

ROLE OF ANXIETY IN THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to investigate the relationship of anxiety with the academic achievement of secondary school students and also to see the regional and gender differences on the basis of their Anxiety. The study was conducted over a sample of 586 (326 boys and 260 girls) Secondary school students studying in Xth class in 10 different schools (5 urban and 5 rural) affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi. Dr. Anil Sharma's general anxiety scale for children was used to measure anxiety and the aggregate score of the selected students in the board examinations was taken to show their level of Academic achievement. The results reported that there exists a negative and significant relationship between Anxiety and Academic achievement. Significant differences were observed between boys and girls, rural and urban students on the basis of their Anxiety.

Key Words: Anxiety. Academic Achievement, Secondary School Students

INTRODUCTION

Achievement in different fields of life such as academics, sports, politics, industry, business etc. has great importance for both the student, and those around him. There can be no doubt that it is affected by many factors that may reduce it, like anxiety or by others that may enhance it, like intelligence, self-confidence, creativity, maturity level etc. The present age may be said to be an age of anxiety. Anxiety is a state of diffused apprehension. It is vague, non-specific and objectless. Anxiety has been taken synonymous with apprehension, dread and uneasiness. This emotion stems from fear, but it is more a fear of what will happen or what has happened than of a clearly apparent fear provoking situation.

Researchers generally agree that certain level of anxiety may motivate the student and make inclined to better achievement. Hence, anxiety is considered a motive for greater achievement. However, a high anxiety score may be one of the obstacles to achievement. That is, the relationship between the two variables may be either linear or curvilinear.

A fair number of previous studies have found a significant relationship between achievement and anxiety (Diaz, Glass, Arnkoff & Tanofsky-Kraff, 2001). Generally, it could be concluded that there is a positive relationship between high degrees of achievement and low anxiety. There is specific degree of anxiety that increases achievement, but if anxiety increases beyond that degree the reverse happens. On the basis of the Yerkes-Dodson law both the task difficulty and the level of anxiety must be taken into consideration. That is, "on difficult tasks low levels of arousal improve performance relative to high levels, but on easy tasks, the reverse is true" (Reber, 1995, p. 860).

Most of the secondary students in these days are influenced by the western culture and science & technology. They are more worried about their achievement in various fields of life. Due to the influence of anxiety, students fall short of their expected level of academic achievement. Hence, the present investigation is designed with following objectives:

- To investigate the relationship of anxiety with academic achievement. To find out the gender and locale differences on the basis of their anxiety.

HYPOTHESES

There exists no significant relationship between anxiety and academic achievement of secondary school students. There exists significant difference in the anxiety level of boys and girls.

No Significant difference exists between rural and urban students on the basis of their anxiety.

SAMPLE

The present study was conducted on a representative sample of 586 secondary students of standard X, randomly selected from 10 different schools (5 Urban and 5 Rural) of two districts of Punjab i.e. Amritsar and Tarntarn. Samples were drawn through multistage random sampling technique by giving due representation of factors like gender and locale.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The present study is a correlation research where the dependent variable is Academic achievement and the independent variable is Anxiety.

TOOLS USED

Dr. Anil Sharma's General anxiety scale for children (2003) has been used to measure the Anxiety of the Secondary students. Marks obtained by the students in their annual C.B.S.E. Board matriculation examination were taken as an index of their level of Academic achievement.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In order to analyze the data, raw scores obtained on the basis of anxiety test and achievement, were converted into T-scores. The product moment coefficient of correlation between anxiety and academic achievement scores was

computed. t-test was applied to find the significance of the differences between the mean anxiety scores of boys and girls, rural and urban secondary students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results reveal that the value of $r = .04$ ($df = 598$, $N = 600$) is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence, depicting that there is no significant correlation between anxiety and academic achievement.

In order to see the effect of boys or girls separately, again product moment coefficient of correlation between the anxiety and achievement of boys and girls were found to be of the order of $r = -.05$ ($df = 298$, $N = 300$) and $r = -.09$ ($df = 298$, $N = 300$) which are not significant at 0.05 level. This may be due to almost equal anxiety score of the girls as well as boys but researchers agree that anxiety can be a multifaceted agent. At its simple or optional level it can be a motive, but at its high level it can be a hindrance.

