

Full length Research Paper

Academic Anxiety among VIII Standard Students in relation to Gender, Type of School Management and Age: A Case Study

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Abstract

Anxiety is an essential, physical response that communicates the need to pay attention to something in the environment. The main objective of the present study is to know the academic anxiety among viii standard students in relation to their gender, management and age. Descriptive survey method of investigation was employed by the investigators. Sample consisting of 191 viii standard students in Koima district was selected by using the simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Academic anxiety scale for children was adopted and modified by the investigators for the present study. Mean; S.D, t-test and Anova were used for analysis of the data by the investigators. Results revealed that girl students have higher average scores than the boys in their academic anxiety scores and also government school students have higher average scores than the private school students in their academic anxiety scores.

Key words: Anxiety, Academic anxiety, Students, Gender, Management, Age.

Introduction

Which learner hasn't felt some degree or level of anxiety in younger days? The familiar gnawing feeling of something akin to fear and nervousness whenever exams approached. Many learners experience varying degrees of academic anxiety at some point. This paper attempts a study of academic anxiety faced by standard VIII students of Nagaland, Kohima and also suggests how best it can be managed. Academic anxiety is a problem long recognized by educationists but very little has been done about it in terms of preparing learners on how to cope with it. Teachers hardly talk about such topics in the classrooms much less provide any counseling to their students. Many a time parents and teachers are responsible for putting unrealistic expectations on our students and children and triggering varying levels of stress, tension and anxiety in young learners.

Students experience varying levels of stress and anxiety in school. For some it can be quite acute and can even lead to serious results-ranging from anxiety attacks and panic attacks with heightened physical symptoms and not merely psychological. For, some academic anxiety is not of serious nature and they are able to cope without too much problems. This paper would attempt to find out the level of Academic anxiety faced by grade VIII boys and girls in government and private institutions in Nagaland.

Anxiety is an essential, physical response that communicates the need to pay attention to something in the environment. This reaction has been essential for animals to survive, and is also important for people. It starts as a biochemical change in one's brain and body with the release of adrenaline. Anxiety, also called angst or worry, is a psychological and physiological state characterized by somatic, emotional, cognitive and behavioural components. Anxiety can create feelings of fear, worry, uneasiness and dread and helps individuals to deal with a difficult situation by prompting them to cope with it and take proactive action that helps to get solve their problem.

According to Cornell University; "Academic anxiety is the result of biochemical processes in the body and the brain that make your attention level increase when they occur. The changes happen in response to exposure to a stressful academic situation, such as completing school assignments, presenting a project in class or taking a test. When the anxiety becomes too great, the body recoils as if threatened, which is a normal fight-or-flight reaction". The human body has a unique way of signaling that there is something in need of one's attention. Anxiety can result in heightened attention to something that needs to be addressed. We can either run away

from it or cope with it and do something to address the source of the anxiety. In man, anxiety is usually associated with expectation of failures in social interaction, and is often caused by the fact that the source of danger is unknown.

Self concept and academic anxiety of secondary school students in relation to gender, types of school and standard of study. The findings revealed that significant difference was found between standards of study in both self concept and in academic anxiety. There existed no significant difference between boys and girls and also government, aided and unaided schools in self concept and in academic anxiety of secondary school students of Mandya City Latha M (2012).

The majority of rural and urban girls had moderate level of academic anxiety. The mean scores indicated that rural girls experienced significantly higher levels of academic anxiety as compared to their counterparts. The results emphasise the need to provide better educational facilities in rural areas and to teach adolescent girls strategies for effective management of their anxiety Deepika and Chawla, Asha (2013).

Academic anxiety among high school students in relation to gender and type of family. In his research it was found out that boys had significantly higher mean of academic anxiety scores than girls Chaman Lal Banga (2014). No significant difference between academic anxiety of male and female secondary school students. A significant difference was found between academic anxiety of government and private secondary school students Gourav Mahajan (2015). Academic anxiety need not necessarily be negative although too much of it can affect performance and get in the way of success in the academic performance and examination in the context of students. A little bit of anxiety is good because it pushes one towards taking action and motivates one to act on what needs to be done. At a low level, anxiety can serve as a constructive factor, giving a nudge towards creativity and problem solving. For a student it would translate into getting prepared for examinations, studying, doing one's projects, completing assignments on time, being attentive in class, practicing better note taking and so on. It can help motivate students to study for tests or complete assignment. Sarla Rani (2015).

The main objective of the present study was to study the academic anxiety among VIII standard students in relation to their gender, type of school management and age.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the above objectives the following hypotheses are formulated.

1. There would be no significant difference between boys and girls of VIII standard students in their academic anxiety.
2. There would be no significant difference between government and private management schools of VIII standard students in their academic anxiety.
3. There would be no significant difference in their age groups of VIII standard students in their academic anxiety.

Materials and Methods

Method: In the present study Descriptive Survey Method of investigation was employed by the investigators.

Sample: For the purpose of the study a sample consisting of 191 VIII standard students from Government High School & Northfield School in Kohima District were selected by using the simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques.

Tool: Academic Anxiety Scale for Children developed by Dr. A.K. Singh and Dr. A. Sen Gupta (2009) was adopted and modified by the investigators for the present study. The reliability of the academic anxiety scale for children test was reported as 0.433 (Split-half) and 0.60 (Test-Retest). The maximum possible score of this test is 20. In academic anxiety scale for children, each item of the test is scored as either + 1 or 0. There are two types of items-positive and negative. All positive items which are endorsed by the subjects as Yes and all negative items No. 4, 9, 16 and 18 which are endorsed by the subjects as No are given as score of +1. A score of zero is awarded to all other answers.

