and offer emotional support help them deal with academic stress during examination (Zhang et al., 2025).

Parental pressure, emotional well-being, and examination anxiety

It is quite common for there to be a direct correlation between parental pressure and anxiety during examination. Unreasonable expectations and concern about grades often contribute to distress and fear of failure. On the other hand, the provision of psychological support by parents will contribute towards building healthy coping mechanisms in their children (Awais et al., 2025).

Student well-being and examination stress management

The mental wellbeing of students is related to their ability to cope with examination stress. Healthy minded students cope with their emotion in a better way and deal with the academic pressure with a positive mindset. Educational institutions that care for the wellbeing of students have low anxiety and good performance (Brown et al., 2022). Emotional intelligence and stress-coping abilities are associated with better psychological well-being (Bukhari et al., 2025; Fatima et al., 2025). Mental health and resilience further support students' learning outcomes (Ameer et al., 2026). Parental circumstances can affect children's social behaviour, empathy, and classroom interaction (Rafiq-uz-Zaman, 2026).

Academic achievement and parental involvement

Parent's participation increases not only academic performance but also motivation. Those parents whose children participate in school make an environment that fosters education and success. Also, participation makes kids prepared to pass the test, and it reduces the fear of taking them and boost self-confidence (Naz et al., 2024). Psychological well-being and emotional intelligence are associated with academic achievement (Fatima et al., 2025). Parental mediation may also influence children's development and behaviour (Bukhari et al., 2026).

Metacognitive skills and management of test anxiety

With Metacognitive abilities, students are able to regulate, manage and evaluate their learning process. Those students who have developed this competence are capable of controlling negative thinking and managing examination stress much better. Metacognitive abilities are usually associated with high academic results and low test anxiety (Aydin & Özgeldi, 2024).

Research Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was employed in exploring the level of participation of parents and teachers in the management of test anxiety amongst secondary school students.

Population and Sample

The target population included secondary school students, teachers and parents in both government and private schools in Rawalpindi. A sample size of 248 respondents was chosen using purposive sampling, which involved 104 students, 40 teachers and 104 parents.

Research Instrument

Three questionnaires were designed to collect information about test anxiety and how parents and teachers involved in managing test anxiety. The questionnaires were designed for students, teachers, and parents.

Data Collection Procedures

Permission was taken from the selected schools before data collection. The questionnaires were distributed to students, teachers, and parents. The respondents were made aware of aim of the research.

Data analysis

Analysis of data was done by use of SPSS. Statistical tools such as frequency, percentages, mean scores, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test were used in analyzing the data.

Ethical consideration

Respondents in the study knew why it was being done and were promised that their information would be kept private. Taking part was their own choice, and they could leave the study anytime.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis refers to sorting, interpretation and summarization of the collected data for making meaningful conclusion from it. In the present case, data was collected from parents, teachers, and secondary school students in Rawalpindi related to test anxiety and the role of parents and teachers in management of test anxiety. The aim of the analysis is to estimate level of test anxiety carried by students and the involvement of parents and teachers in its identification and management. Some of the statistical techniques utilized for the reading and interpretation of the data include frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation. The findings of the analysis provide insight into the current levels of test anxiety among students in Rawalpindi and the potential role of parents and teachers in the management of test anxiety.

Table 1: Test Anxiety Among Students

Statements	Response (%)					Mean	SD
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA		
I feel nervous before examinations.	0	0	4.8	49.0	46.2	4.41	0.585
My heartbeats fast before a test starts.	0	1.9	26.9	49.0	22.1	3.91	0.752
I feel anxious even if I have prepared well for a test.	3.8	10.6	41.3	36.5	7.7	3.34	0.910
I feel pressure to perform well in tests.	0	3.8	32.7	48.1	15.4	3.75	0.760
I worry a lot about my marks before exams.	0	1.0	28.8	40.4	29.8	3.99	0.794
I have a trouble sleeping the night before exams.	4.8	11.5	40.4	35.6	6.7	3.30	0.944
I feel uneasy while attempting internal examination papers.	5.8	13.5	37.5	22.1	7.7	3.39	1.136
I feel tense while sitting in the examination hall during board exam.	1.9	5.8	26.0	37.5	21.2	3.86	0.970
I feel afraid of forgetting what I have studied during exams.	4.8	10.6	26.9	36.5	28.8	3.59	1.085
I fear making careless mistakes because of nervousness in exams.	0	5.8	10.6	58.7	21.2	4.03	0.769
I feel worried that stress will make me lose	0	5.8	25.0	43.3	25.0	3.89	0.858

