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Test Anxiety and Student Resilience in the Context of School Assessment

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Abstract: Countless studies have shown that there is a connection between anxiety felt during exams and school performance. We as individuals are exposed to failure in the moment of an exam and for those who are not familiar with the context, the opportunity to fail is more probable to happen.
The goals of this study are: to identify the relation between exam anxiety and scholar resilience based on gender of the subject and the class he is a part of.
The sample of the study was formed of 96 students from IV grade. There are 57 boys and 38 girls with ages between 9 and 11. The students are from primary school number 8 and primary school number 4 from Suceava, Romania. With the mention that for all the students, we have the parents acceptance that stands for their children's to be a part of the research with the mention of their children's information to remain confidential. Research tools used for the study are: the scale to test exams anxiety- scale made by Douglas & Benson and the questionnaire of resilience-(Oshio et al., 2003/2015).
The research showed that there is a connection between exams anxiety and resilience based on gender of subject and that the level of resilience is different for all of the 4 classes that took part in the study, the biggest value belonging to the first class.
The future directions for the study could be about the influence of the teachers on the level of anxiety during exams and their influence on developing resilience in students.

Keywords: *test anxiety, resilience, methods of evaluation.*

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1. Introduction

Each person remembers the school years, and each person has experienced at least once the fear of being tested, of failure, the fear that he is not sufficiently prepared and will fail or will be disappointed by his results, or even will forget everything he has learned. In order for this not to become a habit that can affect students more and more often, then even adults in the future, it is important to be aware that students face these problems, and it is necessary to be given support from both teachers and family. Some students live even under pressure from teachers or parents who have very high expectations of them, which can stimulate them or on the contrary, it can cause them to fail. Others, in happy cases, perceive everything as a challenge and do not encounter difficulties, even look forward to evaluation.

Students' school performance may be influenced by several factors, positively or negatively. At the time of evaluation, the student can experience several states that can help him or on the contrary, can confuse him in focusing on the tasks he has to perform. During the evaluation, test anxiety occurs in some of the students. Test anxiety, however, is a state of the moment, not a state that the student experiences constantly, but only before and during testing (Crişan & Copaci, 2015; Popa, Bonchis & Clipa, 2018).

Students' school performance may be influenced by several factors, positively or negatively. At the time of evaluation, the student can experience several states that can help him or on the contrary, can confuse him in focusing on the tasks he has to perform. During the evaluation, test anxiety occurs in some of the students. Test anxiety, however, is a state of the moment, not a state that the student experiences constantly, but only before and during testing (Dordi Nejad et. al., 2011). Most of the time, test anxiety affects the ability to concentrate, attention, and together with other manifestations, prevents the student from being able to concentrate at his or her maximum capacity, or to remember the information learned, so that the assessment will not sincerely reflect his ability and performance. However, there are also students who view assessment as a challenge, and who are less affected by test anxiety.

Testing anxiety is a pervasive problem in modern society, not just in school. Remembering test anxiety will serve to counteract reduced access to educational and professional opportunities that a person with anxiety frequently encounters (Benard, 1995; Popa, Bonchis & Clipa, 2018; Robu & Morăraşu, 2008; Zeidner, 1998). Some people exhibit this test anxiety and

later, and this can create them discomfort. Although it occurs as a state of the moment, anxiety can be manifested over a long period of time, becoming a real problem.

Students who experience this state of test anxiety, need to be observed and helped to get over it, so that the anxiety does not affect their school performance. It is therefore important to be aware of the importance of the teacher's influence on pupils (Brown & Hirschfeld, 2008; Brown & Remesal, 2012; Remesal & Brown, 2015) and their assessment (Clipa, 2017).

Another factor that can have an influence, this time positive, on student performance is resilience, which is not a state of moment but a psychic process that manifests itself continuously, and can develop or learn. In the case of students, this can help them to deal with anxiety during assessments, and beyond. It can be said that school resilience appears as the opposite of test anxiety.

