



A comparative study of academic anxiety among secondary school students in relation to the parental involvement

Dr. Sushila Sharma ¹, Suchita ^{2*}

¹ Associate Professor, Baba Mastnath University, Rohtak, Haryana, India

² Research Scholar, Baba Mastnath University, Rohtak, Haryana, India

* Corresponding Author: Suchita

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Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the gender and locality differences in relation to academic anxiety and parental involvement of secondary school students. Furthermore, it explored the relationship between parental involvement and academic anxiety in the sample. This study was conducted on a sample of 600 randomly selected secondary school students aged 14 to 16 years studying in government schools in the state of Haryana. The AASC (Academic Anxiety Scale for Children, 2011) by Singh and Gupta and the PIS (Parental Involvement Scale, 2009) by Chauhan and Arora were used to measure academic anxiety and parental involvement, respectively. Results revealed that academic anxiety was significantly influenced by gender and locality. In addition, there was a significant difference in parental involvement based on gender and locality. Academic anxiety was found to have a significant positive correlation with parental involvement. The results can be used to improve educational programming that addresses academic anxiety of students by fostering a healthy relationship between the home and school through parental involvement in school activities and homework.

Keywords: Academic anxiety, parental involvement, secondary school students

Introduction

The experience of anxiety is a normal response to various stimuli in one's environment. Anxiety is a normal emotion that we all feel from time to time, but excessive worry that lasts for a long time is a serious problem (Dobson, 2012) ^[7]. Poonam (2010) and APA (2000) define anxiety as "a complex mental disorder that affects multiple cognitive, behavioral and psychological states." Anxiety is one of the most prevalent mental disorders in school-aged children, including adolescents, globally (Costello *et al.*, 2003) ^[4]. There is a lot of anxiety and pressure in the students to tackle the challenging tasks. Academic anxiety is a type of anxiety characterized by cognitive, physical, and behavioral states associated with academic situations and activities (Casadi, 2010). A student's negative effects from academic anxiety can worsen over time. If a student's grades start to slip, he or she may begin to feel more anxious when completing certain assignments (Huberty, 2012).

Students gain confidence and self-esteem as a result of their academic credentials (Shukla, 2021) ^[27]. Therefore, it is important to provide a positive environment for students to be successful academically, but academic anxiety works against this goal. If students are to rise to high levels of achievement, they need to experience stiff competition, but this can lead to stress, anxiety and unsatisfactory work. High-anxiety students are unable to concentrate, lack self-assurance, have short attention span, and have poor logical thinking (Shukla, 2021) ^[27].

Children's social, psychological and academic achievement are adversely affected by academic anxiety (Essau *et al.*, 2000) ^[8]. Therefore, they experience academic anxiety manifested in the form of nervousness, helplessness, high blood pressure, and a general lack of attention and concentration (Vitasari, P. *et al.*, 2010) ^[31]. McCraty *et al.* (2000) ^[16] and McCraty (2007) ^[17] showed that having academic anxiety during studies has a negative impact on students' academic performance. However, to

some extent academic anxiety is helpful because it motivates students to complete their assignments (Neelam, 2013) ^[21]. Several studies have emphasized the fact that parental involvement is an effective way to motivate students to be happy in school and is a key factor that contributes to their children's academic success (Toldson, 2008; Epstein *et al.*, 2011; Newchurch, 2017) ^[30, 10]. Parental involvement in education is the involvement of parents with schools and their child for the educational benefit of the child (Hill *et al.*, 2004) ^[12]. According to the researchers, parental involvement is a multidimensional concept that includes participation in school, participation at home and academic socialization (Fan & Chen, 2001; Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Wang & Khalil, 2014) ^[11, 9, 13, 32]. Huh. School-related activities include volunteering, parent-teacher meetings and school assignments. Structured homework and free time (such as regular time or space, visiting museums), as well as assessment of academic performance, are all components of home-based participation. Academic socialization includes interpreting parental expectations for homework and schoolwork, supporting educational and vocational goals, and organizing and planning.

