



Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems

Issue 12, Vol. 8, 2025

RESEARCH ARTICLE 

Exam Anxiety among Fourth-Year Middle School Students: Psychological Manifestations, Family and School Influences, and Implications for Educational Guidance and Academic Adjustment

Dr.

Mohamed Boudiaf University, M'sila

Algeria

E-mail: khadra.hallab@univ-msila.dz

Dr.

Higher Teachers' School, Bou Saada, Laboratory of the Pedagogical Issue and Its Related Questions

Algeria

E-mail : nekbil.abdelaziz@ebousaada.dz

Khadra Hallab**Abdelaziz Nekbil****Issue web link**<https://imcra-az.org/archive/387-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-12-vol-8-2025.html>**Keywords**

Exam anxiety; Middle school students; Academic evaluation; Psychological stress; Family pressure; School guidance

Abstract

Examinations constitute a pivotal evaluative mechanism within educational systems, particularly at transitional stages that significantly influence students' academic trajectories. This study investigates the level of exam anxiety among fourth-year middle school students, focusing on its psychological, behavioral, and emotional manifestations within both school and family contexts. Employing a descriptive analytical approach, data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to students preparing for the fourth-year middle school examination. The findings reveal that the overall level of exam anxiety among the study sample is moderate, with notable manifestations including pre-exam fear, confusion during test performance, sleep disturbances, reduced concentration, and heightened emotional tension. A considerable proportion of students perceive examinations as decisive life events determining their future academic and social status, a perception often reinforced by family pressure rather than emotional support. Conversely, school-based guidance services and educational counseling interventions were found to play a mitigating role in reducing anxiety levels and improving students' psychological readiness for examinations. The study underscores the multidimensional nature of exam anxiety, highlighting the interaction between individual psychological traits, family expectations, and institutional practices. It concludes that while moderate anxiety may function as a motivational factor, elevated levels negatively affect academic performance and psychological well-being. Accordingly, the study recommends strengthening psychological follow-up programs, enhancing family awareness, and institutionalizing preventive counseling strategies within middle school settings to support students during critical evaluation phases.

Citation

Khadra H; Abdelaziz N. (2025). Exam Anxiety among Fourth-Year Middle School Students: Psychological Manifestations, Family and School Influences, and Implications for Educational Guidance and Academic Adjustment. *Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems*, 8(12), 1548-1562. <https://doi.org/10.56334/sci/8.12.131>

Licensed

© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Science, Education and Innovations in the context of modern problems (SEI) by IMCRA - International Meetings and Journals Research Association (Azerbaijan). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Received: 22.05.2025

Accepted: 23.09.2025

Published: 12.12.2025 (available online)

Introduction:

Examinations play an important role in the life of students and they are one of the necessary evaluation methods, but they may be linked with anxiety, which makes them a frightening and worrying problem, because they are associated with determining the fate of the student, his academic and professional future, and his status in society. At the same time, this anxiety may be a motivation for high aspects of human behavior, but sometimes, this anxiety may turn into a curse, and it transforms from a driving force into a hindering force for achievements, and this usually happens when the anxiety reaches a degree of intensity that overwhelms students, causing them many psychological and physical symptoms, and then it becomes an obstacle to success in life. This is what Anastasi pointed out in her study, that a minimum level of anxiety can be considered useful, while a high level of it is considered harmful and naturally leads to a lower level of achievement (Fatima Zahra, 2019, p. 10).

Exam anxiety is a part of the general anxiety that is excited by the situation of tests, and it expresses an individual psychological-emotional problem that students go through during the period of exams, represented in the fear of not succeeding. The exam anxiety is affected by the previous experiences of students in situations similar to exam situations, which they might have gone through at home or in their daily life (Abu Azab, 2008, p.18).

So, the period of passing exams represents a difficult circumstance for the overwhelming majority of students, and therefore it is an environment suitable for relapse or for the occurrence of psychological pressures and tensions that range between mild, situational, and objective anxiety, up to cases of severe and even chronic anxiety. But what the exam arouses for students in terms of anxiety, tiredness, and disturbance of general health, also leads to feelings of distress and discomfort in their lives and the lives of their families (Hajar, Khadhairia, 2017-2018, p. 22).

Exam anxiety is one of the problems faced by students, which appears at any time during the school year whenever the teacher announces a test or exam. Abdel Khaleq (1987) points out that exam anxiety is a type of anxiety related to exam situations, so that these situations excite in the person a feeling of great fear and worry when facing exams; that is, people whose anxiety for exam situations is high tend to perceive evaluative situations as threatening, and exam anxiety is the psychological state or emotional phenomenon or total tension that befalls the individual when he stands in the exam situation where his abilities are subject to examination and evaluation.

This means that exam anxiety is a state of total tension that affects the individual and affects his mental processes, and what confirms this is Eysenck's (1979) study about the effect of exam anxiety on the individual. Its results showed that anxiety reduces the level of concentration and attention, which are considered among the important factors in performing the exam successfully (Saihi Salima, 2012, p. 12).

