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Anxiety and its relationship with self-efficacy among third-year secondary school students: a field study on a sample of students from Relizane province

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the relationship between state-trait anxiety and self-efficacy among third-year secondary school students. A quantitative approach was adopted, using a non-experimental, descriptive-correlational design. The sample consisted of 312 male and female students from various secondary schools in Relizane Province. Data were collected using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) and a self-efficacy scale. The results revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between anxiety and self-efficacy, indicating that higher levels of anxiety were associated with lower levels of self-efficacy. Furthermore, no statistically significant differences were found based on academic specialization (scientific vs. literary) in either anxiety or self-efficacy. These findings suggest that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in regulating anxiety levels among students. Strengthening self-efficacy may contribute to improving psychological well-being and enhancing academic performance. In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of promoting psychological resources that help students cope with anxiety and develop adaptive behaviors in academic contexts.

Keywords: Anxiety, Self-efficacy, Third-year secondary school students.

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Ansiedad y su relación con la autoeficacia entre estudiantes de tercer año de secundaria: un estudio de campo en una muestra de estudiantes de la provincia de Relizane.

RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar la relación entre la ansiedad estado-rasgo y la autoeficacia en estudiantes de tercer año de secundaria. Se adoptó un enfoque cuantitativo, utilizando un diseño descriptivo-correlacional no experimental. La muestra estuvo compuesta por 312 estudiantes, hombres y mujeres, de diversas escuelas secundarias de la provincia de Relizane. Los datos se recopilaron mediante el Inventario de Ansiedad Estado-Rasgo (STAI) y una escala de autoeficacia. Los resultados revelaron una correlación negativa estadísticamente significativa entre la ansiedad y la autoeficacia, lo que indica que mayores niveles de ansiedad se asociaron con menores niveles de autoeficacia. Además, no se encontraron diferencias

estadísticamente significativas en función de la especialización académica (científica vs. literaria) ni en la ansiedad ni en la autoeficacia. Estos hallazgos sugieren que la autoeficacia desempeña un papel crucial en la regulación de los niveles de ansiedad en los estudiantes. Fortalecer la autoeficacia puede contribuir a mejorar el bienestar psicológico y el rendimiento académico. En conclusión, el estudio destaca la importancia de promover recursos psicológicos que ayuden a los estudiantes a afrontar la ansiedad y desarrollar conductas adaptativas en contextos académicos.

Palabras clave: ansiedad, autoeficacia, estudiantes, educación secundaria, bienestar psicológico

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A ansiedade e a sua relação com a autoeficácia em alunos do terceiro ano do ensino secundário: um estudo de campo com uma amostra de alunos da província de Relizane

RESUMO

Este estudo teve como objetivo analisar a relação entre a ansiedade estado-traço e a autoeficácia em alunos do terceiro ano do ensino secundário. Adotou-se uma abordagem quantitativa, utilizando um desenho descritivo-correlacional não experimental. A amostra foi constituída por 312 estudantes, de ambos os sexos, de várias escolas secundárias da província de Relizane. Os dados foram recolhidos através do Inventário de Ansiedade Estado-Traço (STAI) e de uma escala de autoeficácia. Os resultados revelaram uma correlação negativa estatisticamente significativa entre a ansiedade e a autoeficácia, indicando que níveis mais elevados de ansiedade estavam associados a níveis mais baixos de autoeficácia. Além disso, não foram encontradas diferenças estatisticamente significativas com base na especialização académica (científica vs. literária) em relação à ansiedade ou à autoeficácia. Estes achados sugerem que a autoeficácia desempenha um papel crucial na regulação dos níveis de ansiedade entre os estudantes. O reforço da autoeficácia pode contribuir para a melhoria do bem-estar psicológico e para a melhoria do desempenho académico. Em conclusão, o estudo destaca a importância de promover recursos psicológicos que ajudem os alunos a lidar com a ansiedade e a desenvolver comportamentos adaptativos em contextos académicos.

Palavras-chave: Ansiedade, Autoeficácia, Alunos do terceiro ano do ensino secundário.

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INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is one of the variables that has attracted considerable attention from researchers in the fields of education and psychology, with the aim of identifying the key factors and conditions that may increase or reduce it. Researchers have therefore focused on examining the core processes and procedures through which learners can be guided toward acquiring knowledge without being exposed to pressures and frustrations that may lead to anxiety.

