

Effect of Watching Blunder Comedy on Test Anxiety among Postgraduate Students in University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of watching comedy on test anxiety of the Master of Education students, Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. Quasi experimental design was employed to facilitate the study. The population of the study comprised forty (40) Master of Education students of the Department of education university of Maiduguri, 2020/2021 Academic session. Since the population was small, the whole population was used. The students were randomly assigned into two groups of 20 participants each in control and experimental group. The Website Test Anxiety Scale was adopted and used as an instrument for data collection. Pre-test was administered to both groups to determine the degree of their anxiety prior to treatment. The experimental group was exposed to watching blunder comedy for twelve weeks while, the control group was not exposed to watching comedy. Post-test was administered to the both groups in order to compare with the pre-test to determine the effect of the experiment. The results from pre-test and post-test of the two groups were analyzed using ANCOVA. The study revealed that, there was significant effect of watching blunder comedy on test anxiety of Master of Education students, University of Maiduguri. Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that watching blunder comedy has significant effect by reducing test anxiety of Master of Education students, Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The study recommended that; students should watch blunder comedy to reduce test anxiety before taking any test of the Department. The University of Maiduguri should provide facilities where students can watch blunder comedy before taking test to reduce test anxiety.

Keywords: Blunder Comedy, test anxiety, Postgraduate students

Introduction

Comedy is a pleasant experience recognized by many people across the globe. By exploring the complexities of human experience, comedy offers a refreshing and entertaining perspectives to the individuals. It refers to a multifaceted and dynamic form of entertainment that provoke laughter, amusement and joy in audiences. It provides catharsis, offering safe outlet for emotions and tensions. Comedy provides unique way to comment on life's absurdities. It is more than just a simple form of entertainment; it is a reflection of society, a commentary on human nature, way to bring people together and means of tension relaxation. (Cohen, Gottlieb & Underwood, 2015). One of the most beloved and cherished comedy which makes people more laughter and happier is blunder comedy. It has been shown to reduce anxiety by releasing endorphins also known as "feel-good" hormones (Yim, 2016). Blunder comedy, a genre characterized by absurdity, chaos and physical humor has captivated audiences for century. This type of comedy often involves characters navigating ridiculous situations, leading to hilarious consequences. It relies on the art of mishandling, mismanaging and misinterpreting situation, resulting in comedic gold. However, Blunder comedy continues to delight audiences with its absurdity, physical humor and chaos. It provides a light heart escape from anxiety by embracing the ridiculous and the illogical acts, offering a much-needed dose of laughter and entertainment whether through classic films, TV show or live performance (Yim, 2016).

Blunder comedy elicits laughter-a natural physiological response that has been scientifically linked to test anxiety reduction. When we laugh, our brain release endorphins, the body's feel-good chemicals that promote a sense of well-being. Simultaneously, laughter reduces the level of cortisol, the hormone associated with test anxiety. This dual effect produces an immediate calming influence on both the mind and the body. The deep, involuntary muscle relaxation that follows a good laugh mimic the physical state of tranquility, offering temporary relief from the physiological symptoms of test anxiety such as muscle tension, rapid heartbeat and shallow breathing (Ford, Gross & Mauss, 2022).

Test anxiety refers to transitory apprehensive, uneasy or nervous feelings immediately before, during and after taking a specific test. Test anxiety is a feeling of nervous, worry, uneasiness and apprehension which students experience before, during or after writing a test or examination (Nemati & Habibi, 2012). Test anxiety represents a real threat to the validity of the achievement test scores used to assigned letter grades. Testing in an academic setting provokes anxiety in all students in higher education. When students experience high levels of anxiety, their performances could be affected and may not represent an accurate assessment of students' academic performance (Akinsola & Nwajei, 2013). Research works exhibits that, test anxiety is one of the most serious and dangerous psychological condition that affect the validity and reliability of a test (Zeidner, 2004; Ergene, 2003 & Ossai, 2011). Most of the learners are capable to succeed in assessments but the degree of test anxiety which they suffer hinders their performances, hence seize the opportunities and advantages for being success in their dream lives (Zeidner, 2004). Test anxiety can interfere with classroom and aptitude test performance, cause lower self-esteem, contribute to academic dropout and limit educational and vocational development (Ihuoma, 2000). Ergene (2003) is of the view that, high test anxiety can lead students to follow a discipline or career path that is not part of their dreams. The disparity in learners' performances depends largely on the level of their anxiety before and during the test. A high test-anxious student is unable to focus and pay attention on the test than a low test-anxious student (Ossai, 2011). A learner with moderate level of test anxiety is of an advantage to concentrate and perform well in any kind of test (Chapel, Blanding, Siverstein, Takashi, Newman, Gubi & McCain, 2005).

Ossai (2011) study found out that, there was strong positive correlation between test anxiety and attitude towards cheating in examinations. Students with high level of test anxiety were prone to examination malpractice. There are notable variations in terms of performances between students with high level of test anxiety and those with low level of test anxiety. Those with low test anxiety are more confident and conscious to the test than those with high test anxiety. A low test-anxious student concentrates and pays much attention to the test, while a high test-anxious student is disturbed emotionally and cognitively by the anxiety they suffered (Ossai, 2011). Moadeli and Ghazanfari-Hesamabedi (2005) argued that learners can never be free from stress and anxiety when evaluated or tested, but high level of anxiety limits their ability and leads to poor performance. Empirical studies revealed that there is strong correlation between test anxiety and lower academic performance. For instance, Rana and Mahmood (2010) conducted a study on test anxiety and students' achievement scores in Pakistan and found out that there was significant negative relationship between them. Cassady and Johnson (2002) studied the effect of test anxiety on students' academic performance and the findings revealed that, there was negative impact of cognitive test anxiety on academic performance measures. Research have shown that, numerous factors correlate test anxiety. For example, Oyama (2009) found out that there were significant positive relationships among test anxiety, attitude, instructional facilities, parental socio-economic status and students' tendency to cheat during examination.

