Original Article

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON ACADEMIC ANXIETY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN UKHRUL DISTRICT, MANIPUR

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ABSTRACT

The present study provides a comprehensive understanding of academic anxiety among secondary school students in the Ukhrul District of Manipur. The objective of the study was to determine the level of academic anxiety among higher secondary school students in Ukhrul District, Manipur, based on their gender, type of school, and stream differences. The investigator employed a Descriptive Survey method. The study population consisted of students in classes XI and XII from the Ukhrul District, Manipur, under the Council of Higher Secondary Education, Manipur (COHSEM). The study sample consisted of 400 students, selected using Simple Random sampling. The Academic Anxiety Scale (AAS, 2017) was developed by M. Abid Siddiqui and Atieq Ul Rehman. A standardised questionnaire to measure the academic anxiety among higher secondary school students. The present study employed descriptive and inferential statistics, including percentages and the t-test, for comparison between groups. The findings reveal that the majority of secondary students experience an average level of academic anxiety. No significant differences were observed across gender, type of school, and stream.

Keywords: Academic Anxiety, Secondary Level, Gender, Type of School, Stream Differences

INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, it is evident that the world is undergoing rapid change in all areas. Social media, technology, social relations, and other factors were impeding young people's ability to think clearly. Young people nowadays experience anxiety at higher rates than adults because of the way they think and live in society. They also feel inferior in an attempt to fit in because their interest is largely disapproved of in Indian society. Children are under increasing pressure to perform well academically in this competitive environment, which causes them to become tense, nervous, and anxious Mochahary (2022). Physiological, cognitive, psychological, and emotional changes are the main areas of change and difficulties that a person experiences during adolescence Kaur (2006). Students who enrol in higher secondary education systems face a variety of challenges, such as academic anxiety, academic depression, academic stress, socioeconomic hardships, anxiety about future outcomes due to a lack of life management skills, a lack of employment opportunities, law and order issues in a particular society, and so on.

In recent years, a paradigm shift has occurred in the Indian educational system. The objective of modern education has shifted from simply teaching the required curriculum to unlocking, exploring a variety of options, the mind's Subliminal pathways, and equipping the student with entrepreneurial skills to handle life's challenges and reach the pinnacle of success. Adolescents often

struggle with academic motivation and performance due to their preoccupation with forming an identity for themselves. One of the psychological phenomena that has been studied the most is anxiety.

Education is the only way to erase all of society's and the nation's problems. The secondary education stage is the most crucial of all the educational phases, from kindergarten to college, as it provides a strong and reliable foundation for later studies. Students today suffer from severe anxiety and are prevented from giving their best work because of academic anxiety brought on by the family environment, socioeconomic status, educational system, high societal expectations, and other factors.

ACADEMIC ANXIETY

In this era of industrialization and technological advancement, where people's lives are getting increasingly complicated, they must deal with daily issues. The idea of anxiety is regarded as a crucial component in psychology. Every aware citizen of our society understands, based on their personal experience and observations of their peers, that anxiety is a widespread and profound experience in this generation. The most prevalent emotion among secondary school pupils is academic anxiety. It has been discovered that many students experience anxiety when studying various courses. They feel ashamed when they request to take part in any academic activity.

Anxiety is one of the most prevalent emotions and a fundamental component of all human behavior. It is an unpleasant sensation of fear, unease, worry, trepidation, or concern Barlow (2002). Stress, anxiety, and depression were connected. The overlapping symptoms of these three psychiatric disorders may result in a variety of academic issues that can affect students' academic performance. Jannata and Nuraeni (2020) stressed that academic anxiety is frequently present in educational settings and is often brought about by the academic pressures experienced by students. This was further explained by Cebu and Pantalita (2023), who emphasised that academic anxiety encompasses pressure, tension, and worry associated with exams, assignments, and even social expectations linked to academic performance. Academic stress is one of the most common mental health conditions that students deal with, which is mostly brought on by worries about grades and failing classes, according to Atienza and Dominado (2023)

Academic anxiety is most commonly experienced when the stakes are very high, and students have to perform at their best in front of others. According to Singh and Gupta (1984), academic anxiety is a type of state anxiety that is associated with the fear of mistreatment from the environment of educational institutions, such as teachers and certain subjects like English and mathematics. The primary cause of the highest rates of anxiety and depression among students is the irrational competition between parents, societal pressure, and high levels of job aspiration, which place a great deal of pressure on their kids to perform well. They apply intensive pressure on young children to develop academic skills at an age when the child should be allowed freedom and encouraged to study as a natural result of their innate curiosity, fun, and readiness for experiments. As a result, when children fail to meet their expectations, they experience anxiety, depression, and develop suicidal thoughts.

