



# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEST ANXIETY, ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** The present study aimed to investigate the relationships between test anxiety, academic self-efficacy, and psychological well-being among college students. The sample size of the study was 233 college students aged between 18-25 years. The scales used in the study were Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale, The Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, and The Westside Test Anxiety Scale. Data analysis involved the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression. Findings indicated that test anxiety was negatively associated with psychological well-being, while academic self-efficacy showed a significant positive relationship. Regression results further revealed that both variables together significantly predicted psychological well-being, with test anxiety. These results highlight the importance of addressing academic stressors while simultaneously enhancing self-belief to foster better mental health outcomes among students.

**Key words:** Test anxiety, Academic Self-efficacy, Psychological well-being, College students.

## INTRODUCTION

Diener et al. (2010) defined psychological well-being as “a subjective evaluation of one's life that is categorized by affirmative emotions, engagement, and meaning. This definition encompasses a broad range of positive experiences, including happiness, satisfaction, and a sense of fulfilment”. Ryff (1989) distinguished six traits of psychological well-being: autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, environmental mastery, and positive relationships. A person's sense of self-determination, control over their environment, potential for personal growth, ability to build fulfilling relationships, and sense of purpose in life are all examples of these traits.

“The negative impact, stress, physiological arousal, and behavioral reactions that accompany fear of failing or not being competent on an exam or other similar assessment circumstance are together referred to as test anxiety. The intricate relationship between anxiety and a variety of traditional indicators of academic achievement at the elementary, high school, and college levels has been the subject of hundreds of research.” (Dikmen, 2022).

Academic self-efficacy essentially reflects a student's level of self-confidence in academic situations. It plays a vital role as both a predictor of academic achievement and an important indicator of students' mental well-being (Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

## NEED FOR THE STUDY

Given the extreme academic pressure and competitive environment that many Indian college students encounter, it is crucial to comprehend the relationship between test anxiety, academic self-efficacy, and psychological well-being. Examining how internal beliefs like self-efficacy protect against test-related anxiety and affect mental health outcomes is crucial given the rising rates of academic stress, depression, and even suicide among Indian students (Yasmeen, 2024). While prior studies have individually examined the links between academic self-efficacy, test anxiety, and psychological well-being, few have explored the combined effects of these three constructs within the Indian college context but culturally grounded studies in India are scarce. Moreover, existing literature primarily relies on either medical students or high school populations; Indian undergraduate students across diverse disciplines remain underrepresented in this field. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by systematically examining the structural relationships among academic self-efficacy, test anxiety, and psychological well-being among Indian college students—providing empirical evidence that can inform culturally sensitive interventions and academic support programs.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A thorough explanation of the research techniques used in this study is given in this chapter.

### 3.1 Hypotheses

- Ha1: There is a significant relationship between test anxiety and psychological well-being.
- Ha2: There is a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and psychological well-being.
- Ha3 a: There is a significant relationship between test anxiety and autonomy.
- Ha3 b: There is a significant relationship between test anxiety and self-acceptance.
- Ha3 c: There is a significant relationship between test anxiety and personal growth.
- Ha3 d: There is a significant relationship between test anxiety and positive relation with others.
- Ha3 e: There is a significant relationship between test anxiety and environmental mastery.
- Ha3 f: There is a significant relationship between test anxiety and purpose in life.
- Ha4 a: There is a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and autonomy.
- Ha4 b: There is a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and self-acceptance.
- Ha4 c: There is a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and personal growth.
- Ha4 d: There is a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and positive relation with others.
- Ha4 e: There is a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and environmental mastery.
- Ha4 f: There is a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and purpose in life.
- Ha5: Test anxiety and academic self-efficacy significantly predict psychological well-being.

### 3.2 Research Design

This research was quantitative, as it involved statistical models and psychological research methods, and was descriptive. Since this research involves establishing the relationship between variables, The research design used in this study was correlational. The dependent variable in this study was Psychological well-being and the independent variables were Test anxiety and Academic self-efficacy.

### 3.3 Participants

The sample of this study consisted of 233 college students from India, selected through purposive sampling. In this research, the target population was college students who met the inclusion criteria: currently enrolled in undergraduate or postgraduate programs in any discipline, aged between 18 and 25 years, and having appeared for at least one academic test or examination in the past six months to ensure recent experience with test anxiety. The total number of participants included 233 out of which 143 were female, 90 were male. Most of the participants in this study are females.

