

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL COUNSELING IN REDUCING EXAM ANXIETY SYMPTOMS AND IMPROVING ACADEMIC SELF- EFFICACY IN A SAMPLE OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THI-QAR GOVERNORATE

Hasan Mohsin Saadon

Directorate of Thi Qar Education, Ministry of Education of Iraq.

hassan.m.s@utq.edu.iq

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the efficiency of a cognitive-behavioral counselling programme in lowering symptoms of exam anxiety and enhancing academic self-efficacy in a sample of middle school students from the Thi Qar governorate. The sample consisted of (40) pupils who were selected from (90) fifth-grade students attending preparatory schools for boys in Suq Al-Shuyukh (Karma School and the El-Shohada School), on the basis of their high test anxiety scores, they were divided into two groups of similar size, chronological age, and test anxiety score, the experimental group consisted of twenty (20) students who participated in the Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling Program, while the control group consisted of twenty (20) students who did not receive any form of guiding intervention other than the administration of research measures (pre-measurement, posterior, deferred). The study instruments included an exam anxiety scale and an academic self-efficacy scale, in addition to the cognitive-behavioral treatment programme consisting of which consisted of (11) counseling. The semi-experimental method was employed, and the data were analysed using proper statistical methods, the study yielded the following results: a decrease in the level of exam anxiety among the members of the experimental group after the completion of the application of the extension program (post- measurement), A comparison of the experimental and control groups' post-measurement findings revealed that the experimental group performed better in terms of examination anxiety than the control group. The academic self-efficacy of the experimental sample exhibited significant variations between pre- and post-measurement, and the outcomes supported the use of post-measurement, comparing the postponed measuring results of the experimental and control groups revealed that members of the experimental group performed better in terms of reducing exam anxiety and increasing self-efficacy than members of the control group. The researcher gave a series of recommendations and proposals that came from the findings of this study, notably the design of counselling programmes by school counsellors to reduce exam anxiety, increase academic self-efficacy, and foster motivation and desire to learn.

Keywords: Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling, Academic Self-Efficacy, Middle School.

Introduction

Exam anticipation appears to pose a significant hazard to students, particularly those approaching a school examination. Exam anxiety not only affects job perspective, but also academic performance. Although studies have shown that a moderate level of worry propels an individual toward his or her objective, radicalization may result in the development of several worries (Woldeab & Brothen, 2019). Exam anxiety among students at various stages of education has been the subject of a substantial amount of researches in recent years (Barroso et al.,2021). Exam anxiety is pervasive across educational settings. It is a global phenomenon that negatively impacts students' academic performance. This very complex component connects cognitive and emotional discrimination to behaviour (Jena, 2019). According to Brotto et al., (2019) cognitive behavioural therapy is a psychological technique that is used to treat a range of anxiety disorders. This psychological intervention enables the client to comprehend the complete communication process between his thoughts, actions, and emotions. It also underlines that anxiety results in pain and a sense of being threatened when the individual's talents are underestimated. The cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is an effective treatment for anxiety, which is a prevalent disorder (Lackner, 2020). In the 1950s of the previous century, famous psychologists such as Skinner, established the behavioural therapy movement by establishing the connection between behaviour, emotion, and cognitive state, such as assessments (Hayes & Hofmann, 2021). Behavioral experts have stated that this improvement in emotion and individual thought is frequently the result of a shift in conduct. Several decades later, however, psychologists Albert Ellis and Beck broadened the concept of behavioural therapy to incorporate cognitive components as a significant factor (Yakubu, 2020). In comparison to the behavioural perspective, their investigations revealed that a shift in perception has the capacity to affect both emotions and behaviour. In the end, the fundamental parts of treatment emerged, mainly behavioural and cognitive factors. Cognitive behavioural therapy for test anxiety is to assess the need for experience-based intervention with an emphasis on exam anxiety among school students (Krispenz et al.,2019). A increasing body of research demonstrates that cognitive-behavioral therapy helps alleviate symptoms of exam anxiety (Ugwuanyi et al.,2020). To evaluate the efficacy of cognitive-behavioral group therapy, 10 classroom sessions were undertaken, with a focus on adjusting the components of cognitive therapy without compromising the method's core (Wood et al., 2009). Cognitive behavioural therapy utilises erroneous beliefs about the exam through a variety of strategies, including detecting incorrect thoughts, questioning and altering maladaptive views, and examining evidence for and against spontaneous thoughts (Condon, Maurer & Kyle, 2021). Aside from this, cognitive restructuring is one of the most often utilised approaches in cognitive behavioural therapy to modify individual ways of thinking to be more constructive, particularly in test anxiety instances (Heidenreich et al., 2021).

