Traduction et Langues Volume 24 Numéro 01/2025
Journal of Translation and Languages **مجلة الترجمة واللغات**
ISSN (Print): 1112-3974 **EISSN (Online): 2600-6235**
DOI: https://doi.org/10.52919/translang.v24i01.1029

Test Anxiety and Gender: Insights from English Major Students at Hadhramout University

Atef Saleh Al-Tamimi
Hadhramout University – Yemen
a.altamimi@hu.edu.ye
Wagdi Rashad Ali Bin-Hady
Hadhramout University – Yemen
wagdyrashad@hu.edu.ye

To cite this paper:
Al-Tamimi, A. S., & Bin-Hady, W. R. A. (2025). Test anxiety and gender: insights from English major students at Hadhramout University. *Traduction et Langues, 24(1),* 150-169.

Received: 10/03/2025; **Accepted**: 04/06/2025, **Published:** 30/06/2025

Corresponding author : Bin-Hady Wagdi

Keywords

Foreign language learning; Foreign Language Learning anxiety; Foreign Language Test Anxiety (FLTA); Gender; Yemeni English majors

Abstract

Test anxiety stands as one of the most impactful affective factors in the English as a foreign language learning journey. Indeed, current language learning theories affirm the serious impediment of foreign language test anxiety (FLTA) to English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' learning, which results in hindering their performance in English. Therefore, this study examined the levels of FLTA among Yemeni English majors at Hadhramout University before, during, and after a language test. The study also questioned whether male and female students encounter different FLTA levels. The researchers obtained a quantitative research design where a closed-ended questionnaire based on Ahmed and Halawachy (2013) and Himat and Nazari (2019) was distributed among 75 EFL junior and senior students at Hadhramout University, Yemen. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software (Version 28). The methodological approach encompassed both descriptive statistics—comprising mean scores and standard deviations—and inferential analyses, specifically an independent samples t-test to examine gender-based differences in learners' attitudes toward foreign language test anxiety (FLTA). The results revealed that the majority of students scored medium-high in FLTA (mean =3.62). Additionally, the average mean score of the items related to FLTA before the test comes first with a mean of 3.62, followed by FLTA during the test (mean 3.55), and the last average of FLTA occurred after the test (mean =3.08). On contrary to prediction, the results pointed out that female students perceive higher FLTA than male students; however, the difference is insignificant (Sig=.572). The results offer some pedagogical implications for students and teachers at the English Department and syllabus designers at the Academic Development Center, and Quality Assurance at Hadhramout University. The findings would also contribute to familiarize English majors and their respective teachers of the factors which raised their FLTA to use suitable techniques and strategies that build students' self-confidence, control and regulate their emotional feeling and develop healthy physical habits to help these students overcome test anxiety feeling and symptoms particularly before and during taking the test. Finally, the study provides suggestions to open further avenues of research and theoretical and practical insights to the field of FLTA.

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

Available online online at https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/Articles/155

الكلمات المفتاحية

القلق من اختبار اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، النوع الإجتماعي، تعلم اللغة الأجنبية، القلق من تعلم اللغة الأجنبية، طلاب تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية

الملخص

يُعَدُّ قلق الاختبارات من أكثر العوامل الوجدانيّة تأثيرًا في رحلة تعلُّم اللغة الإنجليزيّة كلغةٍ أجنبيّة. حيث تشير النظريات والأبحاث الحالية في مجال تعلم اللغة إلى أن مشكلة القلق من إختبارات اللغة الأجنبية تشكل عائقًا خطيرًا أمام متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وأدائهم في اللغة الإنجليزية. وبناء على ذلك، يهدف البحث الحالي إلى رصد ديناميكية قلق اختبار اللغة الأجنبية لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة حضرموت في ثلاث محطات زمنية: قبل الاختبار، وأثناءه، وبعده. كما حاولت الدراسة أيضًا معرفة ما إذا كان متغير الجنس يؤثر على مستوى القلق من الإختبارات لدى الطلاب. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة، قام الباحثون ببناء استبيانة مغلقة مستندة إلى دراستي حمات ونزاري (2019) وأحمد وحلاوة (2013) وتوزيعها على خمس وسعبون طالبًا وطالبة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة حضرموت، الجمهورية اليمنية. أُجريت التحليلات الإحصائية بواسطة برنامج SPSS (الإصدار 28)، وقد اشتمل المنهج البحثي على تطبيق الإحصاء الوصفي (المتوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية) والتحليلات الاستدلالية، حيث تم استخدام اختبار تي للعينات المستقلة لدراسة الفروق بين الجنسين في اتجاهات المتعلمين تجاه قلق اختبار اللغة الأجنبية. وقد كشفت النتائج أن مستوى القلق لدى غالبية الطلاب من الإختبارات كان متوسط-عالي بمتوسط 3.62. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، جاء في المرتبة الأولى متوسط القلق لدى الطلاب قبل الإختبار بدرجة متوسط عالي بلغ 3.62، يليه في الترتيب متوسط القلق أثناء الاختبار بمتوسط مرتفع 3.55 ثم متوسط القلق بعد الاختبار بدرجة متوسط-عالي بلغ 3.08. علاوة على ذلك، وعلى عكس المتوقع، أشارت النتائج إلى مستوى القلق من الإختبار لدى الطالبات أعلى من الطلاب الذكور، ولكن الفرق ليس ذا دلالة إحصائية (*Sig=.572*). وعلى ضوء النتائج، قدمت الدراسة عدد من التوصيات التي يجب أن يأخذها الطلاب والمدرسون في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية ومصممو المناهج في مركز التطوير الأكاديمي وضمان الجودة في جامعة حضرموت بعين الاعتبار. كما ستسهم النتائج أيضا في تعريف طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية ومعلميهم بالعوامل التي تثير قلقهم من الإختبار مما يمكنهم من إستخدام الإستراتيجيات والأساليب المناسبة والتي تبني ثقة الطلاب بأنفسهم و تكبح مشاعرهم الإنفعالية و تنظمها وتنمي عاداتهم البدنية الصحية لمساعدة هؤلاء الطلاب على التغلب على مشاعر وأعراض القلق خاصة قبل وأثناء الإختبار. وأخيراً، قدمت الدراسة مقترحات وتوصيات لمجالات البحث المستقبلية ورؤى للإسهامات النظرية والعملية في هذا المجال.