Also, the influences of exam anxiety are not limited to the academic performance of the learner, but also extend to his psychological health as a whole. That is why many researchers have cared about this topic within studies focused on diagnosing exam anxiety while trying to reduce it and prevent its symptoms among students, especially (Zahran, 1999, p.94).

Perhaps one of the most important symptoms that appear in students who are anxious about the exam is the inability of the student to recall information, lack of concentration and attention, not enough sleep, etc. This can lead to deterioration and decrease in his academic achievement, or failure in it, which may cause him to repeat the year. Academic achievement is a goal that most students seek in all educational stages, because achievement in it leads to many matters such as self-confidence or feeling of control. The problems suffered by the student may affect his life, especially from the educational side, so his motivation to learn may decrease and his achievement drop, and the severity of anxiety differs from one student to another. Achievement is not only passing consecutive educational stages to success and obtaining grades that qualify him, but it has very important sides in his life as it is the compulsory way to choose the kind of study and profession in the future. Since exam anxiety and academic achievement—

The phenomenon of anxiety is a general phenomenon in this era and appears in individuals as a result of surrounding life circumstances, surprises, and events that the individual faces, and the severity and level of anxiety differ from person to person, each according to his goals, ambitions, and general circumstances. They are also among the most important factors leading to the existence of anxiety. The student has a preparedness for anxiety so that he can adapt to himself and the surrounding environment, but the extremism during feeling anxiety makes the student feel disturbances that affect his life (Abu Saima, 1995, p. 55).

As many studies have shown, including the study of both Al-Tayeb (1996) and Saleh (1994), which were done in this field, there is in fact a positive relationship between high grades in academic achievement and exam anxiety that is on a low level. It was also made clear that individuals who suffer from high anxiety tend to isolation and withdrawing into themselves compared with individuals characterized by low anxiety, which explains the negative effect of a person's anxiety on his achievement level in different educational stages, and this is more clear among females than among males. The studies have attributed this difference to the excess emotional sensitivity that characterizes females compared to males.

Others believe that exam anxiety is considered a positive factor that leads to raising the level of academic achievement among a large number of students, while it may have a negative effect on other students, which leads to a decrease in their academic and cognitive achievement, experience, and social adjustment, especially in the basic stage in which students find difficulty in expressing what they feel from anxiety. If the degree of anxiety among students is known, then it becomes possible to plan to lower it by working on minimizing its causes and the factors that lead to falling into it and increasing it.

While others indicated that there are external reasons that affect students in their academic achievement, among the most important of them are the painful experiences threatening the self of the individual as referred to by both Gudry and Spielberger. Individuals who have a high degree of the anxiety trait are more harmed in exam situations, because high levels of anxiety make the person lose his ability to control, and coordination and integration decrease greatly, which leads to deterioration of performance in the exam and academic achievement (Othman, 2001).

Al-Qamash and Al-Ma'iza also indicated that exams, especially the difficult ones, raise anxiety among students, so they have improper responses as a result of fear and tension from failure, or the feeling of incompetence and expectation of punishment, which leads in turn to low achievement for them.

As for exam anxiety, Kaller and Holaman pointed out that the topic of test anxiety has become an important subject that affects students' levels, and many studies have been conducted in this field to help students who suffer from high exam anxiety to reduce this anxiety and to help them raise their achievement. Dankin (1981) also points out that the level of exam anxiety, whether low or high, affects pupils' achievement especially in the stage of basic education.

Students' anxiety from exams begins with fear and the intensity of the fear increases as the exam approaches, which leads to behavioral disorders as a result of his fear of the exam. This makes the student anxious about the school result and about failure, and what comes after it from the reaction of parents and teachers (Al-Zawahra, 2006), and Kaya (2004, kaya) also points out that exam anxiety may develop to become one form of phobic disorders and an important factor that hinders excellence, academic achievement, and discrimination between students in the different educational levels. There are many students who face failure in their study because of their inability to face and challenge the test situations while taking them, and what accompanies these situations from disorder, tension, and anxiety that affect the ability of the student to adapt well to the exam situation. Hence, our study came to know the effect of exam anxiety on academic achievement among fourth year middle school students, and from here we propose the general question: **What is the level of exam anxiety among fourth year middle school students?**

And from this, the following questions branch:

- 1_ What is the level of exam fear among fourth year middle school students?
- 2_ What is the level of exam confusion among fourth year middle school students?
- 3_ What is the level of exam performance tension among fourth year middle school students?
- 4_ What is the level of exam annoyance among fourth year middle school students?

5_ What is the level of lack of exam skills among fourth year middle school students?

6_ What is the level of exam taking disorder among fourth year middle school students?