Academic anxiety is a novel idea that describes a variety of specific anxiety symptoms that occur in educational settings. It is a typical performance anxiety that is currently a major problem for many secondary school students. Anxiety is something that everyone experiences. It's a normal psychological reaction to anything that makes one uneasy. It has been viewed as one of the main risks to the educational system. Many students at different educational levels have been observed to strive with academic anxiety in relation to their academic endeavours. In the academic field, it is regarded as an inevitable issue that requires an immediate solution.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression among upper secondary students has been determined by the current study. This can have an impact on their academic achievement and result in more serious psychological problems later in life if left undiagnosed and untreated.

Academic anxiety has been identified as a problem for students and is given due attention across the globe. By introducing practical and effective strategies, mechanisms, approaches, and tools across the various school levels with a focus on gender, location, and school types, as well as to all students worldwide. Efforts should be made to address the issues of academic anxiety and its consequences.

Social media has played a significant role in the anxiety faced by the youth, as young people spend most of their time on their phones. Social media exposes users to various sites that negatively impact their mental health and reduce their connection to the real world. Even in the educational sphere, where competition is fierce, students experience pressure and depression, which leads to anxiety.

However, we often overlook the most crucial element: the learner's physical and mental health, amidst the glare of sophisticated teaching and learning resources and infrastructure. Our society places a great deal of emphasis on students' academic performance. Children benefit when they receive support from their parents. It will motivate them to excel in school and alleviate their academic anxieties. Parental encouragement can help children realise their full potential and succeed in their future endeavours. The inverse association between academic anxiety and parental encouragement implies that academic anxiety is lessened by parental guidance, responsiveness, and support.

Teachers should create a nurturing and encouraging learning environment where students can express themselves freely and fearlessly. Creating a positive learning atmosphere, teachers also play a significant role in reducing stress. Academic anxiety can influence educational practices to enhance students' success and well-being. It is the duty of educators to foster a supportive learning environment in the classroom and provide remedial instruction to children from rural areas, enabling them to succeed academically.

School and classroom environments are responsible for Students, either in the zone of anxiety or completely free from academic anxiety. It is essential for parents, teachers, administrators, and others to ensure a better learning environment that enables students to reach their full potential.

Parents, teachers, administrators, counsellors, and other responsible individuals should be more mindful of their behaviour and take the appropriate coping mechanisms in order to control students' behaviour. To reduce academic anxiety, it is essential to establish workshops, seminars, and programs that help students develop a positive outlook. Appropriate guidance and various counselling programs must be held to reduce anxiety among adolescents.

The moral and spiritual development of students should coexist with their intellectual development, as this will ultimately lead to comprehensive growth. Students who possess a well-rounded personality are better equipped to overcome the majority of academic challenges. This will ultimately help them overcome severe academic anxiety.

Education is the remedy for all forms of progress. An individual's full growth is to be realized through Adequate educational provisions. It enlightens a person's personality and offers them the ability to think logically and scientifically.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1) To find out the level of Academic Anxiety present in the higher secondary school students in Ukhrul District, Manipur.
2) To compare the Academic Anxiety between male and female students at the secondary level.
3) To compare the Academic Anxiety between government and private schools at the secondary level.
4) To compare the Academic Anxiety between Arts and Science students at the secondary level.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1) There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among the higher secondary school students with respect to the variation of gender.
2) There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among the higher secondary school students with respect to the variation of institution.
3) There exists no significant difference in academic anxiety between arts and science.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

In the present study, the investigator employed a descriptive survey method.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The study population consisted of students in classes XI and XII from the Ukhrul District, Manipur, under the Council of Higher Secondary Education Manipur (COHSEM). The study sample consisted of 400 students, selected using simple random sampling.