2. Aims

This research aims to investigate the relationships between test anxiety and school resilience, depending on the student's gender. Another purpose of the research is to analyze the impact of satisfaction with grades in Romanian and mathematics on the anxiety of testing and school resilience. The third purpose of the research is the relationship between teachers' perception of assessment, student testing anxiety and school resilience.

The objectives of the research were as follows: Identifying the relationship between test anxiety and school resilience, by student gender, Identification of the impact of test anxiety on school resilience, by student's gender, Analysis of student satisfaction influence on Romanian and math score on school resilience and test anxiety, Identification of differences in test anxiety and resilience according to the class of the students.

3. Research methods

3.1. Description of the sample investigated:

A sample of 96 fourth-graders aged 9 to 11 participated in this research, 57 of whom were male and 39 females.

At the same time, the 4 teachers from the classes of the investigated female group aged between 20 and 50 participated in this research. In addition, the results of the 4 teachers were analysed in relation to data obtained from 230 teachers aged 19 to 54 years (M = 29.31, AS = 9.90), with an average education age of 10.84 years. This sample was used to analyse

how teachers relate to the assessment process and how their perception can impact students' levels.

3.2 Research instruments

The main method used in this research was the survey using the questionnaire.

1. The Scale on Anxiety Testing - The scale was developed by Douglas & Benson and taken from the article "Measuring test anxiety in children: scale development and internal construct validation" (2004).

2. Resilience Questionnaire (Oshio et al., 2003/2015) adapted for 4th graders. This questionnaire comprises 21 items, divided into three dimensions, namely 'searching for the new', 'regulating emotions' and 'orienting towards the future'. (e.g. Looking for new challenges.) (Oshio et al., 2003).

3. The TCoA-IIIA (Teachers' conceptions of Assessment Abridged) questionnaire for teachers uses 27 items, divided equally into nine factors, which are organized into four major, interrelated conceptions of evaluation (i.e., evaluation improves teaching and learning; student assessment classes; evaluation shows quality of schools; evaluation is irrelevant). The answer variants are arranged on a Likert gradation, each question having 5 variants of answer (1 - Total disagreement, 2 – Disagreement, 3 – Agreement, 4 – Large agreement, 5 – Total agreement) of which only one must be checked, the one that best corresponds to the status/experience of the subject. (Brown & Remesal, 2012). An Alpha Cronbach of 0.78 was obtained.

4. The evaluation questionnaire comprises 40 items. Each item was classified as belonging to one of the four aspects focused on evaluation (learning, teaching, responsibility and certification), as well as one of the two purposes of the evaluation.

3.3. Procedure

The participants in the research were chosen from among the students of the 4th grade of the Secondary School No. 4 Suceava and the Secondary School No. 8 Suceava, through the intermediation of the teachers of the classes, who agreed to participate in the study as well. All the participants gave their informed consent for participating in this study, about aims, their status and necessity for research. The subjects received the questionnaire sets after which they were asked to complete them with care and sincerity. The students were given explanations of what to do with each questionnaire. For each student who participated in the research, the parents signed the participation agreement. In the end we received 96 sets of 2

questionnaires from students and 4 sets of 4 questionnaires from teachers. The results of the 4 frameworks were analysed by reference to the data obtained in the sample of 230 teachers in the questionnaires on their perception of the evaluation process.

4. Results

The results of the analysis indicated that there is a positive and significant correlation between the variable automatic reactions and the future orientation variable (r= 0.34, N= 57, p= 0.005), there is a negative and significant correlation between test anxiety and emotion regulation: (r= -0.27, N= 57, p= 0.019), and that there is a negative and significant correlation between the variable thoughts and the regulation of emotions: (r= -0.28 , N= 57, p= 0.016) (see Table 1). As a result, it can be seen that in the case of boys, automatic reactions are directly proportional to the orientation towards the future, and the regulation of emotions correlates negatively with the general test anxiety and thoughts during the evaluation situations.