Research hypotheses:

- 1_ The level of exam anxiety among fourth year middle school students is of a medium degree.
- 2_ The level of exam fear among fourth year middle school students is of a high degree.
- 3_ The level of exam confusion among fourth year middle school students is of a medium degree.
- 4_ The level of exam performance tension among fourth year middle school students is of a medium degree.
- 5_ The level of exam annoyance among fourth year middle school students is of a medium degree.
- 6_ The level of lack of exam skills among fourth year middle school students is of a medium degree.
- 7_ The level of exam taking disorder among fourth year middle school students is of a medium degree.

Research Terms:

- Exam Anxiety: Exam anxiety is a general anxiety accompanied by an emotional state characterized by tension and fear. It affects an individual in different stages and this condition is related to exams and to the evaluation process. Many signs of disorder, tension, and anxiety appear on students, and the danger of this type of anxiety is manifested when it reaches an advanced stage. This happens when anxiety moves from the stage of positive motivation and pushing for effort and striving for more achievements and successes, to an abnormal and unhealthy stage. At this stage, its symptoms stand in the way of the student's stability and success before and during the evaluation or success stage. (Nail Abu Azab, 2008, p.80).
- Sarason (1984) defined exam anxiety as a feeling of threat and tension in certain situations related to exams, and the features of psychological anxiety become clear in manifestations of hesitation, discomfort, feeling suffocated and annoyed, anger, easy irritability, caution and alertness, and physiological manifestations like dizziness, frequent urination, heart palpitations, insomnia, stomach ache, trembling, shivering, sweating and nausea. Operational Definition: It is a feeling and a situation that the pupil lives through in different stages to pass an exam.
- Fourth-Year Middle School Students: The students who are studying at Ahmed Mahsass Middle School in Sidi Hajres, and they are the ones who are taking the fourth-year middle school exam for the 2021-2022 season. They are the study sample members.
- Level: It is the degree that the study sample members obtain on the exam anxiety scale.

Previous Studies:

Aboud Study (1995): Titled "The Effectiveness of a Group Counseling Program in Lowering Anxiety Resulting from Parental Deprivation among Children". The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of a group counseling program in lowering the level of anxiety among children deprived of one parent due to divorce. The study sample consisted of 40 male and female students and they were divided into four groups. Their ages ranged between 9-11 years. The study found that there are differences in the test in favor of the pre-application, and also reached that there are no significant differences between the group's average scores on the anxiety test after the follow-up period.

Saleh Study (1997): Titled "The Effectiveness of Behavioral Counseling in Lowering Exam Anxiety and Improving Academic Performance in the End-of-Year Exam". The study sample consisted of 60 students who were repeating in high school, divided into four experimental groups. The information was collected using the test list. The researcher used percentages, the "t" test, and the one-way analysis of variance test to process the hypotheses. The results showed that there are significant differences between the mean scores of members of the experimental groups in favor of direct group counseling.

Karim Study (2005): Titled "The Level of Exam Anxiety among Specialized Secondary School Male and Female Students in Egypt". The study aimed to identify the difference in the level of exam anxiety between the two sexes from scientific and

literary specialization in the fourth year of secondary school. The researcher used the test anxiety scale he prepared. The study found that there are no statistically significant differences between students of scientific specialization (male) and students of scientific specialization (female) on the exam anxiety scale.

Al Harbi Study (2017): Titled "Exam Anxiety and its Relationship to Self-Esteem Dimensions among Third-Year Secondary School Students". The study aimed to identify the relationship between exam anxiety and self-esteem among third-year secondary school students considering the gender and scientific specialization variables. To achieve this goal, the descriptive method was used, and the sample consisted of 86 male and female students in Laroussi Al-Arabi Secondary School in Tiaret Province, selected randomly. Two scales were applied after confirming their validity and reliability, the first measures exam anxiety prepared by Hamed Abdul Salam Zahran (1999), and the second measures self-esteem designed by Cooper Smith. The study showed the following results:

- There is an inverse correlation between exam anxiety and self-esteem among the study sample students.
- There are differences in the level of exam anxiety due to gender and specialization variables.
- There are no differences in the level of self-esteem due to gender and specialization variables.

Study of Alyami Mohammed Hussein Fahid (2018): Titled "The Level of Test Anxiety among High School Students in Najran City Education and Ways to Overcome It." The study aimed to identify the level of test anxiety among high school students in Najran City Education and ways to overcome it. The study used the descriptive analytical approach, and the anxiety scale consisting of 36 items was applied to the study sample of 600 male and female students, selected randomly from Najran City schools: 32 schools for males and 36 schools for females. The results revealed that the total mean of test anxiety level among high school students in Najran City, from the perspective of the students themselves, was 3.14, and the relative weight of anxiety level was 62.96, classified as medium level. The results also revealed statistical differences at significance level 0.05 in test anxiety level due to grade variable, in favor of third-year high school students. The results showed statistical differences between males and females in test anxiety, in favor of females, meaning the anxiety level of females is high. The study provided several recommendations and suggestions to overcome test anxiety.

