

## **STUDY OF ANXIETY IN RELATION TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG 4<sup>TH</sup> CLASS STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

Anxiety is one of the major predictors of academic performance. Students with anxiety disorder display a passive attitude in their studies such as lack of interest in learning, poor performance in exams, and on assignments. This research observes the relationship between anxiety level and students' academic achievement. The test to find out a significant correlation of anxiety and academic achievement was carried out among fourth grade students. A total 100 males and females student participated in this test. Spence children's anxiety scale was used to measure anxiety and the aggregate score of the selected students in the annual examinations was taken to show their level of achievement. The results reported that there exists a negative and significant relationship between anxiety and academic achievement. It was found that there is a negative and significant correlation ( $r = -0.447$ ) between academic anxiety and academic achievement.

**Key words: Anxiety, Academic Achievement, 4<sup>th</sup> Class Students.**

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## **Introduction**

Anxiety is a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with arousal of the nervous system (Spielberger, 1983). The high level of anxiety causes a persons normal life being difficult such as interfered activities and social life. Anxiety is one of the wide varieties of emotional and behaviour disorders (Rachel and Chidsey, 2005). Students with anxiety disorder exhibit a passive attitude in their studies such as lack of interest in learning, poor performance in exams, and do poorly on assignments. The anxiety's psychological symptoms among students include feeling nervous before a tutorial class, panicking, going blank during a test, feeling helpless while doing assignments, or lack interest in a difficult subject whereas the physiological symptoms include sweaty palms, cold, nervousness, panic, fast pace of breathing, racing heartbeat, or an upset stomach (Ruffins, 2007).

Anxiety while studying is a major predictor of academic performance (McCraty, 2007 and McCraty, et al., 2000) and various studies have demonstrated that it has a detrimental effect. Little is known that there exist a possible association between high level of anxiety and low academic performance among students. Researchers revealed that high levels of anxiety influence on the decrease of working memory, distraction, and reasoning in students (Aronen et al., 2005). Tobias in Ibrahim (1996) has been recognised that anxiety plays significant role in student's learning and academic performance, moreover anxiety has been known to have both facilitating and debilitating effects on academic achievement. Researchers have been looking at the correlation of anxiety and the effect of academic performance among school students, they found that among high school students with higher level of anxiety have lower academic performance (McCraty, 2007) and greater anxiety would be associated with poorer academic achievement (Luigi et al., 2007). Students with high level of anxiety have a reduced memory span, lose concentration, and lack confidence, and poor reasoning power. The element can be described as anger and regret in engineering students when feel anxiety in difficult situations related with their study. Generally, high level of anxiety was more closely associated with lower performance among low ability students (Sena et al., 2007).

## **Definitions of Anxiety**

Anxiety is one of the psychophysiology difficulties (Callahan, 2001). The symptoms can be psychological physical or environmental challenges. There are various forms of anxiety which includes excessive worrying, a sense of fear, restlessness, overly emotional responses, and negative thinking. Some people when anxious they appear to be clam, but the brain never stops thinking. This will get so bad as well as interrupt the quality of life. Experts have many definitions to describe anxiety.

Breuer (1999) mentioned that all anxiety disorders are defined by the dual characteristics of excessive emotional fear and physiologic hyper arousals.

Sarason in Harris et al. (2003) defined that anxiety is a basic human emotion consisting of apprehension and uncertainty that typically appears when an individual perceives an occurrence as being a threat to the ego or self-esteem. In its conceptualization, individuals with high levels of anxiety generally hold heightened levels of trait anxiety, but in evaluative situations, the state of anxiety also elevates.

