

Secondary School Student's Academic Anxiety And Achievement In English

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Abstract: Present study is intended to discover student's academic anxiety and achievement in English in relation to certain demographic variables. Also, the impact of academic anxiety on achievement in English of secondary school students is estimated. Total sample in the present study is 1007. Academic anxiety tool by Singh and Gupta (2011) and achievement in English test develop by researcher himself were used for data collection. Results of the present study revealed significant differences in academic anxiety of secondary school students with regard to their gender, type of school, and place of living. Further, the study also revealed that academic anxiety contributed negligibly, and has negative impact on student's achievement in English.

Introduction:

The desire to achieve more and more, puts a lot of pressure on students, which causes tension and examination anxiety among the students (Kharche, Pranita, Phadke & Joshi, 2012; Simran, Sangeeta & Lily, 2015; Okogu, Osah, & Umudjere, 2016). In the present era, all the parents desire that their children should achieve as much as possible. Students mind set are molded in such a way that they think of becoming topper or getting more marks than his/her peer. Parents and family members are often ask the children about their position in the class in terms of marks obtained in the examination. Their results are also compared with that of others. Such desires for higher achievement have put a lot of pressure on students, which make them academically anxious (Elkind, 2001; Lau, 2002; Pandey & Ahmad 2008). The high parental expectations, social demands, social disapproval and peer rising level of aspirations, contribute a lot in making students anxious in academic situation. In this way, academic anxiety is experienced when the characteristics of anxiety are associated with academic or evaluative situation. Becoming academically anxious is a part and parcel of student's life, they cannot get rid of it, if they want to achieve their desired goal. Academically anxious students often feel difficulty in concentration during study, remembering facts and so on, which may develop a feeling of helplessness and failure (Jain, 2012; Nandini, 2013; Das et al., 2014; Shakir, 2014). Academic anxiety is a type of state anxiety, which is caused by the unhealthy environment of academic institutions, including attitude of teachers, overburden of subjects etc. (Verma and Gupta, 1990; Wilburn, 2005; Chauhan, Awasthi & Verma, 2014; Solanky, 2012).

According to Cornell University center for teaching and learning (2008), academic anxiety is the result of changes in the biochemical process of our body and mind that increases our attention level. Cornell University

center for teaching and learning (2008) has also listed the four main components of academic anxiety i.e. emotionality, study-skills deficits, task-generated interference and worrying. Academic anxiety among students may be eliminated by good socio-emotional school climate (Thakur & Kumar, 2014), learning environment (Upadhyaya, 2013), positive attitude of teachers (Cohen, Ben-Zur & Rosenfeld, 2008), effective teaching strategies (Wilson, 1999), cooperative learning method (Gregersen, 1999; Gokce & Derin, 2007, Oludip & Awoko, 2009), counselling (Khodaei 1997; Hoseynnezhad, 1997), parental encouragement (Mahajan, 2015) and healthy and balance diet (Lai et al., 2014; Psaltopoulou et al., 2014). In spite of the negative impact of academic anxiety, it may also act as a motivator for students and enhance their learning and academic performance (Tobias, 1979).

Anxiety is not a bad thing at all, an average or moderate level of anxiety may be beneficial for the learners and may act as a motivator for them (Driscoll, 2007; Kahan, 2008; Heather & April, 2009; Donnelly, 2009; Singh, 2015; Sawant, 2015). There are many positive aspects of anxiety, but usually the negative aspects are highlighted. It is, however, true that the high level of anxiety has negative and long lasting impact on students' academic performance (Gaudry, & Spielberger, 1971; Trivedi, 1995; Hancock, 2001; Cassady Johnson, 2002; Hamzah, 2007; Luigi, et al., 2007; McCraty, 2007; Sena, et al., 2007; Jing, 2007; Peleg, 2009; Rana & Mahmood, 2010; Nadeem et.al, 2012; Jain, 2012; Nandini, 2013; Ali, Awan, Batool & Muhammad, 2013; Das et.al. 2014; Shakir, 2014; Singh, 2015, Gupta, 2016; Alam; 2017). A consistent amount of anxiety may have positive impact on students' academic performance, as it energizes and motivates the students for the academic work (Driscoll, 2007; Heather & April, 2009). Without it, most of us may lack motivation in various domains of life. Thus, it can be concluded that moderate level of anxiety may act as a motivator and may be helpful for people in having a more sustainable and prosperous life. So, a little anxiety from time to time may be beneficial in enhancing task performance.