Farah Study (2014): This study aimed to identify exam anxiety and its relationship to academic achievement among students of the Faculty of Education, Sudan University. The study used the descriptive analytical method, relying on questionnaires. The results showed that the respondents' answers to these items were negative, which means these items do not apply to them, that is, the degree of exam anxiety among students of the Faculty of Education, Sudan University of Science and Technology is low. There were statistical differences in exam anxiety scores between males and females, and this difference was in favor of females, meaning the exam anxiety of females is high.

Al-Fatli Study (2012): This study revealed the level of anxiety among trainee students and its relationship to their performance in the subject of science education. The research community and sample were 113 students of the fourth year from the Faculty of Education, Department of History and Educational and Psychological Sciences. The research tool was a questionnaire of 29 items. The results showed that there is a direct positive relationship between anxiety level and the performance of trainee students in science education.

Shaheen Study: Titled "Test Anxiety among High School Students in Hebron Governorate." The study aimed to verify the level of test anxiety among students who took the General Secondary Certificate Examination in Hebron Governorate during the school year 2001-2003. The study tried to recognize the distribution of anxiety levels among students, aiming to identify the size of the phenomenon and help stakeholders pay more attention to it, not only at the end of the secondary stage, but also in different school stages. The study found that the responses showed the phenomenon of test anxiety is distributed on three levels with different percentages: those who showed high anxiety were 58.6%, those who showed medium anxiety were 34.9%, and those who had low anxiety were 8.6%.

Al-Tayeb Study (1988): This study aimed to determine the level of test anxiety among college students at Tanta University. The study sample was 200 male and female students divided equally from each faculty: medicine, pharmacy, education, agriculture, and commercial technicians preparation. The anxiety scale used was prepared by Spielberger. The results showed that the average test anxiety among females was higher than among males in each faculty.

Commentary on Previous Studies:

In light of what was reviewed in previous studies, it can be concluded that these studies came varied in their approach to the study variable, which is exam anxiety. Exam anxiety was linked to various variables; nevertheless, it should be noted that these studies nearly sought to achieve one goal, which is the level of exam anxiety among fourth-year middle school students and trying to generalize it to other levels. These studies agreed on their sample selection, which was represented in the method used, and they differed regarding the tools used, the environment of study, etc. Previous studies were useful in building a theoretical background around the topic, which enabled us to formulate the research problem and also to determine the hypotheses.

Study Limits:

The current study limits were as follows:

1. Spatial limits: The current study was conducted at Ahmed Mahsass Middle School in Sidi Hajres, M'sila Province.
2. Time limits: The current study was conducted in its applied part during the period between 28-12-2021 to 12-01-2022.
3. Human limits: The current study was conducted in its applied part on a sample of students who suffer from exam anxiety at Ahmed Mahsass Middle School in Sidi Hajres, M'sila.

Study Method:

The descriptive analytical method was adopted in the current study.

Study Population:

The study population consisted of all fourth-year middle school students who suffer from exam anxiety.

Study Sample:

The study was conducted on a non-probability, purposive sample consisting of 50 male and female students at Ahmed Mahsass Middle School in Sidi Hajres, M'sila. They were selected by coincidence, that is, by the convenient method.

Study Tool:

The Hamid Zahran Exam Anxiety Scale questionnaire was used, which consists of 60 items distributed over three axes, as shown in the following table: Table No. (01)

Items	Axis	Number
1-26	Exam Fear	1
27-45	Exam Confusion	2
46-60	Exam Tension	3
61-72	Exam Annoyance	4
73-86	Lack of Exam Skills	5
86-98	Exam Taking Disorder	6

Questionnaire Scoring:

Table No. (02): Shows the five-point scale to determine the agreement scores for each questionnaire item.

Rating the Response to Items	Arithmetic Mean Range
Very Low	[1 - 1.86]
Low	[1.8 - 2.6]

Medium	[2.6 - 3.4]
High	[3.4 - 4.2]
Very High	[4.2 - 5]

The responses on the questionnaire form were rated as shown in the following table: Table No. (03): Shows the scoring of the items of the exam anxiety level questionnaire among fourth-year middle school students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
05	04	03	02	01

• Presentation and Discussion of Study Results:

Presentation of the results and discussion of the first hypothesis:

The first hypothesis stated that the level of exam fear among fourth-year middle school students is of a medium degree. After processing the responses of the sample individuals and depending on the arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item belonging to the level of exam fear among students, of medium degree, and the total score of the questionnaire, in addition to the ranking of each item in the questionnaire, and depending on the degree (very high - high - medium - low - very low) that was adopted as explained earlier, the following results were obtained. To answer this question, arithmetic means and standard deviations were used as shown in the following table:

Table No. (04) shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the responses of the study sample on the items of the exam fear axis.

