

Using Group Psychology Counseling to Reduce the Test Anxiety of Pupils

Kelin Chen*

School of Humanities, Jiangnan University, Wuxi, 214000, China,

**Corresponding author. Email: tatiana2329039186@163.com*

ABSTRACT

As the pressure of students on academic performance become heavier, there are many negative problems in the psychological development of pupils. Among numerous mental problems, test anxiety is an objective psychological phenomenon in the learning process of students. It has always been an important research topic of educational psychology to relieve students' test anxiety and improve their psychological quality. It's the school's responsibility to relieve students' test anxiety and using group psychology counseling to guide pupils' mental health development is an effective way. Different from other private psychological problems, test anxiety is a common one, which can be discussed publicly. The essay finds out the way to apply group psychology counseling to pupils' test anxiety better by analyzing the research enforced by scholars worldwide and changes of group psychology counseling and test anxiety, which is determined to reduce the test anxiety on pupils.

Keywords: *Test anxiety, Primary school students, Group psychology counseling*

1. INTRODUCTION

Researchers have done lots of research about using group psychology counseling to reduce the test anxiety of primary school students. In China, the research related to testing anxiety started in the 1950s, most of which are empirical research. But there are still some shortages of research. First, the research object is relatively limited, mainly some college students and patients, and relatively few middle school students, primary school students, teachers and other groups. Related research is still in preliminary development. Second, the research method is common and popular, without local characteristics, so the results are useless. Especially in China, most researchers use scales imported from abroad, so whether is the method fits Chinese pupils is doubtful. The essay is going to recommend an efficient method to reduce pupils' test anxiety, which is group psychology counseling. It's a common method in Chinese primary schools, which always be used to help pupils' mental development, such as helping them build harmonious relations. The psychology of primary school students is in the process of constant change, and they are generally not mature enough and still in the exploratory stage of learning. Most researchers believe that in primary school students is not prone to anxiety, however, the fact is that elementary student's psychological development features, which they

cannot have a correct evaluation to myself, tend to be based on the influence of the environment to know themselves, that is to say, they often hitch in the usual study life, by the people around you for their evaluation to know yourself. Therefore, it is easy for them to doubt themselves and shake their confidence when facing exams. In China, scores are an important standard for parents and teachers to measure whether a student is excellent or not. In such an environment, primary school students will inevitably have anxiety when taking exams. Similarly, because primary school students are easily affected by the class environment, targeted group psychological counseling can get twice the result with half the effort. The meaning of the paper is to how can Chinese schools use group psychology counseling to reduce primary school students' test anxiety and help the pupils have better mental development.

2. INFLUENCING FACTORS OF TEST ANXIETY

To find out whether the school can use group psychology counseling to reduce test anxiety of pupils, we have to understand the reasons why pupils have test anxiety, then we can choose efficient ways to reduce test anxiety. Emotions can be influenced and regulated by various individual internal and external factors.

2.1 Internal factors

Internal factors include genetic propensity, cognitive evaluation, and personality traits, which can also be used as the cause of test anxiety [1].

2.1.1 Genetic propensity

Part of the individual differences in trait anxiety can be explained by heredity. Some studies have shown that about 50% of the differences in trait anxiety are caused by genetic differences [2]. The tendency of individuals to worry and anxiety in the examination process also depends on biological factors to a certain extent. Studies show that people with strong nervous systems are more sensitive and experience more anxiety. Richang Zheng found that about 15% of the parents and siblings of anxious neurotics are prone to anxiety, and about 50% of the twin siblings of anxious neurotics have similar symptoms [3].

2.1.2 Cognitive evaluation

Additionally, a student's personality is an important factor that affects students' test anxiety. Personality trait refers to the relatively stable and core psychological characteristics of personality in people's attitude towards reality and corresponding behavior mode, which is the personality characteristic most closely related to society. Studies have shown that extroverted and introverted unstable students tend to score higher on tests of test anxiety. Yurong Fang found that test anxiety is closely related to personality factors. For example, people with trait anxiety are introverted, eager for perfection and attach importance to others' evaluation [4]. Haizhong Zhang revealed that there were significant differences in test anxiety among different temperament types, with the blood type having the lowest test anxiety and the depression type having the highest test anxiety [5].