Datu et al., (2022) indicated that in order to effectively treat exam anxiety, the individual's beliefs are the primary aspect that must be altered. Changing or reconstructing a person's negative emotions might result in positivity, so enhancing a student's emotional life. The CBT-based solution for exam anxiety teaches students how to question problematic thoughts and interrupt avoidance behaviour cycles, in addition to relaxation techniques (such as guided imagery or deep breathing) and study skills training (Feldman, 2019). Cognitive-behavioral therapies are associated with moderate decreases in exam anxiety, according to meta-analyses (Cervin & Lundgren, 2022). Hembree (1988) listed 53 studies in CBT with standard deviations for five pieces of research that combined cognitive-behavioral therapies with study skills training.

The Problem of Study

Exam anxiety is one of the variables that affect students' achievement and motivation, but students must be exposed to evaluation situations whose outcomes determine important decisions in their daily lives and academic future, as the exam plays a role in students' lives. Due to the significance of the exam's role in defining the student's fate, academic career, and place in society, exam anxiety is of great significance. Consequently, it is a significant issue for not only numerous students and their families, but also for society as a whole. This has prompted many professional in this field to focus on studying exam anxiety and develop numerous training and counselling programmes to reduce its severity (Muran et al.,2018). As a result, many Arab and international scientific studies have focused on exam anxiety and its many related variables, such as self-concept, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and others, with the goal of reducing the intensity of exam anxiety in students who experience disruptive anxiety during the exam and turning it into motivational anxiety (Hyseni Duraku & Hoxha, 2018). These programmes included client-centered counselling, analytical counselling, real-life counselling, and human counselling, as well as other counselling strategies used in this field to alleviate exam anxiety. According to studies, students suffer extreme anxiety during exams, such as studying (Ali & Anwar, 2021; Kathem et al 2021; Saeed, Shabila & Aziz, 2021). As a result, investigations and research have demonstrated that students in Iraq experience exam anxiety before to and during exam sessions (Salim, 2022). The researcher observes the lack of Iraqi studies addressing the ways of alleviate intervention to lessen exam anxiety. This compelled the researcher to determine the issue of his investigation in light of the following question:

How effective is CBT in reducing exam anxiety symptoms and improving the level of academic self-efficacy in a sample of middle school students in some middle schools in Thi Qar governorate?

The Questions of Study

This dilemma raises a series of questions, namely the following:

Does the CBT lessen exam anxiety symptoms and increase academic self-efficacy in the telemetry experimental sample?

Are there statistically significant differences in the average pre- and post-measurement scores of members of the experimental group who got the cognitive-behavioral treatment for reducing exam anxiety symptoms and improving academic self-efficacy?

Are there statistically significant differences between the average scores of experimental group members and the scores of control group members in reducing exam anxiety symptoms and improving academic self-efficacy in telemetry?

Are there statistically significant differences between the average scores of experimental group members and the scores of control group members in reducing exam anxiety symptoms and improving academic self-efficacy in deferred measurement?

The Objectives of Study

The current study aimed to:

Investigate the efficacy of cognitive group behavioural therapy in lowering exam anxiety symptoms and enhancing academic competence in a sample of male students from middle schools in the Thi Qar governorate.

Know the differences between the average scores of the experimental group and the control group on the scale of exam anxiety and self-efficacy after the completion of the application of the indicative program (post measurement).

Discover the variations between the average scores of the experimental group and the control group on the exam anxiety and self-efficacy scales one month following the conclusion of the guidance program's implementation.

Provide middle school counsellors with a procedural illustration of how to assist students in reducing exam anxiety.

The Hypotheses of Study

Following is the researcher's formulation of the study's hypotheses:

There are statistically significant variations between the pre-measurement and post-measurement average scores on the test anxiety scale for individuals of the experimental group.

There are statistically significant variations between the pre-measurement and post-measurement academic self-efficacy scale scores of the experimental group.

There are statistically significant differences between the average test anxiety scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post measurement.

There are statistically significant variations between the average Academic Self-Efficacy Scale scores of the experimental and control groups in post measurement.

There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the experimental and control groups in the delayed measurement on the anxiety scale.

