

ABSTRACT

In the school environment, students commonly encounter various forms of fear. In the literature, the fear experienced by students is thematized as test anxiety and fear of failure. School anxiety is associated both with the deterioration of pupils' performance and with its potential improvement. The aim of this work is to map the relationship between pupils' experienced fear in mathematics lessons, their performance and other motivational variables. We focused on differentiating the facilitating, for the performance beneficial fear, and the inhibiting, for the performance debilitating fear.

The data collection took place in the form of a questionnaire survey, with the involvement of students of the second year of the four-year grammar school and the corresponding year of the six-year grammar school. We investigated the students' attitudes towards mathematics, the degree of experienced fear, the average grade in mathematics, learning motivation for the subject and BIS/BAS sensitivity, representing an indicator of facilitating and inhibiting fear. We used open questions to map the moment of fear.

The results show a connection between the pupils' experience of fear, attitudes towards mathematics, partly also learning motivation and their average grade in this subject. Success in the subject of mathematics has the strongest link to the popularity of the subject, motivation and aptitude for the subject. Failure in a subject is associated with difficulty and fear. The theoretical starting points that are captured in the BIS/BAS method have been confirmed by research. The results indicate a weak association between facilitating and debilitating fear, represented by BIS/BAS sensitivity, and the average grade in the mathematics subject. The relative weakness of this link points to the likely impossibility of explaining the relationship between school anxiety and performance on the basis of this single variable and favors a multidimensional approach to test anxiety. Due to the complexity of the school environment, the issue of school fear remains open.

KEYWORDS

Educational psychology, fear at school, facilitating and inhibiting fear, motivation, mathematics.