A Study of Academic Anxiety of Senior Secondary School Students in Relation to Locale and Type of School

*Sonal Sharma **Dr. Mohd. Shakir

Abstract

Academic anxiety is the feeling of distraction, worry, fear or being stressed out due to academics. If anxiety level increases, it hinders the student's academic performance. The present study was carried out to find out the difference in academic anxiety of senior secondary school students in relation to locale (rural and urban) and type of school (government and private). A sample of 355 senior secondary school students from various schools of Aligarh and Agra districts of Uttar Pradesh were selected. Standardized tool developed by Sharma &Shakir (2019) used for measuring the level of academic anxiety of senior secondary school students. The statistical techniques utilized in the present study were mean, standard deviation and t-test. Results revealed a significant difference in the academic anxiety of senior secondary school students in relation to locale. Urban senior secondary school students have more academic anxiety in comparison to their counterparts. Similarly significant difference is found in the academic anxiety of senior secondary school students in relation to type of school. Senior secondary students studying in private schools have more academic anxiety in comparison to government senior secondary school students.

*Research Scholar, Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh-202002. U.P.

**Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh-202002. U.P.

Research and Reflections on Education

Introduction

Life is full of challenges and becoming complex and complicated day by day as the emergence of globalization has enhanced the feeling of competition in the world of academics as well as in the world of work. The reasons behind this are: excessive workload, pressure, cut-throat competition, feeling of quality consciousness, constant comparison with others, desire to achieve more and more, constantly striving for excellence in order to stand out with others, trying to control everything etc. People trust sophisticated complicated technological innovations more than real people and this automation/sophistication results in the physical and mental breakdown. This breakdown has adverse effects as it leads to the self-communicable negativity, stress and anxiety.

Anxiety disorders are the most common disorders occur during adolescence. Anxiety is of many types and one among them is academic anxiety. Academic anxiety is a kind of anxiety related to the impending danger from the learning institution, learning environment, from ineffective study habits, from a certain subject, from the specific subject teacher or from the examination. It is a mutual feeling of agitation, uneasiness, distress, stress or tension in a reaction to a certain school situation which is related to the academics and perceived negatively. Students can feel anxiety related to every academic task as well as with the examination also. It may tend towards lack of concentration, procrastination, low academic achievement, lower level of intrinsic motivation, poor study habits, low achievement motivation, delayed academic assessments etc. Academic anxiety can become more detrimental over time. A moderate level of academic anxiety is considered as a normal but high level can hamper the academic performance of an individual (Huberty, 2012; Shakir& Sharma, 2018). Academic anxiety can either enhance or inhibit academic performance and it depends on how an individual student perceives the academic situation (Mahato&Jangir, 2012; Matto&Nabi, 2012).

Objectives of the Present Study

1. To study the level of academic anxiety of senior secondary school students.
2. To compare the mean scores of academic anxiety of rural and urban senior secondary school students.
3. To compare the mean scores of academic anxiety of government and private senior secondary school students.

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Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no statistical significant difference in the mean scores of academic anxiety of rural and urban senior secondary school students.

2. There is no statistical significant difference in the mean scores of academic anxiety of government and private senior secondary school students.

Methodology

- **Design:** The present study was a descriptive survey in nature for which senior secondary school students were considered as the population for the study.

- **Sample:** For the present study, the sample consisted of 355 senior secondary school students of Aligarh and Agra districts of Uttar Pradesh, India.

- **Research Tool Used:** For data collection, Academic Anxiety Scale (AAS-SSSM) developed and standardized by Sharma &Shakir (2019) was used to measure the level of Academic Anxiety of senior secondary school students.

- **Statistical Techniques Used:** For breaking down the data into meaningful results proper statistical techniques were utilized i.e., mean, standard deviation and t-test. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21was utilized to analyze the data in this study.

Normality of the Data

Table 1: *Descriptive Measures to know the Normal Distribution of Academic Anxiety Scores*

N	Mean	SD	Std. Error of Mean	Sk	Std. Error Sk	Z-value of Sk	Ku	Std. Error Ku	Z-value of Ku
355	155.44	21.39	1.135	0.196	0.129	1.51	-0.494	0.258	-1.91

The data is normally distributed as z value of Skewness (Sk) and Kurtosis (Ku) as presented in table 1comes under the standard of z value i.e., ±1.96 (Massey & Miller, 2002).

Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion

Appropriate analysis along with its interpretation and discussion is being drafted as follows:

Objective 1: To study the level of academic anxiety of senior secondary school students.

As it is descriptive analysis, so null hypothesis not formed by the researchers. In order to know the level of academic anxiety of senior secondary school students, fundamental statistical measures have been assessed.

Table 2: *Showing Percentage of Senior Secondary School Students falling under Different Levels of Academic Anxiety*

	Number	High (176 & Above)	Moderate (135-175)	Low (134 & Below)
Total Sample of Senior Secondary School Students	355	64 (18.02%)	222 (62.53%)	69 (19.43%)

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no statistical significant difference in the mean scores of academic anxiety of rural and urban senior secondary school students.