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

1. Introduction

EFL educators and researchers consider test anxiety among the most influential affective factors in the journey of EFL learning. This phenomenon debilitatingly impacts EFL learners (e.g., Liu & Huang, 2011; Akkakoson, 2016; Ali & Fei, 2016; Al-Tamimi, 2016; Yassin & Razak, 2018; Abdul Razak et al., 2019). Foreign language test anxiety (FLTA) is perceived as one of the broadest anxiety research trends in recent years. Nevertheless, there is no agreement on the causes, contributing factors, and the consequences of FLTA (Aydin et al., 2021).

In fact, research studies on FLTA dated back to 1914, when Folin and his colleagues published their pioneering study. Recently, many empirical studies have been reported on how FLTA relates to performance and found that it prevents many EFL learners from reaching their academic potential (e.g. Aydın et al., 2006; Cakıcı, 2016; Obioma & Obioma, 2019; Yarkwah et al., 2024). Even worse, numerous studies indicate that test anxiety brings several physical and emotional problems and minimizes motivation among EFL learners (Aydın et al., 2006). These studies collectively highlight the significant negative impact of FLTA on academic performance across different EFL educational levels and contexts. They also emphasize the need for targeted interventions to help students manage FLTA and improve their academic outcomes.

From a different angle, FLTA has been effectively found to be correlated with gender among EFL students in various learning contexts (Rezazadeh & Tavakoli, 2009). However, existing studies linking anxiety and gender are still inconclusive and controversial. These studies just oriented the gender difference in terms of FLTA (Aydin, 2019). As for the problem to be investigated, according to Ahmed and Halawachy (2013), FLTA phases, i.e., before, during, and after testing, is rarely identified among EFL learners. Hence, despite the several existed studies on FLTA among EFL learners (Ahmed & Halawachy, 2013; Alfaini, 2022; Butt & Akram, 2013; Chue & Lim, 2024; Himat & Nazari, 2019; Gursoy & Arman, 2016; Khan et al., 2020), there is a need to ascertain the levels of FLTA among Yemeni EFL learners as no research we came across that has been done yet in the Yemeni EFL context. Hence, the researchers are urged to conduct the current study to unveil the FLTA levels among Yemeni English majors at Hadhramout University and find out the possible impact of gender on students' FLTA. The results would aid in a deeper understanding of these issues and will fill in a gap in existing information in the context under study. This study helps in unveiling the following queries:

- What are the levels of FLTA, perceived by English majors at Hadhramout University before, during, and after a language test?
- Is there any gender difference among English majors at Hadhramout University regarding their FLTA?

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

Available online online at https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/Articles/155

1. Literature Review

This section provides an overview of test anxiety and its main components and phases. Then, snapshot of the relationship between gender and FLTA will be shown. Finally, previous related studies on test anxiety among EFL learners will be reviewed.

2.1 Test Anxiety

To familiarize the readers with the term test anxiety, Morris et al. (1981) perceive it as the worry aroused in the test-takers due to their concerns about the consequence of the test results. For Zeidner (1998), test anxiety is considered as a cluster of mental, behavioral and physical reactions featured by fears of failure or negative consequences in essessment settings like exams. Furthermore, test anxiety is viewed as a psychological state featured by individual's high emotional response; it is also characterized by feelings of concern, apprehension, uncertainty, and fear happened before, with, or even after taking a test (Olatoye & Afuwape, 2003). Similarly, in an operational definition, test anxiety is regarded as a personalized emotional experience that occurs due appearing in a specific evaluation situation accompanying feeling of distress and apprehension that relate to the testing process and to the fear of failing, and potential negative outcomes (Ahmad & Halawachy, 2013; Himat & Nazari, 2019; Balwan & Kour, 2022). This operational definition of test anxiety has been adopted by the researchers in this study.

In line with the above-mentioned operational definition, Moore (2006) considers test anxiety to include three phases namely; preparing for, performing in and reflecting on the tests. Firstly, before the test, EFL students often feel anxious while preparing, struggling to retain information and fearing failure. Those with high anxiety may study inefficiently, which increases their stress. Secondly, during the test, test anxiety can impact performance, causing some students to forget what they studied or struggle with time management. Even well-prepared students may experience mental blocks due to stress. Finally, for after the test phase, anxiety continues for some students as they worry about their performance and potential failure. Those who believe their effort determines success tend to feel less anxious, while others who lack confidence may experience lingering stress (Moore, 2006). Following these phases, we try to points out the FLTA levels before, during and after the test for Yemeni English majors at Hadhramout University.