There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the experimental group and the control group in delayed measurement on the academic self-efficacy scale.

The importance of Study

The significance of the research lies in the significance of the topic it addresses, which is exam anxiety among students at various educational stages, particularly students of the preparatory stage, because students who have moved from the middle stage to the preparatory stage may encounter different problems than they were accustomed to in the middle stage in terms of the intensity of the curriculum, the nature of the questions, and the teaching methods. The significance of the study also lies in the fact that it reflects the researchers' desire to identify the negative effects of exam anxiety on students, as well as appropriate guidance methods for addressing this issue, which concerns many students families in light of recent developments and changes in education systems. The significance of study is further underscored by the use of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to combat test anxiety, which is the first step in determining its effectiveness in lowering exam anxiety and enhancing self-efficacy among a sample of Middle school in the Thi Qar governorate. Recognizing the usefulness of the CBT in lowering exam anxiety and enhancing self-efficacy in light of the results of the current study highlights the value of research in an applied context.

METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology: This study employed a semi-experimental design to assess the efficacy of cognitive-behavioral counselling in lowering exam anxiety symptoms and enhancing academic competence among a sample of middle school students in Thi Qar Governorate.

The Sample of Study: This study's experimental sample consisted of 40 students selected from 143 students enrolled in the preliminary stage at Al-Karma school for boys (experimental) and Al-Shohada Preparatory school for boys (control) who scored high on the test anxiety scale and low on the academic ability scale. The range of their ages was (15-16) years, with a mean age of (15.57) years and a standard deviation of (0.74). The sample was divided into two equal-sized groups: The experimental group of twenty students from Al-Karma Preparatory School for Boys was selected for the study, while the control sample was picked from the Al-Shohada Preparatory School for Boys, the rationale for selecting the experimental and control groups from different schools was that the effect of the extended intervention would not be communicated across the experimental and control groups. The software and its tools have been implemented in the computer room of the school.

Instruments of Study: The following instruments were utilised to verify the hypotheses:

1. Exam Anxiety Scale: The researcher designed this examination based on numerous metrics such as the Alpert and Haber, (1960). ; Sarason, (1984); Alpert & Haber, 1960; and Cassady and Johnson, (2002), the scale consists of (35) items and measures a set of dimensions: (Concerns about how others will see you if you do badly, concerns about your self-image, concerns about future security, concerns about unwillingness to test, physical reactions and thinking disorder, and general anxiety about experiences).

Honesty And Consistency of The Scale:

Honesty: Internal Consistency of The Scale: As indicated in the table below, the researcher utilised the law of correlation to determine the relationship between the dimensions of the scale and their relationship to the overall degree.

Table 1: Internal Consistency of Test Anxiety Scale Dimensions And Overall Score

Dimensions	Kidney	Seeing Others	Selfie	Future Concerns	Unpreparedness	Physical Reactions	Intellectual Disorders	General Concern
Kidney	1	0.489**	0.385**	0.624**	0.739**	0.769**	0.764**	0.739**
Seeing Others	0.489**	1	-0.027-	0.303**	0.282**	0.221**	0.267**	0.316**
Selfie	0.385**	-0.027-	1	-0.015-	0.265**	0.238**	0.186**	0.232**
Future Concerns	0.624**	0.303**	-0.015-	1	0.431**	0.338**	0.359**	0.407**
Prepare For The Test	0.739**	0.282**	0.265**	0.431**	1	0.406**	0.527**	0.489**
Physical Reactions	0.769**	0.221**	0.238**	0.338**	0.406**	1	0.552**	0.475**
Intellectual Disorders	0.764**	0.267**	0.186**	0.359**	0.527**	0.552**	1	0.499**
General Concern	0.739**	0.316**	0.232**	0.407**	0.489**	0.475**	0.499**	1

It is evident from Table (1) that there is a statistically significant correlation at the level of (0.01) between the dimensions of the scores of the scale and each other, as well as a correlation between the dimensions of the test anxiety scale and the overall score; therefore, the researcher can confidently apply the scale to the sample of the basic study.

Scale stability: The stability of the scale was calculated using the Cronbach alpha and half-hash methods on the survey sample of (80) students, and the following table shows the results of the stability of the scale.