Definition of anxiety by Spielberger's (1995) is emotional state consisting of feeling, tension, apprehension, and its effects on the nervous system. These are differentiated in state and trait anxiety. State anxiety is transitory emotional state reflective of one's interpretation of a particular stressful situation at a particular period of time or at that moment feeling. However trait anxiety is the enduring personality characteristic which refers to relatively stable individual differences that characterizes people's anxiety or general feeling of anxiety (Spielberger, 1983). Spielberger's theory of anxiety has led to understanding the concept of anxiety. A person who has a certain level of anxiety has been found to be a facilitative tool for an individual to perform ineffectively. The combination of feeling anxiety can lead to interference with performance through mind blocking, attention resources, more cognitive interference, worries and fears induced by anxiety.

### **Definitions of Academic Achievement**

Dictionary of Education (Carter, 1959) defines academic achievement as “the knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects, usually determined by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers or both”.

According to Oxford Bibliographies (2016), “Academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university”.

### **Importance of Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement is very important for leaning and personality development of a student. Assessing student’s progress means identifying what he has achieved. Acquiring skills in academic matters is important as a means of attaining complete realization and it is the unique responsibility of the school. Achievement in academics prepares the students for their future. Academic achievement helps student in all over development.

### **Anxiety and Academic Achievement**

The anxiety perspective and academic performance is adopted from Catastrophe theory which explains about the relationship of anxiety and performance in terms of sport performance. It is important to understand the theory and the influence of anxiety upon performance. Martin in Robb (2005) proposed that cognitive anxiety would have negative correlation with performance and physiological anxiety have curvilinear relationship with performance. The cognitive anxiety is the component that most strongly affects performance (Ingugiro, 1999; Robb, 2005). According to Fazey and Hardy (1988) cites cognitive anxiety has a positive relationship with performance when physiological arousal is low. Researcher demonstrated that students with higher level of anxiety tend to obtain lower marks in their end-of-semester examination (Hamzah, 2007). Researcher has been conducted to see the correlation of anxiety and the influence of academic achievement, student with high anxiety levels would have lower academic achievement among high school students (McCraty, 2007). Others expressed the opinion that the high level of anxiety will be associated with low academic performance (Luigi et al., 2007, and Sena et al., 2007). Similarity result find, a fair number of previous studies have found a

significant relationship between academic achievement and anxiety (Diaz et al. in El-Anzi, 2005), a positive relationship between high degrees of academic achievement and low anxiety (El-Anzi, 2005).

It has been recognized that anxiety plays significant role in students' learning and academic performance (Tobias, 1979). Reilly and Lewis (1991) say that anxiety is hampering for young people's academic achievements. Changing schools, Parents divorcing or pressure of work, exams and test can all be difficult events for students. Anxiety is strongly linked with emotional depression. According to Science Daily (2009), the effect of anxiety on academic achievement is not always obvious but new research by the Economic and Social Research Council suggests that there may be hidden costs. The research found that anxious individuals find it harder to avoid distractions and take more time to turn their attention from one task to the next than their less anxious fellow students. This research was conducted by Eysenck (2009). These findings have clear practical implications in the classroom. "A lot of the negative effects of anxiety appear to be caused by difficulties with controlling attention. This suggests that training techniques designed to enhance attention control - the ability to ignore distractions and to switch attention from one task to another - could help anxious students to achieve their academic potential," he explains. In addition, the study showed that anxious individuals often perform at a comparable level to no anxious ones but only do so at a greater cost in terms of effort or perhaps long term stress. This shows that it is important that teachers focus not only on whether a student's academic performance seems to be satisfactory but also on how much effort the student had to put in to achieve that level. Anxious students may be trying desperately hard just to keep up and this could be at great psychological cost.

### **Rationale**

Academic achievement is of paramount importance, particularly in the present socio-economic and cultural contexts. Obviously, in the school and colleges great emphasis is placed on achievement; right from the beginning of formal education. Problems concerning the academic under achievement or over achievement have been the subject of wide study. Some relate achievement to learning situations, while others relate it to intelligence, values, emotional intelligence, socio-economic status, academic anxiety, self-concept, and various other factors.

