ACADEMIC ANXIETY OF SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT, INDIA

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Abstract

Excessive academic anxiety may impair attention span, concentration and memory which can result in having a negative effect on the academic achievement of the individual. Pupils even may withdraw or avoid from socializing with peers or pursuing activities that interest him. But an average level of anxiety is useful in keeping pupil motivated in learning. The present study was conducted to examine the differences between academic anxiety of school students with regard to gender variation and locale variation that were occurring among students of Murshidabad district, India. "Academic Anxiety Scale for Children" (AASC Scale) constructed by Dr. A.K. Singh and Dr. A. Sen. Gupta (2009) was used for collecting data from a random sample of 200 secondary and senior secondary school students. Statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' test were applied for analysis of data. The results revealed that female students were more anxious than male students in academic field. However, there was no significant influence of locality of the school on the anxiety of school students of Murshidabad District, India.

Keywords:Anxiety;Academic anxiety;Academic achievement;AASC Scale;Murshidabad District.

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1.   Introduction

Anxiety means a kind of displeasing feeling of uneasiness, nervousness, apprehension, concern or worry characterized by fear, dread, or uncertainty about something the source of which is largely unknown or unrecognized by the individual (Good, 1973; Barlow, 2002). In today's cut throat competitive environment, anxiety is a common phenomenon of everyday life. There are several factors that produce stress, such as- environmental factors (Stress in relationships, abuse/ victimization at work /school, death of a loved one, financial stress etc.), medical factors (side effects of medication, Lack of oxygen from emphysema, pulmonary embolism etc), intoxication/ withdrawal from an illicit drug (heroin/cocaine), genetic predisposition, neurological problems, prescription of some drugs (Vicodin, benzodiazepines, or barbiturates) and many more. Various common symptoms of anxiety are increase or decrease of blood pressure level (Kazdin 2000), sweating trembling, increased rate of heartbeat, adrenalin rush etc. Developing a state of anxiety in academic field may impair attention span, concentration and memory which can result in having a negative effect on the academic performance of the individual due to formation of false anticipation of threatened self-esteem. 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. But an average level of anxiety is useful in keeping pupil motivated in learning and also helpful for those future citizens in having a more sustainable and prosperous life. Thus it could be concluded that to enhance the academic achievement of students, it is sheer duty of parents and educators to regulate academic anxiety in a certain extent. In this connection the present study was to examine the difference between academic anxiety of school students with regard to gender variation and locale variation.

Regarding this, various literatures and review papers were studied by the investigator. The major findings of the most related literatures of the present study were as follows: Sharma & Sud (1990), Bryme (2000), Pomerantz, Altermatt, & Saxon (2002) and Bhansali & Trivedi (2008) found that girls on the whole had more incidences and intensity of academic anxiety in comparison to boys. On the other hand, Lummeburg (1964) admitted that the negative correlation between test anxiety and achievement scores tends to be large for boys than girls. A study conducted by Ojha (2005) supported this inference. Interestingly, Gaudry and Spielberger

(1972), Trivedi (1995) and Jain (2012) advocated that boys and girls are mostly equally anxious in academic field. Trivedi (1995) had added more that there was also no significant relation between stream of student and their academic anxiety in his study. Moreover, according to the study of Mnicholas & Lewiensohn (1998), females were almost twice more likely to have experienced anxiety disorders than males at the age of 6. According to the study of Bihari (2014), rural secondary school students and urban secondary school students were equally anxious in academic field.

Following research objectives were taken into consideration:

➢ To find out significant differences, if any, in the level of academic anxiety of school students with regard to gender variation of the students.

➢ To find out significant differences, if any, in the level of academic anxiety of school students with regard to locale variation of the school.

The investigator had drawn samples randomly from a definite examining body system which has never been explored before by any previous worker from this perspective, *i.e.,* Murshidabad district of the state West Bengal, India.

2.   Research Method

As per research objectives stated above, the following null hypotheses had been formulated:

H_{O1} There does not exist any significant difference of academic anxiety among school students due to their gender variation.