Table 2: Stability of The Test Anxiety Scale In The Survey Sample Members

Dimensions	Cronbach Alpha	Half-Hash
Kidney	0.38	0.86**
Seeing Others	0.45	0.72**
Selfie	0.66	0.71**
Future Concerns	0.61	0.54**
Prepare For The Test	0.85	0.71**
Physical Reactions	0.68	0.61**
Intellectual Disorders	0.34	0.5**
Overall Grade	0.85	0.6**

Table (2) demonstrates that the stability of the test anxiety scale using the Cronbach alpha equation and the half-hash was satisfactory; thus, it may be applied to the experimental study population (experimental and control).

2. Academic Self-Efficacy Scale

This scale was developed by McCloskey and Scielzo (2015) and consists of twenty-five items that measure five dimensions: time management, personal initiative, motivation, social factors, beliefs, and abilities. The examiner responds to each statement using a five-answer scale based on the Likert method (1-5), a high score shows that the examinee possesses academic self-efficacy, whereas a low score suggests a decline in academic ability. Scale scores vary from a minimum of 25 to a maximum of 125.

Psychometric Characteristics of The Scale:

Authenticity of Content: The scale was presented to a professor in the Department of English at the Directorate of Education, who is fluent in both the scale's language and Arabic. The professor translated the scale into Arabic and then asked others to translate the Arabic text of the scale into English. The results of this procedure indicate that the percentage of conformity was high and within (94%) for all items on the scale.

Internal Consistency: The scale was applied to the survey sample (75) of the aforementioned students in order to determine the appropriateness and clarity of the scale's paragraphs in the sample, and the internal consistency of the scale and its subdimensions was validated by calculating the correlation between each single and the total degree of dimension and each dimension and the total degree of the scale, as shown in Table (3).

Table 3: Internal Consistency Between Each Individual For The Academic Self-Efficacy Scale And The Overall Score of The Dimension.

Time Management			Personal Initiative			Motivation			Social Factors			Beliefs And Abilities		
Number	Correlation coefficient	Significance	Number	Correlation coefficient	Significance	Number	Correlation coefficient	Significance	Number	Correlation coefficient	Significance	Number	Correlation coefficient	Significance
1	0.86**	0.000	3	0.71**	0.000	2	0.72**	0.000	18	0.66**	0.000	5	0.75**	0.000
6	0.79**	0.000	7	0.70**	0.000	4	0.81**	0.000	19	0.67**	0.000	9	0.66**	0.000
11	0.74**	0.000	8	0.75**	0.000	13	0.54**	0.005	20	0.61**	0.001	10	0.75**	0.000
14	0.64**	0.000	12	0.73**	0.000	15	0.53**	0.007						
21	0.79**	0.000	16	0.72**	0.000	22	0.84**	0.000						
23	0.65**	0.000	17	0.26	0.208	25	.59**	0.002						
24	0.77**	0.000												

The results of Table (3) reveal that, at the level of significance (0.01), there is a statistically significant association between each individual's score and the overall degree of distance, indicating that the scale has a high degree of internal consistency. As indicated in the table below, the correlation between the score of each dimension and the overall score of the academic self-efficacy scale was calculated to validate the internal consistency of the scale as a whole.

Table 4: Correlation Coefficient Between The Score of Each Dimension And The Overall Score of The Academic Self-Efficacy Scale

Scale Dimensions	Correlation Coefficient	Significance
Time Management	0.87**	0.000
Personal Initiative	0.79**	0.000
Motivation	0.75**	0.000
Social Factors	0.61**	0.000
Beliefs And Abilities	0.80**	0.000

It is evident from Table (4) that all dimensions of the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale attained statistical significance at the (0.01) level of significance, establishing the veracity of the content of each dimension related to the overall score.

Measurement stability: To calculate stability, the stability coefficient was extracted using the method of half-hashing, and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated using the survey sample. The table below illustrates the consistency of the academic self-efficacy measure.

Table 5: Repetition Stability Coefficients and Cronbach Alpha for the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale and its Subdimensions

Dimensions	Cronbach Alpha	Half-Hashing
Time Management	0.625	0.86**
Personal Initiative	0.291	0.72**
Motivation	0.732	0.71**
Social Factors	0.542	0.54**
Beliefs And Abilities	0.612	0.71**
Overall Degree	0.848	0.92**

It is evident from Table (5) that all aspects of the scale have an appropriate level of stability, which may be guaranteed and applied to the study's target population.