concentration in exams.							
I feel fear of not completing the exam paper on time.	5.8	1.9	22.1	39.4	26.0	3.88	1.058
I feel afraid of the consequences of poor exams performance.	0	0	7.7	42.3	30.8	4.42	0.634
I feel fear of disappointing my parents because of exam result.	0	1.9	26.9	48.1	23.1	3.92	0.759
I feel scared of teacher's if I perform poorly in exams.	7.7	6.7	37.5	34.6	13.5	3.39	1.056

The findings indicate that secondary school students experience a considerable level of test anxiety. The highest mean scores were reported for feeling afraid of the consequences of poor examination performance ($M = 4.42$, $SD = .634$) and feeling nervous before examinations ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .585$), indicating that fear of failure and examination stress are the major sources of anxiety. Students also reported fear of making careless mistakes because of nervousness ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .769$), worrying about examination marks ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .794$), and fear of disappointing their parents ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .759$). Comparatively lower mean scores were found for feeling anxious despite being well prepared ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .910$), fear of teachers when performing poorly ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.056$), and trouble sleeping before examinations ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .944$). Overall, the findings suggest that students experience moderate to high levels of test anxiety, with fear of poor performance and examination outcomes being the most prominent concerns.

Table 2: Role of teachers in managing test anxiety.

Statements	Response (%)					Mean	SD
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA		
They can identify students who feel anxious before exams.	0	5.0	45.0	50.0	0	3.45	0.597
Notice nervousness in students during exam time.	0	0	37.5	57.5	5.0	3.68	0.572
Observe physical discomfort in students during examination.	0	17.5	40.0	42.5	0	3.25	0.742
Teachers notice that you have trouble sleeping due exam stress.	15.0	12.5	62.5	10.0	0	2.67	0.859
Teachers identify anxiety related to internal examination in students.	0	2.5	35.0	52.5	10.0	3.70	0.687
Teachers identify anxiety related to external examination in students.	0	15.0	47.5	37.5	0	3.22	0.698
Teachers notice students struggling with time management during exams.	0	2.5	7.5	57.5	32.5	4.20	0.687
Teachers observe that fear of poor results increases student's anxiety.	0	0	47.5	52.5	0	3.53	0.506
Teachers notice students fear of disappointing parents.	7.5	12.5	37.5	27.5	15.0	3.30	1.114
Teachers observe that fear of teacher's reaction affects student's exam anxiety.	2.5	12.5	42.5	40.0	2.5	3.28	0.816

Teachers provide emotional support to students during exams.	7.5	12.5	55.0	25.0	0	2.97	0.832
Teachers encourage students to stay calm during examinations.	0	2.5	22.5	50.0	25.0	3.98	0.768
Teachers guide students to manage their study time effectively.	0	2.5	35.0	57.5	5.0	3.65	0.622
Teachers help students cope with exam stress.	5.0	12.5	37.5	37.5	7.5	3.30	0.966
Teachers take steps to reduce test anxiety in the classroom.	0	0	30.0	47.5	22.5	3.92	0.730

The findings indicate that teachers play a positive role in identifying and managing students' test anxiety. The highest mean score was for teachers noticing students struggling with time management during examinations ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .687$), followed by teachers encouraging students to stay calm during examinations ($M = 3.98$, $SD = .768$) and teachers taking steps to reduce test anxiety in the classroom ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .730$). Teachers were also perceived to identify anxiety related to internal examinations ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .687$) and guide students to manage their study time effectively ($M = 3.65$, $SD = .622$). The lowest mean score was for teachers noticing students' sleeping problems due to exam stress ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .859$), indicating that less visible signs of anxiety are more difficult to recognize. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers contribute positively to managing students' test anxiety by providing guidance, encouragement, and classroom support.

Table 3: Role of Parents in Managing Test Anxiety.

