

The main aim of this study was to investigate by means of an exploratory survey, the effects of test anxiety on test performance for some primary seven school children in Kisumu municipality. More precisely, the performance of groups of children who report high test anxiety was compared with performance of children who report low test anxiety.

The sample of subjects used in the study consisted of 252 standard seven pupils drawn from seven primary schools within the municipality of Kisumu. Test anxiety was measured by the Test Anxiety Scale for Children (TASC); Test performance was measured by the General verbal Ability Test suitable for use in African schools (GWAT) together with end-term school marks.

Based mainly on Sarason's Interfering response theory, it is predicted that:

- 1) The correlation between test anxiety and academic performance would be negative,
- 2) Bright high test-anxious subjects would perform better than their low test-anxious counterparts,
- 3) Academically average high test-anxious subjects would perform better than their low test-anxious counterparts.
- 4) Academically below-average low test-anxious subjects would perform better than their high test-anxious counterparts.

The results obtained indicated that the reported test anxiety is inversely related to test performance for the majority of the children. However, in a single classroom test, it was found that induced anxiety or ego-involvement was associated with better performance for bright children.

It was concluded that the present educational practice of paying a lot of emphasis on the importance of examinations induces anxiety which is only beneficial to bright children. For the less bright children, what they need is, probably less of such emphasis, but more of training in test-taking and coping skills so that their anxiety may be channeled into responses relevant to test-taking.