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Grade Level Differences in the Cognitive, Behavioral, and Physiological Components of Test Anxiety

Abstract

The capacity to cope with test anxiety that contain high concentrations of cognitive, behavioral, and physiological manifestations, is becoming increasingly important in educational contexts as well as evaluative settings. The developing ability to deal with test anxiety relative to the increasingly strict evaluative practices students encounter points that students' test anxiety may decline as they move through school years. This study examined three test anxiety components (*thoughts*, *off-task behaviors*, and *autonomic reactions*) with students from 3 public schools in İstanbul, Turkey. Using a diverse sample of elementary (Grade 4; N = 414) and middle (Grade 6; N = 201) school students, grade level differences in these components were investigated. Applying a multivariate approach, significant differences were found in the overall test anxiety, favoring fourth grade students. The results also revealed Grade 4 advantage for *off-task behaviors* and *autonomic reactions*, η^2= .014 and η^2= .011, but no grade level differences in the *thoughts*. Educational implications of the findings are discussed.