

Academic Anxiety among High School Students in Relation to Gender and Type of Family

- Chaman Lal Banga

In this paper the researcher has studied academic anxiety among high school students in relation to gender and type of family. He has explored that there is hardly any difference on the basis of these two factors.

Key words: Academic Anxiety, Gender, High school students, Nuclear family and joint family.

In the present scientific era, the progress of a nation depends upon its educational system. Without a sound and qualitative educational system, the nation cannot keep pace with the developed countries. 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. 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 centre 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. They live in a world where nothing seems to be guaranteed with certainty and at the same time they are expected to perform at every front, the main being the academics. Adolescents often lack in academic motivation and performance, as their attention is divided among a lot many things especially at creating an identity for themselves. Anxiety is one of the most studied phenomenons in psychology. It is normal human response to stress. The concept of anxiety is differentiated from fear as it is a normal human response to stress. Today anxiety is a common phenomenon of everyday life. It plays a crucial role in human life because all of us are victim of anxiety in different ways (Goodstein and Lanyon, 1975).

ANXIETY: CONCEPT AND MEANING-

Anxiety is an essential, physical response that communicates the need to pay attention to something in the environment. This reaction has been essential for animals to survive, and is also important for people. It starts as a biochemical change in your brain and body with the release of adrenalin. Anxiety, also called angst or worry, is a psychological and physiological state characterized by somatic, emotional, cognitive and behavioural components. The root meaning of the word anxiety is the vex or trouble; in either presence or absence of psychological stress, anxiety and create feelings of fear, worry, uneasiness and dread. At a lower level, anxiety helps individuals to deal with a difficult situation by prompting them to cope up with it but when anxiety becomes excessive, it becomes a disorder.

ACADEMIC ANXIETY: CONCEPT AND MEANING-

Anxiety is a state of mind in response to some stimulus in the environment which brings in the feelings of apprehension or fear. When the person is exposed to the cause of anxiety the next time, the conditioning effect causes a repeat response and the person will try to avoid the cause. 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. Its 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. Academic anxiety in children and adolescents can be challenging to recognize since it can have much in common with other disorders.

According to Cornell University, "Academic anxiety is the result of biochemical processes in the body and the brain that make your attention level increase when they occur. The changes happen in response to exposure to a stressful academic situation, such as completing school assignments, presenting a project in class or taking a test. When the anxiety becomes too great, the body recoils as if threatened, which is a normal fight-or-flight reaction".

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES-

With reference to Lummeburg (1964) found a negative correlation between test anxiety and achievement scores in a sample of 213 boys and girls studying in grade IV to V. He reported that negative correlation tends to be large for boys than girls. Gaudry and Spielberger (1971) discussed that high test anxiety is considered as one of the main factor for low performance of students at university level. Gaudry and Spielberger (1972) conducted a study on test anxiety differences in boys and girls in relation to their academic achievement. They observed that the relationship between anxiety and achievement is equally stronger for two sexes, but their relationship may vary as a function of complex situational factors such as the sex of teacher or teacher's value system. Trivedi (1995) attempted to study the anxiety level and academic achievement of undergraduate students. The major objectives of the study were:

- To study the anxiety level of undergraduate students,
 - To study if there are significant differences between any two categories of undergraduate students in respect of their anxiety level, and
 - To study the nature of relationship between the anxiety level and academic achievement of undergraduate students.
- The major findings were:
- No significant difference existed between the means of boys and girls, science and commerce streams, science and arts streams in respect of their anxiety level.
 - A negative relationship had been found between the anxiety level and academic achievement among the girls, students of commerce and arts streams but among boys and students of science stream a positive correlation had been found, but the correlation had been found to be very low and not significant. Schonwetter, (1995) by relating this phenomenon to classroom instruction, the researchers further discussed "how high test-anxious students were unable to benefit directly from organized instruction, which

ultimately affected their performance in class". Murthy and Kulshreshtha (1999) have attempted to study the influence of academic anxiety on academic achievement of students studying in two management schools, on class IX students comprising boys and girls.