By reducing behavioral issues that hinder learning, parental involvement in academics can enhance school performance. (Hill *et al.*, 2004) ^[12]. Academic anxiety in children is strongly influenced by parental involvement and education (Prajapati, 2020). Parents' high involvement and expectations in their child's academic pursuits eventually allow them to engage in a thinking cycle and allow anxiety to dominate their actions (Mehta, 2016) ^[18].

Instead of putting extra pressure on their children to complete extra tasks, parents should focus on helping their children achieve academic success and overall happiness. Naturally, all parents want the best for their children, including how well they do in school. However, parents should be aware that their attitude deficiencies, as well as psychological issues in their children, will affect how well their children do in their studies. Parents need to pay attention to the psychological and social needs of their children (Rohayani, 2020; Sari and Maningtyas, 2020).

Review of literature

Some of the studies that have been conducted on the topic of academic anxiety and parental involvement are as follows:

Hill *et al.* (2004) ^[12] found differences in parental education and ethnicity. Higher parental education was associated with fewer behavioral issues, which were related to achievement and aspirations. Aspirations, but not behavior or performance, were related to parents' lower education. Milgram, N. and Toubiana, Y. (2010) revealed that homework was less stressful than other schoolwork. Older teens are less concerned about schoolwork and procrastinate more on homework than younger children. The results of study conducted by Mahajan's (2015) ^[15] on "Academic Anxiety of Secondary School Students in relation to their parent's encouragement", show a significant and inverse relationship between academic stress and parental encouragement.

Prajapati (2020) ^[23] studied academic anxiety among students and parental education and their involvement. Less parental involvement and more parental involvement had no significant difference in an adolescent's academic anxiety. Students of above-graduate parents had high academic anxiety, while those of below-graduate parents had less. In the study of Sikand & Kauts (2017) ^[28] academic pressure is

increased when parents are less involved whereas academic frustration and academic anxiety are increased when parents are more involved in their children's education. Wu *et al.* (2022) ^[33] found that parental burnout was less affected by education anxiety when the family was functioning better. Also, family functioning lessens parental burnout while parental anxiety about education affects children's academic burnout.

The rationale of the study

While parental control is associated with lower achievement and higher anxiety levels, supportive parental involvement in academic tasks improves children's academic performance and reduces students' anxiety (Cardy *et al.*, 2020) ^[2]. The level of academic anxiety experienced by children is strongly influenced by the level of parental involvement. Academic expectations take precedence over other measures of parental involvement, allowing children to engage in a thinking cycle and let anxiety control their actions. In India, academic pressure from parents is the main cause of concern among school children and adolescents (Deb, 2001; Deb, Chatterjee & Walsh, 2010; Mahajan, 2015) ^[5, 6, 15].

The goal of this paper is to attempt to explain gender and locality-based differences in academic anxiety and parental involvement. Also, how parent involvement is related to the academic anxiety of secondary school students. This survey can help parents, teachers and students. Outcomes can help students with high academic anxiety and encourage parental involvement in shaping an after-school program that supports their children's learning through school-related programs, decisions, and assignments.

Objectives

1. To examine and compare the academic anxiety with respect to gender in secondary school students.
2. To examine and compare the academic anxiety with respect to locality for secondary school students.
3. To examine and compare the parental involvement with respect to gender in secondary school students.
4. To examine and compare the parental involvement with respect to locality for secondary school students.
5. To determine the relationship between academic anxiety and parental involvement among secondary school students.

Hypotheses

1. Academic anxiety does not differ significantly with respect to gender in secondary school students.
2. Academic anxiety does not differ significantly with respect to locality for secondary school students.
3. Parental Involvement does not differ significantly with respect to gender in secondary school students.
4. Parental Involvement does not differ significantly with respect to locality for secondary school students.
5. Academic anxiety and parental involvement do not have a significant relationship among secondary school students.

Research methodology

The data was gathered using standardised tools. As a result, this study employed the descriptive survey method.

Population

For this study, the target population was 9th and 10th-grade school students in government schools affiliated with the Haryana Board of School Education, Bhiwani, Haryana.

Sample

A multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select a total sample of 600 students from grades IX and X from 19 government secondary schools across six districts (one district from each division) in the state of Haryana. The students were selected according to gender and locality. There were 9 urban schools and 10 rural schools.