TOOLS AND STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

A standardised questionnaire, the Academic Anxiety Scale (AAS, 2017), developed by M. Abid Siddiqui and Atieq Ul Rehman, was employed to measure academic anxiety among higher secondary school students. The present study employed descriptive and inferential statistics, including percentages and the t-test, for comparison between groups.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION
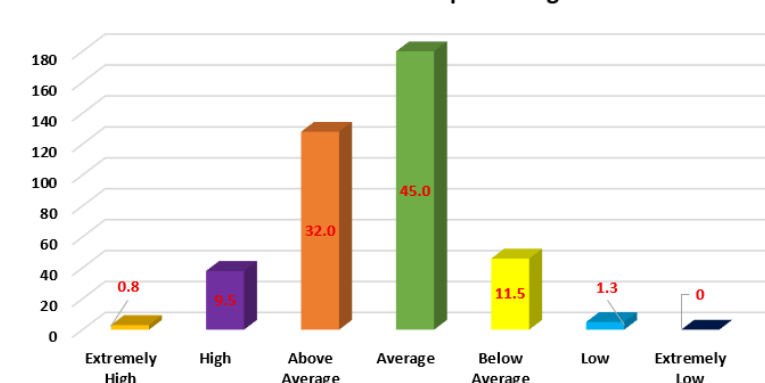
Figure 1

Figure 1 Academic Anxiety Level Present in the Higher Secondary School Students in Ukhrul District HQ, Manipur

Figure 1 indicates that 0.8% have an extremely high level of academic anxiety, 9.5% have a high level of academic anxiety, 32.0% have an above average level of academic anxiety, 45.0% have an average level of academic anxiety, 11.5% have a below average academic anxiety, 1.3% have a low level of academic anxiety and none of the students have an extremely high level of academic anxiety. So, it can be stated that a maximum number of students are at an average level of academic anxiety.

Ho1: No significant difference in academic anxiety among the higher secondary school students with respect to the variation of gender.

Table 1

Table 1 Academic Anxiety Between Male and Female						
Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t-value**	**Df**	**p-value**	**Result**
Male	200	80.10	9.66				
Female	200	79.83	10.04	.269	398	.419	NS

Table 1 shows no significant difference in academic anxiety between male and female students. The researcher selected 200 students from both genders; the mean value of male academic anxiety was 80.10 and 79.83 for females. The standard deviation for males and females was 9.66 and 10.04, respectively. The t-value of both genders is 0.269, and the degrees of freedom are 398, and significant at 0.419. So, the p-value is larger than 0.05 (P>0.05), the level of significance. According to the findings of the analysis, there is no significant difference in academic anxiety among male and female higher secondary students. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho2: No significant difference in academic anxiety between arts and science stream students.

Table 2

Table 2 Academic Anxiety Between Arts and Science Stream Students						
Stream	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t-value**	**df**	**p-value**	**Result**
Arts	200	80.78	10.09	1.65	398	0.329	NS
Science	200	79.15	9.54				

Table 2 shows no significant difference in academic anxiety between male and female students. The researcher selected 200 students from both genders; the mean value of male academic anxiety was 80.78 and 79.15 for females. The standard deviation for males and females was 10.09 and 9.54, respectively. The t-value of both genders is 1.65, and the degrees of freedom are 398, and significant at 0.329. So, the p-value is larger than 0.05 (P>0.05), the level of significance. According to the findings of the analysis,

there is no significant difference in academic anxiety among arts and science higher secondary students. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho3: No significant difference in academic anxiety among the higher secondary school students with respect to the variation of institution.

Table 3

Table 3							
Types of School	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t-value**	**df**	**p-value**	**Result**
Government	200	79.51	9.34	.919	398	.421	NS
Private	200	80.42	10. 32				

Table 3 shows no significant difference in academic anxiety between students from government and private schools. The researcher selected 200 students from both government and private schools; the mean value of academic anxiety was 79.51 for government schools and 80.42 for private schools. The standard deviation was 9.34 and 10.32, respectively. The t-value is 0.919, and the degrees of freedom are 398, and significant at 0.421. So, the p-value is larger than 0.05 (P>0.05), the level of significance. According to the findings of the analysis, there is no significant difference in academic anxiety among government and private higher secondary students. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1) A maximum number of students are at an average level of academic anxiety.
2) There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among male and female higher secondary students. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.
3) There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among arts and science higher secondary students. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.
4) There is no significant difference in academic anxiety among government and private higher secondary students. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

The present study is a comprehensive study on the Academic Anxiety of secondary school students in the Ukhrul district, Manipur. The findings of the present study indicate that the majority of secondary school students demonstrated an average level of academic anxiety. These results align with previous studies by Bhat and Geelani (2021), Sharma and Shakir (2019), Das and Kumar (2022) and Dar et al. (2023). Which reported a moderate level of academic anxiety among secondary students. The finding shows that most students, regardless of gender, type of school and stream differences, had an average level of academic anxiety.