The objectives included-

- To study the influence of academic anxiety on academic achievement.
- To study the influence of two management schools on academic achievement. Singh (2003) conducted a study on the topic of "a study of anxiety among medical post-graduate students in relation to sex, intelligence and socio-economic status." He found; a) Significant differences in anxiety of post-graduate medical students in relation to independent impact of sex. b) No significant difference in anxiety of post-graduate medicos in relation to independent impact of intelligence. Neelam and Attri (2013) have attempted to find out the academic anxiety and academic achievement of secondary school students. It was hypothesized that there exists a significant difference in academic anxiety and academic achievement of male and female secondary school students. For verification of these hypotheses, the data was collected from 200 secondary school students of Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh by adopting lottery method of random sampling by administering 'Academic Anxiety Scale for Children (AASC)' and their marks of class 9th were taken as academic achievement. The statistical technique used was t- test. The findings of the present study revealed that there exists significant difference in academic anxiety and academic achievement of male and female secondary school students. Girls found to be more academically anxious and had better academic achievement than boys.

PROBLEM-

"Academic Anxiety of High School Students in relation to Gender and Type of family".

OBJECTIVES-

The following objectives were laid down for the present study:

- To study gender wise difference in the academic anxiety of high school students.
- To study family- wise difference in the academic anxiety of high school students.

HYPOTHESES-

The following hypotheses were formulated for the present study:

- There exists significant gender wise difference in the academic anxiety of high school students.
- Students coming from nuclear and joint families do not differ significantly in their academic anxiety.

METHOD-

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

SAMPLING-

In the present 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

Sr. No	Name of school	No. of students
		Selected in sample
1	GSSS Sanahi	41
2	GHS Baffrin	06
3	GSSS(Boys) 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 the present 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 disagrees. 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: In order to obtain empirical verification of the proposed hypotheses, the data was analyzed by applying t-test.

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 Academic Anxiety of High School students in relation to gender and type of family Academic Anxiety of High School Students in Relation to Gender.

The means of academic anxiety scores of boys and girls along with number, SD and t-value are given in Table 1.2

TABLE 1.2

Gender wise difference in Academic Anxiety of High School students

Variable	Gender		SE _{DM}	t-value
	Boys (N=125)	Girls (N=75)		
Academic Anxiety	M=10.54	M=10.49	0.71	0.07

	S.D.=3.47	S.D.=5.554		

Table 1.2 indicates that the calculated value of 't' for finding out the difference in the academic anxiety of boys and girls, for df 198, came out to be 0.07 which is less than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis No. 1, "There exists significant gender wise difference in academic anxiety of High School Students" is rejected. It may be interpreted that boys had significantly higher mean of academic anxiety scores (10.54) than the girls (10.49).

Academic Anxiety of High School students in relation to their type of family

The means academic anxiety scores of High School students belonging to nuclear and joint families along with number, SD and t-value are given in Table 1.3

TABLE 1.3

Family-wise Difference in Academic Anxiety of High School Students

Variable	Gender		SE _{DM}	t-value
	Nuclear (N=87)	Joint (N=113)		
Academic Anxiety	M=10.32	M=10.76	0.50	0.87
	S.D.=3.69	S.D.= 3.35		

NS - Not significant at 0.05 level

Table 1.3 depicts that the calculated value of 't' for finding out the significance of the difference in the means of academic anxiety of students coming from nuclear and joint families, for df 198, came out to be 0.87 which is below the table value even at 0.05 level of significance.

Hence, the hypothesis No. 2, "Students coming from nuclear and joint families do not differ significantly in their academic anxiety", is accepted.

However, students coming from joint families have slightly higher mean of academic anxiety score (10.76) than their counterparts coming from nuclear families (10.32) but this difference is not significant statistically.

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.

