

A Study on Academic Anxiety among Adolescents of Minicoy Island

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Abstract: *Academic anxiety is a common issue that students cannot ignore if they want to succeed in school. A study on academic anxiety among regular residential adolescent students of the age between (14 to 16 years) of Minicoy Government and private Schools was conducted on a sample of 80 respondents randomly selected. The endeavor of the study was to measure the academic anxiety among students between 14 to 16 years of age, to evaluate and compare the academic anxiety among boys and girls and to find the relationship of school environment viz-a-viz the academic anxiety in the sample.*

Keywords: Academic, Achievement, anxiety, Adolescents

I. Introduction

Educational or academic anxiety is a kind of anxiety which relates to the imminent danger from the environment of the educational institutions together with teacher and certain subjects like Chemistry, Physics for numerical, Mathematics, and English to some extent for some north Indian states. It is a mental sensitivity of uneasiness or distress in response to school or college circumstances that is perceived negatively. Academic anxiety is totally not a bad thing. However it is true that a high level of anxiety interferes with concentration and memory which are critical for day to day academic performance and success, however it is also true without any anxiety, majority of us would lack the enthusiasm and motivation to study for exams, do everyday homework or write any research papers. A modest amount of anxiety actually helps academic performance by creating morale and motivation. Academic anxiety is a common issue that students cannot ignore if they want to achieve academic success in school. If academic anxiety is not properly addressed, it can have many serious, severe and long lasting consequences such as causing a student to start hating a subject or a teacher, procrastinate, tell lies to parents, perform poorly on school work, absent classes to pursue activities that interest him and withdraw from socializing with peers or friends and may recoil into his own cocoon and drop school.

II. Review of Literature

Teachers should be prepping students prior to the test to better deal with the stress of test taking (Syncamore, & Corey, 1990). Stress during testing shows up as early as Kindergarten when student behavior was observed before, during, and after testing (Fleege, Charlesworth, Burts, & Hart, 1992). Mnicholas and Lewiensohn (1998) conducted a study on the anxiety on the basis of gender differences. The

data indicates that at age 6, females are already twice more likely to have experienced anxiety disorders than males. . Parents and teachers agree that there is too much stress on all involved concerning standardized testing (Barksdale-Ladd, & Thomas, 2000). Bryme (2000) conducted a study on anxiety, depression and coping strategies in adolescents. Results suggested that males present significant decrease of anxiety and fear in 12th grades instead of girls who show increase in anxiety and by this time both males and females use different coping strategies in order to deal with fear and anxiety. Students scored poorly on standardized test compared to the level of work they were doing during class, it was attributed to the stress of test taking (Rhine, & Smith, 2001). This study found no harmful effects from standardized testing and that most students have positive attitudes towards the testing (Mulvenon, Connors, & Lenares, 2001). Benchmark tests are used to keep track of student success to provide information to teachers so they can better prepare the students for the state tests (Cheek, Bradley, Reynolds, & Coy, 2002). Test anxiety can cause students to rush through tests, so they end up doing poorly on them. It can also cause "achievement stress" that will continue to follow them on their academic path (Cheek, Bradley, Reynolds, & Coy, 2002).

American children are the most tested in the world, and none of them are exempt from the stress of the testing (Clovis). Pomerantz et al, (2002) in a study on, "Gender Differences in Academic Performance and Internal Distress." The main aim of this research was to understand the pattern of gender differences. Girls out performed boys across all four subjects but were more prone to internal distress than boys were. Girls doing poorly in school were the most vulnerable to internal distress. . An examination of the effects of the standardized tests as observed by the classroom teacher (Landry, 2006). Standardized testing has shown up in

education without enough research to warrant it (Henry). Teaching the test is taking away from an education based on personal experiences (Lesch, 2007). During a week of standardized testing, students began to show symptoms of itching apparently in response to the stress of the testing (Halvorson, Crooks, LaHart, & Farrell, 2008). However, even girls doing well in school were more vulnerable than boys were. Yousefi et al. (2010) determined the relationship between test- anxiety and academic achievement among adolescents in Iran. Results showed that there is a significant correlation between test anxiety and academic achievement. In addition, there is a significant difference of academic achievement between male and female adolescents where by females score higher in their academic achievement.