It might also be expedient at this juncture to shed light on test anxiety components as it has been classified into mental, affective-physiological and behavioural elements. The mental or cognitive element refers to distressing thoughts linked with the fear of negative consequences and concern about failure (Zeidner & Mathews, 2005).

Affective-physiological type element denotes the physical of anxiety such as headache, muscle tension, sweat on the hands, upset stomach, rapid heartbeat and trembling. Lastly, the behavioural feature involves overt actions that divert focus away from the task during a test such as tapping with a pencil, gazing, restless movements and so forth (Ahmed & Halawachy, 2013).

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

2.2 Gender and FLTA

Gender differences in FLTA among EFL learners emerged as a contentious and argumentative issue. In fact, many studies have tested the correlation between FLTA and gender among EFL students. These studies have revealed that females EFL students typically experience higher FLTA than male studnets (e.g. Rezazadeh & Tavakoli, 2009; Santana & Eccius-Wellmann, 2018; Aydin, 2019; Matara & Pantu, 2021; Fibiyani & Pratiwi, 2023; Al Fraidan, 2024; Waluyo et al., 2025).

For instance, Rezazadeh and Tavakoli (2009) examined the correlation between gender and FLTA among 110 Iranian EFL students enrolled at the University of Isfahan. Female students have been found to have higher FLTA scores than males. Similarly, Santana and Eccius-Wellmann (2018) examined gender differences in FLTA among 231 EFL Mexican university students taking the TOEIC. They demonstrated that women had higher FLTA and lower TOEIC scores compared to men. Moreover, Aydin (2019) surveyed FLTA among 414 fourth-grade EFL students in Turkey revealing that females reported higher levels of FLTA, particularly in thoughts and autonomic reactions. Furthermore, in Indonesia, Matara and Pantu (2021) studied 255 Indonesian EFL students' anxiety using a test anxiety inventory and found that females had higher FLTA than males. In the Arabic EFL context, a recent study was carried out by Al Fraidan (2024) with 80 Saudi EFL learners, investigating the effect of FLTA on students' language competence and gender. The findings revealed the greater susceptibility of female students to FLTA, suggesting that social expectations and cognitive strategies contribute to these differences. As seen, all these studies consistently show that females tend to experience higher FLTA, which negatively impacts their academic performance. Also, the studies emphasize the need for institutional strategies to assist students, particularly females, manage test-related stress more effectively.

However, several studies reported that female students usually witnessed greater FLTA levels when compared to their male counterparts, some studies do not align with these findings (e.g. Ahmed & Halawachy, 2013; Alikbari & Gheitasi; 2017; Khan et al., 2020; Rezazadeh & Tavakoli, 2009). For example, Rezazadeh and Tavakoli (2009) conducted a study in the University of Isfahan in Iran and asserted that no gender-based difference is found in FLTA among students. Similarly, Alikbari and Gheitasi (2017) investigated FLTA among Iranian EFL high school learners, with a focus on the role of gender and attitudes towards EFL learning. The online test anxiety scale was distributed to 400 Iranian EFL students. The results found no significant gender-based differences between students' levels of FLTA. Furthermore, another related research was done by Khan et al. (2020) among 187 Pakistani EFL students revealed that gender did not significantly affect students' level of FLTA.

In fact, the discrepancies in the results suggest that while gender differences in FLTA are commonly observed, they may not be universal. Factors including cultural context, educational environment, and individual features and traits such as language proficiency, study habits, self-confidence, motivation and coping strategies could

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

influence the relationship between gender and FLTA. Given a review of some of the related studies of FLTA among EFL students, it is found that Yemeni EFL learners have not been investigated yet. Therefore, the current research is carried out to identify the levels of FLTA of a group of Yemeni EFL undergraduates. In addition, since some previous research showed no difference in EFL learners' FLTA levels based on gender, the present study includes the gender variable to measure whether various genders witness different FLTA in a learning context not tackled before, i.e., Yemen.

Many studies have investigated FLTA among EFL students (e.g. Ahmed & Halawachy, 2013; Butt & Akram, 2013; Gursoy & Arman, 2016; Himat & Nazari, 2019; Alfaini, 2022; Ali, 2023; Al-Sukaini et al., 2025; Chue & Lim, 2024; Khan et al., 2020; Wakuma, 2025; Waluyo et al., 2025; Abd Elmajid, 2025;) in various contexts. For instance, Alfaini (2022) identified the levels of FLTA among Indonesian EFL vocational high school students. To collect data, a Test Anxiety Scale (TAS) questionnaire was administered among 168 EFL students. The main results showed that the highest FLTA levels were found in items related to lack of preparation, bad grades, and forgetting knowledge during tests.

Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that Indonesian EFL students need better practice to manage stress and anxiety. The study also recommended that teachers motivate students and provide strategies for test preparation. Additionally, Gursoy and Arman (2016) undertook a study in Turkey to identify the students' levels of FLTA. It was also designed to find out the correlation between students' FLTA, gender, grade level, and academic achievement. Generally, the results revealed that the sample had a moderate level of FLTA, and female students appeared to be more anxious than their male counterparts. In Thailand, Waluyo et al. (2025) surveyed 345 first-year EFL undergraduate to examine their FLTA levels and the possible impact of gender and proficiency levels on students' test anxiety levels. The study showed that THAI EFL students reported a high FLTA level. Also, it was found that both gender and proficiency levels of the students had significant effects on students' FLTA.