From the perusal of the literature it is evident that very few studies have been undertaken in the state of Himachal Pradesh to study academic anxiety of high school students in relation to certain socio-demographic variables. So keeping this in view, it was thought worthwhile to study the academic anxiety of high school students in relation to gender and their type of family.

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, lowers 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 opportunity 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.

The present study has its implication for parents, teachers, policy makers, administrators, central and state government, and all other bodies related to the development of the students at high school stage directly and indirectly. In the light of the present study all those who are engaged in the work of development of students at high school stage should take necessary steps for improving the academic anxiety. Knowledge about academic anxiety is of immense worth both for teachers and learners and it will play an important role in teaching-learning process.

- We can reduce level of academic anxiety among students if the evaluation system is student friendly.
- Indian society is not male dominating now. We are giving equal opportunity both to male and female students. Since in CCE we are evaluating each aspect of student development so lack in one aspect is overcome by the growth in another aspect, which also reduces the level of academic anxiety among students.
- Students from nuclear and joint families are showing no difference in their academic anxiety i.e. type of family is not contributing to academic anxiety, which implies that healthy home environment whether it is in nuclear or joint family will always contribute to lowering the level of academic anxiety.

The conclusion or final result based on analysis and interpretation of data may be stated as given below:

1. There is no significant gender difference in academic anxiety of High School Students.
2. Students coming from nuclear and joint families do not differ significantly in their academic anxiety. However, students coming from joint families have slightly higher mean

of academic anxiety score (10.76) than their counterparts coming from nuclear families (10.32) but this difference is not significant statistically.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH-

The scope of the present study is delimited to gender and their type of family of high school students and their relationship with academic anxiety. Following suggestions may be laid down in the continuity of the present study and in the light of the delimitations of the study:

1. The present study was conducted on high school students. Similar researches may be carried out to study the relationship of academic anxiety at other levels of education.
2. The present study can be conducted on a large sample. Instead of Hamirpur district, this study can be done on the students of Himachal Pradesh state as whole for more reliable results.
3. The present study can be conducted to find out the difference between academic anxiety and academic achievement of rural and urban students.
4. This study can be further extended to find out the difference between academic anxiety and academic achievement of tribal students.
5. An investigation of Academic Anxiety in relation to Academic Achievement may be conducted among middle, high and senior secondary school students.
6. Comparative study of Verbal and Non-Verbal Intelligence may be conducted among high school students.

Reference-

- 1- Barlow, David H. (2000). Unrevealing the mysteries of anxiety and its disorders from the perspective of emotion theory. *American Psychologist* 55 (11): 1247-63.
- 2- Gaudry, E., & Spielberger, C. D. (1971). *Anxiety and Educational Achievement*. New York: Wiley.
- 3- Gaudry and Spielberger (1972). Test anxiety differences in boys and girls in relation to their academic achievement. *Journal of instructional psychology: A psychological abstract*.
- 4- Goodstein, L.D. and Layon, R.I. (1975). *Adjustment, Behaviour and personality*, Addison weekly Publishing Company, INC.
- 5- Koul, Lokesh (2004): *Methodology of Educational Research*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd 576, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014.
- 6- Lummeburg (1964), Relations among Social Desirability Achievement and Anxiety measurer in children, in *child development*, (35, pp.169-182).
- 7- Neelam and Attri, A.K. (2013). Academic Anxiety and Achievement of Secondary School Students, *International Journal of Behavioral Social and Movement Sciences*. (Vol. 02- Issue 1, pp. 27).
- 8- Singh, B. (2003). A Study of Anxiety among Medical Post Graduate Students in relation to Sex, Intelligence and Socio-Economic Status. *Indian Educational Review*, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp.90
- 9- Trivedi and Bhansali (2008). Is Academic Anxiety Gender Specific?, *Journal of Social Science*, (Vol.17- No.1, pp.1-3).
- 10- Trivedi, R.M. (1995), Anxiety level and Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Students. *Experiments in Education* Vol. XXIII- No. 3, 47-51, In *Indian Educational Abstracts*, Vol 3, July 1997, pp.67