But in this context, study of the relationship of academic achievement to anxiety of the students also has been of great importance to researchers. Researchers have been looking at the correlation of anxiety and the effect of academic performance among school students, they found that among high school students with higher level of anxiety have lower academic performance (McCraty, 2007), and greater anxiety would be associated with poorer academic achievement (Luigi et al., 2007). Ormord (2000) has viewed about the relationship between anxiety and academic achievement that anxiety and academic achievement has been a difficult relationship to clearly elucidate. Academic achievements are related scholastic aptitude, it seems reasonable to suggest that more able students can spend their time in more non academic activities. Researchers revealed that high levels of anxiety influence on the decrease of working memory, distraction, and reasoning in students (Aronen et. al., 2004). Here, it is pertinent to point out that academic achievement being the function of total personality in the socio physical environment has the cognitive and affective domain, each playing its definite role (Binder et. al. 1970). Given then, that the inclusion of personality variables does increase the efficiency of attempts to predict school achievement, the next question might be to ask which of the many personality measures potentially available are most important. A major portion of the research relevant to this question involves studies, which have been attempted to relate anxiety and to school achievement scores. Academic anxiety can become more detrimental over time. As a student's academic performance suffers, the anxiety level related to certain academic tasks increases (Huberty, 2012). The investigator felt that there would be a relation between the anxiety and academic achievement of school students or not. Hence the investigator wished to investigate on these problems. This investigation, therefore, attempts to see the significant relation between the anxiety and the academic achievement.

### **Objectives**

In the present research, the researcher performed their study to attain the following objectives:

1. To study anxiety among 4<sup>th</sup> class students
2. To study academic achievement among 4<sup>th</sup> class students
3. To study the relationship between anxiety and academic achievement among 4<sup>th</sup> class students

### **Operational definitions of the study**

- **Anxiety:** The scores on the General anxiety scale for children (Sharma, 2003) will assess anxiety.
- **Academic Achievement:** The scores of the annual examination of the students will be the measure of academic achievement.

### **Hypothesis**

Following hypothesis is proposed for the present study:

- Anxiety will be significantly related to academic achievement among 4<sup>th</sup> class students.

### **Delimitations**

The study will be delimited in the following aspects:

1. The study sample will be limited to 4<sup>th</sup> class students of Himachal Pradesh Board only.
2. The study will be limited to the size of sample 100 only.

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

### **Design**

The design used for the present research was Descriptive Survey Method.

### **Sample**

Random sampling technique was used for the identification and selection of the sample. Sample of 100 children of 4<sup>th</sup> class was selected from Himachal Pradesh Board Schools of Distt. Sirmour. Both boys and girls were part of the sample i.e. 50 boys and 50 girls.

### **Tools used in the study**

- Spence children's anxiety scale (1994) has been used to measure the anxiety of the students.
- Marks obtained by the students in their annual examination were taken as their level of academic achievement.

### **Procedure**

Sample was collected randomly by taking into consideration the nature of the study. The questionnaire of the anxiety was distributed to the students. Student read the questionnaire first then the answer sheet was given to the student. After the student answers all the questions, the

answer sheet was scored later. The scores of annual examination were used as the level of academic achievement of the students.

### **Statistical Techniques Used**

Product moment method of correlation was used to analyze the data.

### **Results**

A coefficient of correlation between anxiety and academic achievement obtained was -0.447 which is statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. The relationship between these two variables i.e anxiety and academic achievement are significantly correlated to each other. The results showed that there was a significant correlation of high level anxiety and low academic achievement among students. Both the variables are closely related. Thus the hypothesis “Anxiety will be significantly related to academic achievement among 4<sup>th</sup> class students” is accepted.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

- Research can be done with higher level of students.
- Research can be done with other tools.
- Research can be done on other cities also.
- Large of sample size required to strengthen the coefficient correlation was suggested for further research.

### **Conclusion**

Anxiety plays negative role in the academic achievement of the 4<sup>th</sup> class students.

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