Fear, stress, worry, nervous and anxiety are considered to be part of the natural factors that affect individuals leaning outcomes. Most of the assessment results failed to yield out accurate and authentic learners' abilities and performances due to the test anxiety the learners suffered. However, one of the researchers who was a master of education student, through his interaction with colleagues during their Master Degree Programme observed that, master students of the department of Education University of Maiduguri 2020/2021 academic session suffer test anxiety when writing test. They are scared, worried and stressful without having any means to reduce the anxiety before taking test. Thus, this study determined to examine if watching comedy have significant effect on reducing test anxiety of Master of Education students, Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

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Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to determine the Effect of Watching Blunder Comedy on Test Anxiety of Master of Education students, Department of Education University of Maiduguri

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of watching blunder comedy on test anxiety of Master of Education Students, Department of Education, University of Maiduguri

Methodology

The study adopted quasi-experimental design to determine the effect of Watching Blunder Comedy on Test Anxiety of Master of Education students, Department of Education University of Maiduguri. The population of the study comprised all forty (40) Master of Education Students of the Department of Education University of Maiduguri in the 2020/2021 academic session. Since the population was small, the whole population was used, as such no sample was drawn for the study. The researchers employed two research assistants who were professionals of educational technology to assist them installing and operating devices for the experiment. The participants were randomly selected and divided into two group - control and experimental. Each group consist 20 participants. Pre-test was administered to both groups to determine the degree of their anxiety prior to treatment. The experimental group was exposed to watching blunder comedy for thirty minutes every day up to twelve weeks while, the control group was exposed to watching horror for thirty minutes every day up to twelve weeks. After the treatment, Post-test was administered to the both groups in order to compare with the pre-test to determine the effect of the experiment. The Website Test Anxiety Scale was adopted and used to collect data. The test consists of twenty items. These twenty items were divided into two subscales- worry subscale and emotional subscale. Each subscale consists ten items followed by five-point scale which indicate the degree of test anxiety where the participants were expected to select the one that best suit their feelings. The instrument was pilot tested using participants who were master of education students, Department of Continue Education University of Maiduguri. Test-retest technique was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and yielded reliability coefficient of 0.78. The study used ANCOVA to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. ANCOVA was used to analyze data in order to reduce error variance, increasing the precision of the analysis and making it more likely to detect significant effects. It increased the statistical power of analysis to detect smaller effect that might not have been significant otherwise.

Presentation of Results

Hypothesis: There is no significant effect of watching blunder comedy on test anxiety of Master of Education Students, Department of Education, University of Maiduguri.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation for Pre-Test and Post-Test

Groups	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Control	33.30	4.24	34.40	3.14
Experimental	30.00	3.72	21.90	4.67

The results of mean and standard deviation obtained from pre-test in the table I shows that both the groups were suffering from test anxiety before the treatment. After the treatment, the mean and standard deviation obtained from post-test for both groups indicate that, the control group was still suffered test anxiety while, the experimental group was free from test anxiety, as the mean of the control group goes higher than that of experimental group. This exhibits that, watching comedy has significant effect on test anxiety.

Table 2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects of Watching Blunder Comedy on Test Anxiety

Source	Type III Sum of			F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
	Squares	Df	Mean Square			
Corrected Model	914.880 ^a	2	457.440	44.972	.000	.841
Intercept	14.658	1	14.658	1.441	.246	.078
Pre-test	146.080	1	146.080	14.361	.001	.458
Grptyp	402.891	1	402.891	39.609	.000	.700
Error	172.920	17	10.172			
Total	16880.000	20				

The results of data analysis on Table 2 above show that there is significant effect of watching blunder comedy on test anxiety of Master of Education Students of the Department of Education University of Maiduguri at significant P-value ($p < .05$).

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study revealed that, watching blunder comedy has significant effect on test anxiety of Master of Education Students, Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. This finding is in line with the findings of Yim (2016) who revealed that, watching comedy reduces anxiety by releasing endorphins also known as “feel-good” hormones. It provides a light heart escape from anxiety by embracing the ridiculous and the illogical acts, offering a much-needed dose of laughter and entertainment. However, what was found in this study is also confirmed that of Ford, Gross and Mauss (2022) which revealed that, Blunder comedy elicits laughter-a natural physiological response that has been scientifically linked to test anxiety reduction. The deep, involuntary muscle relaxation that follows a good laugh mimic the physical state of tranquility, offering temporary relief from the physiological symptoms of test anxiety such as muscle tension, rapid heartbeat and shallow breathing. However, the finding of this study agreed with Cohen, Gottlieb and Underwood (2015) which also reported that comedy provides catharsis, offering safe outlet for emotions and tensions. Comedy provides unique way to comment on life’s absurdities. It is more than just a simple form of entertainment; it is a reflection of society, a commentary on human nature, way to bring people together and means of tension relaxation. The conformity and uniformity between this study and the findings of the previous studies might happen as a result of the power of the natural factor. Anxiety is a natural factor that occurs beyond human control. As human being shares the same characteristics, every individual can suffer the pain of test anxiety before and during assessment or evaluation which may subsequently affects the results. Therefore, this might be the reason why different studies reveal similar findings.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, the researchers concluded that, watching blunder comedy has great significant effect by reducing test anxiety of Master of Education students, Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that, students should be encouraged to watch blunder comedy to reduce test anxiety before taking any test of the Department. The University of Maiduguri should provide facilities where students can watch blunder comedy before taking test to reduce test anxiety.

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