2.1.3 Personality traits

Besides, studies have shown that there is a significant relationship between self-cognition and test anxiety, test anxiety is positively correlated with students' expectation of failure, and negatively correlated with their self-concept of ability, expectation of failure and negatively correlated with their self-concept of ability, the expectation of academic self-efficacy, and belief in academic control[6]. Self-accepting students tend to have relatively reasonable expectations of themselves and their exams, so they are less likely to experience excessive anxiety. Conversely, people with low levels of self-acceptance tend to have high expectations of themselves, which can lead to excessive worry and exam anxiety. Chengfen Zhang explored the relationship between test anxiety and ability self-perception and pointed out that the higher the ability self-perception, the lower the test

anxiety. The lower one's ability self-perception, the greater one's test anxiety [7]. Gaogai Huang found that there was a significant negative correlation between self-acceptance and test anxiety. Those with high test anxiety had low self-acceptance, low self-evaluation and low self-esteem, while those with low test anxiety had the opposite situation.

Similarly, Richang Zheng also found that the level of test anxiety is different at different ages of individual development, which reflects the influence of physiological maturity on the level of individual test anxiety. Such as children in the lower grades of primary school, emotional performance is more intense, excitement and inhibition of the regulation ability are relatively low, easy to be stimulated by the environment and lose balance. In terms of the level of test anxiety, this period is relatively high. After grades three and four, students' ability to control their emotions has been improved to a certain extent, and correspondingly, the level of test anxiety has also been reduced.

2.2 External factors

In addition to internal factors, there are also external factors, such as parenting style and social environment. Family is the center of students' emotional dependence, and parents' parenting styles largely affect students' concepts and attitudes [8]. On the one hand, parents have too high expectations and one-sided pursuit of academic results. When children feel unable to meet their parents' expectations, they will have anxiety. On the other hand, the family's authoritarian upbringing makes children fearful and causes great psychological pressure, which leads to exam anxiety. Jianzhong Qiao conducted a study on the factors related to middle school students' test anxiety and found that students' family education attitude and parents' education expectation are all related to students' anxiety to some extent. Similarly, the society exaggerates the function of examination, attaches too much importance to the score, takes the examination result as the only criterion to evaluate the student and so on, all leads to the students' misunderstanding of the function and significance of examination, attaches too much importance to the examination result, and intensifies the exam anxiety. Kennerty proposed that due to the penetration of Confucius' ethical concepts in Asian culture, Asian countries emphasize academic excellence, which is the reason why Chinese students' test anxiety is significantly higher than that of British or European students.

3. GROUP PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING

3.1 The function of group psychological counseling

The research shows that group counseling has four advantages for the members. Group psychological counseling has a wide influence with great appeal to emotion, which can turn the help from other members to the resource of motivation to help others so that group psychological counseling has multiple sources of influence. In this situation, group members have the opportunity to observe each other's behaviors and learn to imitate some adaptive behaviors of group members, so that they can observe themselves from multiple perspectives and understand themselves. Additionally, the efficiency of group psychological counseling is significantly higher than individual counseling, with time and effort being saved. Individual counseling requires consultants to communicate face to face and one to one. Each counseling takes a long time, while group counseling is a one-to-many process, which increases the number of consultants. Therefore, group psychological counseling can be used to pupils efficiently. Moreover, the effect of group psychological counseling is easier to consolidate than that of individual counseling. Gerald Corey mentioned that through group counseling, members gradually expose and become aware of their own uncomfortable behaviors and break through their bottlenecks and learn to make new adaptive decisions then gradually take control of their own life. The effect of group psychological counseling can adapt to the schema better. Similarly, group psychology is especially suitable for common psychological problems which the consultants have. Pupils have lacked social experiences so they don't know how to find help from classmates through communication. While in the group psychological counseling pupils can share their worries and empathize with each other, which can help solve their problems.

3.2 The way of group psychological counseling

Group psychological counseling can greatly alleviate the psychological problems of primary school students. Domestic scholar Xiaoming Yu put forward that the adoption of group counseling in the form of mental health education in primary schools is not only to ensure that pupils can lay a good foundation in the early stage of development, but also to guide them to develop independently and grow into more excellent talents in the future. In his opinion, the role of group psychological counseling includes: Firstly, stimulating students' positive emotions and interest in learning. Secondly, establish correct self-concept and improve students' interpersonal skills. Finally, develop positive psychological qualities and promote the development of

students' personalities [9]. Many researchers hold the view that group psychological counseling can be used to reduce anxiety, especially before the test. As is mentioned before, most pupils have anxiety because of their parents, teachers or friends, not from themselves. Therefore, we have to arise students' interest in learning and reduce the pressure from their surroundings to reduce test anxiety at its root.