Item Number	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Degree
1	I feel disappointed when I perform the end-of-year exam	2.90	1.10	18	Medium
2	I cannot revise the night before the exam	2.66	1.16	24	Medium
3	I feel bored when it comes time for final revision	3.22	1.32	8	Medium
4	As soon as I receive the question paper, I get a severe headache	2.72	1.48	22	Medium
5	The exam questions are above my achievement level	3.14	1.38	11	Medium
6	I suffer from forgetfulness when reading the questions for the first time	3.24	1.47	6	Medium
7	I expect failure in exams	3.18	1.36	10	Medium
8	During my exam I fiddle with anything in front of me, like a ruler, or something else	3.30	1.48	5	Medium
9	I lack the desire for success and excellence	2.56	1.38	26	Medium

10	I have no patience to review the answer	3.42	1.57	3	High
11	One of my faults is hurried and inaccurate answering	3.30	1.36	4	Medium
12	I don't know how to prepare for the exam	3.24	1.30	7	Medium
13	I feel very nervous during my answering in exams	2.60	1.42	25	Medium
14	I see exams as a permanent threat	2.88	1.38	20	Medium
15	I find it hard to choose the questions to answer	2.88	1.57	19	Medium
16	Boredom makes me leave the exam room as soon as half the time passes	3.00	1.38	14	Medium
17	At the start of the exam I feel I won't be able to finish it	2.96	2.10	16	Medium
18	My fear makes me unable to read the question paper accurately	3.08	1.50	12	Medium
19	I am afraid of observers and monitors in the exam halls	3.00	1.52	13	Medium
20	I wish all exams would be canceled	2.96	1.45	15	Medium
21	While taking exams, I find myself thinking about the possibility of failing	2.70	1.40	23	Medium
22	I increase the use of stimulants during exam days	2.74	1.32	21	Medium
23	I believe all exam questions are unexpected	3.20	1.47	9	Medium
24	I suffer from instability in my seat during the exam	2.94	1.46	17	Medium
25	I resort to guessing in preparing for the exam	3.92	1.45	1	High
26	It upsets me that all studying revolves around exams	3.80	1.38	2	High
Total score		79.54	16.77	1	Medium

From Table No. (01), we notice that the values of the arithmetic means for the items ranged between (2.80–4.50), knowing that the lowest response value is (01) and the highest response value is (05). The overall average for the questionnaire reached (79.54). After calculating the true value of the arithmetic mean, which was (3.05), this value belongs to the range

• Presentation and discussion of study results: Presentation and discussion of the first hypothesis: The second hypothesis stated: The level of exam confusion among fourth-year middle school students is at a high degree. After processing the responses of the sample individuals and relying on arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item belonging to exam

confusion among students, at a high degree, and the overall score of the questionnaire, in addition to ranking each item in the questionnaire, and relying on the degree (very high - high - medium - low - very low) that was adopted as previously explained, the following results were obtained. To answer this question, arithmetic means and standard deviations were used, as shown in the following table:

Question 2: What is the level of exam confusion among fourth-year middle school students?

Item Number	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Degree
27	I feel my heart beats quickly during exams	4.04	1.10	3	High
28	I get confused when the monitor announces the remaining time	4.18	0.89	1	High
29	After the exam I ask every day about the result	4.08	1.10	2	High
30	The hardest days for me are the days of waiting for the result	3.86	1.03	4	High
31	I get very confused when the result is announced	3.60	0.93	8	High
32	I sweat when I can't answer in the exam	3.50	0.80	13	High
33	I feel anxious and disturbed during my exam performance	3.68	0.87	5	High
34	My disturbance increases when reviewing answers with colleagues	3.54	1.04	10	High
35	I panic about surprise exams	3.52	0.97	11	High
36	I worry that my future depends on exams	3.64	1.05	7	High
37	I feel lack of self-confidence during my exams	3.50	0.83	12	High
38	I rush the answer fearing the time will run out	3.46	0.90	15	High
39	My hands shake when answering exam questions	3.22	1.05	18	Medium
40	I feel fear from the exam	3.32	0.95	16	Medium
41	I become severely confused during exams	3.48	0.99	14	High
42	After taking an exam, I feel that my answer was not successful	3.64	0.99	6	High
43	I worry about graders' errors	3.56	0.93	9	High
44	I feel unstable during exam days	3.22	0.95	17	Medium
45	I feel extremely tired during exam days	3.20	0.92	19	Medium
		68.24	5.30		High

From Table No. (3), we notice the values of the arithmetic means for the items ranged between (2.80-4.50), knowing that the lowest possible answer is (01) and the highest is (05). The overall mean for the questionnaire reached (50.84). After calculating the true value of the arithmetic mean, which was (3.38), this value belongs to the range

• Presentation and discussion of study results: Presentation and discussion of the first hypothesis: The third hypothesis stated: The level of exam tension among fourth-year middle school students is at a medium degree. After processing the sample's responses and relying on arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item belonging to exam tension among students, at a high degree, and the overall score of the questionnaire, in addition to ranking each item in the questionnaire, and relying on the degree (very high - high - medium - low - very low) as previously explained, the following results were obtained:

Question Three: What is the level of exam performance tension among fourth-year middle school students?