H_{O2} There does not exist any significant difference of academic anxiety among school students due to the locale variation.

Present study was to assess the anxiety level of students comparatively with regard to gender variation and locale variation. Hence, gender of students and locale of school worked as independent variables and academic anxiety was dependent variable. This was a descriptive research. Among all the techniques of descriptive research method, normative survey was applied here to collect the sample from government aided schools (of both types- rural and urban) of Murshidabad District of West Bengal, India. The sample comprised of 200 students (100 boys and 100 girls) of class VII only, which was selected using simple random sampling procedure. Ex-post facto research design was followed. "Academic Anxiety Scale for Children"

(AASC Scale) by Dr. A.K. Singh and Dr. A. Sen. Gupta (2009) was used to study the academic anxiety in relation to certain variables. According to the manual, reliability value of the tool was r= 0.60 (test-retest method) and r= 0.65 (split half method); it had been validated against the Sinha Anxiety Scale, Neuroticism scale of MPI and CAAT (r= 0.31, 0.41, 0.57 respectively). The tool consisted of 20 questions on different academic perspective which caused anxiety like educational pressure, examination phobia, institutional discipline, parent- teacher association, homework etc. The test was administered on the respondent/ students as per the prescribed norms and conditions in calm and quite atmosphere. To ensure proper administration of the tool, some precautions, like well ventilation, good sitting arrangement, undisturbed classroom situation etc were taken by the investigator. At first, the students were instructed with necessary information and the investigator puzzled out their doubts. The participants had to indicate whether they agreed to the statement given or not. The answer scripts, duly filled by the respondents (students), were collected all at a time. Then they were scored as per the scale manual. A data sheet was prepared from the array of the scores by grouping the students into different categories- gender and locale. As per the objectives and hypotheses stated, the scores of the students in relation to all the variables were analyzed.

The delimitations of the study were many due to time constraints and paucity of funds, such as- small sample number, restricted area of application and limited components of the tool.

3.   Result and Discussion

The main objective of the present investigation was to determine the relative contribution of the predicting variable (academic anxiety) on the criterion variable (gender of the students and locale of the school). Keeping the above purpose in view, the investigator is going to discuss the quantitative aspect under two sub headings: descriptive analysis and inferential analysis.

3.1   Descriptive analysis of the data

The descriptive analysis of the score obtained from the administered questionnaire depicted that Mean= 11.34, Median=11.20, Mode=10.92, Standard Deviation= 3.2, Skewness= 0.30 and Kurtosis=0.27, where n=200. The facial expression of the data denotes that the distribution curve seems to be not normal but approaching to its normal form, positively skewed and Platykurtic in

nature. This may be due to sampling error caused from various delimitation of the study. A Frequency Polygon was plotted from the obtained data.
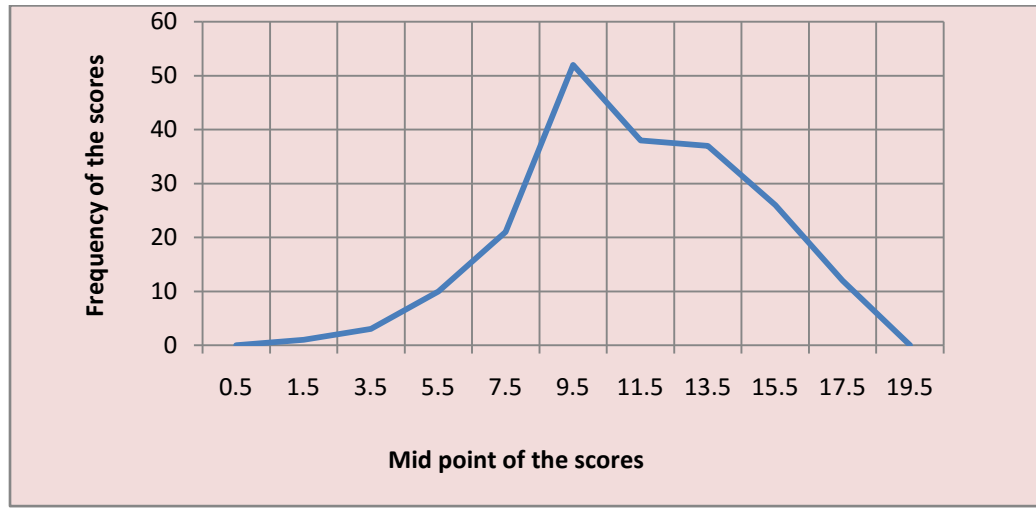
3.2   Inferential analysis of the data