Table 1. Correlations between the variable automatic reactions and the future orientation variable

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1							
2	-,067	1						
3	,920(**)	-,116	1					
4	,659(**)	-,040	,452(**)	1				
5	,795(**)	,029	,616(**)	,300(*)	1			
6	,034	,729(**)	,019	,089	-,008	1		
7	**-,276(*)**	,690(**)	**-,285(*)**	-,140	-,205	,194	1	
8	,155	,648(**)	,068	-,020	**,342(**)**	,323(**)	,131	1

Note: 1-total anxiety, 2- full resilience 3-anxiety- thoughts, 4-anx_behaviour, 5- anx_automatic reactions, 6-rez_finding the innovation, 7-rez_emotional regulation, 8- resilience_future orientation; **p <.001; *p <.05

(Source: Authors own contribution)

The result of the analysis indicated that there is a negative and significant correlation between thoughts during testing and future orientation: (r= -0.30, N= 38, p= 0.032), there is a negative and significant correlation between distracted behaviour and emotion regulation (r= -0.38, N= 38, p= 0.009), and as in boys, there is a significant negative and correlation between anxiety and : (r= -0.35, N= 38, p= 0.015), and a negative and significant correlation between variable thoughts and emotion regulation: (r= -0.28, N= 38, p= 0.043) (See Table 2). So, in the case of girls, the thoughts during the test relate to a low level of positive orientation towards the future, and a high level of distracted behaviour is related to a lower regulation of emotions. As with boys, high anxiety correlates negatively with the regulation of emotions just like thoughts during tests. The hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 2. Correlation between thoughts during testing and future orientation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1							
2	-,236	1						
3	,933(**)	-,241	1					
4	,839(**)	-,265	,726(**)	1				
5	,768(**)	-,085	,567(**)	,454(**)	1			
6	,115	,726(**)	,067	,043	,201	1		
7	**-,354(*)**	,711(**)	**-,282(*)**	**-,384(**)**	-,266	,195	1	
8	-,250	,649(**)	**-,304(*)**	-,194	-,096	,329(*)	,173	1

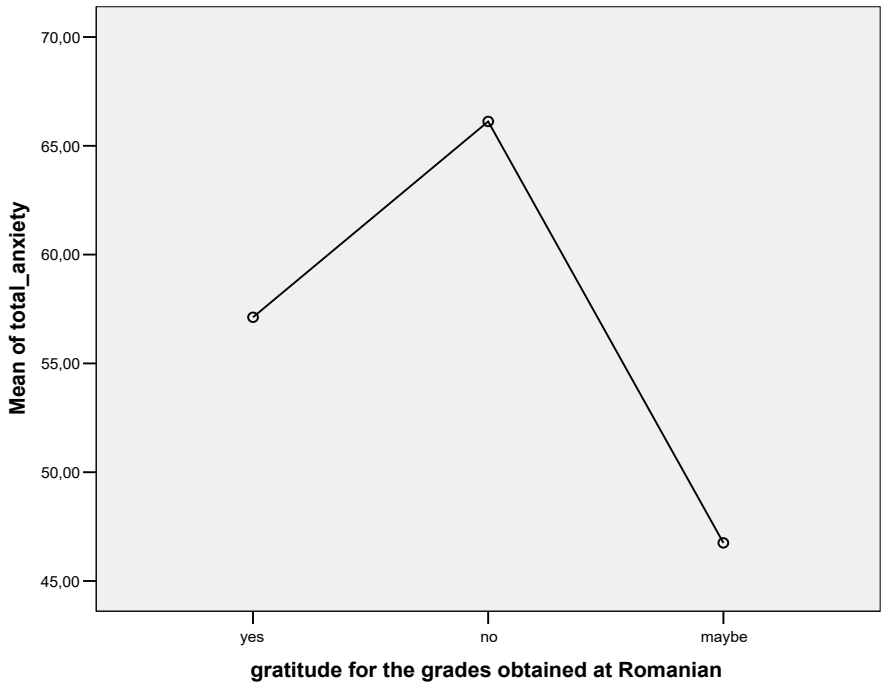
Note: 1-total anxiety, 2- full resilience 3-anxiety- thoughts, 4-anx_behaviour, 5- anx_automatic reactions, 6-rez_finding the innovation, 7-rez_emotional regulation, 8- resilience future orientation **p <.001; *p <.05.