3. Mentorship Program

By referencing the theoretical literature in counselling and CBT to determine the efficacy of lowering exam anxiety symptoms in middle and high school children, we conclude that these approaches are effective in in studies Ames et al., (2016); Hamilton et al., (2019); Jackevicius et al., (2014); and Jordan et al., (2019), the researcher benefited from reviewing programmes created for this purpose in order to design a programme consisting of eleven orientation sessions, each lasting approximately forty-five minutes and separated by four days, during the first semester of 2021, 2022. It was implemented in the computer room of Karma Preparatory School for Boys, and the programme included a set of cognitive-behavioral techniques that matched the sample's characteristics and chronological age, in addition to homework, the course covers the following topics: expressing feelings and thoughts about the exam (emotional venting), coping with exam anxiety, imaginative relaxation, problem-solving, time management, and role-playing technique, tolerating false beliefs about exams, refuting irrational thoughts, using technique and assertiveness, modelling,

training in coping with incorrect thoughts, and progressive immunisation against anxiety.

Below is a condensed overview of the CBT sessions designed to alleviate exam anxiety and boost academic performance.

First Session: Discuss the programme and its aims, the results it seeks to achieve, and the rules governing the attendance of students for the program's sessions in order to familiarise and encourage students to participate.

Second Session: The clarify that the purpose of the programme is to lessen exam anxiety, and as an assignment for the next session, participants were requested to write and share their thoughts and feelings regarding the exam.

Third Session: At the beginning of the homework session, they were asked to express their feelings and thoughts in class in collaboration with the students, then summarise them and teach them to recognise their misconceptions and ineffective beliefs regarding their exam thoughts, and replace them with positive beliefs. In addition to training students to recognise their own talents and flaws, we expect the same from them. They were also taught that while studying is important, there are other things in life that are very significant and that education is not everything. In addition, they were tasked with identifying and attempting to identify other disruptive thoughts as they went about their home practise.

Fourth Session: After providing a review of past sessions, students were instructed to control and calm themselves whenever they felt anxious. Then relaxation was taught to them. In order to overcome their nervousness, they were assigned the responsibility of practising relaxation techniques at home.

Fifth Session: Initially, relaxation was performed again, then questions were asked about the methods of study, and after hearing the answers, many study and learning strategies were taught. As a household task, they were asked to practice the method of study that they considered desirable and to act on learning based on its principles.

Sixth Session: After summarising the previous session, they created an exam case with the assistance of a student and asked them to comment on the actions performed by the student in question during the exam session and express their mistakes. They were then instructed to create a similar situation at home, write down their actions, and present them in the following session.

Seventh Session: After examining the objectives, explanations were provided on how to manage time and how to answer questions, including how to attempt to answer the easier questions first and then go on to the more difficult ones. It was made plain that an incomplete response was preferable to none at all, and in the end it was clear from a textbook that everyone agreed upon.

Eighth Session: In this session, the exam was administered digitally, and students were given feedback on how to answer their questions and how they conducted

themselves during the exam session. The conversation then turned to the study's evidence and its execution.

Ninth Session: Explained are the benefits of nutrition and exercise in reducing exam anxiety. In addition, they were instructed in healthy eating and instructed in a number of workouts, which they are expected to perform everyday.

Tenth Session: Exam strategies and expectations consistent with the ability of the program's participants in terms of achievement, their willingness to study, and acceptable solutions to the challenges they experience before and during the exam were explained. There were explanations addressing sufficient sleep on test days, regular and specified planning of the test day, the absence of material accumulation on test night, and the efficiency of these strategies for sustainable learning.

Eleventh Session: The session consisted of a review of the contents, responses, and opinions of previous sessions regarding the programme and its usefulness. Participants were then asked to respond to the measurement tools that were used prior to the first session, and they were asked to attend a second session after the first semester exam to determine the stability of improvement in reducing exam anxiety and enhancing academic self-efficacy.

RESULTS

From the hypotheses set in this study, the results of the current study on the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral counselling in lowering exam anxiety symptoms and enhancing academic self-efficacy in a sample of middle school students in the Thi Qar Governorate may be detailed.

Presentation of the results of the first hypothesis, which states, "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the members of the experimental group on the test anxiety scale in the pre-measurement and their average score on the post-scale."

As indicated in the table below, the T.Test law was employed to calculate the differences for an independent sample in the experimental group in order to verify this hypothesis.