The above results are in conformity with the results of study conducted by **Kahan (2009)** in a study showed that test anxiety did not correlate to final exam scores but are contrary to the studies conducted by **Spielberger (1966)**; **Abu Marak (1988)**; **Dodds (1975)**; **Feldheusen and El-Anzi, Freih owayed (2005)** who found negative correlation between anxiety and academic achievement

Table showing the results of t-test for the variable of Anxiety

Sr. No	Variab les	Gro up	Mean	SD	df	t-values
1	Anxiety	Boys	45.896	8.831	598	11.037*
		Girls	54.120	9.411		
2	Anxiety	Rural	50.501	10.356	598	1.207
		Urban	49.515	9.631		

* Significant at .05 level

The results of above table indicate that there is significant difference in the anxiety of boys and girls (t value=11.037) whereas no significant difference (t value=1.207) is found in the anxiety of rural and urban students as graphically represented in figures 1&2.

Secondary School Students

The results reveal that and girls are more anxious than boys and these are in line with the findings of previous studies (**Dodds, 1975**; **Abu Marak, 1988**; **Pomerantz, Altamatt and Saxon, 2002**; **El-Anzi, Freih Owayed, 2005**, **Barenes, 2005**, **Larmore (2010)**). The reasons for sex differences in anxiety may be society's attitude towards females. They bear more responsibilities and demands in different situations of life.

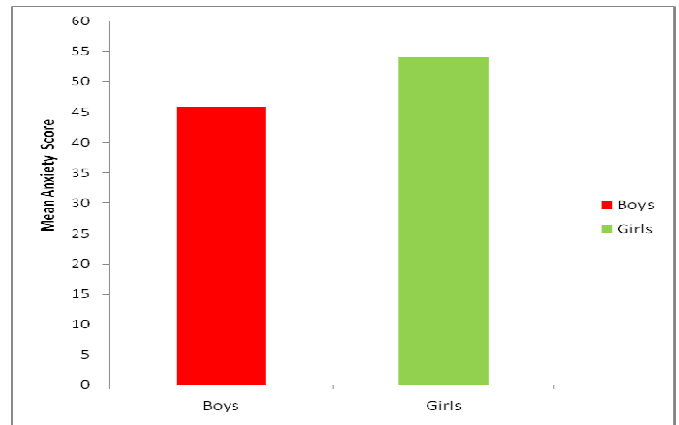


Fig 1: Representing the Mean Scores of Anxiety for Boys and Girls

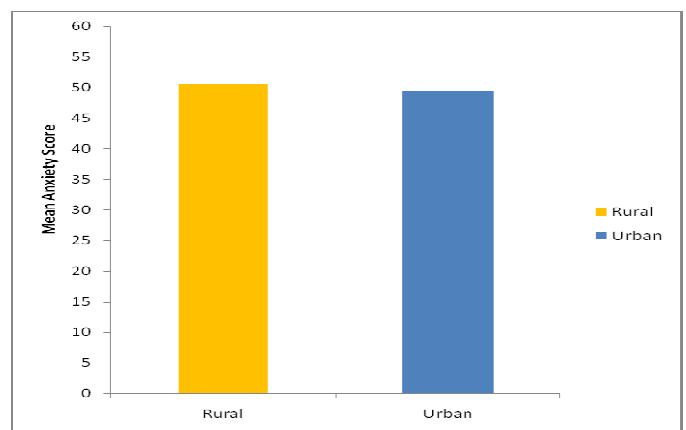


Fig 2: Representing the Mean Scores of Anxiety for Rural and Urban

The reasons for urban student's lower anxiety as compared to rural ones may be due to the fact that urban secondary school students are more intelligent active alert and have more facilities for getting education at their disposal and hence react with all situations without being anxious. Moreover, their parents are also educated and help their wards in solving their problems whereas in rural setting, parents are illiterate and students have to help in their parent's work besides getting education. On the basis of the above results interpreted, all the three hypotheses stands accepted.

CONCLUSIONS

Anxiety plays no role in the academic achievement of the secondary school students.

Girls are more anxious than boys and out of rural and urban secondary school students, rural students are more anxious than their urban counterparts.

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