(Source: Authors own contribution)

The Anova One Way test was applied to assess the impact of Romanian language scores on test anxiety scores. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the levels of the variable thank you for the score at Romanian depending on the variable of test anxiety: [F(2.85)=4,701, p=0.012]. The post hoc games-Howell test indicated that there are significant differences in anxiety between the following groups of

subjects: yes/no(Mdif= -8.99,p=0.039), in the sense that subjects satisfied with the results (M = 57.11) have a significantly lower level of anxiety than subjects who are not satisfied (M=66.11) of the Romanian language result; not/little (Mdif= 19.36, p=0.028), in the sense that, surprisingly, subjects who are not satisfied with the results have a significantly higher level of anxiety than subjects who are less satisfied (M= 46.75) with the results (see graph 1).

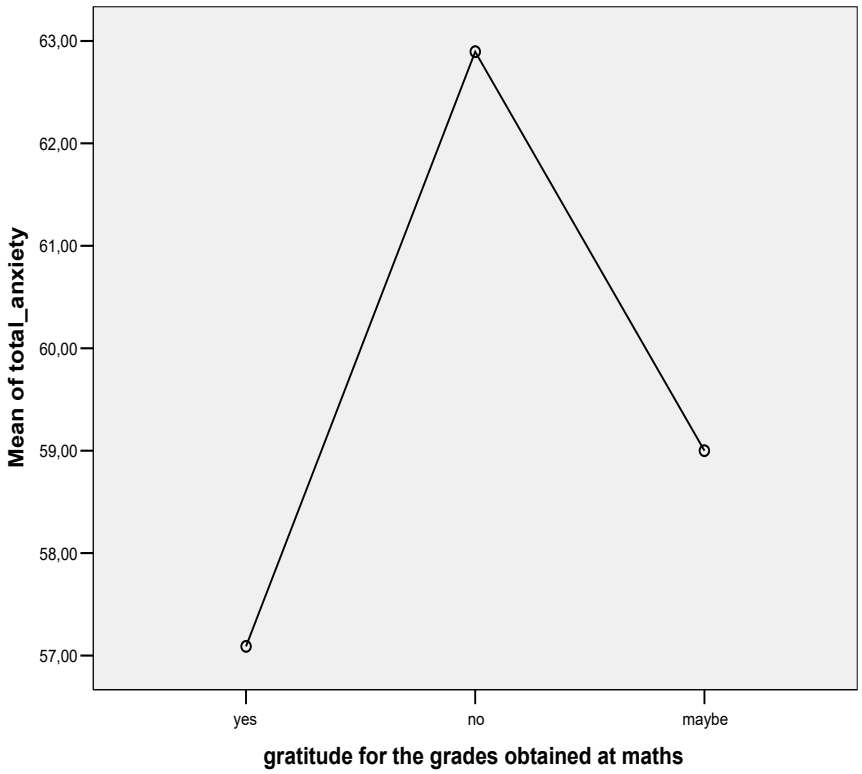
Graph 1: Graph of differences in the level of anxiety in terms of satisfaction with the grades obtained in Romanian.



(Source: Authors own contribution)

To evaluate the impact of satisfaction with math scores on test anxiety scores, the Anova One Way test was applied in SPSS. The results showed that there is no significant difference between the levels of the satisfaction variable compared to the grade in mathematics depending on the test anxiety variable: [F (2.85) = 1.474, p = 0.235] (see graph 2). The hypothesis is not confirmed.