With respect to gender, the study found no significant difference between male and female secondary students. This finding aligns with earlier studies by Rahaman and Rana (2018), Rani and Manita (2015), Das and Kumar (2022), Dar et al. (2023), and Mannow and Yadav (2025). Which reported that there is no significance between male and female students on academic anxiety. However, contradictory findings were reported by Hashmi and Shakir (2023), which indicate that female learners were found to be more academically anxious than male learners. Hasan (2022) concludes that male students of private schools have more academic anxiety than their female counterparts. Similarly, female government school students have been shown to have more academic anxiety than female private school students. Dar et al. (2023) indicate that female senior secondary school students experience higher examination anxiety than their male counterparts. Das et al. (2025) found that female students are more anxious than male students, and Das and Kumar (2022) found that female senior secondary school students have significantly higher academic anxiety than male students. Thus, gender has a medium effect on academic anxiety. Kaur et al. (2024) also found that female students exhibit higher mean anxiety scores compared to male students.

In terms of the type of school, the findings revealed no significant difference between government and private schools. It contradicts previous studies, such as Sharma and Shakir (2019) study, which indicates that private senior secondary school students have more academic anxiety than government senior secondary school students. So, the type of school has a medium effect on academic anxiety. Bihari (2014) found a significant difference between the mean scores of government and private secondary school students. Private school children's less anxious compared to their counterparts. Hasan (2022) reveals that school types have a significant effect on academic anxiety. The study found that the students of government schools were reported to have high academic anxiety. Mohi-ud-Din and Bhat (2021) also reveal that adolescent students enrolled in private schools possess significantly higher academic anxiety than students enrolled in government schools.

Regarding the stream difference, the present study found no significant difference in academic anxiety among government and private higher secondary students. This finding is consistent with the study by Mannow and Yadav (2025), which found no significant difference between the academic anxiety of higher secondary school students studying in the science and art streams. Kumari and

Singh (2022) also found no significant difference in academic stress of the senior secondary school students with respect to the stream of subjects. Mohi-ud-Din and Bhat (2021) revealed that both science and arts adolescent students were impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic and showed the same level of academic anxiety. However, contradictory findings from Fatma and Aqil (2017) suggest that science stream adolescents seem to be more anxious than commerce stream adolescents.

CONCLUSION

The present study provides a comprehensive understanding of academic anxiety among secondary school students in the Ukhrul District of Manipur. The findings reveal that the majority of students experience an average level of academic anxiety, consistent with earlier research reporting moderate anxiety levels among adolescents. No significant differences were observed across gender, type of school, and stream difference, although previous studies have reported mixed results, with some suggesting higher anxiety among female students, government school students, or science stream learners. These inconsistencies suggest that although school type and gender may have a moderate impact on academic anxiety, these effects vary depending on the situation. This study primarily focused on the hilly areas of Manipur, a region that is often underrepresented in educational research. These results suggest that differences in the family environment, socioeconomic status, educational system, and other factors contribute to this phenomenon in hilly areas. The study emphasises that secondary students frequently suffer academic anxiety, which transcends institutional and demographic borders. The results emphasise the necessity for educators and legislators to create universally applicable supportive therapies for anxiety. Future studies should continue to investigate contextual elements that could account for differences in gender, school types, and stream differences. Results show that a number of factors, including personal, familial, institutional, social, and political, may pose a risk of causing students to experience severe academic anxiety. Developing Academic management skills, managing time effectively, and seeking academic assistance from experts such as counsellors and teachers. Engaging in extracurricular activities, including regular exercise, can help reduce stress and anxiety. So, in order to handle the problem of severe academic anxiety prevalent among students, the need of the hour is to create awareness among students and teachers about them by organising seminars, conferences, workshops, symposiums, etc.

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