From descriptive analysis, the investigator found that there were variations in the mean score of different sub samples in comparison of the mean score of total sample on academic anxiety among school students. Therefore, the inferential analysis of the sub samples was done to test the significant difference between the means. The investigator used 't' test to test the hypotheses.

Table: Summarization of significant difference between mean scores of different sub- samples in Academic Anxiety.

Variations	Sub-samples	No. of Samples	Mean	Standard deviation	$M_1 - M_2$	SE_{DM}	't'	Remarks
Class of study 1	Boys	100	10.76	3.52	1.10	0.45	2.44	Significant at 0.05 level
	Girls	100	11.86	2.74				
Class of study 2	Rural	100	11.64	3.32	0.72	0.46	1.57	Insignificant at 0.05 level
	Urban	100	10.92	3.14				

3.3   Hypothesis testing:

H_{O1} There does not exist any significant difference of academic anxiety among school students due to their gender variation.

Interpretation: 't' value in academic anxiety among boys and girls was found to be 2.44 from the combined table, which was significant at the point 0.05 level (critical value of 't' at a particular degree of freedom= 1.97). So it can be concluded that there exists significant difference of academic anxiety among boys and girls. Hence, the hypothesis H_{O1} is rejected. Mean scores show that girls are more anxious in academic field than boys.

H_{O2} There does not exist any significant difference of academic anxiety among school students due to the locale variation.

Interpretation: 't' value in academic anxiety among rural students and urban students was found to be 1.57 from the combined table, which was not significant at 0.05 level (critical value of 't' at a particular degree of freedom= 1.97). It can be concluded that rural and urban students are almost equally anxious academically. Hence, the hypothesis H_{O2} is accepted.

4.   Conclusion

Sharma & Sud (1990), Bryme (2000), Pomerantz, Altermatt, & Saxon (2002) and Bhansali & Trivedi (2008) found that girls had more incidences and intensity of academic anxiety in comparison to boys. As the hypothesis H_{01} was rejected, or it could be said that the result indicated girls were more anxious in academic field than boys. Thus the result obtained was in accordance with the previous study. But the studies done by Lummeburg (1964), Gaudry and Spielberger (1972), Trivedi (1995), Ojha (2005), Jain (2012) went against this inference. So far the investigator consulted with previous literatures of eminent workers, very few works have been reported till now about the influence of locale of the school over academic anxiety. As the hypothesis H_{02} was accepted, investigator concluded that there was no influence of locale of school for producing academic anxiety. Rural students and urban students were found to be equally anxious in academic field. Study of Bihari (2014) supported the result.

The investigator found that though the scores obtained from the administered tool ("Academic Anxiety Scale for Children") in both rural and urban schools of Murshidabad District, was not equally distributed but they seemed to be approaching near the normal form and claimed that the deviation appeared due to sampling error. Again it could be concluded that there was significant difference between academic anxiety in male and female students in academic field. But there was no significant difference between academic anxiety of rural and urban school students.

In this study, the researcher had taken a small part of concern from a vast area of studying Academic Anxiety. Investigator felt for further investigation on or related problems of academic anxiety should be as follows:

1)   Similar researches may be carried out to study the relationship of academic anxiety at other higher levels of education.

2)   The present study can be conducted on a large sample. Instead of Murshidabad district, this study can be done on the students of West Bengal as a whole for more reliable results.

3)   The present study can be conducted to find out the influence of academic anxiety on academic achievement of school students.

4)   A Study of Academic Anxiety in relation to socio- economic status and school type among Secondary School Students may be conducted.

5.   References

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