Waluyo et al. (2025) advised Thai EFL teachers and policymakers to prepare suitable methods for generating welcoming settings for students before initiating their English tests, besides implementing appropriate treatment strategies incorporating behavioral and cognitive therapies.

Relevant research was carried out in the Middle East. Ahmed and Halawachy (2013) investigated FLTA levels among Iraqi EFL university students. The study also aimed to identify the possible impact of gender on students' FLTA. The researchers prepared a 52-item questionnaire to identify students' FLTA before, during, and after the test (23 items, 13 items, 16 items), respectively. The questionnaire was distributed among 60 third-year EFL students at the University of Mosul. The results showed no significant differences in FLTA scores in terms of gender. Also, the findings showed that academic and personal factors significantly affect female students' anxiety more than males. Based on the results, the researchers recommended the implementation of strategies to make test environments

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

less stressful. Recently, Himat and Nazari (2019) investigated FLTA levels (before, during, and after the test) among Afghani EFL undergraduates. The sample included 180 EFL students (159 males and 21 females) from Kandahar University. The researchers adapted the questionnaire developed by Ahmed and Halawachy (2013). The study revealed that high levels of FLTA were observed among the subjects before and during tests. Pedagogical recommendations were proposed to students to raise their awareness of test formats and manage study time. In addition, they advised teachers to consider students' FLTA levels when designing tests.

To summarise, all the above-mentioned highlighted the importance of identifying FLTA levels among EFL students. The studies emphasized that FLTA is a major problem among EFL students in different contexts, and it is also thought of a preventing barrier in achieving good scores in the exams.

2. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive quantitative study was held at Hadhramout University to measure the FLTA levels among Yemeni English majors. The study was conducted in the Acadmeic year 2024-2025.

This study targeted all the EFL students who enrolled in the English Department at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Hadhramout University, Yemen, for the academic year 2024-2025. The students' total number reached 214 (159 females and 55 males). The researchers utilize a non-probability convenience sampling to select accessible subjects who would represent the output of the English Language program at Hadhramout University. The convenience sampling technique was utilized due to practical constraints such as limited time and budget. This technique allowed researchers to gather initial insights and conduct exploratory research similar to the current investigation. Given this, only 75 junior and senior students were selected to fill in the questionnaire. There were 58 females and 17 males, a general feature that females are more than male students at the Yemeni English Departments. Their age ranged from 21 to 26. However, the majority of them (70.7%) were in the 22-23 age group. Depending on their level of study, junior (49.3%) and senior (50.7%) students appear to be similar in number. Regarding their academic achievement level, most of the subjects assumed that their Grade Point Average (GPA), in the first semester of the academic year 2024-2025, as very good (46.7%) and good (34.7%). The profile of these subjects is shown in Table 1 below.

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

Table 1.

Students' biodata

Categories	Subcategories	Total (n=75)	Percentage %
Age	21 years	11	**14.7**
	22 years	23	**30.7**
	23 years	30	**40**
	24 years	4	**5.3**
	25 years	7	**9.3**
Gender	Male	17	**22.7**
	Female	58	**77.3**
Level of Study	Third year	37	***49.3***
	Fourth year	38	***50.7***
Academic Achievement Level	**Excellent**	**5**	***6.6***
	Very good	**35**	***46.7***
	Good	**26**	***34.7***
	Satisfactory	**6**	***8***
	Weak	**3**	***4***

3.2 Research Instrument(s)

To collect the study data, the researchers developed a questionnaire based on prior research by Ahmed and Halawachy (2013) and Himat and Nazari (2019). The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Section A aimed to collect data on the students' demographic background. Section B was developed to obtain information concerning the students' levels of FLTA. It consisted of 52 items which were categorized into three basic stages of FLTA according to timing: 23 items measure students' FLTA before the test, 12 items were designed while the test and measuring students' FLTA after the test was evaluated using 17 items. The FLTA is a five-point scale based on Likert rating where 5 was given to the choice "strongly agree" and the point 1 for "strogly disagree". The researchers provided Arabic version of the the questionnaire (Please see Appendix I).

For validating the content, a copy of the scale was handed to two professors in ELT to obtain expert of the questionnaire regarding any issue on wording, or instructions. Their feedback and suggestions were noted and changes made as appropriate. To validate the questionnaire, 10 EFL students were used as a pilot sample. They are chosen from the main sample and later on excluded from the final administration. The pilot sampling asked for some clarifications which we take into consideration to enhace the questionnaire. The students' responses were processed and calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. The SPSS results indicated a total reliability score of .996. The scores ranked from .983 for during the test diminsin, .990. for after the test diminsin, and .993 for before the test dimension. Madan and Kensinger (2017) state that reliability scores between .75 and 1.00 are regarded excellent. Thus, the scale's value as seen in Table 2 shows an excellent level of reliability.

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

Table 2.

Reliability Statistics

Test phase	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Before	23	.993
During	13	.983
After	16	.990
Total	52	.996

3.3 Data collection and Analysis

The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and an inferential one, through SPSS (Version 28). Students' results on FLTA were calculated using mean score and standard deviations. The reserachers implemented the independent Sample t-test to find out the possible effect of gender on students' FLTA so as to help answer the second research question of this study.