Standardized testing is scary for all involved, so some tips to help your child prepare are offered (Familyeducation.com). Parents and teachers agree that there is too much stress on all involved concerning standardized testing (Barksdale-Ladd, & Thomas, 2000). The positive feelings towards standardized test, is that there is nothing wrong with the standardized test and that their children are not stressed about it (Osbourne, Stegman, Suitt, & Ritter, 2004). Students in the United States appear to have it easy regarding standardized testing compared to students in Taiwan. Their test scores determine whether they attend the best high schools and whether they attend college at all (Huang). Students are all expected to pass a written test with multiple choice answers, how is this fair for auditory or tactile learners (Hill, 2005).

III. Objectives

- a) To accurately assess the academic anxiety of adolescents (14-16 years)
- b) To compare the academic anxiety among boys and girls.
- c) To study the influence of school environment on the academic anxiety.

IV. Methodology and Procedure

The present study was conducted on a sample of 100 students (50 males and 50 females) in the age group of 14-16 years. It needs to be mentioned that these subjects were taken from 8th to 12th grade. Random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample for this purpose data was collect by using the Academic Anxiety Scale developed by Alpert, R. & Habe 201-215r, RN (1960) and used it in Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology- 61. The data collected was subjected to statistical analysis by using Mean, Standard Deviation (S.D) and T- test in order to facilitate analysis and interpretation and understanding.

V. Results and Discussion

Table 5.1: Percentage of sample on three levels of Academic anxiety

Anxiety levels	Frequency	Percentage
Low	32	32

Average	42	42
High	26	26
Total	100	100

Table 5.1 shows the percentage of the sample on three levels of academic anxiety. It is found that 32 % of the respondents had shown low academic anxiety, where as 42 percent of the respondents had average academic anxiety and only 26 percent of the respondents had high academic anxiety.

Table 5.2: Comparison of Mean Scores of Academic Anxiety of Male and Female School Students.

Factor	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	Df	t-value
Anxiety Score	Male	50	12.62	2.3059	98	0.3138
	Female	50	12.57	2.1350		

Table 5.3 Compares the mean scores of academic anxiety of private and government school students. The t-test reveals that there is a significant relationship between the school surroundings and academic anxiety with the students of government schools having higher academic anxiety. This may be due the fact that the quality of teaching is very poor as far as government schools are concerned.

Table 5.4: Percentile Rank of the Respondents on Various levels of Academic Anxiety.

Percentile Rank	Description of anxiety	Frequency	Percentage
80 and above	Very Anxious	24	24.00
60-79	Anxious	22	22.00
45-59	Average	20	20.00
25-44	Less anxious	15	15.00
24 and Below	Very less anxious	19	19.00
	Total	100	100

Table 5.4 reveals that 24 percent of the respondents were very anxious (percentile rank 80 and above), 22 % were found to be anxious (percentile rank 60-79), 20 % had scored average-percentile rank 45-59. 15% respondents were in between 25- 44 percentile and were thus found to be less anxious and only 19 % were having very low anxiety (percentile rank 24 and below).

VI. Major Findings

- a) Most of the students experience academic anxiety.
- b) Gender was not found to have any impact on the anxiety scores.
- c) The type of school and the environment had a significant relation with the academic anxiety.

VII. Conclusion

It is concluded that most of today's school children have very high levels of academic anxiety which can have many serious and long lasting consequences on the physical and mental health of children. Parents and teachers in

collaboration with school guidance workers should formulate a plan and work together for the better development of children. Timely encouragement, inspiration and motivation are very important and should be efficiently used by both teachers and parents.

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