This has been approached through the study of both cognitive and non-cognitive variables influencing anxiety, among which self-efficacy is considered a central factor (Goldberg, 1993).

Anxiety has multiple sources. For example, Mohamed Bayoumi Khalil (2000) argues that families characterized by conflict and selfishness tend to generate feelings of anxiety, hostility, and pessimism among their members. In such environments, values and norms become unstable, family relationships deteriorate, and anxiety-inducing factors prevail, thereby threatening the psychological well-being of children (Bayoumi Khalil, 2000, p. 29).

Similarly Kroenke et al. (2001) indicates that thinking about the future is a major source of anxiety, especially when combined with painful past experiences, the pressures of modern life, and the individual's aspiration for self-realization and meaning in life.

The concept of self-efficacy represents a central component of social cognitive theory and is among the most influential constructs introduced by Bandura. Through this concept, he emphasized the role of social and cognitive factors in learning and their dynamic interaction. Self-efficacy is considered one of the most important factors in coping with anxiety. Bandura (1989) argued that self-efficacy regulates anxiety-provoking patterns of thought and influences levels of aspiration, achievement, motivation, and learning. It constitutes a fundamental basis for determining an individual's level of motivation, psychological well-being, and capacity for personal accomplishment (Zaleski, 1996; Al-Jubouri, 2013, p. 16).

Self-efficacy theory is grounded in individuals' judgments about their ability to perform specific behaviors. It is not merely a general feeling, but rather a self-evaluation of one's capabilities, persistence, effort, and flexibility in dealing with difficult and complex situations, as well as the ability to face challenges and resist failure (Bandura, 1989, p. 729).

Schwarzer conceptualizes self-efficacy expectations as a personality dimension reflecting the ability to overcome difficult tasks and challenges. These expectations guide individuals in selecting coping strategies and decision-making processes related to problem-solving, and they also influence the amount of effort and the psychological and material resources invested in confronting difficulties.

Bandura (1999) further emphasized that self-perception and self-regulation are dynamic variables that evolve over time and across situations. Self-perception changes with experience and acquired knowledge, and consequently, self-efficacy expectations also vary over time and with accumulated experiences (Al-Masaeid, 2011, p. 682).

Given that self-efficacy expectations are shaped by life experiences and play a significant role in enhancing motivation and achievement, it is essential to understand this concept and the variables that may increase or decrease its level.

Considering that self-efficacy is a developable construct and can be used to regulate anxiety levels, studying both variables becomes particularly important for improving students' performance and fostering their personal development.

Research Problem

The increasing pressures of daily life, along with stress and crises experienced by individuals—particularly students—are major factors that intensify anxiety and feelings of negativity.

Ahmed Okasha defines anxiety as a vague and unpleasant feeling accompanied by fear and tension, often associated with physiological symptoms such as increased autonomic nervous system activity, shortness of breath, and rapid heartbeat (Fayed, 2001, p. 46).

Anxiety may negatively affect students' levels of aspiration, hinder their goals, and reduce their ability to solve problems, ultimately weakening their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, in turn, is a crucial factor in coping with anxiety. Therefore, it is important for researchers to examine the potential effects of anxiety on students' psychological, personal, and academic dimensions, particularly in relation to their aspirations, as self-efficacy is closely linked to these aspirations.

Bandura (1997) emphasized that self-efficacy regulates anxiety-inducing thought patterns and influences levels of aspiration, achievement, motivation, and learning. It is a key determinant of motivation, psychological health, and personal accomplishment (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995; Luszczynska et al., 2005). Moreover, self-efficacy affects the types of activities individuals choose, the effort they exert, and the persistence they demonstrate when facing obstacles. Conversely, low self-efficacy leads to the opposite outcomes (Duffy et al., 2025).

Self-efficacy develops through life experiences and role models and is built over years of dealing with life challenges with flexibility and perseverance. It is one of the most important psychological variables guiding behavior and contributing to the achievement of personal

goals. Individuals' beliefs about their abilities play a decisive role in enhancing performance and success (Al-Jubouri, 2013; Szota et al., 2024; Al Qaisy & Thawabieh, 2017).

Abu Suleiman also emphasized that self-efficacy is a key factor in effectively coping with anxiety (Abu Suleiman, 2007, p. 8).