### 3.4 Measures

The psychological well-being was measured using The Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale. It was developed by Carol D. Ryff in 1989 to assess multiple facets of psychological well-being beyond mere happiness or life satisfaction. The scale comprises six core domains: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance. The scale consists of 18-items, with three items representing each domain. (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995)

The test anxiety was measured using West Side Test Anxiety Scale. It was developed by Harold S. M. Driscoll and colleagues in 2007 to screen for test anxiety in students, particularly in academic settings. It is a 10-item self-report questionnaire. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater test anxiety. Driscoll (2007)

Academic Self-efficacy is measured using The Academic Self-Efficacy Scale was developed by Chemers, Hu, and Garcia (2001) to measure students' beliefs in their ability to successfully perform academic tasks such as studying, completing assignments, understanding coursework, and doing well on exams. It is a 8-item scale that uses a 7-point Likert-type format, ranging from 1 (Not at all true) to 7 (Very true). Higher scores indicate greater perceived academic self-efficacy.

### 3.5 Procedure

The sample of the study consisted of 233 college students enrolled in various academic programs and had undergone exams in the past 6 months. They were selected based on inclusion-exclusion criteria. Informed consent was obtained from all. Ethical consideration was maintained and the details of the subjects were kept highly confidential and were only used for this research. The study included responses from people in India. Purposive sampling was administered. It is a non-probability sampling method where the sample selection is based on the logic and experience of the researcher. This method is used for selecting specific samples. The scales were distributed to the participants through Google Forms and physical copies. Appropriate statistical tools were used for the data analysis.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The dataset comprised 233 responses from individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 who were college students. IBM SPSS Statistics 25 was utilized to carry out the statistical analysis, while Microsoft Excel was employed to process the data. The demographic information was computed for each participant. To assess the data's normality, the Shapiro-Wilk test was employed. Pearson's correlation was subsequently calculated and the Multiple regression was also carried out.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Results of Correlation between Test Anxiety, Academic Self-efficacy and Psychological well-being.

Table 4.1

The relationship between Test anxiety, Academic self-efficacy and psychological well-being.

	Test anxiety	Academic self-efficacy
Psychological well-being	-.173**	.185**

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

The analysis shows a significant negative correlation ( $r = -.173$ ,  $p = .003$ ) between test anxiety and psychological well-being among college students. This means that as test anxiety increases, psychological well-being tends to decrease. The first hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between test anxiety, psychological well-being. The Pearson correlations shows that there exists a significant negative relationship between test anxiety and psychological well-being. That is test anxiety and psychological well-being are negatively correlated. This suggests that individuals experiencing test anxiety are likely to report lower levels of psychological well-being.

In a study conducted by Yarkin.et.al in the year 2021 among 427 high school students founded that test anxiety is negatively correlated with psychological well-being. Suggesting that increased test-related stress may

compromise emotional and psychological health. The study focused on the relationship between test anxiety and psychological well-being further supports the finding of Pearson's and Pearson's correlation conducted in this study to find the relationship between test anxiety and psychological well-being among college students. Therefore, the first hypothesis (Ha1) is accepted.

Academic self-efficacy was found to be positively correlated with psychological well-being. This indicates that students with higher levels of confidence in their academic abilities also reported better overall psychological well-being. This shows that a person who tends to have higher academic self-efficacy tends to have higher psychological well-being.

In a study conducted by Tang & Zhu (2023) conducted a study to examine the determinants of psychological well-being among Chinese English as a Foreign Language students, focusing on the roles of academic self-efficacy, grit, and teacher support founded that academic self-efficacy had a significant positive relationship with psychological well-being.

The results of the study also give evidence in accepting the second hypothesis which states that academic self-efficacy has a positive relationship with psychological well-being. Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted.

#### 4.2 Relationship between Test anxiety, Academic self-efficacy and domains of Psychological well-being.

	Academic self-efficacy	Test anxiety
Autonomy	.209**	-.176**
Personal Growth	.240**	-.239**
Self-acceptance	.234**	-.314**
Positive relation with others	.124	-.118
Environmental Mastery	.290**	-.367**
Purpose in life	.122	-.113

The results revealed that test anxiety was negatively correlated with several dimensions of psychological well-being. Specifically, higher test anxiety was associated with lower autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery. These findings suggest that students experiencing greater test anxiety tend to feel less autonomous, report lower levels of personal development, accept themselves less, and perceive less control over their environment. In contrast, test anxiety showed weaker, non-significant relationships with positive relations and purpose in life, indicating that these aspects of well-being may not be strongly influenced by test-related anxiety.

