

A STUDY OF ACADEMIC ANXIETY LEVEL OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

CHAMAN LAL BANGA

Asstt. Prof., Department of Education, ICDEOL, Himachal Pradesh University Shimla, India

ABSTRACT

The present study is undertaken with a view to find out the level of Academic Anxiety among high school students. The statistical technique used was frequency distribution. It was hypothesized that There exist significant difference in academic achievement of high school students with respect to their level of academic anxiety. For verification of hypotheses, the data was collected from 200 secondary school students of Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh by adopting convenient sampling technique by administering 'Academic Anxiety Scale for Children' (AASC). The statistical technique used frequency distribution. The findings of the study revealed that there is less level of academic anxiety among high School students.

Key words: Academic Anxiety, Anxiety level and High School Student.

INTRODUCTION:

Education is a lifelong process, which starts right from cradle and goes on throughout life. Education is about the preparation of unprepared minds. Preparation of mind as a process, thus involves enormous inputs and efforts on the parts of all stakeholders namely parents, teachers, peers and society. All these play a very significant role in the development of a child from his birth till death. The child learns a lot from all these in all stages of his life. But, this process of development is not an easy process. The child faces many problems from his childhood till his death. In a developing country like India where there is lack of resources in almost every sphere, it becomes difficult for the individual to fulfill most of his needs during his life span. This difficulty in the fulfillment of his needs due to several personal, emotional and social reasons creates anxiety among the individuals.

ANXIETY: CONCEPT AND MEANING

Anxiety is a normal human emotion that everyone experiences at times. Many people feel anxious, or nervous, when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test, or making an

important decision. Anxiety disorders, however, are different. They can cause such distress that it interferes with a person's ability to lead a normal life. Anxiety is an essential, physical response that communicates the need to pay attention to something in the environment. An anxiety disorder is a serious mental illness. For people with anxiety disorders, worry and fear are constant and overwhelming, and can be crippling.

Anxiety: A Situational Variable- Anxiety may be considered a situational variable, i.e. a reaction by the individual to a threat of uncertain magnitude, or an enduring aspect of the personality, a characteristic tension level worrying among people. The concept of anxiety as a threat to the self seems more applicable to the state of anxiety than to the trait. However, anxiety a mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration is associated with failure to meet one's needs, anticipation of such failure, or even merely as awareness of the possibility of failure. The frustration or anticipated frustration of basic normal needs actually results in emotional disturbances taking the form of fear, anger, or anxiety. Anxiety amongst adolescent boys and girls is very common and natural. Be it about self, career, academics or any other issue, the youths undergo feelings of anxiety at some phase of their lives. Freud (cf. Baldwin, 1967) described adolescence as a period of sexual excitement, anxiety and sometimes of personality disturbance. Anna Freud characterizes adolescence as a period of internal conflict, psychic disequilibrium and erratic behaviour. Adolescents are on one hand egoistic regarding themselves as the sole object of interest and the center of the universe but on the other hand also capable of self sacrifice and devotion. Youth today are living in an increasingly anxiety ridden atmosphere (Nalini, 1997)

ACADEMIC ANXIETY: CONCEPT AND MEANING

All the responsibilities of being an academic brings with it a state of mind referred to as "academic anxiety". This can be associated with almost all the tasks associated with academics i.e. starting from attendance to classes to the biggest cause of academic anxiety- exams! It doesn't stop there, though. Students can be anxious about everything from their reading speed to their performance in gym class. Academic anxiety arises out of the apprehension of rebuke from teachers, parents and peers regarding the failures of performing the responsibilities of an academic properly. Developing a state of academic anxiety causes a decrease in attention span,

