Academic Anxiety — A Curse for Academic Achievement of Adolescents A Reality or Myth

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Abstract

We all have experienced situations in our lives which have posed challenges for us. All the challenges and problems put us to stress and that results in anxiety. Adolescence is the most critical period of human life. The child experiences a number of changes in this transitional period. The adolescent has to change in old habits of childhood in home, school and society. The change over to new pattern of habits creates anxiety in adolescents. This anxiety is a catalyst for achievements or it works as a curse? This paper makes an effort to explore this question. The main aim of the study is to explore role of academic anxiety in academic achievement. For this purpose 160 adolescents comprising 80 males and 80 female studying in different schools of Bareily city were selected through random sampling technique. Tool employed for the purpose was Academic Anxiety Scale for children (AASC) by Dr. R.K. Singh. Role of Anxiety in achievement was found to be negative.

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Adolescence is the most important period of human life. The child experiences a number of changes in this transitional period. The adolescent has to change in old habits of childhood in home, school and society. The changeover to new pattern of habits creates anxiety in adolescents.

Generally anxiety can be either a trait or a state anxiety. A trait anxiety is a stable characteristic or trait of a person. A state anxiety is one which is

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aroused by some temporary condition of the environment such as examination, accident, punishment etc. Academic anxiety is a kind of state anxiety which relates to the impending danger from the environments of the academic institutions including teacher, certain subjects like mathematics, English, etc.

Different types of studies have been conducted on anxiety by Joshi, G. (2000), Alam, M.M.(2001), Devi, P and Ahmed, J.(2006), Agarwal, M (2006), Anup, S. and Zinnia, S. (2008), Pushpanjali, B.S. (2007), Parvathamma, G.H. and Sharnamma, R(2010). But so far no study has been conducted to explore role of academic anxiety in achievements of adolescents of Bareilly city. So, the investigator decided to explore whether academic anxiety a boon or bane for academic achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Academic Anxiety — a curse for Academic Achievement of Adolescents- A Reality or Myth

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows :

- to explore the role of academic anxiety in academic achievement.
- to study correlation between academic anxiety and academic achievement.
- to determine gender biases with respect to academic anxiety and academic achievement.

Hypothesis

To achieve the objectives of the study the following hypothesis were formulated and tested empirically –

H1- High level and average level anxiety students do not differ significantly in their academic achievement.

H2- There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of the students having high anxiety level and low anxiety level.

H3- Students with average level anxiety and low level anxiety do not differ significantly in their academic achievements.

H4- There is no significant correlation between academic anxiety and academic achievement of boys.

H5- There is no significant correlation between academic anxiety and academic achievement of girls.

H6- Significant gender biases do not exist with respect to academic anxiety and academic achievement.

Methodology

Sample – All students of IX standard studying in different missionary and public schools of Bareily city were the population of the study. 160 students in all, comprising 80 boys and 80 girls were selected through random sampling technique. Sample distribution is shown in table given below-

Table 1
Distribution of Sample

S.No	Name of School	No. of Students		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1	Radha Madhav Public School Bareilly	20	20	40
2	C.M. Public School Bareilly	20	20	40
3	Bishop Conard S.S. School, Bareilly	20	20	40
4	Heartman School Bareilly	20	20	40
	Total	80	80	160

Tools

In the present study Academic Anxiety Scale for Children (AASC) by Dr. A.K. Singh and Dr. (Ms) Sengupta has been used. The total number of items in this test is 20; there are two types of items- positive and negative. The maximum possible score of this test is 20. High score on this test indicates high academic anxiety and low score on the test indicates low academic anxiety.

The reliability of this test through test retest method is .60 and it is significant at .01 level, and through split half method is .65 and it is also significant at .01 level. The present test has been validated against neuroticism scale, Sinha Anxiety scale and CAAT and correlation coefficients values were .31, .41, .57, respectively. These values were significant at .01 level. Thus it is a valid test. For academic achievement percentage of marks in half yearly examination was the criteria.

Statistical Techniques

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), Correlation and Critical Ratio tests were used for analysis of data.

Analysis and Interpretation

On the basis of analysis of data mean, S.D. and C.R. values of Academic Achievement and Academic Anxiety of the students were calculated and are shown in table 2.

It is quite clear from the table that the students having high level of anxiety have lowest achievement and the students having average level of anxiety have average achievement and the students having lowest level of anxiety have the highest achievement, thus anxiety plays an important role in achievement; it is a curse for achievement.