Based on the above, the research problem becomes clear: anxiety is a rich field of study, as individuals naturally experience fear and anxiety in response to vague and unpleasant feelings, which may lead to frustration. Accordingly, the relationship between anxiety and self-efficacy constitutes a significant issue worthy of investigation. The present study seeks to answer the following questions:

- Is there a statistically significant correlation between anxiety and self-efficacy among third-year secondary school students?
- Are there statistically significant differences in anxiety attributable to academic specialization (scientific vs. literary)?
- Are there statistically significant differences in self-efficacy attributable to academic specialization (scientific vs. literary)?

Research Hypotheses

- There is a statistically significant relationship between anxiety and self-efficacy among third-year secondary school students.
- There are statistically significant differences in anxiety attributable to academic specialization (scientific vs. literary).
- There are statistically significant differences in self-efficacy attributable to academic specialization (scientific vs. literary).

Research Objectives

- To examine the relationship between anxiety and self-efficacy, given the importance of the latter in students' success.
- To identify differences between students in scientific and literary streams in terms of anxiety.
- To identify differences between students in scientific and literary streams in terms of self-efficacy.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to clarify the relationship between anxiety and self-efficacy, thereby enhancing understanding of how each variable influences the other. This may help guide educational stakeholders in leveraging these insights to improve students' psychological well-being, efficiency, and success across academic, personal, social, and professional domains.

Furthermore, the study may assist school counselors in addressing students' problems and provide teachers with practical insights into how to interact with students in ways that enhance their self-efficacy and help regulate their anxiety.

Operational Definitions of Variables

First: Operational Definition of Anxiety

Anxiety is defined as the score obtained by the participants based on their responses to the items of the anxiety scale used in this study.

Second: Operational Definition of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as the score obtained by the participants based on their responses to the items of the self-efficacy scale used in this study.

Theoretical Framework

Definition of Anxiety

The American Psychiatric Association provides one of the most widely used definitions of anxiety, describing it as a feeling of fear, tension, or distress arising from the anticipation of a potential threat whose source is largely unknown or unclear. Anxiety and fear are often accompanied by various physiological changes (Al-Huwaila, 2010, p. 25).

Spielberger et al. (1977) defines anxiety as a temporary emotional state experienced when an individual perceives a situation as threatening to the self. This state activates the autonomic nervous system, leading to feelings of tension and preparedness to the threat. He distinguishes between state anxiety and trait anxiety, noting that relatively stable individual differences exist in the tendency to experience anxiety (Beck et al., 1988; Barlow, 2002). These differences are attributed to variations in how individuals perceive the world, particularly in interpreting situations as dangerous or threatening, as well as their predisposition to respond with anxiety (Al-Huwaila, 2010, p. 23).

Theories Explaining Anxiety

Anxiety has been extensively studied and interpreted by major psychological theories. The most prominent among them are as follows:

a. Psychoanalytic Theory

According to Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, anxiety arises from the conflict among the three components of personality: the id, ego, and superego. Anxiety is viewed as an unpleasant and vague emotional state characterized by fear, tension, and physiological symptoms. Freud considered anxiety as an initial response to danger. He also referred to primary anxiety experienced by the infant during physical separation from the mother, associating it with the trauma of birth. This state may reoccur in later situations, such as maternal absence, due to fear of unmet needs (Al-Anzi, 2010, p. 54).

b. Behavioral Theory

From a behavioral perspective, anxiety is regarded as a learned fear response triggered by stimuli that may not inherently provoke fear. However, when such stimuli are repeatedly associated with anxiety-provoking situations, they acquire the ability to elicit anxiety. This response may then generalize to similar stimuli (Al-Anzi, 2010, p. 55).

c. Humanistic Theory

Humanistic theorists argue that anxiety stems from fear of the future, which is inherently uncertain and may threaten human existence or personal meaning. According to this perspective, humans are uniquely aware of their mortality, and the anticipation of death constitutes a primary source of anxiety. Additionally, failure to achieve life goals, inability to select appropriate means to attain them, or doubt about achieving them can generate anxiety. Feelings of inadequacy due to illness, disability, aging, or other life obstacles further intensify anxiety (Al-Anzi, 2010, p. 15).