Item Number	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Degree
46	My anxiety about exams is the reason why I hate studying.	3.30	1.01	14	Medium
47	I get very annoyed when the exam schedule is announced.	3.40	1.01	8	High
48	I lose my appetite during exam days.	3.32	0.93	11	Medium
49	My intense fear of the exam makes me forget what I have memorized.	3.32	1.12	10	Medium
50	I am bothered that exams measure memorization and I am not good at memorizing.	3.22	0.97	15	Medium
51	During the exam, I write with one hand and bite my nails with the other.	3.52	0.94	2	High
52	I find it hard to express what I want to write in the exam.	3.56	0.94	1	High
53	I seem as if I am shaken during the exams.	3.46	0.96	4	High
54	I suffer from disorganization of the answer paper.	3.42	1.06	6	High
55	I feel uncomfortable and disturbed during the exam.	3.44	0.86	5	High
56	When reviewing before entering the exam hall, I feel information has evaporated from my head	3.36	1.05	9	Medium
57	I am threatened by what may result from my failure during the exam.	3.32	0.86	12	Medium
58	I feel very tense during the exam.	3.50	1.14	3	High
59	One of my faults is reading the question paper quickly.	3.30	1.01	13	Medium
60	I feel tense when entering the exam hall.	3.40	0.97	7	High
		50.84	4.31		Medium

From Table No. (4), we observe that the values of the arithmetic means for the items ranged between (2.80-4.50), knowing that the lowest answer value is (01) and the highest is (05). The overall questionnaire mean was (50.84). After calculating the true arithmetic mean value, which was (3.38), this value falls within the range

• Presentation and discussion of study results: Presentation and discussion of the fourth hypothesis: The fourth hypothesis stated: The level of exam annoyance among fourth-year middle school students is medium. After

processing the responses of the sample and relying on the arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item belonging to exam annoyance among students, at a high degree, and the overall questionnaire score, plus item ranking in the questionnaire, and based on the degree (very high - high - medium - low - very low) previously adopted, the following results were obtained:

Question Four: What is the level of exam annoyance among fourth-year middle school students?

Item Number	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Degree
61	My feeling of discomfort starts before I receive the question paper.	3.48	0.90	4	High
62	I get confused when answering oral exam questions in class.	3.50	1.03	3	High
63	When I review the night before the exam, I find I have forgotten everything.	3.56	1.05	2	High
64	I feel very tense during my exam performance.	3.08	0.76	12	Medium
65	I feel very anxious before the exam.	3.16	0.90	11	Medium
66	Anxiety accompanies me all exam days.	3.32	1.02	8	Medium
67	I feel lack of self-confidence during answering in exams.	3.46	0.77	5	High
68	I feel very afraid when taking exams.	3.62	1.01	1	High
69	I feel very tense when preparing for the exam.	3.26	0.86	10	Medium
70	I am afraid as exam time approaches.	3.36	0.80	6	Medium
71	Exams are the thing that worries me the most.	3.30	0.88	9	Medium
72	Instructions from the exam committee annoy me.	3.34	0.92	7	Medium
		40.44	5.07		Medium

From Table No. (4), we see that the values of the arithmetic means for the items ranged between (2.80-4.50), with the lowest response value being (01) and the highest (05). The overall mean of the questionnaire was (50.84). After calculating the true value of the arithmetic mean, which reached (3.38), it falls in the range

• Presentation and discussion of study results: Presentation and discussion of the fifth hypothesis: The fifth hypothesis stated: The level of lack of exam skills among fourth-year middle school students is at a medium degree. After processing the responses of the sample and relying on the arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item belonging to the lack of exam skills among students, at a high degree, and the overall score of the questionnaire, plus item ranking in the questionnaire, and based on the degree (very high - high - medium - low - very low) previously adopted, the following results were obtained:

Question Five: What is the level of lack of exam skills among fourth-year middle school students?