Numerous factors are there that may make students academically anxious such as personal, social, political, familial and institutional factors (Gupta, 1992; Gautam, 2011; Mattoo & Nabi, 2012). Some investigators (Kaur 1991, Verma 1992, Dagur, 1988, Joshi 1988, Thilagavathi 1990) have noted that intelligence level, health disorders, emotional disorders, maladjustment, low aspiration level, low self-concept are some of the factors that may make students academically anxious. Similarly, parental attitude, broken family, lack of guidance, low socio economic status may give rise to anxiety (Barinder, 1985; Sabapathy, 1986; Saxena, 1988; Yadav, 1989; Gautam, 2011). Furthermore, illiteracy, irrational norms imposed on someone, unequal distribution of resources, castiesm etc. are also the contributor of anxiety among students (Sridevi, 2013; Pant et. al., 2013). Apart from these, some institutional factors like the type of school (Government, Private), school environment, teacher student relationship curricular and co-curricular aspects, etc. may also be responsible in provoking

academic anxiety among the students (Mohanty, 1985; Deb, Chatterjee, & Walsh, 2010, Mahato and Jangir, 2012; Mattoo & Nabi, 2012; Singh & Jha, 2013). Social anxiety among the students is caused by family and school environment (Bracik, Krzysztof & Zaczek, 2012). All these factors resist students to concentrate on their studies, which results in academic anxiety among the students. In classroom situations, a student also experiences fear, anxiety or tension for which numerous (personal, social, political, familial and institutional) factors are responsible. Among all the factors that may contribute to the academic anxiety among the students, the school-related and home-related factors are mainly responsible. Keeping in view the theoretical and conceptual background of the study, the researcher has enlisted the following objectives.

Objectives of the present study

1. To find out the differences in academic anxiety of secondary school students in relation to their gender, type of school and location
2. To find out the effect of academic anxiety on achievement in English of secondary school students

Hypothesis

1. There is no difference in academic anxiety of secondary school students in relation to their gender, type of school and location
2. There is no effect of academic anxiety on achievement in English of secondary school students

Methodology

In the present study, the researcher adopted the quantitative research approach and Descriptive survey research design to encounter the objectives of the present study. 1007 secondary school students from Rajouri and Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir selected as a sample, through multi-stage random sampling technique. For the assesment of academic anxiety and achievement in English of secondary school students the investigator has used Academic Anxiety by Singh & Gupta (2011) and self-constructed English Achievement test respectively. Analysis of the data has been made by SPSS.

Analysis, Interpretation and discussion:

Objective 1: *To find out the differences in academic anxiety of secondary school students in relation to their gender, type of school and location*

To encounter this objective, three way ANOVA ($2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial design) has been used as shown in the table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Summary of 2×2 ×2 (ANOVA) Factorial Design for the Scores of Academic Anxiety according to Gender, Place of Living and Type of School

Source		N	Mean	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Gender	Boys	541	9.71	1307.335	1	1307.335	88.085**	.000
	Girls	466	12.01					
Place of living	Rural	571	10.50	81.204	1	81.204	5.471*	.020
	Urban	436	11.13					
Type of school	Govt.	515	10.22	195.373	1	195.373	13.164**	.000
	Private	492	11.36					
Gender ×Place of living × Type of school				.354	1	.354	.024	.877
Error				14826.964	999	14.842		
Total				134310.000	1007			