d. Cognitive Theory

Cognitive theorists maintain that it is not events themselves that cause anxiety, but rather the individual's interpretation of those events. Anxiety arises from misinterpretations or exaggerated perceptions of threat. Irrational thinking patterns and faulty cognitive processing contribute to its. Cognitive therapy, therefore, focuses on modifying these distorted interpretations, often incorporating behavioral techniques as part of the treatment process (Al-Huwaila, 2010, p. 50).

e. State-Trait Anxiety Theory

Spielberger's theory is currently one of the most widely accepted frameworks in psychology and psychiatry. It integrates elements from previous theories and distinguishes between two components:

State Anxiety: A temporary emotional condition occurring at a specific moment and intensity, characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and heightened autonomic activity.

Trait Anxiety: A relatively stable predisposition to perceive situations as threatening and to respond with increased anxiety. It reflects individual differences in vulnerability to anxiety.

The distinction between state and trait anxiety is often compared to kinetic and potential energy. State anxiety (like kinetic energy) represents a visible and immediate reaction occurring at a specific time and intensity, whereas trait anxiety (like potential energy) reflects underlying individual differences that influence the intensity of anxiety responses (Al-Masri, 2011, p. 18).

Definition of Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1982) defines self-efficacy as a set of judgments individuals make about their ability to perform specific behaviors. It reflects their beliefs in their capacity to deal with difficult and complex situations, overcome challenges, and persist in completing assigned tasks (Bandura, 1977, p. 192).

Al-Mazrou (2007) considers self-efficacy as a key determinant of behavior. Individuals who believe in their abilities tend to be more active and possess higher self-esteem. Self-efficacy acts as a cognitive framework through which individuals perceive their ability to control their environment, reflecting their beliefs about their capabilities and their confidence in *مواجهة* life pressures (Hijazi, 2013, p. 420).

Sources of Self-Efficacy

Bandura identified four primary sources from which self-efficacy beliefs are developed, strengthened, or weakened:

a. Mastery Experiences

This source is based on individuals' direct experiences. Success tends to enhance self-efficacy expectations, whereas repeated failure diminishes them. Strong self-efficacy develops through overcoming obstacles via sustained effort and perseverance. Importantly, perceived capability plays a more central role than actual ability or outcomes (Al-Nashawi, 2006, p. 474).

b. Vicarious Experiences

Self-efficacy is also shaped through observing others, particularly those perceived as similar, successfully performing tasks. Such observations enhance individuals' beliefs in their own abilities and motivate sustained effort. Conversely, witnessing others fail despite strong effort may reduce self-efficacy beliefs. These social experiences significantly influence expectations and learning through modeling (Al-Nashawi, 2006, pp. 374-375).

c. Verbal Persuasion

This source involves encouragement and reinforcement from others, often referred to as social persuasion. Teachers, peers, and parents can influence learners' beliefs in their ability to succeed. Verbal persuasion may also be internal, in the form of positive self-talk. Although its impact is relatively limited, it can be effective under appropriate conditions, especially when delivered by credible sources.

Bandura also emphasizes that creating a supportive learning environment depends on the teacher's own sense of self-efficacy. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to support low-achieving students, enhance their motivation, and build their confidence (Hassouna, 2009, p. 124).

d. Physiological and Emotional States

According to Bandura, self-efficacy can be influenced by individuals' emotional and physiological reactions. Reducing intense emotional responses and modifying negative interpretations of physical states can enhance self-efficacy. The critical factor is not the intensity of emotional arousal itself, but how it is perceived and interpreted. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to interpret emotional arousal as facilitating performance, whereas those with low self-efficacy perceive it as a barrier.

Anxiety, in particular, is considered a key factor affecting self-efficacy, with an inverse relationship between the two. High emotional arousal often lowers self-efficacy. For example, fear of falling may limit performance due to heightened emotional activation.

Field Study

Study Sample

The study sample consisted of 312 male and female third-year secondary school students from both scientific and literary streams. The sample was drawn from several secondary schools representing different geographical areas within the Relizane province.

Research Instruments

a. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) – Spielberger (1970)

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory was developed by Spielberger in 1970. It was later adapted, translated into Arabic, and standardized for the Egyptian context by Abdel-Raqib Ahmed Al-Bahiri (1984), under the title State and Trait Anxiety Test.