concentration and memory which can result in having a negative effect on the performance of the individual. It is now been learnt that some level of anxiety is required for the person to take up all the responsibilities seriously but both high levels of academic anxiety or too low a level has deleterious effects on academic performance, which in turn may lead to more academic anxiety. The era of competition makes students more anxious and the eagerness of whether they can do well in their academic part or perform well in academic activities may adversely affect the mental health of students. It is the painful uneasiness of mind while doing or focusing on academic activities in school or at home. It is a kind of state anxiety which relates to the impending danger from the environment of the academic institutions including teaching certain subjects like mathematics, science, english etc. Academic anxiety afflicts students during school-related situations. If academic anxiety isn't properly addressed, it can have many serious and lasting consequences, such as causing a student to procrastinate, perform poorly on school work, fail in classes and withdraw from socializing with peers or pursuing activities that interest him. Academic anxiety is, to a certain extent, unavoidable, necessary, and even productive, since it motivates to spend time for academic tasks. It's stress or pressure that you experience based upon school related functions, such as presenting in front of a class. The method of reducing your anxiety depends upon which of these you are experiencing. Although anxiety is a normal, even healthy part of our lives, it can be counterproductive when not managed well. Academic anxiety is a common issue that students cannot ignore if they want to succeed in school. It often leads to problems concentrating while studying and remembering information while completing tests, which makes the student feel helpless and like a failure. If academic anxiety isn't properly addressed, it can have many serious and lasting consequences, such as causing a student to procrastinate, perform poorly on schoolwork, fail classes and withdraw from socializing with peers or pursuing activities that interest him.

Anxiety is your body's way of telling you that there is something in the environment in need of your attention. It is basically a series of biochemical changes in your brain and body, such as an increase in adrenaline (causing your heart to beat faster) and a decrease in dopamine (a brain chemical that helps to block pain). These changes result in a state of heightened attention to the source of the anxiety. High levels of anxiety cause your body to prepare to fight or run away

from the perceived threat -- commonly called the “fight-or-flight response.” Anxiety is not a bad thing. It is true that a high level of anxiety interferes with concentration and memory, which are critical for academic success. Without any anxiety, however, most of us would lack the motivation to study for exams, write papers, or do daily homework. A moderate amount of anxiety actually helps academic performance by creating motivation.

METHOD:

For conducting the present investigation, ‘Survey Technique under Descriptive Method of Research’ was used.

SAMPLING:

In this investigation, the researcher adopted convenient sampling technique. The sample for present study comprised of 200 all 9th class students of Government schools Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh. All the students from 8 schools were selected by the researcher in order to realize the objectives of present study. The sampling distribution is given in table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1

Number of Schools along with Number of Students

Sr. No	Name of school	No. of students Selected in sample
1	GSSS Sanahi	41
2	GHS Baffrin	06
3	GSS(Boys)S Hamirpur	51
4	GSSS Tauni Devi	23
5	GSSS Bohni	22
6	GSSS Bhota	24
7	GSSS Chabutra	19
8	GSSS Jhiralri	14
	Total	200

RESEARCH TOOL USED:

Following research tool was used by researcher in the present study:

‘Academic Anxiety’ Scale for Children (AASC) developed by Dr. A.K. Singh and Dr. A. Sen Gupta (2009).

In this study, academic anxiety scale towards school students of class VIII, IX, X (age range: 13-16years) has been developed by Dr.A.K.Singh and Dr.A. Sen Gupta (2009) was used. The preliminary form of the “Academic Anxiety” Scale of Children (AASC) had 30 items. After carrying out item analysis based upon Kelly technique (1939), only 20 items were retained and the remaining 10 were dropped.

The scale is self administering and self-reporting five points scale requiring response for each item on a continuum ranging from strongly disagree. The reliability of the academic anxiety scale for children test was reported as 0.433(Split-half) and 0.60 (Test-Retest). The scale is fairly internally consistent as well as valid as reported by authors.

The detailed norms-

The detailed norms for interpretation of obtained scores, scoring procedure and instructions for its use are given in the manual of the scale. A low score on the scale indicates favourable attitude towards academic anxiety of students and vice- versa.

Scoring Procedure-

The maximum possible score of this test is 20. In academic anxiety scale for children, each item of the test is scored as either + 1 or 0. There are two types of items-positive and negative. All positive items which are endorsed by the subjects as Yes and all negative items No. 4, 9, 16 and 18 which are endorsed by the subjects as No are given as score of +1. A score of zero is awarded to all other answers. Thus high score on the test indicates high academic anxiety and low score on the test indicates low academic anxiety.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE:

The data was analyzed by applying the statistical technique frequency distribution.

