



JOURNAL OF EXERCISE SCIENCE AND PHYSIOTHERAPY

Indexed, Peer Reviewed, Referred

Since 2005



A Study of Gender Difference in Anxiety among Adolescents with Specific Learning Disabilities

Seema Bhatnagar and Prem Kumar

Abstract

Aim: The aim of the study was to observe gender difference in anxiety among adolescents with specific learning disabilities. **Materials and Methods:** A Samples of 110 adolescents (55 males and 55 females) were selected from Government Secondary school of village Nara, district Hoshiarpur. For data collection Beck Anxiety Inventory by A.T. Beck, N. Epstein, G. Brown and R.A. Steer was used. **Results:** No statistically significant difference was found between mean scores of anxiety of male and female adolescents with specific learning disabilities. **Conclusion:** It was concluded that no statistically significant difference was found between mean scores of anxiety of male and female adolescents with specific learning disabilities. In other words, male and female adolescents with specific learning disabilities experience the same level of anxiety.

Seema Bhatnagar

Assistant Professor
Master Tara Singh Memorial College for Women
Ludhiana (Punjab), India.
E-mail: seemabajaj74in@gmail.com

Prem Kumar

Lecturer
JSS Ashakiran Special School and Teacher Training Institute,
Jahankhelan Hoshiarpur (Punjab), India
Email: prem016.saini@yahoo.com

Key words: Gender Difference, Anxiety, Adolescents, Specific Learning Disabilities

DOI: 10.18376/jesp/2026/v22/i1/47762

Introduction

Anxiety is a mental health condition characterized by excessive, uncontrollable and persistent fear or worry that disrupts daily life, distinct from temporary stress. Causes of Anxiety includes rapid heart rate, fatigue, irritability and panic. There are different factors responsible for Anxiety like biological factors, environmental factors, past trauma, health conditions, substance use etc. Some common symptoms of anxiety are rapid heart rate, sweating, trembling, feeling weak, tired, restlessness, avoiding situations that trigger anxiety. There are different types of anxiety disorder like generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, Specific Phobias. Adolescence is a period marked by rapid physical, emotional and social changes. During this stage, academic expectations and social pressures increase significantly. Adolescents who suffer from specific learning Disabilities often face difficulties in reading, writing, spelling or mathematical

skills despite having average or above average intelligence. These academic challenges can lead to feelings of frustration, low self-esteem and Anxiety.

Anxiety may arise due to repeated academic failures, negative feedback from teachers or press and fear of evaluation. Research has shown that students with learning disabilities are more vulnerable to emotional problems than their typically developing peers. Understanding the level of anxiety among adolescents with specific learning disabilities is important for developing appropriate educational and psychological interventions. Mugnaini et.al. (2009) found that adolescents with dyslexia show significantly higher anxiety levels compared to normal students. Nelson & Harwood (2011) reported that students with learning disabilities demonstrate higher levels of internalizing problems such as anxiety and depression. Gallegos, J.; Langley, A. & Villegas, D. (2012) compared severity and risk status for anxiety and depression with coping skills among 130 Mexican school children with learning disabilities (LD) and 130 school children without LD. This research is the first to explore the emotional difficulties of Mexican children with LD. Children completed the Spanish version of the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale and Children's Depression Inventory. Results indicated that a higher percentage of children with LD were at risk for anxiety (22.3% vs. 11.5%) and depression (32% vs. 18%). No statistically significant differences were found for coping skills. Results support the idea that there is an increased awareness of comorbid depression and anxiety among students with LD and a need to promote early identification and intervention in schools.

Efforts should focus on better understanding the relationship between social emotional difficulties and academic achievement and on developing effective interventions to support children with LD. Marianna A. M. et.al. (2014) compared the levels of depression, anxiety at school and self-esteem in children with learning disabilities, mathematical disabilities and a control group who showed typical learning. The participants were 132 children (52 girls and 80 boys). These pupils were selected by scores on a battery of tests commonly used in Italy for the assessment of learning disabilities. On the whole analyses revealed that children with learning disabilities and mathematical disabilities showed higher level of depression and school anxiety as well as lower rated self -esteem at school than children with typical learning.

Thakkar, A.N. et. al. (2016) determined if school students with newly diagnosed SLD were more likely to have anxiety than their regular peers. The study cases (aged 8-15 years) were recruited from institute's learning disability clinic. The samples of the specific learning students were 138. The matched controls were recruited from four schools in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. Anxiety was measured using the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale (SCAS) child self-report version questionnaire. Median SCAS scores and the proportion of students with an SCAS score in the "clinical anxiety" range were compared between the groups. SCAS scores were significantly higher in 8-11-year-old learning-disabled male and female students and 12-15-year-old female students as compared with matched controls. A significantly higher number of learning-disabled students were found to have "clinical anxiety" Students with newly diagnosed SLD have greater odds of being "clinically anxious" relative to their regular peers. The statistical significance level was ≤ 0.05 .

Material & Methods

The present study was conducted on 110 adolescents (55 males and 55 females) from government secondary school of village Nara, district Hoshiarpur (Punjab) India. The age range of adolescents were between 13-17 years. To assess Anxiety Beck Anxiety inventory was used which is designed by A.T. Beck, N. Epstein, G. Brown & R.A. Steer.

Results

The mean, median and mode of the scores of anxiety of male adolescents with specific learning disabilities was 18.13 ± 7.00 , 19.00 and 20.75. The scores were proximate to each other. The values

of skewness and kurtosis of male adolescents with specific learning disabilities was 0.343 and -0.732 respectively showing that the distribution was positively skewed and platykurtic. However, these distortions are quite small. Therefore, the distributions can be taken as normal (Table 1 & Figure 1).