**Significant at 0.01 level * Significant at 0.05 level

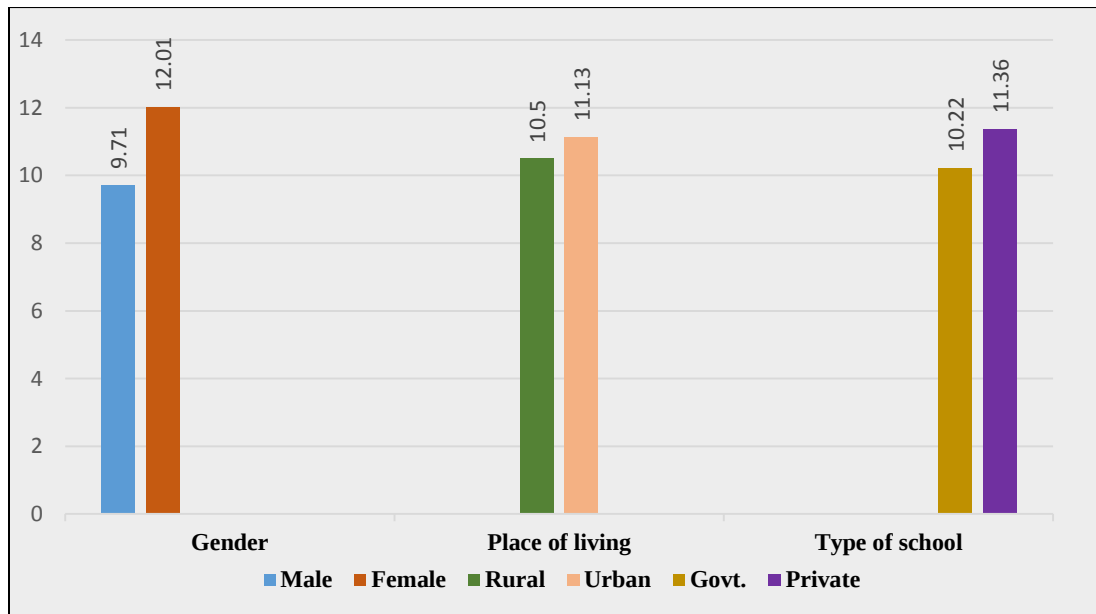


Fig. 1.1: Showing Mean Differences of Academic Anxiety according to Gender, Place of Living and Type of School

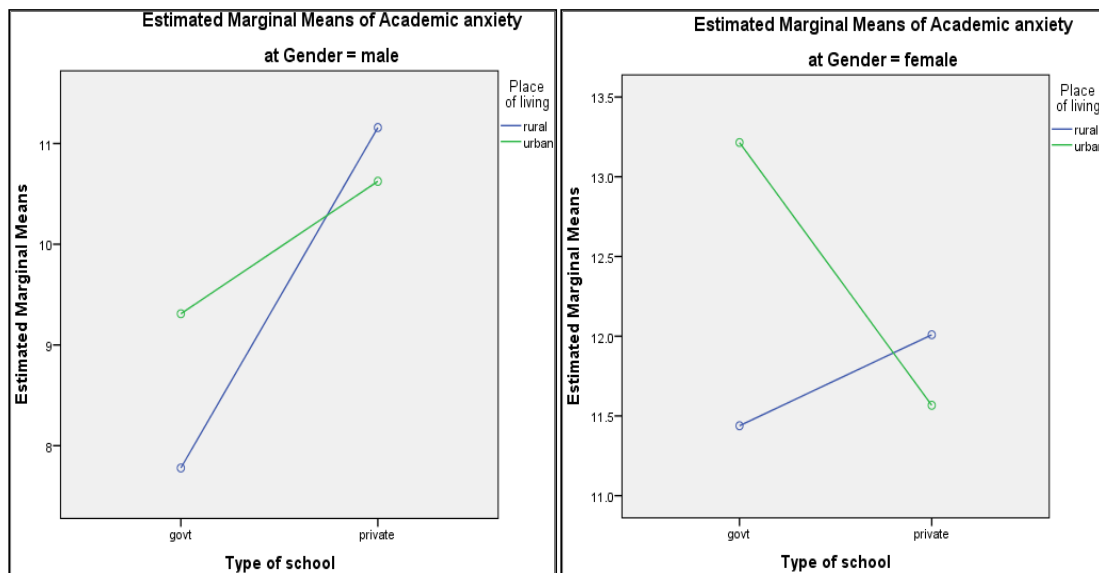


Fig. 1.2 : Representing Interactional Effect among Gender, Place of Living and Type of School in Academic Anxiety