Table 6: Differences between the Mean Pre- and Post-Measurement Averages of the Experimental Group on the Exam Anxiety Scale

Exam anxiety	Pre-Measurement		Post-Measurement		T
	M	SD	M	SD	
Overall Degree	111.65	9.44	94.40	5.72	8,92

It is evident from Table (6) that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level of 0.01 between the pre-measurement and the telemetry on the test anxiety scale for members of the experimental group who received the cognitive

guidance programme, as the results favoured the dimensional measurement. This finding indicates that the members of the experimental group who received the mentorship programme benefited from its techniques and activities included in the sessions of the programme in reducing the severity of the symptoms of exam anxiety, thereby transforming their anxiety into motivational anxiety, which enabled them to persevere and challenge themselves to achieve high grades in academic achievement. The effectiveness of the programme in lowering exam anxiety among the experimental sample of Karma Preparatory School students is supported by this result.

Presentation of the results of the second hypothesis, which reads: "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the members of the experimental group on the scale of academic competence in the pre-measurement and their average score on the dimensional scale."

The average differences in academic self-efficacy ratings were used to determine the differences between the pre-measurement and post-measurement scores of members of the experimental group who received programme assistance. The following table displays these differences.

Table 7: Differences between the Averages of Pre- and Post-Measurement among the members of the experimental group on the scale of academic competence

Academic Competence	Pre-Measurement		Post-Measurement		T
	M	SD	M	SD	
Overall Degree	81.75	4.34	101.50	3.21	7,29

There are statistically significant changes at the level of significance (0.01) between the average scores of the pre-measurement and the average scores of the post-measurement on the scale of academic self-efficacy, and the results favour the dimensional measurement Table (7). In other words, the members of the experimental group demonstrated a significant increase in academic competence compared to their scores on the tribal assessment. This finding demonstrates the effectiveness of the programme in assisting members of the experimental group to activate their own motivation, prepare for study, and manage their study time before the exam. In addition, their own perceptions about exam or test anxiety have been significantly reduced. This result is a result of the interaction between the members of the sample and the researcher during the presentation of the contents of the counselling sessions, which centred on the development of personal skills through self-awareness and enhanced personal and academic motivation.

Presentation of the third hypothesis, which reads: "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the members of the experimental group and

the members of the control group on the test anxiety scale in the dimensional measurement".

As shown in the table below, the (T.Test) law was used to determine the differences between the experimental and control groups in telemetry on the test anxiety scale in order to verify this hypothesis.

Table 8: Differences between the experimental group and the control group on the test anxiety scale in the telemetry

Exam Anxiety	Pre-Measurement		Post-Measurement		T
	M	SD	M	SD	
Overall Degree	94.40	5.72	117,37	4.37	8,44

The results of Table (8) indicate that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.01) between the members of the experimental group and the members of the control group on the overall score of the test anxiety scale after the completion of the application of the cognitive-behavioral programme, where the members of this group benefited in reducing the symptoms of exam anxiety compared to the members of the control group. In other words, the experimental group profited from the programme and its many strategies, whereas the control group, which did not get an intervention, continued to demonstrate high exam anxiety and tribal assessment scores.

Presentation of the fourth hypothesis, which reads: "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the members of the experimental group and the members of the control group on the scale of academic self-efficacy in telemetry". To verify this hypothesis, the (T.Test) law was applied to the academic competency scale telemetry data of the experimental and control groups, as shown in the table below.

Table 9: Differences between the experimental group and the control group on the academic self-efficacy scale in telemetry

Exam Anxiety	Pre-Measurement		Post-Measurement		T
	M	SD	M	SD	
Overall Degree	101.50	3.21	82,11	4.36	5,29

On the scale of academic competence, there are statistically significant differences at the level of (0.01) between the members of the experimental group who received the Cognitive Behavioral Counseling Program sessions and the members of the control group who did not receive any indicative intervention after the completion of the application of the programme sessions (telemetry). The results of the hypothesis

supported the experimental group in comparison to the control group, where the value of (T) (5.29), which is a function at, was greater for the experimental group (0.01). This conclusion suggests that the programme helped members of the experimental group with test anxiety increase their academic self-efficacy, as self-efficacy is correlated with exam anxiety; the greater the exam anxiety, the lower the academic self-efficacy. Exam anxiety is inversely associated with academic self-efficacy as well. Students with a greater sense of academic self-efficacy experienced less test anxiety, and vice versa.

Presentation of the results of the fifth hypothesis, which reads: "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the members of the experimental group and the members of the control group on the scale of exam anxiety in the deferred measurement".