This instrument is among the most widely used measures of anxiety in both scientific research and clinical practice, due to its strong psychometric properties. It consists of two forms, each containing 20 items. The items include both positively and negatively worded statements, with four response options for each item:

For state anxiety: Not at all, A little, Sometimes, Very much

For trait anxiety: Not at all, Sometimes, Often, Always

b. Self-Efficacy Scale.

This scale, developed by Adel Al-Adel (2001), consists of 50 items. Each item is accompanied by four response options: Rarely, Sometimes, Often, and Always. The scale includes 26 positively worded items and 24 negatively worded items.

After verifying the psychometric properties of the instruments through a pilot study and subsequently administering them to the main sample, the following results were obtained:

Presentation and Interpretation of Results

Results of the First Hypothesis

Hypothesis Statement:

"There is a statistically significant correlation between anxiety (state and trait) and self-efficacy among third-year secondary school students."

To test this hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. The results revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between anxiety (state, trait, and total score) and self-efficacy. The correlation coefficients were as follows:

State anxiety and self-efficacy: -0.484

Trait anxiety and self-efficacy: -0.552

Total anxiety score and self-efficacy: -0.545

Accordingly, the hypothesis was confirmed. The alternative hypothesis was accepted, indicating a statistically significant negative correlation at the 0.01 significance level between anxiety (state-trait) and self-efficacy among third-year secondary school students.

These findings are consistent with previous studies, including those conducted by Diener et al. (2003), and Hiyam Saber Sadeq Shaheen (2012), all of which reported a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety.

Researchers interpret this result in light of Bandura's (1977) framework, which identifies anxiety as one of the factors influencing self-efficacy. The relationship between the two variables is inverse, and heightened emotional arousal tends to reduce self-efficacy levels (Shaheen, 2012, p. 156).

Self-efficacy reflects an individual's perceived ability and competence in *مواجهة* challenges. It plays a crucial role in shaping behavior, cognition, and emotional responses. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to demonstrate greater persistence, sustained effort, and confidence in their abilities. They are more likely to continue striving toward their goals despite obstacles and are better equipped to manage their fears.

In contrast, individuals with low self-efficacy tend to withdraw quickly when faced with difficult tasks. They focus on their perceived shortcomings and anticipate failure, which contributes to increased anxiety levels. Therefore, the negative correlation identified in this study appears logically consistent: as anxiety increases, self-efficacy decreases, and vice versa.

Further support for this interpretation is found in previous empirical studies:

Reid and Ryff (1989) conducted a study aimed at understanding and managing anxiety in school settings. Their findings indicated that self-efficacy, self-acceptance, and problem-solving skills are closely associated with anxiety levels. Higher levels of these variables were linked to lower anxiety, whereas lower levels were associated with higher anxiety (Al-Mashikhi, 2009, p. 113).

Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007) examined the relationship between perceived stress, self-efficacy, and psychological well-being among Iranian high school students. The study involved a sample of 866 students and employed several instruments, including the General Health Questionnaire (McCrae & Costa, 2003; Goldberg & Williamns, 1997), which measures somatic symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunction, and severe depression, as well as the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995).

The results showed that self-efficacy significantly influences mental health and stress responses among adolescents. Students with high self-efficacy were better able to cope with stress and demonstrated better psychological well-being. In contrast, those with lower self-efficacy experienced greater difficulty in managing stress, leading to higher levels of anxiety and psychological distress (Al-Mashikhi, 2009, p. 134).

Results of the Second Hypothesis

Hypothesis Statement:

"There are statistically significant differences in anxiety (state-trait) among third-year secondary school students attributable to academic specialization (scientific vs. literary)."

To test this hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine differences between the mean scores of scientific and literary students on the anxiety scale (state-trait). The results indicated that the significance values (Sig.) were as follows:

State anxiety: 0.174

Trait anxiety: 0.071

Total anxiety score: 0.098

All values exceed the significance level of 0.05, indicating that the differences are not statistically significant. Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis is rejected, and the null hypothesis is accepted, confirming that there are no statistically significant differences between scientific and literary students in anxiety (state-trait).

These findings are consistent with studies conducted by Amal Al-Ahmad (2001) and Mahmoud Ashri (2004), which also reported no differences in anxiety based on academic specialization. However, they contradict findings from Othman (1993) and Nahed Saud (2005), which indicated significant differences in anxiety in favor of literary students.