Academic self-efficacy was positively associated with several dimensions of psychological well-being. Higher levels of academic self-efficacy were significantly related to greater autonomy personal growth, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery. These findings suggest that students who feel more confident in their academic abilities also tend to perceive themselves as more independent, capable of personal development, accepting of themselves, and better able to manage their surroundings. In contrast, academic self-efficacy showed weaker, non-significant correlations with positive relations and purpose in life, indicating that these domains of well-being may not be strongly influenced by self-efficacy in academic contexts. Analysis across the domains of psychological well-being, the results showed that test anxiety had significant negative relationships with autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, and environmental mastery. Accordingly, hypotheses Ha3a, Ha3b, Ha3c, and Ha3e were accepted. Among these, the strongest effect was observed for environmental mastery, indicating that students with higher test anxiety experienced greater difficulty in effectively managing their surroundings and academic challenges. In contrast, the relationships between test anxiety and positive relations with others (Ha3d) as well as purpose in life (Ha3f) were not statistically significant, and therefore, these hypotheses were not accepted. This pattern suggests that while test anxiety

undermines several intrapersonal aspects of well-being, its influence on interpersonal relationships and life purpose appears to be weaker.

The analysis of academic self-efficacy across the domains of psychological well-being demonstrated significant positive relationships with autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery. Accordingly, hypotheses Ha4a, Ha4b, Ha4c, and Ha4e were accepted. The strongest association was found for environmental mastery ( $\beta = .290$ ), suggesting that students with higher levels of academic self-efficacy are more capable of effectively managing academic and life challenges. Similarly, the significant links with autonomy, personal growth, and self-acceptance indicate that students who believe in their academic competence are more likely to act independently, pursue growth-oriented goals, and maintain a positive evaluation of themselves.

### 4.3 Predictive power of Test anxiety, Academic self-efficacy, on Psychological well-being

Table 4.3 shows the regression analysis for the variables Test anxiety, Academic self-efficacy and Psychological well-being.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	B	Std.Error	$\beta$	t	p	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F
Test anxiety	Psychological well-being	-.452	.113	-.272	-4.017	0.000			
							418	.175	24.465
Academic self-efficacy		.332	.104	.216	3.193	0.000			
								P<0.001	

A multiple regression was conducted to examine whether test anxiety and academic self-efficacy predicted psychological well-being. The overall model was significant, and explained approximately 17.5% of the variance in psychological well-being ( $R^2 = .175$ ). Test anxiety was a significant negative predictor, indicating that higher levels of test anxiety were associated with lower psychological well-being. In contrast, academic self-efficacy was a significant positive predictor, suggesting that greater self-efficacy was associated with higher psychological well-being. Specifically, higher levels of test anxiety were associated with lower psychological well-being, whereas greater academic self-efficacy contributed positively to well-being. These findings align with previous research showing that test anxiety functions as a maladaptive factor that negatively impacts students' psychological adjustment, while self-efficacy acts as a protective factor. For instance, García-Álvarez et al. (2021) found that academic self-efficacy and emotional intelligence served as significant predictors of psychological well-being among Venezuelan university students, highlighting the role of self-efficacy as a protective psychological resource. Similarly, their study noted that anxiety-related factors undermine psychological health, further supporting the present results. Therefore, the third hypothesis which states that Test Anxiety and Academic self-efficacy significantly predicts psychological well-being is accepted.

### Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationships among test anxiety, academic self-efficacy, and psychological well-being in college students. The findings revealed that test anxiety negatively impacts several domains of psychological well-being, such as autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery. In contrast, academic self-efficacy was positively associated with these domains and emerged as a significant predictor of overall psychological well-being. Regression analysis confirmed that these two variables exert opposing influences, highlighting the dual role of academic-related emotional factors on students' psychological functioning. Overall, the study underscores the importance of fostering academic self-efficacy while addressing test-related anxiety in order to enhance students' overall well-being. These results suggest

that interventions aimed at improving students' confidence in their academic abilities and managing anxiety can contribute to better mental health outcomes.

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