It might be worth mentioning here that FLTA mean values were interpreted following Nunnally and Bernstein's (1994) interpretation. That is, mean values between 1.00 and 2.00 reports that the test-takers have a low level of FLTA. Moreover, mean score between 2.01 and 3.00 shows that the students have medium-low level. Finally, a medium-high level of anxiety is ranked between 3.01 and 4.00, and a high interpretation is with a mean value between 4.01 and 5.00.

3. Results and Discussion

The two research questions investigated in this study were presented in the following two sections.

4.1 Students' FLTA Levels

The researchers display the results of the first research question, i.e. What are the levels of FLTA, perceived by English majors at Hadhramout University before, during, and after a language test?

Table 3 indicates that the FLTA of the English majors at Hadhramout University was at a moderately high level with an overall mean 3.44.

Table 3.

FLTA before, during and after the test

FLTA	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
During the test	3.55	1.133
Before the test	3.62	1.118
After the test	3.08	1.266
Overall mean score	3.44	1.167

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

The results of the EFL students' FLTA three stages illustrates that the pre-test phase mounted the highest level of FLTA among the majority of the students with an average mean score of 3.62. This is followed by the average mean of 3.55 indicating that the students' FLTA during the test comes next in order. In contrast, the lowest average mean value was found for the FLTA after the test demonstrating that the current students felt less anxious after undertaking the test.

The current findings seem to concur with the results of prior research which found that EFL students had much apprehension before the test (e.g. Ahmed & Halawachy, 2013; Himat & Nazari, 2019; Ndirangu et al., 2009). For example, Himat and Nazari (2019) who conducted their study among 180 Afghani EFL undergraduates found that most of them had problems in the preparation stage before the test as they had no time to study. Moreover, similar to the findings of the present investigation, Rezazadeh and Tavakoli (2009) found that the Iranin EFL students had the least FLTA apprehension after the test. Moreover, these results pointed out the stduents' attribution of their FLTA some factors including the extensive exam material, stringent time constrains, the unclear test instructions and length of the test, and wording, and challenging test techniques. These findings may emphasize that the current students appear to be exam-oriented and feel more pressure to achieve academic success. Consequently, they are more anxious about comprehending questions and the possibility of failing their exams. These concerns may stem from EFL students' awareness of how crucial the test is for their success and the various factors that influence their performance (Birjandi & Alemi, 2010).

Finally, for the nature of the post-test anxiety, the most appeared specific concerns favoured by the current students are related to their wrong expectations of what to be right answers turned to be wrong and they suspect that the instructors might not be fair in correcting their papers.

4.2 Students' FLTA Levels and Gender

In this section, t-test data are presented and discussed so as to answer the second research question i.e. Is there any gender difference among English majors at Hadhramout University regarding their FLTA? Table 4 below provides t-test results to show if the difference between gender in FLTA is significant or not.

Table 4.

Test anxiety across gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Males	17	3.29	1.007	-.568	73	.572
Females	58	3.46	1.117			

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

The results in Table 4 illustrate that females score higher in test anxiety (mean= 3.46) compared to males (mean=3.29) who witnessed moderate FLTA. However, as the $t(73) = -0.568$, $p = .572$, one may assume that the analysis did not reveal statistically significant between male and female students in FLTA participanted in this study. The results are consistent with prior research among EFL learners which found no significant differences between males and females (e.g. Ahmed & Halawachy, 2013; Rezazadeh & Tavakoli, 2009). However, this is in contrast with the findings of previous research on the impact of gender on FLTA among EFL learners (e.g. Al Fraidan, 2024; Aydin, 2019; Fibiyani & Pratiwi, 2023; Gursoy & Arman, 2016; Mousavi, Haghshenas & Alishahi, 2008). Perhaps, factors such as participants' achievement and proficiency levels, educational and socioeconomic background, motivation and coping strategies may account for this contrast.

Similarly, many studies which examining FLTA have consistently found elevatated anxiety levels among students in the pre and during the test stages (See e.g. Ahmed & Halawachy, 2013; Himat & Nazari, 2019; Ohata, 2005). According to Simpson et al. (1995), experiencing FLTA while preparing for or taking a test is usually harmful, but it can be supportive if the FLTA is not too intense as it urges students to prepare well for the test. On the other hand, analyzing the FLTA level and gender revealed the difference is not statistically significant. Therefore, gender does not appear to have meaningful impact on students' FLTA in this research.

The finding that there is no statistically significant gender-based differences in FLTA in this study is indeed intriguing, especially considering the contrasting resuelts reported in many other studies. It is believed that several factors unique to the Yemeni educational and cultual environment might explain this divergence. One of the reasonable explanations that Yemeni EFL female undergraduates at Hadhramout Uinversity appear to have high level of confidence and not experiencing higher FLTA levels could be that they usually prepared well and got higher scores and better results compared to males. In addition, the educational system in Yemen faces significant challenges due to the current socio-political landscape, ongoing conflict, economic instability and infrastrucure deterioration. These factors impact both male and female studentls similarly and potentially neutralizing gender differences in FLTA. Finally, strong community and family support systems particularly in Hadhramout might help students manage their FLTA regardless of gender. Further empirical research should be conducted to verify or reject the mentioned assumptions and explore the possible impact of different educational and cultural factors on Yemeni EFL students' FLTA.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study demonstrates that the students at Hadhramout University had a moderately high level of test anxiety. The results can serve as a foundation for offering some pedagogical insights and suggestions that those professors, curriculum developers, and EFL students in the English Department at Hadramout University should consider.