Teachers should not only focus on scheme combines the aspects of cognition, emotion, behavior intervention, in view of the formation of test anxiety factors, using the comprehensive intervention methods to relieve the students' test anxiety, but also design a lot of little games and activities, such as role play, establishment situation, for each member to establish an atmosphere full of understanding and care, It can help the members to imitate others, greatly improving the fun of psychological counseling and the participation of members. Similarly, group psychological counseling provides group members with practice opportunities close to real situations, so that they can learn more and faster. And, the whole process of psychological counseling needs to be gradual, not only in the exam before counseling, at ordinary times can help students to establish a correct self-awareness, let students develop the habit of "comparing with their previous" and "evaluation of their own in many aspects", change the habit of students too concerned about others' evaluation of their own. In this way, it can help students establish correct self-cognition, help to cultivate students' correct attribution view, let students know that "efforts will get good grades", so as to relieve the anxiety before exams caused by internal pressure. At the same time, teachers also need to pay attention to the transition of psychological counseling to the real world, hoping for better results. The object of group psychological counseling should include teachers and parents, so as to improve the external environment of students' examination anxiety, help parents to form a good family upbringing, and help teachers to evaluate students not only from their scores, so as to relieve pupils' test pressure externally. As the situation in China, the external factors are more significant, not only from parents but also from their gender. Some students may discriminate against students who get low scores in the examination, which makes the test anxiety worse. Therefore, during the group psychological counseling teacher can help the students form a better evaluation mechanism, which allows students to find each other's advantages.

4. CONCLUSION

Group psychological counseling in our country should learn the appropriate foreign essence to enrich group psychological counseling in China as a professional counseling organization, strengthen localization research, the directing theory for the formation of local features, investigate the most effective

way to diversity in group psychological counseling and evaluation systems, further broaden the scope of group guidance, and enrich and strengthen group psychological counseling. As an important test psychological problem, test anxiety has been paid attention to by psychologists and educators. The concept, measurement tools, influencing factors and intervention methods of test anxiety have been studied in depth and systematically. However, there are relatively few intervention studies on primary school students. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to develop effective test anxiety intervention measures for primary school students, and establish a perfect test anxiety prevention plan based on schools, which requires the joint efforts of the whole education system and the majority of scholars.

Additionally, most of the studies on test anxiety are foreign. Due to differences in cultural background, education policy, school system and other aspects between countries or regions, the universality of the research conclusions needs to be verified. Interventions that are proven to work in one country may not work or be less effective in another. At present, it is necessary for us to localize the internationally recognized intervention therapy and develop a new test anxiety intervention mode suitable for China's national conditions, so as to alleviate the test pressure of primary school students and improve their physical and mental quality.

We hope that group psychological counseling can be better and deeper applied in primary schools in the future, so as to contribute to the road of alleviating pupils' psychological problems.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout the writing of this dissertation I have received a great deal of support and assistance. I would first like to thank my tutor for her valuable guidance throughout my studies. You provided me with good ideals that I needed to complete the essay. I would also like to thank my parents for they always support me with their love and prayers and cheer me on. In addition, I would like to thank my grandmother and aunt who are far away in heaven, they will always be the light shining in front of me.

REFERENCES

- [1] Gao Cheng, Liu Chang. A review of the Generation, Mechanism and Intervention of Test Anxiety [J]. Chinese Examinations, 2021(6):78-85.
- [2] V A N BEIJSTERVELD T C E M, VERHULST F C, MOLENAAR P C M, Et al. Genetic basis of pairs of male and female pairs [J]. Acta geologica sinica, 2004, 34 (3) :229-242.
- [3] Zheng Richang, Chen Yongsheng. Diagnosis and treatment of test anxiety [M]. Heilongjiang Science and Technology Press, 1990.
- [4] Fang Yurong, Ke Xianfu, Liu Ling, et al. Journal of anhui university of science and technology (self science edition), 2003, 23(2):79-81.
- [5] Zhang Haizhong. Teacher Education Research, 1995(4):38-41. (in Chinese)
- [6] VON DER EMBSE N, JESTER D, ROY D, et al. Test anxiety effects, predictors, and correlates: a 30-year meta-analytic review [J]. Journal of Affective Disorders, 2018, 227: 483-493.
- [7] Zhang Chengfen, Mao Weizhen. A Preliminary study on the relationship between self-perception of test anxiety ability and students' achievement attribution [J]. Psychological Science, 1992(6):54-56.
- [8] Hong Ming, Wang Hongli. Psychological Science, 2002, (6):753-754.
- [9] Yu Xiaoming. Research on the value and application of group counseling in Primary school students' mental health education [J]. Modern primary and secondary education, 2017, 33(06):84-86.