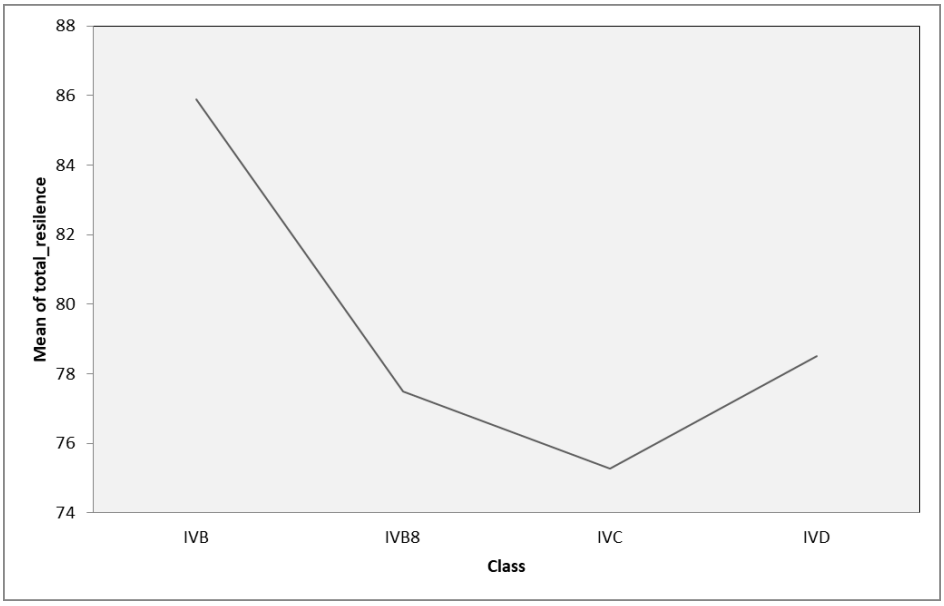
Graph 2: Graph of the differences in the level of anxiety according to the satisfaction with the marks obtained in mathematics



(Source: Authors own contribution)

The results showed that there is a significant difference between the levels of the resilience variable depending on the class of students: [F (3.92) = 7.346, p = 0.000]. The games-Howell post hoc test indicated that there were significant differences in anxiety between the following groups of subjects: IV B / IV IV B8 (Mdif = 8.37, p = 0.004), IV B / a IV- a C (Mdif = 10.61, p = 0.001), a IV- a B / a IV- a D (Mdif = 7.94, p = 0.005) (see graph 5). Class IV B has the highest resilience score (85.89) and at the opposite pole is class IV C (75, 27). No significant differences were found between the other groups of subjects. In conclusion, there is a significant difference in the level of resilience between the 4 classes of students. The hypothesis is partially confirmed.

Graph 3: Graph of the differences in the level of resilience between the 4 classes of subjects



(Source: Authors own contribution)

The scores of the 4 teachers were analyzed by reference to the median obtained by the group of 230 subjects tested to investigate the perception of the evaluation process.

To test the hypothesis that there is a relationship between teachers' perception of assessment and the variables student testing anxiety and school resilience, a descriptive analysis of the scores obtained in the 2 questionnaires was performed for each dimension.

The teacher of the first class of students obtained the highest score (46.00) in the "learning assessment", the size of the second questionnaire related to assessment, and the lowest score in the certification (38.00). is below the median (Median = 44.00). He also obtained the lowest score at the "formative assessment" dimension (63.00), a score below the median of 68.00. It is therefore observed that teachers' perception of assessment differs, as does the level of resilience and anxiety in students, because teachers, through their attitude, influence the level of the two dimensions.

Table 3. Relationship between teachers' perception of assessment and the variables student testing anxiety and school resilience.