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

These pedagogical insights may help raise the EFL instructor's awareness at Hadhramout University of the FLTA obstacles faced by English major students by adapting, developing and implementing appropriate teaching techniques to help students overcome their apprehension and fear of tests. The findings would contribute to familiarize English majors at Hadhramout University with the factors which raised their FLTA so as to use suitable strategies that build their confidence level, and ability to control and regulate their emotional feeling and develop healthy physical habits to help them overcome test anxiety feeling and symptoms particularly before and during taking the test as recommended by Ndirangu et al. (2009). Finally, curricula developers could help develop appropriate training courses to assist students to reduce their FLTA particularly before and during the test.

There are several limitations that need to be acknowledged to prevent any misinterpretations or overgeneralizations of the findings. Firstly, due to time and money constraints, this study was limited to 75 junior and senior English students at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Hadramout University. Consequently, the findings may primarily reflect the views of stduents under investigation. Secondly, the study was limited to senior and junior students because they were expected to have a better understanding of their FLTA, given their higher proficiency in English and their advanced achievement levels compared to lower-level students. Lastly, this study did not consider various personal, learning, and socioeconomic factors that might influence learners' FLTA. Therefore, caution should be considered when generalizing the findings.

This study remains significant in spite of the limitations, because it explored an issue related to the FLTA of Yemeni EFL students that had not been previously researched. It is hoped, therefore, that this study could be of benefit to university professor to adjust their teaching methods and improve their learners' self-confidence.

This is the first study of its kind among English major students at Hadhramout University. The study proposed some pedagogical implications for students and their respective teachers at the English Department and syllabus designers at the Academic Development Center and Quality Assurance at Hadhramout University. However, the study also points to areas that require further investigation. Such areas of future research may include, but not restricted to, the following:

Firstly, it is recommended to increase the sample size of the students by incorporating other Yemeni EFL undergraduates from Hadhramout University and/or other Yemeni universities so as to improve the generalizability of the results. Secondly, it would be useful to explore the perspectives of Yemeni EFL teachers concerning students' FLTA. Incorporating teachers' views can highlight practical challenges and accurate concerns based on their experience regarding their students' FLTA. Thirdly, as the current study is quantitative and restricted to questionnaire results, therefore, it is recommended to triangulate the methods and research tools to help obtain rich and comprehensive data so as to increase the credibility and the quality of information gathered and draw more accurate conclusions on the issue under investigation. For instance, using interviews

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

would help offer useful and detailed insights regarding students' concerns and fear of tests. Finally, it is suggested for further studies to find out the possible effect of personal, academic, learning and socioeconomic factors on the FLTA of Yemeni EFL learners.

References

[1] Abd Elmajid, W. (2025). Strategies to mitigate EFL test anxiety. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, 7(2), 528- 544.

[2] Abdul Razak, N., Yassin, A., & Moqbel, M. (2019). Investigating foreign language reading anxiety among Yemeni International students in Malaysian universities. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 9(4), 83-92.

[3] Ahmed, H., & Halawachy, A. (2013). An investigation of test anxiety by EFL university students: A field study. *College of Basic Education Researches Journal, 12*(3), 775-798.

[4] Alfaini, F. (2022). *A survey of foreign language test anxiety of EFL vocational high school students*. Bachelor's thesis, Islamic University of Indonesia.

[5] Al Fraidan, A. (2024). Interplay of language proficiency, gender, test anxiety, and cognitive strategies: The spectrum of guessing behaviors in multiple-choice assessments among Saudi EFL learners. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology, 8*(6), 1148-1161.

[6] Ali, J. (2023). An exploration of online test anxiety during COVID-19: EFL learners' perspectives. *Human and Social Sciences, 50*(2), 342- 353.

[7] Ali, T., & Fei, F. (2016). Foreign language classroom anxiety among Iraqi students and its relation with gender and achievement. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 6*(1), 305–310.

[8] Alikbari, M., & Gheitasi, M. (2017) Investigative students' test anxiety and attitude toward foreign language learning in secondary school in Ilam. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics, 20*(2), 51-69.

[9] Akkakoson, S. (2016). Speaking anxiety in English conversation classrooms among Thai students. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction, 13*(1), 63–82.

[10] Al-Sukaini, F., Karimi, F., Abdul Hussein, F., & Ghabanchi, Z. (2025). The interplay between test-taking strategies, test anxiety, and goal orientations of EFL learners. *Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 14*(1), 50-67.

[11] Al-Tamimi, A. (2016). Investigating anxiety in speaking English as a foreign language for female students in Yemen. *Alandalus Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, 12*(9), 5-29.

[12] Aydin, U. (2019). Test anxiety: Gender differences in elementary school students. *European Journal of Educational Research, 8*(1), 21-30. https://doi.org/10.12973/eujer.8.1.21

[13] Aydin, S., Akkaş, F., Turnuk, T., & Beydilli, A. (2021). The foreign language test anxiety scale: Tests of reliability and validity. *Eurasian Journal of Language Teaching and Linguistic Studies, 1*(1), 96-109.