Tools and statistical techniques

Tools

The researcher employed the following standardised tools for the current study:

1. Academic Anxiety Scale for Children, (2011) by Singh and Gupta.
2. The Parental Involvement Scale, (2009) by Chauhan and Arora.

Statistical Techniques

The results of the survey were subjected to statistical

analysis, which was carried out using the appropriate statistical methods. Mean, standard deviation, t-test, and correlation were utilised to accomplish this goal.

Data analysis and interpretation

Data was organised, tabulated, and interpreted based on the objectives.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation, and 't' value of Academic Anxiety for boys and girls in secondary schools

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t-value
Academic Anxiety	Boys	298	9.44	2.48	598	3.481**
	Girls	302	10.19	2.80		

**Significant at 0.01 level

The result in table 1 showed the mean and S.D. scores of boys (9.44 & 2.48) and girls (10.19 & 2.80) on academic anxiety scale. The calculated 't' value (3.48) was significant at 0.01 level, which was higher than the table value (2.33). This showed that girls experienced more academic anxiety than boys (Figure 1).

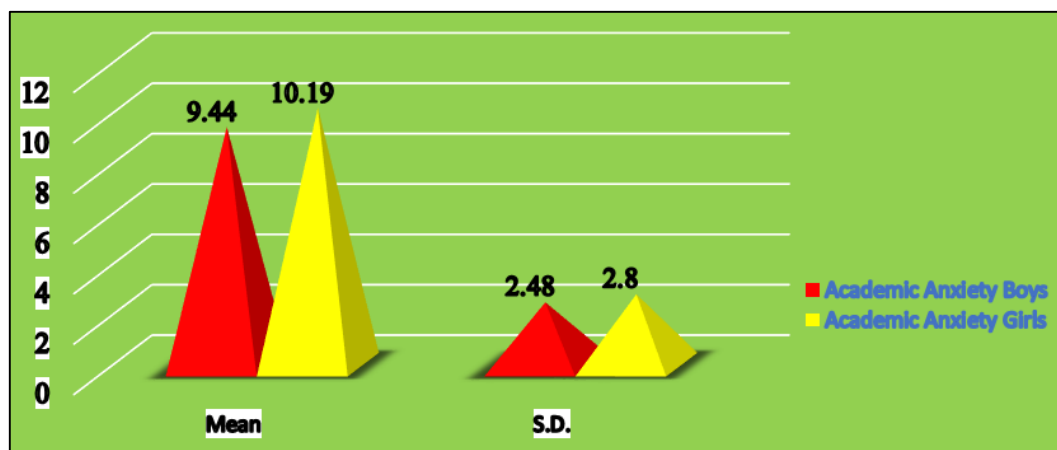


Fig 1: Mean, S.D. of Academic Anxiety for boys and girls in secondary school

As a result, hypothesis 1: "There is no significant difference in academic anxiety between boys and girls secondary school

students" was rejected.

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation, and 't' value of Academic Anxiety for urban and rural secondary schools

Variable	Locality	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t-value
Academic Anxiety	Urban	289	10.05	2.717	598	2.07**
	Rural	311	9.60	2.614		

**Significant at 0.01 level

The mean and standard deviation (S.D.) scores of urban (10.05 & 2.71) and rural (9.60 & 2.61) students on the academic anxiety scale were presented in table 2. The two groups were statistically significant at the 0.05 level of

significance. The calculated 't' value (2.07) was higher than the table value (1.65). This revealed that secondary school students who live in urban areas have more academic anxiety than those who live in rural areas (Figure 2).