Statistics										
		improve_TCoA	Irrelevant_TCoA	school.account_TCoA	student.account_TCoA	assessment_teaching	assessment_learning	assessment_certification	assessment_accountability	assessment_formative.regulation	assessment_societall.control
N	Valid	218	224	232	228	230	229	225	227	229	220
	Missing	16	10	2	6	4	5	9	7	5	14
Mean		41,8486	23,9821	9,7629	10,6491	41,4217	44,8297	43,6178	44,0000	69,6812	82,3318
Median		**41,0000**	**23,0000**	**9,0000**	**11,0000**	**41,0000**	**45,0000**	**44,0000**	**44,0000**	**68,0000**	**82,0000**
Minimum		21,00	14,00	3,00	6,00	27,00	32,00	14,00	26,00	48,00	53,00
Maximum		58,00	38,00	15,00	15,00	60,00	79,00	86,00	59,00	109,00	116,00
Teacher 1		**52,00**	23,00	8,00	11,00	36,00	**46,00**	**38,00**	46,00	**63,00**	83,00
Teacher 2		21,00	38,00	14,00	6,00	34,00	39,00	46,00	46,00	66,00	82,00
Teacher 3		39,00	26,00	7,00	11,00	42,00	44,00	44,00	46,00	77,00	77,00
Teacher 4		35,00	22,00	9,00	9,00	35,00	41,00	42,00	50,00	65,00	81,00

5. Discussion

The first hypothesis was tested using the SPSS program. The results showed that in the case of boys, automatic reactions are directly proportional to the positive orientation towards the future. We can say that in general boys make decisions faster and do not think as much as girls before making a decision. Automatic reactions can be considered the same as spontaneity. The specific behavior of boys at risk differs from that of girls. This has been demonstrated in a study that says that in many different areas, men are more prone to risk than women (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer, 1999; Croson & Gneezy, 2009; Eckel & Grossman, 2002; Weaver, Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

According to the results of the test of the second hypothesis, in girls the distracted behavior during the test (looking at other colleagues, playing with the pen) leads to decreased emotional regulation and negative thoughts during the test lead to a decrease in the level of positive orientation towards these future. It has been found several times that women report higher levels of anxiety than men (Bandalos et al., 1995; Cassady & Johnson, 2002; Popa et al., 2018; Volkmer & Feather, 1991; Zeidner, 1998). However, there were not many parents among researchers regarding the location of these gender differences.

Hypothesis 3 tests the influence of the automatic reaction variable on the future-oriented variable. According to the results obtained, both for boys and for girls, the level of automatic reactions influences the positive orientation towards the future. In other words, subjects who have a high level of automatic reactions are more spontaneous and better oriented towards the future.

The results of hypothesis 4 show that only the satisfaction with the grades in Romanian influences the test anxiety. Specifically, the highest score of anxiety is given to subjects who are satisfied with the grades obtained, but surprisingly, the lowest score is given to subjects who are less satisfied with the grades. It can be said that this little is actually the small degree of interest that these subjects have for grades. At the same time, it can be said that only in the Romanian language the satisfaction influences the anxiety, because in the Romanian language the evaluation is easier to interpret, compared to mathematics where everything is clear, correct or wrong. Probably the expectations are higher in Romanian, or the evaluation criteria are not sufficiently clarified by the teacher. A greater emphasis on clarifying the evaluation criteria in Romanian could prevent testing anxiety and increase satisfaction with the marks obtained in this discipline. In this way, students could more easily understand what they have to do and their expectations could be closer to reality and the results obtained.

Hypothesis 5 tests the differences in the level of resilience in the 4 classes of subjects. According to the results obtained, there are significant differences between the first class of subjects and the other classes tested. There are differences between all classes but they are not significant. The first class of subjects has the highest score on resilience. These results can be explained by the relationship between the teacher's attitude towards evaluation and the level of resilience of students in his class.