RESULT AND INTERPRETATION:

Analysis of data means studying the organized material in order to discover inherent facts or phenomena. It involves breaking down existing complex factors into simpler parts and putting

parts together in new arrangements for the purpose of interpretation i.e. verification of hypothesis and getting answers to the research questions. In the present study, the main aim was to the study of Academic Anxiety level of High School Students

Level of Academic Anxiety among High School Students

As the main purpose of the present investigation is to study the academic anxiety of high school students, it was through worthwhile to verify the normality of data gathered by the investigator. The values of different descriptive statistic based on the scores of academic anxiety of high school students are given in table 1.2

TABLE 1.2

Distribution of Scores for total Sample of Government High School Students on the Variable "Academic Anxiety".

Class Interval		Frequency		Cumulative Frequency		
3-4		4		4		
5-6		24		28		
7-8		28		56		
9-10		43		99		
11-12		43		142		
13-14		28		170		
15-16		22		192		
17-18		7		199		
19-20		1		200		
N	Mean	Median	Mode	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
200	10.85	10.56	9.98	3.79	+ 0.22	+ 0.261

Table 1.2 shows that the values of mean and medium of academic anxiety of high school students as 10.85 and 10.56 respectively , which are quite proximate to each other. The value of S.D. is 3.79. Further, the value of skewness is + 0.22 which shows that the curve is positively skewed. This indicates that somewhat lower numbers of high school students are massed at

positive end or towards the left of normal distribution curve. In addition to this value of Kurtosis was calculated to be + 0.261, which indicates that the curve is platyurtic in nature. Since there is less distortion, so the sample of high school students can be taken as normally distributed and parametric statistical technique can be employed on obtained data.

DISCUSSION:

The present time is the time of harsh and cut throat competition in every sphere of life. If one has to excel or succeed in his career, he/she has to overcome a number of barriers which are of both external as well as internal in nature. The external barriers are related to the environment in which the individual resides and the facilities he enjoys over there. The internal barriers to one's success are related to the personality traits of that individual. These personality traits or characteristics are very much essential for getting success. Some of the major personality characteristics that can hamper or prove to be detrimental in one's success include anxiety level. 'Academic Anxiety' is a common issue that students cannot ignore if they want to succeed in school. It often leads to problems concentrating while studying and remembering information while completing tests, which makes the students, feel helpless and like a failure. So, it was thought worthwhile by the investigator to study the level of academic anxiety among high school students. The results of the present study will help in knowing the level and differences in academic anxiety of the high school students. School counsellors can use this data for reducing the academic anxiety of the students so that they can contribute optimally for social as well as national development. This will also assist in refining their certain personality traits that will finally lead to higher academic performance.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

The most outstanding characteristics of any research are that it contributes something new to the development of the area of concerned. On the basis of the above findings, the investigator is inclined to have the following educational implications;

It is a common perception that the Academic Anxiety is related to Academic Achievement of students in such a way that less Academic Anxiety leads to higher 'academic achievement' or vice versa. The main cause of Academic Anxiety is examination system, burden of homework and attitude of parents and teachers. A moderate amount of anxiety actually helps academic

performance by creating motivation. It is, therefore, needed to find out the level of Academic Anxiety in school students. It is reflected from the results of the present study that there is low level of academic anxiety among high school students. Which can be seen in the light of new evaluation system i.e Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). Here we are evaluating each aspect of student development and we are motivating them to contribute according to their ability and interest. Which in turn lowering their level of academic anxiety. Moreover promotion of all students whether male or female, whether is from nuclear or joint family . So implication of this study is that the evaluation system is student friendly, then they will have low level of academic anxiety and we cannot differentiate any student on the basis of their level of academic anxiety. i.e. they will behave almost similarly in the examination. Another educational implication of this study is, less burden of home work, no to punishment and student friendly school environment will definitely reduce the level of academic anxiety among high school students. Equal opportunities to male and female and to all categories is also responsible for no difference in level of academic anxiety among male and female students of different categories.

CONCLUSIONS:

The conclusions based on analysis and interpretation of data, stated as there is less level of academic anxiety among high School students.

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