To calculate the differences between the members of the experimental group and the control group in the delayed measurement of exam anxiety, i.e. one month after the completion of the application of the indicative programme, the law of differences between the two independent groups was used, as shown in the table below.

Table 10: Differences Between Members of The Experimental And Control Group on The Test Anxiety Scale In Deferred Measurement

Exam Anxiety	Experimental Group (Deferred)		Control Group (Deferred)		T
	M	SD	M	SD	
Overall Degree	90,22	4,30	111,15	3,20	8,44

It is evident from the previous table (10) that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.01) between the members of the experimental group and the control group on the scale of exam anxiety in the delayed measurement, and that the experimental group outperformed the control group, this finding implies that individuals of the experimental group maintained a reduction in exam anxiety symptoms, as evidenced by the average scores of the experimental group members on telemetry and postponed assessment. This finding most likely confirms that exam anxiety contributes to many positive factors in school if it is at the level of motivational anxiety and not the disruptive anxiety of students' competencies and abilities.

Presentation of the results of the sixth hypothesis, which reads: "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the members of the experimental group and the members of the control group on the scale of academic self-efficacy in the deferred measurement."

To verify the differences between the experimental and control groups in the delayed measurement of academic self-efficacy, the (T.test) law of differences between the two independent groups was applied, as indicated in the table below.

Table 11: Differences between members of the experimental and control group on the scale of academic self-efficacy in deferred measurement

Academic competence	Experimental Group (Deferred)		Control Group (Deferred)		T
	M	SD	M	SD	
	Overall Degree	99.53	2.96	83.55	

Table (11) demonstrates that, at the level of significance (0.01), there are statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group on the scale of academic self-efficacy in the delayed measurement, with the results favouring the experimental group. The hypothesis of the study was that cognitive behavioural therapy would improve students' self-efficacy and academic performance. The results of the table indicated that the experimental group exhibited a substantial gain in academic self-efficacy, which was positively reflected in a decrease in exam anxiety, hence enhancing the academic accomplishment of the experimental group members relative to the control group members.

DISCUSSION

It is evident from the table relating to the test anxiety hypotheses that the results were positive in reducing the symptoms of exam anxiety in the middle school students in the Dhi Qar governorate study sample, and that the guidance programme was effective in reducing these symptoms in the members of the experimental group in the telemetry compared to the pre-measurement. According to the results of the tables, the comparison between the experimental and control group in the dimensions and delayed measurement was also suggestive of the process of lessening the symptoms of examination anxiety in the experimental group as compared to the control group (6, 8, 10). This shows the efficacy of the CBT programme utilised in the current investigation in reducing exam anxiety symptoms in the experimental sample compared to the control sample members in the dimensional and delayed measures. It has indicated many researches and studies such as the study Essau et al., (2019); Miri et al., (2019); and Sohn et al., (2018), the results of these trials demonstrated a reduction in exam anxiety scores among group CBT recipients compared to those in the control group. On the basis of these findings, this model should be taught to middle school students as a preventative measure to reduce kids' exam anxiety. Exam anxiety is one of the most severe disorders of disability and the annual school academy that

will affect the performance of many students, and the process of counselling intervention through cognitive-behavioral counselling will help students to increase academic motivation, self-enhancement, and academic achievement commensurate with their mental abilities, and their good personality attributes in order to prevent the process of students school dropout and the loss of academic energy, which is an educational, social, and national loss. Therefore, intervening and instructing students on how to handle exam or test situations aids in the proper development of their scientific talents. The results of the hypotheses on academic self-efficacy presented in tables (7, 9, 11) demonstrated the usefulness of cognitive-behavioral therapy in enhancing the level of academic self-efficacy in the experimental sample relative to the control sample in telemetry and delayed. The indicates that the mentorship programme has helped students boost their self-efficacy as a positive quality, as the student supports time management, personal initiative to learn, and increased drive, in addition to addressing the pressures and difficulties he faces in school in a rational and logical manner, he must move away from the negative emotions that affect their achievement performance and increase academic pressures, particularly exam anxiety, academic reluctance, and ultimately dropping out of school and losing his scientific future due to these pressures and disruptive anxiety of academic motivation. Therefore, a high correlation may exist between exam anxiety and academic self-efficacy. However, past analytic evaluations (Montazemi, 2006) have focused on exam performance (i.e. the influence of study skills training on enhanced learning) or anxiety reduction (i.e. the effect of systematic desensitisation therapy in reducing exam anxiety). Cognitive-behavioral therapies are crucial to comprehending exam anxiety, thus efforts must be concentrated on clarifying these issues. It has been demonstrated that the self-efficacy of the study is a good indication of exam anxiety, and the significance of self-efficacy in relation to the study is emphasised: the better the self-efficacy, the lower the exam anxiety. Exam anxiety occurs predominantly during study, therefore this outcome is not surprising. The indicates that the well-known link between self-efficacy and exam anxiety holds true. It can be explained by mental imagery' minimal impact. According to prior research, greater clarity and the effect of mental imagery engender more emotional involvement. Consequently, it is evident that when both circumstances occur, fear grows even further. There are several possible explanations: (a) pictures do not operate as an intermediate in and of themselves, which may be indicative of the simultaneous and independent effect of self-efficacy and images on exam anxiety, or (b) fantasies act as an intermediary, but only in terms of their influence. Vitality and spontaneous use of imagination are probably secondary factors. Consequently, cognitive-behavioral counselling interventions assist students in reconstructing the cognitive image of exams and their results, thereby assisting the student in regulating his emotions and organising his time in a good manner in order to perform well on the exam, the procedure increases