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

[14] Aydın, S., Yavuz, & F. Yesilyurt, S. (2006). Test anxiety in foreign language learning. Journal of Graduate *School of Social Sciences of Balikesir University*, *9*(16), 145-160.
[15] Balwan, W. K., & Kour, S. (2022). Test anxiety research: twenty First Century in Retrospect. *J Adv Educ Philos, 6*(5), 306-310.
[16] Birjandi, P., & Alemi, M. (2010). The impact of test anxiety on test performance among Iranian EFL learners. *Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience*, *1*(4), 44-58.
[17] Butt, M., Akram, O., Gulzar, S., & Yahya, F. (2013). Test anxiety among students of pure science and social science. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 3*(3), 30- 37.
[18] Cakıcı, D. (2016). The correlation among EFL learners' test anxiety, foreign language anxiety and language achievement. *English Language Teaching*, 9(8), 190-203.
[19] Chue, K., & Lim, M. (2024). Optimism and perseverance: Examining interrelations with test anxiety and academic achievement. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *10*, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101196
[20] Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017). Research methods in education. Routledge & Falmer.
[21] Fibiyani, T., & Pratiwi, L. (2023). Language test anxiety between gender and proficiency among foreign language learners. *Journal of Education Research and Evaluation, 5*(1), 40-47.
[22] Folin, O., Denis, W. & Smillie, W. (1914). Some observations on emotional glycosuria in man. *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, *17*, 519-520.
[23] Gursoy, E., & Arman, T. (2016). Analyzing foreign language test anxiety among high school students in an EFL Context. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 5 (4), 190-200.
[24] Himat, A., & Nazari, H. (2019). Investigating the level of test anxiety in EFL students at Kandahar University, Afghanistan. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, *4*(4), 141-152.
[25] Khan, E., Munir, H., Afzal, A., & Ansari, M. (2020). Influence of test anxiety on students' academic achievement at secondary level. *Ilkogretim Online*, *20*(2), 303-316.
[26] Liu, M., & Huang, W. (2011). An exploration of foreign language anxiety and English motivation. *Education Research International*, 1–8.
[27] Madan, C., & Kensinger, E. (2017). Test-retest reliability of brain morphology estimates. *Brian Informatics*, *4*(2), 107-121.
[28] Matara, K., & Pantu, E. (2021 March). Test anxiety is reviewed by gender. *In proceedings of the 21st International Conference on Law and Social Sciences*, Salatiga, Indonesia. http://doi.org/10.4108/eai.6-3-2021.2306190
[29] Moore, M. (2006). *Variations in test anxiety and locus of control orientation in achieving and underachieving gifted and non-gifted middle school students*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Connecticut.

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

[30] Morris, L., Davis, M., & Hutchings, C. (1981). Cognitive and emotional components of anxiety: Literature review and revised worry-emotionality scale. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 73,541-555.
[31] Mousavi, M., Haghshenas, H., & Alishahi, M. (2008). Effects of gender, school performance and school type on test anxiety among Iranian adolescents. *Iranian Red Crescent Medical Journal, 10*, 4-7.
[32] Ndirangu, G. W., Muola, J. M., Kithuka, M. R., & Nassiuma, D. K. (2009). An investigation of the relationship between test anxiety and academic performance in secondary schools in Nyeri Distrcit, Kenya. *Global Journal of Education Research*, 8, (1-2). 1-7.
[33] Nunnally, J., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory*. McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages.
[34] Obioma, E., & Obioma, O. (2019). Relationship between students' test anxiety levels and academic achievement in secondary schools. *Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science*, *30*(1), 1-10.
[35] Ohata, K. (2005). Potential sources of anxiety for Japanese learners of English: Preliminary case interviews with five Japanese college students in the US. *TESL-EJ, 9*(3), 1-21.
[36] Olatoye, R., & Afuwape, M. (2003). Test anxiety as a determinant of examination misdemeanor among some Nigerian secondary school students. *Ibadan Journal of Educational Studies*, *3*(182), 32-39.
[37] Rezazadeh, M., & Tavakoli, M. (2009). Investigating the Relationship among Test Anxiety, Gender, Academic Achievement and Years of Study: A Case of Iranian EFL University Students. *English Language Teaching, 2*(4), 68-74.
[38] Santana, J., & Eccius-Wellmann, C. (2018). Gender differences in test anxiety in high-stakes English proficiency tests. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *15* (1), 100-111.
[39] Simpson, M., Parker, P., & Harrison, A. (1995). Differential performance on Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale in Black Private College freshmen: A partial report. *Perceptual and Motor Skills, 80*, 699-702.
[40] Wakuma, O. (2025). An investigation into anxiety levels and English learning outcomes of high school students with a particular focus on grade nine. *Discover Education, 4*, 1-11.
[41] Waluyo, B., Zahabi, A., & Panmei, B. (2025). Examining the correlates and components of English test anxiety in EFL students: A quantitative study. *MEXTESOL Journal*, *49*(1), 1-16.
[42] Yarkwah, C., Kpotosu, C., & Gbormittah, D. (2024). Effect of test anxiety on students' academic performance in mathematics at the senior high school level. *Discover Education*, *3*, 245. https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-024-00343-z

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

[43] Yassin, A., & Razak, N. (2018). Investigating foreign language learning anxiety among Yemeni university EFL learners: A theoretical framework development. *English Language Teaching*, *11*(10), 38–51.
[44] Zeidner, M. (1998). *Test anxiety: The state of the art.* Plenum.
[45] Zeidner, M., & G. Mathews. (2005). Evaluation anxiety. In A.J. Elliot and C.S. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation,* (pp. 141-163). Guildford Press.