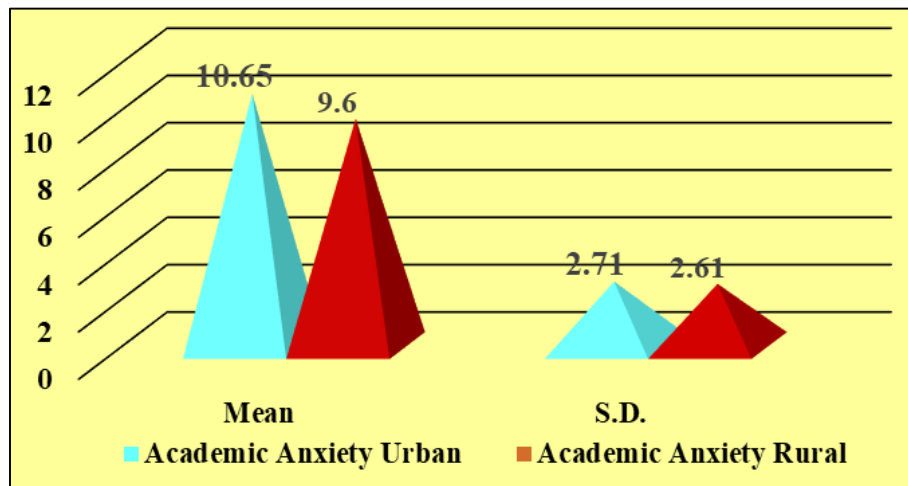


Fig 2: Mean and S.D. of Academic Anxiety for urban and rural secondary school students

So, the second hypothesis, "There exists no significant difference in academic anxiety among urban and rural secondary school students," was not retained.

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation, and 't' value of Parental involvement for boys and girls in secondary schools

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t-value
Parental Involvement	Boys	298	84.92	10.485	598	3.237**
	Girls	302	84.88	11.898		

**Significant at 0.01 level

In table 3, boys scored 84.92 (mean) with S.D. = 10.48 and girls scored 84.88 (mean) with S.D. = 11.89 on the parental involvement scale. The calculated 't' value was 3.23 was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. From the above

table, it was concluded that boys and girls have significantly different mean scores. Figure 3 showing that boys mean score was slightly higher than the girls.

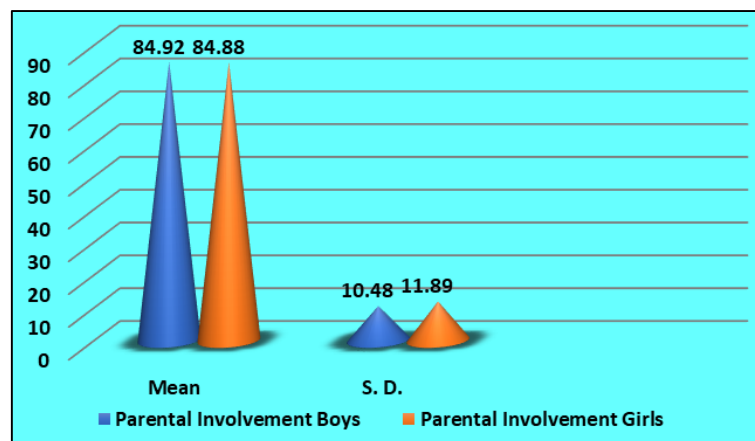


Fig 3: Mean and S.D. of Parental Involvement for boys and girls in secondary schools

Therefore, hypothesis 3: "There exists no significant difference in parental involvement among urban and rural secondary school students" was rejected.

Table 4: Mean, standard deviation, and 't' value of Parental involvement for urban and rural secondary school students

Variable	Locality	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t-value
Parental Involvement	Urban	289	87.62	10.762	598	2.541**
	Rural	311	85.28	11.696		

**Significant at 0.01 level

The table shows that urban schools scored 87.62 (mean) with an S.D. of 10.76 and rural schools scored 85.28 (mean) with an S.D. of 11.69. The t-value of both groups was 2.54, which was greater than the table value (2.33). The above table

shows that the mean difference is significant at 0.01 level. It showed a difference between urban and rural student parent involvement. Urban students have higher parental involvement than rural students (Figure 4).