The last hypothesis of the research aims at the influence of the teacher on the level of resilience of students (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). The results of the 4 teachers were analyzed in relation to the data obtained

from 230 teachers, reporting to the median. The differences between the results obtained by the four staff show that they have an influence on the level of resilience and testing anxiety of the students' classes. The teacher who teaches the class with the highest level of anxiety has the highest score at the dimension that says that assessment improves teaching, which indicates that this teacher views assessment as a way to adjust the way of teaching and how it has to adapt teaching to the needs of its students. Regarding the irrelevance of the evaluation, the teacher obtained a score equal to the median, which shows that this teacher does not place much emphasis on evaluation, so he does not consider to a very large extent that evaluation has a high relevance, which which means it doesn't put a lot of pressure on students when it comes to assessment (Graczyk, Connolly & Corapci, 2005; Putwain, Nicholson, Connors & Woods, 2013). And in the dimension related to the evaluation of learning, the teacher had the highest score, being above the median. As in the previous case, it can be said that this teacher puts more emphasis on teaching and learning (Remesal & Brown, 2015)., linking the assessment to these two aspects, and without putting much emphasis on the results of the assessment which can sometimes be erroneous. The lowest scores obtained by the first teacher were for certification and formative evaluation, which is in stark contrast to the literature which says that "formative evaluation holds the promise of promoting students' achievements and motivation" (Yin et al, 2008). Given the score obtained by the students of the first class in the sample, it would have been expected that among the highest scores would be that of the teacher from that class.

6. Conclusion

Therefore, after obtaining and analyzing the research results, it can be concluded first of all, that there are both negative correlations and a positive correlation between test anxiety with its dimensions, and resilience with its dimensions (Russo & Boman, 2007), depending on the gender of the subject, because negative thoughts during testing together with test anxiety decrease the level of regulation of students' emotions (Popa, Bonchis & Clipa, 2018; Wren & Benson, 2004). Boys with a higher level of automatic reactions are more positively oriented towards the future, while the future-oriented orientation of girls is affected by negative thoughts during testing. In the case of girls, the distracted behavior is inversely proportional to the regulation of emotions.

Second, we can say that automatic reactions that may be similar to spontaneity, or the reaction to the risk situation (boys differ from girls, they may be more impulsive and engage more often in risk situations), may influence the positive orientation. to the future. In other words, more spontaneous students are more optimistic, look to the future with confidence and think positively about it, being more impulsive and engaging in risky situations more often without thinking too much (Sparfeldt, Rost, Baumeister & Christ, 2013).

Third, one of the factors that influences students' testing anxiety is satisfaction with the grades obtained in Romanian language and literature, being a discipline where assessment is more subjective, or assessment criteria are not well understood by students, which creates different expectations in relation to reality, confusion, frustration, anxiety (Zeidner & Matthews, 2003). Also, in math assessment, students are more likely to receive faster feedback. Following a study conducted in 2005, students said that the assessment was useful because it led to information and feedback. This information, in the correct form, could help students and, to a lesser extent, teachers to improve, and at the same time, feedback can be used to show them the progress of parents and employers (Peterson & Irving, 2008; Zeidner & Matheus, 2003; Willis, 2017).

Therefore, the highest score of anxiety is given by the subjects who are satisfied with the marks obtained, but surprisingly, the lowest score is given by the subjects who are less satisfied with the marks. It can be said that those who want better grades become more stressed and anxious, while students who do not give much importance to grades are not stressed even if they know they could have achieved better results.

Fourth, it was found that the level of resilience differs between classes of students, not only between them, this being due to the teacher's perception of assessment, and its influence on students. The role of formative assessment is very important in motivating students. According to one article, the formative assessment article promises to promote students' achievements and motivation. In particular, the study in the article examined whether formative assessments would improve students' motivation, achievement and, consequently, conceptual change. It was found that student motivation, achievements and conceptual changes varied significantly among the participating teachers, but the formative assessment treatment did not have a significant impact on these outcome variables (Clipa & Mihai, 2019; Yin et al, 2008).

Research has shown that there are relationships between test anxiety and student resilience depending on their gender, that satisfaction with

grades may influence students' anxiety levels, and that teachers' perceptions of assessment influence students' level of resilience. when the teacher considers assessment as a way to improve teaching and regulate learning on the fly, it does not put pressure on students in testing situations, so they develop more resilience by being more positive and optimistic.

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