The absence of differences in anxiety levels may be explained by the similarity in conditions experienced by students in this stage. Third-year secondary students, regardless of specialization, are exposed to comparable psychological pressures and share a common goal—success in the baccalaureate examination. This shared objective, combined with similar family and school environments, contributes to relatively uniform levels of anxiety.

Furthermore, educational reforms have expanded opportunities across all academic streams, making success no longer limited to a specific specialization. Additionally, this stage corresponds to adolescence, a developmental period characterized by high energy, ambition, and a strong drive to achieve personal goals. These shared developmental and contextual factors may explain the absence of significant differences in anxiety between the two groups.

Results of the Third Hypothesis

Hypothesis Statement:

“There are statistically significant differences in self-efficacy among third-year secondary school students attributable to academic specialization (scientific vs. literary).”

To test this hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine differences between scientific and literary students on the self-efficacy scale. The results showed that the significance value (Sig.) was 0.343, which is higher than the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, the difference is not statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the alternative hypothesis and acceptance of the null hypothesis: there are no statistically significant differences between scientific and literary students in self-efficacy.

These findings are consistent with studies by Rani (2000), Mahmoud Al-Alousi (2001), and Khaldi (2007), all of which reported no differences in self-efficacy based on academic specialization. However, they differ from the findings of Houeida Hanafi Mahmoud and Fawzia Abdel-Baqi Al-Jamali (2010), which indicated differences in favor of scientific students.

This result can be interpreted by considering that self-efficacy is fundamentally a personality-related construct rather than a function of academic content. According to Bandura’s social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is shaped by four primary sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. These sources operate across all contexts and are not restricted to a particular academic specialization.

Students in both scientific and literary streams are exposed to similar life experiences, challenges, and motivational contexts. They strive equally toward achieving academic success, regardless of their specialization. Consequently, academic specialization does not appear to significantly influence self-efficacy levels.

CONCLUSION AND STUDY FINDINGS

Academic failure cannot be attributed solely to school-related factors such as the educational or administrative environment, nor to family or societal influences. It may also be linked to the student's own engagement and activation of their abilities and behaviors, which are shaped by interactions with parents, teachers, administrators, and peers.

Based on the findings, the study successfully achieved its primary objective of identifying the relationship between anxiety and self-efficacy among third-year secondary school students. The results revealed an inverse relationship between the two variables, with no significant differences observed between scientific and literary students.

Self-efficacy emerges as a strong predictor of individual behavior and performance, as it reflects individuals' evaluations of their own capabilities, persistence, effort, and ability to cope with challenges. It also plays a crucial role in *مواجهة* anxiety effectively.

The main findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

A statistically significant negative correlation exists between anxiety (state-trait) and self-efficacy among third-year secondary school students.

No statistically significant differences were found between scientific and literary students in either anxiety or self-efficacy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance students' self-efficacy:

Greater emphasis should be placed on developing self-efficacy through enriching curricula with activities and content that foster students' confidence and capabilities.

Counseling and intervention programs should be designed to enhance self-efficacy and reduce anxiety, particularly for students preparing for examinations.

Self-efficacy remains a central concept within social cognitive theory and one of Bandura's most influential contributions. It highlights the interaction between social and cognitive factors in learning. As noted by Bandura (1995), self-efficacy plays a key role in regulating anxiety-provoking thoughts and influences motivation, achievement, and learning outcomes. It is a fundamental determinant of motivation, psychological well-being, and personal accomplishment (Al-Jubouri, 2013, p. 16).

Enhancing self-efficacy can strengthen students' self-confidence, enabling them to *مواجهة* future challenges more effectively. This, in turn, contributes to better academic adjustment, improved learning conditions, and increased chances of success.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has several limitations. First, the non-experimental design does not allow for causal inferences between anxiety and self-efficacy. Second, the sample was limited to a single geographical area, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Finally, the use of self-report instruments may introduce response biases, such as social desirability and subjective perception.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies should consider employing longitudinal or experimental designs to better understand causal relationships between anxiety and self-efficacy. Expanding the sample to include diverse educational and cultural contexts is also recommended. Additionally, incorporating variables such as resilience, social support, and academic achievement may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

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