The results of three-way ANOVA reveal that female secondary school students have high academic anxiety than male secondary school students. The result of the present study is quite consistent with the previous researches (Attri & Neelan, 2013, Siddique & Rehman, 2014; Das et al., 2014). Whereas, opposite finding was revealed by a few researchers (Banga and Sharma, 2016). However a number of researchers (Putwain, 2008; Mahat & Jangir, 2012; Jain, 2012; Thakur & Kumar, 2015; Kumar, 2013; Bihari, 2014; Banga, 2014;

Mahajan, 2015; Prabu, 2015 and Chauhan, 2016) have found that girls and boys do not differ significantly in academic anxiety. The reason may be the natural tendency of the female students to attain good marks or become topper in the class, make them academically anxious. On the other hand male students are not much bother about the exams and generally have carefree attitude are more confidence in their capacity to perform well in the exam. Male students are also engaged in various physical activities like games, sports, tour etc. which has limited access to females. The females are more prone to be academically anxious, when they are determined to prove their worth in academics or in other fields, especially when their parents and other members of society make them feel that they are intellectually inferior to male students. In order to overcome the inferiority complex and to prove their worth, they work hard, which puts a lot of pressure on them and results in anxiety disorders. Hormonal imbalance in the females are more common, that also make them anxious. Furthermore, females in our society are more likely to experience sexual, physical and mental abuse, which results in anxiety disorders.

Results of the present study also reveal that urban students are academically more anxious than rural secondary school students. Similar findings were revealed by a few researchers (Rao, 2014; Chauhan, 2016). Whereas, opposite findings were revealed by some investigators (Vig & Chavla, 2013; Thakur & Kumar, 2015). However, others (Kumar, 2013; Bihari, 2014; Prabu, 2015; Banga and Sharma, 2016) found that rural and urban do not differ significantly in academic anxiety. The reason may be the competitive spirit among the urban students. Students in the urban areas are generally came from high socioeconomic background, they are also studying in good institutions and are enrolled in better courses, which requires competency and hard work. Urban parents also have high expectations from their children, which puts a lot pressure on them. Urban society is always open, progressive, dynamic and competitive, in order to cope up with the existing changes and maintaining the existing status, every member has to compete and work hard, which may results in anxiety disorders. Furthermore, urban people are more prone to anxiety due to complex nature of the society as the social contacts among the people are limited.

Results of the present study also indicate that private school students have high academic anxiety than govt. school students. Result of the present study is supported by the researcher (Mahajan, 2015). Whereas, opposite finding were revealed by Bihari (2014). However, others (Prabu, 2015; and Chauhan, 2016) reported no difference in academic anxiety of the students studying at Govt. and private schools. The reason may be the high academic pressure on private school students. Private schools are mainly run with a view to earn money in the name of quality education, for this, school owners enroll more and more students, introduce more courses, which creates academic stress among students. Parents, who send their children to private schools have to pay high tuition fee, and encourage their children to perform better, which puts a lot of

pressure on them and as a result they become academically anxious. In private schools the spirit of competition is always high, classes are overcrowded, strict rules and regulations are observed, more subjects are there to study, high expectations of teachers and parents etc. make the students academically anxious.

In the present study, the researcher also estimated the interactional effect of three demographic variables (gender, place of living and type of school). The results of interactional effect show that male students from rural area studying in private secondary schools are academically more anxious than their corresponding parts. Whereas, the female students from urban areas studying in government secondary schools are higher in academic anxiety than their corresponding parts. Although, the results of interactional effect are not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) “*There is no difference in academic anxiety of secondary school students according to gender, place of living and type of school*” is rejected.

Objective 2: To know the effect of academic anxiety on achievement in English of secondary school students

In order to know the effect of academic anxiety on achievement in English of secondary school students, the following hypothesis has been formulated.

H₀2: There is no effect of academic anxiety on achievement in English of secondary school students

In order to test the above hypothesis linear regression analysis has been estimated as shown in the tables (1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) given below:

Table 1.1: Model Summary of the Regression Analysis effect of Academic Anxiety on Achievement in English of Secondary School Students

Predictive variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F Change
Academic Anxiety	.106	.011	.010	8.606	11.500**

**Significant at 0.01 level

A close perusal of the table (1.1) shows that coefficient of correlation among the variables is .106 and its square is .011. This means that 1.1% of variance in achievement in English is explained by academic anxiety of secondary schools, and the remaining percentage of the variance is still to be accounted for the other variables, which are not included in the study.