Statistical techniques used: In order to analyze the data statistical techniques such as Mean, S.D, t-test and ANOVA were used by the investigators.

Results and Discussion

The influence of independent variables (gender, type of school management (government or privately managed) and students' age on the academic anxiety of VIII standard students was investigated.

Hypothesis – 1: There would be no significant difference between boys and girls of VIII standards students in their academic anxiety. The above hypothesis is tested by employing 't' - test. The results are presented in Table – 1.

Table 1: Influence of Gender on the Academic Anxiety of VIII standard students.

S.No	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value
1	Boys	95	12.94	3.003	.308	
2	Girls	96	13.30	2.497	.255	0.914@

Note: '@': not significant at 0.05 level.

It is found from the Table – 1 that the mean and S.D of boys VIII standard students in their academic anxiety scores are 12.94 and 3.003 and the mean and S.D of VIII standards girl students in their academic anxiety scores was 13.30 and 2.497. It means that girl students have higher average scores than the boys in their academic anxiety scores. From the table-1, calculated value of 't' (0.914) is less than the table value of 't' (1.96) for 189 df at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the Hypothesis – 1 is accepted at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore it is concluded that the hypothesis "there would be no significant difference between boys and girls of VIII standards students in their academic anxiety" is accepted. Therefore it was found that gender has no significant influence on their academic anxiety. It may be attributed to the explanation that academic anxiety i.e. a feeling of worry, nervousness or uneasiness about academic activities is only a subjective trait and not influenced by personal characteristics like gender, age, etc. Latha M (2012) and Gourav Mahajan (2015) supported this research finding and where as Chaman Lal Banga (2014) not supported.

Hypothesis – 2: There would be no significant difference between government and private management schools of VIII standard students in their academic anxiety.

The above hypothesis is tested by employing 't' - test. The results are presented in Table – 2.

Table 2: Influence of Type of school management on the academic anxiety of VIII standard students.

S.No	Type of School Management	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value
1	Government	114	14.17	2.186	.205	
2	Private	77	11.57	2.802	.319	6.841**

Note: '**': Indicates significant at 0.01 level

It is found from the Table – 2 that the mean and S.D of government VIII standard students in their academic anxiety scores are 14.17 and 2.186 and the mean and S.D of private VIII standards students in their academic anxiety scores are 11.57 and 2.802 respectively. It shows that government school students have higher average scores than the private school students in their academic anxiety scores. From the table-2, calculated value of 't' (6.841) is greater than the table value of 't' (2.576) for 189 df at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the Hypothesis – 2 is rejected at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore it is concluded that "there would be no significant difference between government and private management schools of VIII standards students in their academic anxiety" is rejected. Therefore the type of school management has significant influence on their academic anxiety. Therefore there is a significant difference between government and private management schools of VIII standards students in their academic anxiety. It is inferred that the government school students are more anxious than the private school students in relation to their academic activities. Gourav Mahajan (2015) supported this research finding and where as Latha M (2012) not supported.

Hypothesis – 3: There would be no significant difference in their age groups of VIII standard students in their academic anxiety.

The above hypothesis is tested by employing 'ANOVA' - test. The results are presented in Table – 3 and Table-4.

Table 3: Mean and S.D scores of the VIII standard students in their academic anxiety scores.

S.No	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1	13	66	12.44	2.925	.360
2	14	94	13.12	2.715	.280
3	15	20	14.10	1.997	.447
4	16	11	15.45	1.368	.413
	Total	191	13.12	2.759	.200

Table-4: ANOVA

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	109.733	3	36.578	5.118**
Within Groups	1336.498	187	7.147	
Total	1446.230	190		

Note: '**': Indicates significant at 0.01 level

It is found from the Table – 3 and 4 that the calculated value of 'F' (5.118) is greater than the table value of 't' (3.78) for 3 df and 187 df at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the Hypothesis – 3 is rejected at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore the hypothesis that "there would be no significant difference in their age groups of VIII standard students in their academic anxiety" is rejected. It was found that age group level has significant influence on students' academic anxiety. Therefore there a significant difference in their age groups of VIII standard students in their academic anxiety. 16 years age group students have more academic anxiety than other age group levels.

Findings of the Study

- Girls' students have higher average scores than the boys in academic anxiety scores.
- There is no significant difference between boys and girls of VIII standard students in their academic anxiety.
- Government school students have higher average scores than the private school students in their academic anxiety scores.
- There was significant difference between government and private management of VIII standards students in their academic anxiety.
- Therefore there a significant difference in their age groups of VIII standard students in their academic anxiety.
- 16 years age group students have more academic anxiety than other age group levels.

Conclusion

From the results it shows that girl students have higher average scores than the boys in their academic anxiety scores and also government school students have high average scores than the private school students in their academic anxiety scores. There exists significant difference in academic anxiety of VIII standard students in relation to age. Teachers should play an important role in helping students to find out the causes and factors of their academic anxiety and help them to cope and overcome the anxiety caused by academic activities in variety of ways. Teachers may create awareness on anxiety, encourage open-communication in classroom, teach and discuss positive coping skills with students, allow students opportunities to practice and apply coping strategies etc. Teachers also may communicate with parents regarding the concerns and anxiety of their wards especially in severe cases. Students can also help themselves by being regular, focused, sincere, dutiful and doing their work on time instead of last minute rush and cramming that can contribute to students' stress.

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