

The Role of Anxiety in Achievement

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Abstract

The present study was designed to investigate the relationship of anxiety with achievement of high school students and also to see the regional and gender differences on the basis of their anxiety. The study was conducted over a sample of 400 (200 boys and 200 girls) high school students studying in Xth class in 8 different schools (4 urban and 4 rural) affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi. Sharma's general anxiety scale for children was used to measure anxiety and the aggregate score of the selected students in the board examinations was taken to show their level of achievement. The results reported that there exists a negative and significant relationship between anxiety and achievement. Significant differences were observed between boys and girls, rural and urban students on the basis of their anxiety.

Keywords: Anxiety, Achievement, Boys, Girls, Rural, Urban

INTRODUCTION

Achievement in different fields of life such as sports, academics, industry, business etc. has great importance for both the student, and those around him/her. There can be no doubt that it is affected by many factors that may reduce it, like anxiety or by others that may enhance it, like general mental ability, emotional and social maturity.

The present age may be said to be an age of anxiety. Anxiety has been taken synonymous with apprehension, dread and uneasiness. This emotion stems from fear, but it is more a fear of what will happen or what has happened than of a clearly apparent fear provoking situation. Anxiety is a state of diffused apprehension. It is vague, non-specific and objectless.

Researchers generally agree that certain degree of anxiety may motivate the student and make inclined to better achievement. Hence, anxiety is

considered a motive for high achievement. However, a high anxiety score may be one of the obstacles to achievement. That is, the relationship between the two variables may be either linear or curvilinear.

A fair number of previous studies have found a significant relationship between achievement and anxiety (*Diaz et al, 2001*). Generally, it could be concluded that there is a positive relationship between high degrees of achievement and low anxiety. There is specific degree of anxiety that increases achievement, but if anxiety increases beyond a certain level the reverse happens. On the basis of the Yerkes-Dodson law both the task difficulty and the level of anxiety must be taken into consideration. That is, "on difficult tasks low levels of arousal improve performance relative to high levels, but on easy tasks, the reverse is true" (*Reber, 1995*).

Most of the young students in these days are influenced by the western culture and science & technology. They are more worried about their achievement in various fields of life. Due to the influence of anxiety, students fall short of the expected level of achievement. Hence, the present investigation is designed with following objectives:

- To investigate the relationship of anxiety with achievement.
- To find out the gender and regional differences on the basis of their anxiety. .

Hypotheses

- i) There exists a significant negative relationship between anxiety and achievement.
- ii) There is significant difference in the anxiety level of boys and girls.
- iii) Significant difference exists between rural and urban students on the basis of their anxiety.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted on a representative sample of 400 students of standard X, randomly selected from 8 different schools of four districts of Punjab i.e. Amritsar, Kapurthala, Bathinda and Patiala. Samples were drawn through multistage random sampling technique by giving due representation of factors like gender and region.

The present study is a correlation research where the dependent variable is achievement and the independent variable is anxiety.

TOOL

General anxiety scale for children (Sharma, 2003) has been used to measure the anxiety of the students. Marks obtained by the students in their annual C.B.S.E. Board matriculation examination were taken as an index of their level of achievement.

In order to analyze the data, raw scores obtained on the basis of anxiety test and achievement, were converted into T-scores. The product moment coefficient of correlation between anxiety and achievement scores was computed. t-test was applied to find the significance of the differences between the mean anxiety scores of boys and girls, rural and urban students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results reveal that the value of $r' = -.149$ ($df=398$, $N= 400$) is negatively significant at 0.05 level of confidence, depicting that there is significant negative correlation between anxiety and achievement.

In order to see the effect of boys or girls separately, again product moment coefficient of correlation between the anxiety and achievement of boys and girls were found to be of the order of $r' = -.128$ ($df = 198$, $N = 200$) which is not significant and $r' = -.238$ ($df = 198$, $N = 200$) which is significant at 0.05 level. This may be due to the high anxiety score of the girls as compared to boys but researchers agree that anxiety can be a multifaceted agent. At its simple or optional level it can be a motive, but at its high level it can be a hindrance. Anxiety in its earlier phase puts a person in a state of instability and imbalance. To reduce that tension, the person must remove

causes, and here anxiety may be motive to get rid of what upsets an individual.

The above results are quite in conformity with the results of studies conducted by *Spielberger (1966)*; *Abu Marak (1988)*; *Dodds (1975)*; *El-Anzi, (2005)* who found negative correlation between anxiety and academic achievement.

Table showing the results of t-test for the variable of Anxiety

VARIABLES	GROUP	MEAN	SD	DF	'T'
Anxiety	Boys	47.88	10.25	398	4.343*
	Girls	52.12	9.29		
Anxiety	Rural	52.07	9.96	398	4.223*
	Urban	47.93	9.63		

* Significant at .05 level

The results of above table indicate that there is significant difference in the anxiety of boys and girls as well as rural and urban students as the t-values (4.343) and (4.223) are found to be significant at .05 level.

The results reveal that and girls are more anxious than boys and these are in line with the findings of previous studies (*Dodds, 1975*; *Abu Marak, 1988*; *Pomerantz, Altamatt and Saxon, 2002*; *El-Anzi, Freih Owayed, 2005*). The reasons for sex differences in anxiety may be society's attitude towards females. They bear more responsibilities and demands in different situations of life.

The reasons for urban student's lower anxiety as compared to rural ones may be due to the fact that urban high schools students are more intelligent active alert and have more facilities for getting education at their disposal and hence react with all situations without being anxious. Moreover, their parents are also educated and help their wards in solving their problems whereas in rural

setting, parent are illiterate and students have to help in their parent's work besides getting education. On the basis of the above results interpreted, all the three hypotheses stands accepted.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Anxiety plays negative role in the achievement of the high school students. It indicates that a certain level of anxiety is essential for achieving high.
2. Significant differences exist between boys and girls, Rural and urban students on the basis of their anxiety.

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