Table 1.2: Summary of ANOVA for Regression Analysis

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
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Regression	851.624	1	851.624	11.500**	.000
Residual	74426.225	1005	74.056		
Total	75277.849	1006			

**Significant at 0.01 level

The table 1.2 shows that the F value ($F = 11.500$, $P < 0.01$) is significant at 0.01 level. This means that the regression model is acceptable and academic anxiety affects significantly achievement in English. Therefore, the hypothesis **Ho7: “There is no effect of academic anxiety on achievement in English of secondary school students”** is rejected. Thus, it indicates that the contribution of the predictive variable (academic anxiety) on achievement in English cannot occur by chance.

Table 1.3: Regression Coefficient

Predictive variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t-value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
Constant	25.044	.753		33.245**	.000
Academic anxiety	-.221	.065	-.106	-3.391**	.001

**Significant at 0.01 level

The above table (1.3) shows the standardized coefficient (β), bearing t value for academic anxiety ($t = -3.391$, $P < 0.01$) is significant at 0.01 level. It depicts that academic anxiety has negative predicting power on achievement in English of secondary school students. It means that an increase in per unit in academic anxiety the achievement in English of respondents' decreases by -.221. Out of the results, given above, the following equation may be prepared:

$$Y = a + bx$$

$$Y = 25.044 + (-.221) \times \text{Academic anxiety}$$

Here

Y = Dependent variable (Achievement in English nt)

a = constant

b = predictive variable (Academic anxiety)

x = Raw score of academic anxiety.

The graphical presentation of regression line of Achievement in English is shown in fig. 1.2

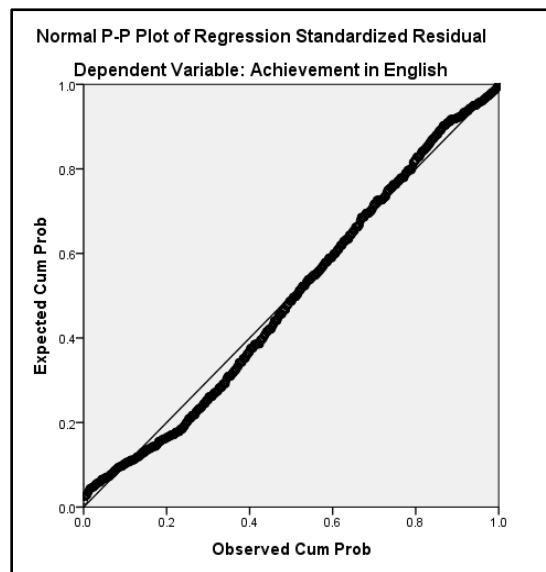


Figure 1.3: Graphical Presentation of Showing Variance of Independent Variables on Dependent Variable

Thus, the results of the regression analysis (table 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 indicate that academic anxiety has negative impact on achievement in English. The results of the present study are supported by some researchers (Jain, 2012; Nandini, 2013; Das et al., 2014; Shakir, 2014; Alam; 2017) who have found negative impact of academic anxiety on academic achievement. A few researchers have also studied anxiety in relation to various subjects like-achievement in science (Wynstra & Cumming, 1990) and achievement in English (Cui, 2011; Ali et al., 2013). All of them have found negative impact of anxiety. While studying the foreign language anxiety in relation to achievement in English, Tanielian (2014) and Dordinejad & Ahmadabad (2014) reported negative correlation.

Conclusion and suggestions

The findings of the present study show the significant differences in academic anxiety with regard to gender, type of school and place of living. However, the interactional effect is not significant. Further, the study also found that academic anxiety contribute negligibly and has negative impact on student's achievement in English. In this regard, it is recommended that school environment should be in such a way that provides maximum freedom and friendly atmosphere to the students, so that, their level of academic anxiety may be lessen. The teacher should try their best to minimize all the factors that may contribute to academic anxiety. Orientation programme for parents should be organized to make them aware about the home related factors that contribute to academic anxiety. It is also suggested that government and non-government agencies should provide special training and awareness programs for girls to enable them to cope with academic anxiety. Private school

administration should try its best to create friendly atmosphere and make school climate healthier and provide effective counselling to the students.

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