Table 1. Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of Scores of Male Adolescents with Specific Learning Disabilities on the variable of Anxiety

	Mean	Median	Mode	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Male (n=55)	18.13	19.00	20.75	7.00	0.343	-0.732

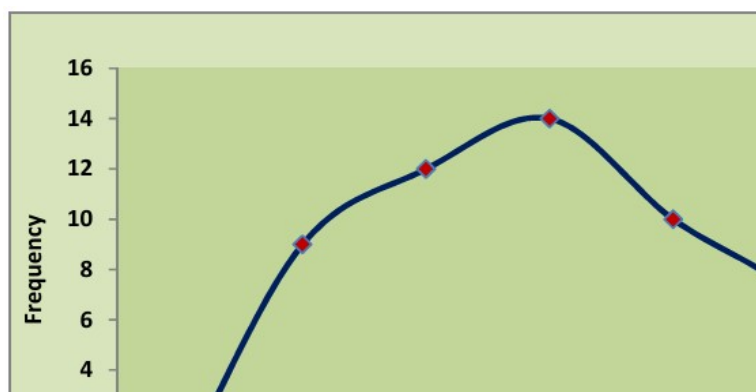


Figure 1. Frequency of Scores of anxiety of male adolescents with specific learning disabilities

The mean, median and mode of the scores of anxiety of female adolescents with specific learning disabilities was 16.60 ± 7.52 , 16.00 and 14.80. The scores were proximate to each other. The values of skewness and kurtosis of male adolescents with specific learning disabilities was 0.457 and -0.795 respectively showing that the distribution was positively skewed and platykurtic. However, these distortions are quite small. Therefore, the distributions can be taken as normal (Table 2 & Figure 2).

Table 2. Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of Scores of Female Adolescents with Specific Learning Disabilities on the variable of Anxiety

	Mean	Median	Mode	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Female (n=55)	16.60	16.00	14.80	7.52	0.457	-0.795



Figure 2. Frequency of Scores of anxiety of female adolescents with specific learning disabilities

To observe the difference if any in the mean scores of anxiety among adolescents with specific learning disabilities based on gender (male and female), t-test was used.

Table 3 and Figure 3 show the mean scores of anxiety of male and female adolescents with specific learning disabilities and it was 18.13 ± 7.00 and 16.60 ± 7.52 respectively. It was found that the mean scores of anxiety of male adolescents was more than female. The t-ratio was 1.10 and it was not statistically significant at .01 level. Thus, the difference in the mean scores of anxiety of female and male adolescents with specific learning disabilities was not statistically significant. In other words, we can say that gender does not contribute to the anxiety of adolescents with specific learning disabilities.

Table 3. T-ratio of Anxiety between Male and Female Adolescents with specific learning disabilities

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-ratio	Sig./Not Sig.
Anxiety	Male	55	18.13	7.00	1.10	Not Sig.
	Female	55	16.60	7.52		

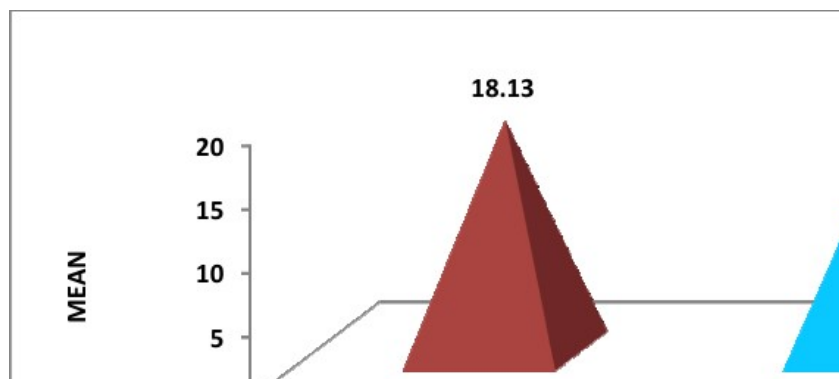


Figure 3. Difference between Mean Scores of anxiety among male and female adolescents with specific learning disabilities

Conclusion

It was concluded that no statistically significant difference was found between mean scores of anxiety of male and female adolescents with specific learning disabilities. In other words, male and female adolescents with specific learning disabilities experience the same level of anxiety.

References

- Beck, A.T., Epstein, N.; Brown, G.& Steer, R.A. (1988). An inventory to measure clinical anxiety: Psychometric properties. *Journal of consulting and clinical Psychology*, 56, 893-897.
- Gallegos, J.; Langley, A. & Villegas, D. (2012). Anxiety, Depression and coping skills among Mexican School Children: A comparison of students with and without Learning Disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Quarterly*. 35(1),54-61.
- Mugnaini, D. et. al. (2009). Internalizing correlates of dyslexia. *World Journal of Pediatrics*.
- Marianna, A.; Rappo, G. and Pepi, A. (2014). Depression, Anxiety at school and self-esteem in children with Learning Disabilities. *Journal of Psychological Abnormalities in Children*. 3:125.
- Nelson, J.M. & Harwood, H. (2011). Learning Disabilities & Anxiety: A meta- analysis. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*.
- Thakkar, A.N.; Karande , S.; Bala, N.; Sant, H.;Gogtay , N.J. & Sholapurwala, R.(2016). Is anxiety more common in school students with newly diagnosed Specific Learning Disabilities? A cross sectional questionnaire based study in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. *Journal of Postgraduate Medicine*; 62 (1):12-19.

Conflict of Interest: None declared