The achievement of the students having high anxiety level is lesser than the students having average anxiety level and the students with low anxiety level and this difference is significant at .05 level. Thus H1, that is, high level and average level anxiety students do not differ significantly in their academic achievement is rejected. Similarly H2, that is there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of the students having high anxiety and low anxiety level, is also rejected.

Average level anxiety students' achievement is lower than the students having low anxiety level thus H3, students with average level anxiety and low level anxiety do not differ significantly in their academic achievement is also rejected. These findings are supported by the findings of Sharma and Rao (1984) which states that academic performance is negatively influenced by test anxiety. It may be because anxiety in an individual may cause emotional disturbances, reduce

Table 2
Role of Academic Anxiety in Academic Achievement

S.No.	Academic Anxiety			Academic Achievement		Group compared	C.R.	Df.	P
	Level	M.	S.D.	M.	S.D.				
1	High(N=29)	44.8	4.75	54.75	12.12	H Vs A	3.12	37	>
2	Avg(N=82)	33.45	4.28	62.00	11.54	H Vs L	5.69	80	>
3	Low(N=29)	21.15	4.7	69.75	11.11	A Vs L	3.54	37	>

concentration and create high pressure and stress on mind which could result in restlessness, irritability and upset in glandular secretion. All these further reduce the efficiency in academic achievement.

To study relationship between academic anxiety and academic achievement of boys and girls, correlation coefficient was calculated, values obtained are shown in the table given below-

Table 3
Correlation between Academic Anxiety and Academic Achievement of Boys and of Girls

Gender	N	df	r	P value
Boys	80	78	-0.54	<
Girls	80	78	-0.40	<

It is clear from the table that correlation coefficient between academic anxiety and academic achievement of boys is -0.52 but is not significant at 0.05 level. Thus, H_4 there is no significant correlation between academic anxiety and academic achievement of boys is accepted.

Similarly, correlation coefficient between academic anxiety and academic achievement of girls is -0.40. it is insignificant at 0.05 level. Thus H_5, there is no significant correlation between academic anxiety and academic achievement of girls is also accepted. Another thing is also visible from the table that there is moderate negative correlation between academic anxiety & academic achievement of boys but in case of girls it is low negative. The meaning is that academic anxiety affects boys' academic achievement much more negatively than that of girls'. It may be because adolescents constitute the sample of the study and girls grow mature much before than boys. Besides, they pass much more time at home where they are all the time at home and are with their parents and older ones who are much more anxious so they are used to live with this phenomenon so it does not affect their achievement so negatively as it does in case of boys.

To explore gender biases in relation to academic anxiety and academic achievement, M., S.D., C.R. were calculated, values obtained are shown in the table given below.

It is clear from the table that girls have somewhat more anxiety level than boys, but this difference is not statistically significant. This finding is supported by the findings of Chatterjee et.al (1976), Durette (1965), Sharma and Ghandhi (1971) and Hijhwan (1972). It may be because girls pass more time at home and naturally pass more time with parents who are more restrictive and anxious because as the age increases anxiety of the individual also increases. Sastry (1990), Fava and Molloy (1998)

Table 4
Gender Biases in Academic Anxiety and Academic Achievement

S.No.	Variables	Groups	N	M	S.D.	C.R.	P
1	Academic Anxiety	Boys	80	32.13	8.83	1.42	<
		Girls	80	34.25	9.99		
2	Academic Achievement	Boys	80	66.13	14.44	4.02	>
		Girls	80	57.87	11.39		

Keralak (2002). But so far as academic achievement is concerned gender biases exist significantly at 0.05 level. It may be because science students constitute the sample of the study and the boys' academic achievement in science subjects is higher than that of girls (Kaur, R. and Gill, J.K.(1993).

Thus, gender biases do not exist in academic anxiety but in academic achievement gender biases exist. Thus H6, that gender biases do not exist in academic anxiety and academic achievement is partially accepted and partially rejected.

Conclusion

Anxiety plays an important role in academic achievement. It is reality not a myth that academic anxiety is a curse for academic achievement. Highest the anxiety, lowest the achievement, lowest the anxiety, highest the achievement. Thus both at teachers level and parents level efforts should be made for minimising the anxiety level so as to maximise the achievement. For this purpose small group interactions can be encouraged, counseling and guidance services can be provided and school climate and psychosocial environment in which the students study, can be evaluated to check whether the academically anxious perceive their environment as congenial or not, if not, efforts should be made to make it congenial one.

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