Item Number	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Degree
73	It bothers me that there are no serious monthly exams to prepare us for the end-of-year exam.	3.38	0.91	8	Medium

74	I am afraid there will be questions we have not practiced on.	3.36	0.87	10	Medium
75	It annoys me that teachers don't train us for exams or how to answer.	3.24	1.01	13	Medium
76	I am afraid of a bad result.	3.34	0.90	11	Medium
77	It bothers me that I can't distribute exam time on required questions.	3.32	0.90	12	Medium
78	I get confused that time is not enough to answer questions.	3.16	1.01	14	Medium
79	It annoys me that I can't organize a revision schedule.	3.40	0.98	7	High
80	I am afraid there will be questions from outside the syllabus.	3.42	0.90	6	High
81	I worry I don't know the best review method.	3.38	1.02	9	Medium
82	I worry I don't know how to answer the questions properly.	3.64	1.06	2	High
83	Short exam time is a problem for me.	3.48	0.98	4	High
84	I am afraid of teachers threatening us with hard exam questions.	3.66	0.91	1	High
85	Excessive movement of monitors in the hall worries me.	3.56	0.84	3	High
86	I worry some question will be left unchecked.	3.46	0.99	5	High
		47.80	5.92		High

From Table No. (5), we notice that the arithmetic mean values for the items ranged between (2.80-4.50), with the lowest possible response value being (01) and the highest (05). The overall mean of the questionnaire was (50.84). After calculating the real value of the arithmetic mean, which was (3.41), it falls in the range

• Presentation and discussion of study results: Presentation and discussion of the sixth hypothesis: The sixth hypothesis stated: The level of exam-taking disorder among fourth-year middle school students is medium. After processing the responses of the sample and relying on the arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item belonging to exam-taking disorder among students, at a high degree, and the overall score for the questionnaire, in addition to ranking each item in the questionnaire, and using the adopted degrees (very high - high - medium - low - very low), the following results were obtained:

Question Six: What is the level of exam-taking disorder among fourth-year middle school students?

Item Number	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Degree
87	Because of intense fear, I can't eat on the morning of the exam.	3.34	0.83	5	High

88	I get insomnia and can't sleep the night before the exam.	3.22	0.90	7	Medium
89	Out of fear, I study even while on my way to the exam hall	3.40	0.83	3	High
90	I feel very cold in my body during exams	3.62	0.96	1	High
91	I suffer from headaches during exam days	3.22	0.96	6	Medium
92	My intense tension during exams causes stomach disturbances	3.34	0.95	4	Medium
93	I feel like vomiting during exams	3.46	0.95	2	High
		23.60	3.98		Medium

From Table No. (6), we observe the values of the arithmetic means for the items ranged between (2.80–4.50), knowing that the lowest response value is (01) and the highest is (05). The overall mean for the questionnaire reached (50.84). After calculating the real arithmetic mean value, which was (3.37), this value falls in the range

- Presentation and discussion of the general study hypothesis:

The general hypothesis stated: The level of exam anxiety among fourth-year middle school students is of a medium degree. After processing the responses of the sample and relying on arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item belonging to exam anxiety among students at a high degree, and the overall score of the questionnaire, plus item ranking in the questionnaire, and based on the degree (very high – high – medium – low – very low) previously adopted, the following results were obtained:

General Question: What is the level of exam anxiety among fourth-year middle school students?

Axis	Total Score	Std. Deviation	Rank	Degree
Total	310.46	24.78		
Axis 1	79.54	16.77	1	Medium
Axis 2	68.24	5.30	2	Medium
Axis 3	50.84	4.31	3	Medium
Axis 4	47.80	5.92	5	Medium
Axis 5	40.44	5.07	4	Medium
Axis 6	23.60	3.98	6	Medium

From Table No. (07), we see that the values of the arithmetic means for the axes ranged between (79.54–23.60), with the lowest possible answer being (01) and the highest (05). The first axis ranked first with an arithmetic mean of (79.54) and a standard deviation of (16.77). The second axis came in second place with a mean of (68.24) and standard deviation (5.30), and the third axis was third with a mean of (50.84) and standard deviation (4.31). The fourth axis came fifth with a mean of (47.80) and standard deviation (5.92), and the fifth axis was fourth with a mean of (40.44) and standard deviation (5.07). The true mean was (3.33). Thus, the exam anxiety scale for fourth-year middle school students, the total score for the scale, was at a medium level.

The Farah (2014) study showed that the respondents' answers to these statements were negative, meaning they did not apply to them and the exam anxiety level among students at the Faculty of Education, Sudan University of Science and Technology was low. The study of Alyami Mohammed Hussein Fahid (2018), titled "The Level of Test Anxiety among High School

Students in Najran City Education and Ways to Overcome It," revealed the total mean for test anxiety among high school students in Najran City from their own perspective was (3.14), and the relative weight of anxiety was (62.96), a medium level. The results showed statistically significant differences in test anxiety level attributable to grade level, in favor of third-year high school students. The results also showed significant differences in test anxiety scores between males and females, in favor of females, meaning that female anxiety levels are higher. The study provided recommendations and suggestions to overcome test anxiety, and the hypothesis was achieved.

Sarason (1984) believes exam anxiety increases during socialization in family settings, especially in the early years of a child's life, where inappropriate parental evaluation of children's behavior provokes feelings of aggression toward the parents. Since children cannot express these feelings due to dependence on parents for their needs and approval, they tend to exhibit feelings of guilt, anxiety, and diminished self-esteem, especially in evaluative situations.