Statements	Response (%)					Mean	SD
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA		
Parents discuss exam schedules with their children.	0	7.7	48.1	35.6	8.7	3.45	0.762
Parents help children plan study time before exams.	3.8	9.6	40.4	36.5	9.6	3.38	0.928
Parents try to keep home calm during exam days.	3.8	4.8	26.9	46.2	18.3	3.38	0.928
Parents avoid high expectations about exam results.	0	0	25.0	58.7	16.3	3.70	0.954
Parents notice changes in children sleep before exams.	4.8	14.4	41.3	33.7	5.8	3.91	0.640
Parents give emotional support on exam days.	0	0	26.9	59.6	13.5	3.87	0.624
Parents encourage children to stay confident in exams.	0	0	25.0	51.0	24.0	3.99	0.704
Parents guide children about managing time in exams.	0	11.5	61.5	24.0	2.9	3.18	0.665
Parents avoid unnecessary pressure during exams.	0	5.8	39.4	37.5	17.3	3.66	0.832
Parents motivate children to focus on efforts, not marks.	0	1.9	52.9	39.4	5.8	3.49	0.638
Parents talk calmly about exam performance.	0	7.7	46.2	30.8	15.4	3.54	0.847
Parents support children even if results are	0	1.9	38.5	55.8	3.8	3.62	0.596

poor.								
Parents avoid negative reaction to low marks.	3.8	7.7	52.9	28.8	6.7	3.27	0.850	
Parents help children learn from exam mistakes.	0	0	45.2	51.0	3.8	3.59	0.568	
Parents encourage a positive attitude after exams.	1.0	15.4	36.5	35.6	11.5	3.41	0.920	

The table shows parents providing considerable support in helping their children manage test anxiety during examinations. The highest mean score was for parents encouraging children to stay confident in exams ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .704$), followed by parents noticing changes in children's sleep before exams ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .640$) and parents giving emotional support on exam days ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .624$).

Parents were also perceived to avoid high expectations about exam results ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .954$) and avoid unnecessary pressure during examinations ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .832$). Respondents further agreed that parents support their children when exam results are poor ($M = 3.62$, $SD = .596$) and help them learn from examination mistakes ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .568$). The comparatively lower mean scores were found for parents guiding children about managing time during exams ($M = 3.18$, $SD = .665$) and parents helping children plan study time before exams ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .928$). Overall, the findings indicate that parents play a positive role in managing students' test anxiety by providing emotional encouragement, maintaining a supportive home environment, and motivating their children throughout the examination process.

Findings of the Study

- Secondary school students experienced moderate to high levels of test anxiety.
- Fear of poor examination performance, nervousness before examinations, and fear of making mistakes were the major sources of test anxiety.
- Students also expressed concern about examination marks and disappointing their parents.
- Teachers played a positive role in identifying and managing students' test anxiety by encouraging students, recognizing time management difficulties, and reducing anxiety in the classroom.
- Teachers were less effective in recognizing hidden symptoms of anxiety, such as student's sleeping problems before examinations.
- Parents supported their children by providing emotional encouragement, building confidence, avoiding unnecessary pressure, and maintaining a supportive home environment.
- Parents were comparatively less involved in guiding students about time management and study planning before examinations.
- Overall, both parents and teachers contributed positively to managing students' test anxiety.

Discussion of the Study

The findings revealed that secondary school students experienced moderate to high levels of test anxiety, with fear of poor examination performance and nervousness before examinations being

the strongest concerns. Students also worried about examination marks, making careless mistakes, and disappointing their parents, indicating that examination pressure affects both their emotional and academic well-being. Teachers were found to play an important role in managing test anxiety by encouraging students, identifying examination-related anxiety, and creating a supportive classroom environment. However, they were less successful in recognizing less visible symptoms, such as sleep-related stress. Parents also contributed positively by providing emotional support, encouraging confidence, reducing unnecessary pressure, and maintaining a calm home environment. Nevertheless, parents showed relatively less involvement in helping students with study planning and time management. Overall, the findings suggest that the combined support of parents and teachers can play an important role in reducing students' test anxiety.

Recommendation

- Secondary schools should establish counselling services to help students manage test anxiety effectively.
- Teachers should regularly identify students experiencing examination stress and provide timely emotional and academic support.
- Schools should organize awareness sessions on examination stress, study planning, and time management.
- Parents should encourage their children, avoid unnecessary academic pressure, and maintain a supportive home environment during examinations.
- Parents should become more involved in helping students plan study schedules and manage examination time effectively.
- Schools should strengthen parent-teacher collaboration to monitor students' emotional well-being before examinations.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on students' learning, confidence, and personal improvement rather than examination results alone.
- In future researches, the impact of counseling and parental training programs in reducing test anxiety should be considered.

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