his sense of self-efficacy, thereby decreasing the anxiety of the exam that disrupts his mental abilities and transforming them into a stimulating impulse anxiety for those abilities, allowing him to approach the exam in a positive manner, free of negative emotions and thoughts.

CONCLUSIONS

Looking at the outcomes of the researcher's hypotheses for the study, we can draw the following conclusion:

The results demonstrated the efficacy of the cognitive counselling programme in lowering exam anxiety symptoms in experimental sample members using telemetry and delayed assessment, comparing the results of the experimental group with the control group of students from some Suq Al-Shuyukh preparatory schools, it was discovered that the experimental group achieved lower scores on the test anxiety scale in the dimensional and delayed assessments than the control group.

The results demonstrated that the mentorship programme assisted students in the experimental group to increase their academic self-efficacy in dimensional and delayed measurement compared to the control group.

The results should not be generalised to all students who are exposed to cognitive-behavioral counselling in middle school, but they are genuine within the limitations of the current study, and the most significant of these limitations are as follows:

In the current investigation, each grade was assigned a small sample size. Therefore, care must be taken to disseminate the results to all middle school pupils in the Thi Qar governorate.

Some students were unable to participate in determining the therapeutic sessions in a quiet manner since their teachers did not permit them to leave class. Consequently, several of them were required to leave the meeting after thirty minutes.

The final examination sessions of the student were displayed. Therefore, the student was unable to attend school 14 days before to the exam. Therefore, the researcher was unable to use particular cognitive-behavioral counselling strategies (such as relaxation training). As a result of the intervention's location within the school, elements such as loudness caused their classmates to be distracted during programme sessions, disturbing students' concentration and preventing them from effectively participating in sessions.

The final limitation is the lack of Arab and international studies on the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral counselling in reducing exam anxiety and enhancing self-efficacy among middle school students. This prompted the researcher to overcome this limitation by focusing on exam anxiety through a cognitive-behavioral counselling programme designed to reduce exam anxiety and improve a number of other variables across multiple educational stages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results of the study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

Students and their parents participate in an intervention programme based on cognitive-behavioral counselling to reduce exam anxiety, as the majority of student teachers have personal issues with their parents regarding the stress methods they use to encourage their students to study, which impacts exam anxiety in students.

Provide training programmes in schools to teach parents how to establish a relationship and acceptable behaviour with their children, as well as how to assist their children in recognising and developing their own talents.

The need for schools to employ competent and self-assured counsellors so that students can discuss their difficulties freely and without fear during tests.

Establish complete mentorship training classes for students on how to build personal interactions with parents, teachers, and classmates, how to believe in one's own skills, and how to make a positive impression on oneself before to the exam.

The need for more action regarding the influence of negative ideas related to exam anxiety and the relationship between academic self-efficacy/exam anxiety at numerous schools and universities, as well as undertaking research and mentoring programmes to improve students' academic competence.

Training academic staff in teaching and study techniques has a major impact on lowering exam anxiety when students are exposed.

Efforts should be made to increase students' academic self-efficacy by training members of the examination committee to assist students with exam anxiety.

In order to alleviate exam anxiety and improve academic self-efficacy, it is necessary for students' evaluation methods to be modified and sustainable assessment methods to be sought.

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