Table 3: *Showing Difference in Academic Anxiety in terms of Locale*

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t	d	Sig.
Academic Anxiety	Urban	202	158.70	20.78	1.462	353	-3.353	0.358	0.001<0.01
	Rural	153	151.12	21.48	1.737				

The result indicates that (table 3) that there is a significant difference in the academic anxiety of the two groups, t (353) = -3.353, p-value = 0.001<0.01 is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The present result argues that the urban senior secondary school students (M = 158.70, SD = 20.78) are significantly higher in the academic anxiety than the rural senior secondary school students (M = 151.12, SD = 21.48). Here the value of effect size (d = 0.358) suggests that the value of d lies between 0.2 - 0.5 which indicates a small effect size. Thus, the locale has a small effect on academic anxiety. Therefore, null hypothesis (H₀1)is rejected.

The present finding is in consonance with the findings reported by Rao&Chaturvedi (2017) who revealed that there is a significant difference among class IXth rural and urban secondary school students on academic anxiety. The present finding is also aligned with Chauhan (2016) who has found that urban students have more academic anxiety than rural school students.

Results may be justified on the grounds that urban senior secondary school students have educated families who are supportive towards education. Urban senior secondary school students have more parental pressure to fit in and perform well in exams to get admission in the best colleges/universities. Teachers and school administration exert a lot of pressure to perform better and achieve more. So students are often over scheduling themselves which results in academic anxiety. There are a lot of expectations from family, parents and teachers on students but they do not have a strong support system which helps them in diverting their academic anxiety. The pressure is so much on the high grades that students forget the fun element in learning and inclined towards rote memorization and cramming.

However, contradictory results were found by Singh &Thukral (2009); Vig&Chawla (2013); Sultan &Bhat (2019) who revealed that rural students have more anxiety in comparison to urban students. On the same lines, Bihari (2014); Kumar (2013); Fatma (2015); Lal (2014); Banga& Sharma (2016); Sagar& Singh (2017) revealed that rural and urban school students did not differ in their academic anxiety and academic stress.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no statistical significant difference in the mean scores of academic anxiety of government and private senior secondary school students.

Table 4: *Showing Difference in Academic Anxiety in terms of the Type of School*

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t	d	Sig.
Academic Anxiety	Private	189	162.21	20.16	1.467	353	-6.757	0.719	0.000<0.01
	Government	166	147.72	20.14	1.564				

The observation of table 4 depicts that the result of this independent sample t-test is found to be statistically significant, t (353) = -6.757, p-value = 0.000<0.01 is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The result indicates that private senior secondary school students (M = 162.21, SD = 20.16) have more academic anxiety than the government senior secondary school students (M = 147.72, SD = 20.14). Here the value of effect size (d = 0.719) suggests that the value of d lies between 0.5 – 0.8 which indicates towards medium effect size. Further, the value of d (Cohen's d) suggests that type of school has a medium effect on academic anxiety. Therefore, the null hypothesis ($H_0 2$) is rejected.

Similar findings were also reported by Dhull (2013); Mahajan (2015); Subramani & Kadhiravan (2017) who reported that private school students have more academic stress and academic anxiety than government school students. Bihari (2014) and Ghosh (2016) also found similar results that a significant difference between mean scores of government and private secondary school students was found.

The findings of the study reveal that senior secondary school students studying in private schools have more academic anxiety than their government counterparts. Justification for the present result may be that the private senior secondary school students have the most challenging learning environment. They are overloaded with homework, assignments, projects, sports classes, co-curricular classes, extra classes, remedial classes etc. School administrators, teachers and parents push them to do excel in every field including curricular and co-curricular. Everyone expects them to do multitask and they are accepted only for what they are going to achieve. They have the baggage of their parents' unfulfilled dreams and they consider them as a tool for accomplishing them. The constant pressure of achieving educational goals is overriding the joy of active meaningful learning and thus, making students anxious and stressed.

However contradictory results were found by Lal (2014); Chauhan (2016); Khemka & Rathod(2016) who reported that no significant difference was found in the academic anxiety of students of private and government secondary schools. Likewise, Akeela & Ashok (2018); Channawar (2018) revealed that government school students had more stress than private school students.

Findings of the Present Study

1. Out of 355 senior secondary school students selected for the study
    *   18.02% (64) senior secondary school students have high academic anxiety.
    *   62.53% (222) senior secondary school students have moderate academic anxiety.
    *   19.43% (69) senior secondary school students have low academic anxiety.
2. The significant difference was found between rural and urban senior secondary school students. Urban senior secondary school students have more academic anxiety than rural senior secondary school students.

3. The significant difference was found between government and private senior secondary school students. Senior secondary school students studying in private schoolshave more academic anxiety than government senior secondary school students.

Educational Implications of the Study

This study may helpful for the teachers, school administrators, policymakers, parents, educationists, counselors and other stakeholders to know the extent of academic anxiety among senior secondary school students. Necessary actions may be taken up to reduce and manage the extent of academic anxiety among the learners. Learning environment plays a major role in academic achievement so, it is the responsibility of teachers and school administrators to make the learning environment conducive and congenial. The study will be helpful in orienting counseling and guidance programs in senior secondary schools to improve academic performance by lowering and managing academic anxiety. Parental encouragement has a positive influence on children. Parents can be guided to encourage and appreciate their child's efforts so that they get motivated to perform well in academics and experience less academic anxiety. Teachers should encourage and motivate students to study hard and help them in solving their problems related to the studies. Teachers should create a caring and supportive learning atmosphere where students can express freely without any kind of fear.

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