Appendices

Appendix (I): FLTA Arabic Version of the Questionnaire

The following questionnaire constitutes part of a research project that investigates test Anxiety among EFL students at Hadhramout University.

The questionnaire is anonymous, and all the data will be handled confidentially. Your accurate responses and the time spent filling in the questionnaire are highly respected and appreciated.

Instructions: For the following items, please indicate your answer with a tick (√) in the boxes or spaces provided. Where a line is provided, please write your answer, if applicable.

A) Background Information

Please tick (√) in the appropriate box.

1. What is your age? (……..)

2. What is your sex?

Male [ ]
Female [ ]

3. What is your level of study?

3rd Level [ ]
4th Level [ ]

4. What is your GPA in the first semester of this year?

Excellent [ ]
Very good [ ]

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

Good [ ]
Satisfactory [ ]
Weak [ ]

Appenix (2): Test Anxiety Issues

What are your attitudes towards the following test anxiety issues? Please tick (√) in the appropriate box.

Before Taking the Test I feel anxious because…	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
1) The questions might be very difficult.					
2) There might be unseen questions.					
3) The questions might be in a form I am not familiar with and hence I will not know how to answer.					
4) I might not answer well and get a good mark.					
5) The questions will require long answers and I will not have enough time.					
6) I might feel sick on the day of the exam.					
7) I might not be in time for the exam.					
8) I might have a familial problem.					
9) I might be accused of attempting to cheat.					
10) I might not have enough time to study.					
11) The material to be covered for the exam is too long.					
12) I feel afraid of the teacher especially when it is the first exam in the subject s/he teaches.					
13) I might not be ready for the exam.					
14) I have not been studying daily.					
15) There might be no questions to be left out.					
16) Students' discussions of certain questions and their reactions before the exam scatter the information I have.					
17) I have not summarized the material for the exam.					
18) The teacher might not understand my answers.					
19) I have read the important materials only					
20) There is no chance to postpone the exam especially when it is the last chance to success.					
21) I might know there is an exam shortly before it.					
22) I might feel hesitant to answer the questions.					
23) I might not have enough time to review the material.					

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

Available online online at https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/Articles/155

During Taking the Test I feel anxious because…	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
24) I do not know all the answers.					
25) I think I will definitely fail.					
26) I feel I am totally lost.					
27) I cannot remember the answers.					
28) I might be busy-minded with issues other than the exam.					
29) I might feel hesitant in answering.					
30) I might feel uncomfortable and for unknown reasons.					
31) The wording of the question might make me not understand some vocabulary items.					
32) I might not have enough time to answer.					
33 I feel unstable and review my answer too many times.					
34) The questions are difficult.					
35) I become under heavy stress due to the tension I am undergoing.					
36) There is tough invigilation.					
After Taking the Test I feel anxious because…	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
37) I expect failure.					
38) Scoring might be tough.					
39) There might be a mistake in scoring my paper.					
40) The instructor might not be fair in correcting papers.					
41) I might have forgotten to put down my name on the test paper.					
42) I might get an unexpected mark.					
43) My parents might be angry because of my low performance.					
44) The instructor might be annoyed because of my poor performance.					
45) My colleagues might make fun of me.					
46) My mark will be lower than those of my close friends.					
47) There was a question to be left out and I am not sure if I have done that.					
48) I feel hesitant to discuss the questions with my colleagues.					
49) I feel I have to sit for the exam by the end of summer vacation.					
50) I discovered that what I expected to be right answers turned to be wrong.					

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

Available online online at https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/Articles/155

51) I might have annoyed the instructor with my bad handwriting.					
52) I do not know if I have given the required answers					

Acknowledgements
The researchers wish to express their sincere gratitude to the EFL students in the English Department at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Hadhramout University, for their valuable time and participation in responding to the questionnaire.

Authors' Biodata
Atef Saleh Al-Tamimi is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and currently serves as the Deputy Dean for Students' Affairs at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Hadhramout University, Yemen. His primary research interests include English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Needs Analysis, and English Language Teaching (ELT). In addition to his work in TESOL, Dr. Al-Tamimi has developed a growing interest in the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language learning and teaching. He explores how AI-based tools and platforms can enhance learner engagement, personalize instruction, and improve educational outcomes. His current research investigates the potential of AI applications in ESP curriculum design and assessment within the field of language education.

Wagdi Rashad Ali Bin-Hady is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at Hadhramout University, College of Education, Humanities and Applied Sciences. Dr. Bin-Hady chaired the English Department for four years and currently directs the Quality Assurance Unit at the same college. His research interests encompass AI-based learning and Translation Studies. Dr. Bin-Hady serves as a peer reviewer and editor for several academic journals. He has penned numerous research papers published in Scopus and Web of Science journals.

Authors' Contribution
Atef Saleh Al-Tamimi authored the introduction, literature review, methods, and conclusion. *Wagdi Rashad Ali Bin-Hady* was responsible for data analysis and authored the results, discussion, and abstract. Both authors jointly revised the final manuscript.

Declaration of conflicting interest
The authors declared no conflicts of interest to the article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License