Study Recommendations:

- Developing a comprehensive program to use social networks for spreading awareness about the correct concept of these sites and their negative impact on university students.
- Directing researchers to give more attention to topics on how to care for students in final years, as they greatly need the school counselor's role and support to overcome all difficulties during exams.
- Conducting similar studies at different stages and levels (primary, middle, secondary).
- Enriching scientific and academic efforts by conducting follow-up studies on the role of the school and career guidance counselor in reducing exam anxiety among students and generalizing them to various segments of society.
- Providing awareness and sensitization programs for fourth-year middle school students on the optimal use for dealing with exams.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards in educational and psychological research. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from students and their legal guardians. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were strictly maintained, and data were used solely for scientific research purposes. No psychological or academic harm was inflicted on participants during data collection.

Author Contributions

- Dr. Khadra Hallab: Conceptualization of the study, theoretical framework development, data collection, and initial drafting of the manuscript.
- Dr. Abdelaziz Nekbil: Methodological design, statistical analysis, interpretation of results, critical revision of the manuscript, and academic supervision.

Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation to the administration, teachers, students, and families of Ahmed Mahsass Middle School in Sidi Hajres for their cooperation and support during the data collection process. Special thanks are also extended to colleagues at the Laboratory of the Pedagogical Issue and Its Related Questions for their valuable academic feedback.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

References:

1561 - www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 12, Vol. 8, 2025
Exam Anxiety among Fourth-Year Middle School Students: Psychological Manifestations, Family and School Influences, and Implications for Educational Guidance and Academic Adjustment
Khadra Hallab; Abdelaziz Nekbil

1. Aboud, A. (1995). *The effectiveness of a group counseling program in reducing anxiety resulting from parental deprivation among children* (Unpublished master's thesis).
2. Abu Azab, N. I. (2008). *The effectiveness of a proposed counseling program in reducing exam anxiety among secondary school students in the Gaza governorates* (Master's thesis). Islamic University of Gaza.
3. Abu Saima, A. (1995). *Anxiety and academic achievement*. Arab Center for Student Services.
4. Al-Fatli, A. A. (2012). Anxiety levels among trainee students and their relationship to performance in science education. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences*, 14(2), 87-109.
5. Al-Harbi, M. A. (2017). Exam anxiety and its relationship to self-esteem dimensions among third-year secondary school students. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 9(1), 55-78.
6. Al-Tayeb, A. H. (1988). Test anxiety among university students at Tanta University. *Journal of Psychological Studies*, 4(2), 112-136.
7. Anastasi, A., & Urbina, S. (1997). *Psychological testing* (7th ed.). Prentice Hall.
8. Eysenck, M. W. (1979). Anxiety, learning, and memory: A reconceptualization. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 13(4), 363-385. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0092-6566\(79\)90001-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0092-6566(79)90001-1)
9. Farah, A. A. (2014). Exam anxiety and its relationship to academic achievement among students of the Faculty of Education. *Sudan University Journal of Educational Studies*, 6(1), 101-123.
10. Fatima Zahra, B. (2019). *Exam anxiety and academic achievement among students*. Dar Al-Ilm for Publishing.
11. Gudykunst, W. B., & Spielberger, C. D. (Eds.). (1983). *Anxiety and communication*. Sage Publications.
12. Hajar, K., & Khadhairia, H. (2018). Exam anxiety among fifth-year primary school pupils: A field study. *Journal of Childhood and Education*, 5(2), 19-35.
13. Kareem, A. M. (2005). Exam anxiety among male and female students in specialized secondary education in Egypt. *Egyptian Journal of Educational Psychology*, 15(3), 233-258.
14. Kaya, M. (2004). The relationship between test anxiety and academic performance. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 4(2), 367-389.
15. Othman, F. S. (2001). *Anxiety and psychological stress management* (1st ed.). Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi.
16. Saihi, S. (2012). Exam anxiety and contributing factors among pupils. *Journal of Human and Social Sciences*, January Issue, 45-66.
17. Saleh, A. H. (1997). The effectiveness of behavioral counseling in reducing exam anxiety and improving academic achievement. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 9(1), 71-94.
18. Sarason, I. G. (1984). Stress, anxiety, and cognitive interference: Reactions to tests. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46(4), 929-938. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.46.4.929>
19. Shaheen, Y. A. (2003). Test anxiety among secondary school students in Hebron Governorate. *Palestinian Journal of Educational Research*, 7(1), 33-59.
20. Spielberger, C. D. (1980). *Test Anxiety Inventory*. Consulting Psychologists Press.
21. Spielberger, C. D. (1983). *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for adults*. Consulting Psychologists Press.
22. Yami, M. H. F. (2018). The level of test anxiety among high school students in Najran city education and methods of overcoming it. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 7(2), 141-165.
23. Zahran, H. A. (1999). *Mental health and psychotherapy* (4th ed.). Alam Al-Kutub.