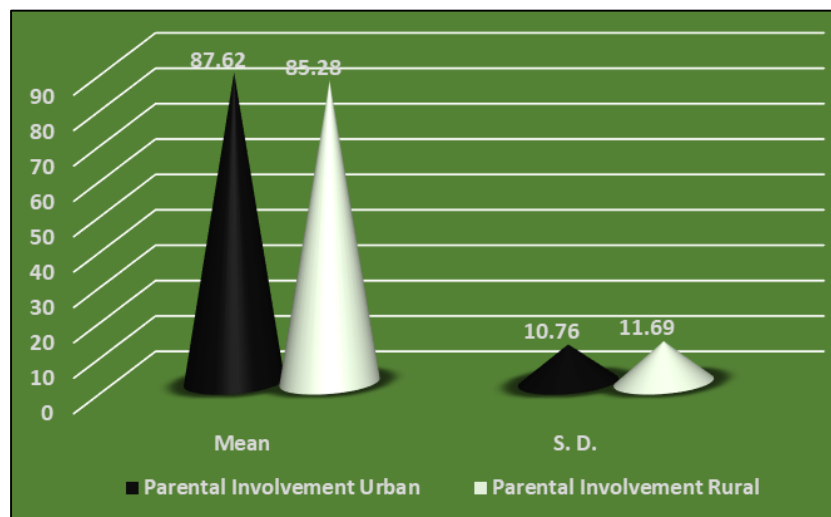


Fig 4: Mean and S.D. of Parental Involvement between urban and rural secondary school students

As a result, hypothesis 4: "There exists no significant difference in parental involvement among urban and rural secondary school students" was denied.

Table 5: Relationship between Academic Anxiety and Parental Involvement

Variables	N	Pearson's Correlation 'r'
Academic Anxiety	600	0.122**
Parental Involvement		

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 shows a statistically significant positive relationship between academic anxiety and parental involvement at a level of 0.01. The 'r' value was 0.122. So, the hypothesis 5 "There exists no significant relationship between academic anxiety and parental involvement among secondary school students" is rejected. Results showed that parental involvement increases the level of academic anxiety of students.

Major Findings

1. Boys and girls experience academic anxiety at significantly different levels. Girls had a higher mean score than boys, which indicated that they were more academically anxious.
2. Students in secondary schools studying urban and rural schools experience academic anxiety at significantly different levels. The mean score of students in urban schools is higher than that of students in rural schools.
3. The parental involvement of secondary school students in boys and girls differs significantly. Boys in secondary school had a slightly higher mean score than girls.
4. The parental involvement of secondary school students in urban and rural areas differs significantly. Urban school students had a higher mean score than rural school students, indicating greater parental involvement.
5. The results of the current study showed a significant correlation between secondary school students' parental involvement and their academic anxiety. From the table, it can be inferred that student academic anxiety increases as parental involvement scores do, and vice versa.

Discussion

In the present study, the researchers found a significant difference in academic anxiety between boys and girls in secondary schools. Girls had more academic anxiety as compared to boys. This result was in line with earlier research done by Sultan and Bhat (2019) [29]. Results revealed that students in urban schools had higher academic anxiety than their rural counterparts, which contradicts the results of a previous study conducted by Sultan and Bhat (2019) [29]. Furthermore, this study found a significant difference in parental involvement between secondary school boys and girls. Findings showed that boys had slightly higher parental involvement as compared to girls. This result also contradicts the result of a previous study conducted by Mehta and Kaur (2022) [19]. They carried out a study on the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement among 8th grade students, and girls' parents were shown to be significantly more involved in their children's education than boys' parents. In addition, there was a significant difference in parental involvement of urban and rural secondary school students. Parents of children in urban located schools were more involved in their children's schooling than parents of rural school students. This finding matched the findings of a prior study by Prater *et al.* (1997) [27]. They examined parental involvement in schools located in rural, urban, and suburban areas. Urban parents were shown to be more involved in their children's schools than those from suburban and rural areas. Furthermore, the analysis found a significant positive relationship between academic anxiety and parental involvement, indicating that as parental involvement increases, so does student academic anxiety, and vice versa.

Conclusion

It is impossible for students to ignore the widespread problem of academic anxiety. If it is not effectively treated, it can have several negative, dangerous, and long-lasting effects. The results obtained from this study indicated that urban located school students and girls experienced higher academic anxiety. However, academic anxiety and parental involvement has significantly positive relation. The results

can be used to improve educational programming that addresses academic anxiety of students by fostering a healthy relationship between the home and school through parental involvement in school activities and homework. Parents should refrain from being unnecessarily critical, abusive, impatient, or pessimistic. They should set attainable and realistic goals for their child.

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