

ACADEMIC ANXIETY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AIZAWL CITY

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Abstract: The present study examined the level of academic anxiety among secondary school students in Aizawl City and investigated whether significant differences existed with regard to school management, class and gender. A descriptive survey method was employed for the study. The population comprised Class IX and Class X students enrolled in government, private and deficit secondary schools in Aizawl City. Using stratified random sampling, a sample of 400 students was selected. Data were collected using the Academic Anxiety Scale developed by Siddiqui and Rehman (2017). The findings revealed that academic anxiety was prevalent among secondary school students, with the majority exhibiting average to above-average levels of academic anxiety. The study further found no significant differences in academic anxiety based on school management, class and gender with regards to academic anxiety. The study concludes that academic anxiety is a common occurrence among secondary school students in Aizawl City.

Key Words: Academic Anxiety, School Management, Descriptive Survey, Secondary School Students.

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is the general feeling that all is not well. This state of helpless apprehension may be restricted to a limited number of environmental settings or it may be generalized to all in a form that has been described as "free floating anxiety". In the modern society it is not possible to prevent the development of certain minimum level of anxiety (Madiwalar, 2021). Anxiety is fear that anticipates difficulty. It can also be called "worry", it may be mild, continuous and panic may occur when it is intense (Hooda 2017). We have all encountered situations in life that present us with various challenges. These difficulties can lead to stress, which may in turn cause feelings of anxiety.

Often students feel the pressure to achieve high levels of academic success which over-shadowed the joys of education and making the students anxious and depressed sometimes. As soon as the new session starts an exhaustive timetable is given by the school with a handbook that has more test or examination schedules than extra-curricular activities. Anxiety that a student experiences due to school environment is called Academic Anxiety. It is kind of state anxiety which relates to any impending danger or beyond normal state of mind from school environment such as examination, subject, etc. Since we are living in an age of anxiety where competition is at stake, the presence of anxiety is common to anybody and it is the general feeling that all is not well. It is one of the most regular psychological disorders among the school going children and throughout the world.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Adolescents' age is the age of anxiety and tensions due to biological mechanism but that is a natural process which cannot be suppressed. Anxiety is a prevalent problem during this stage of life where students experience many firsts, including new lifestyle, friends, exposure to new cultures of studies and alternate ways of thinking. Therefore, an accurate understanding of what level of anxiety disorders students go through during this period of life is important.

With the heavy syllabus and hectic routine of the secondary school, the students are presented with deadlines for assignments to be submitted and projects to be completed the moment academic session begins. Extra classes in school and coaching classes in the evening are the common order of the day. It is understandable that a hectic academic schedule can weigh heavily on students, causing them to experience a range of emotions and feelings that fluctuate differently on both genders which can affect them in various ways. Academic anxiety is a common issue for all students as it can interfere with learning in both direct and indirect ways leading to poor achievement.

In India, the main documented cause of anxiety among school going children and adolescence is parents' high educational expectations and pressure for academic achievement (Deb, 2010). There is also fierce competition among the higher secondary students since the number of places in educational institutions for their further studies is fewer than the number of students. Hence, students have a lot of pressure to perform well in the examination from all the sides of life.

Hence, it is essential to assess whether adolescent students are experiencing academic anxiety. Early identification is crucial, as it allows for timely and appropriate intervention. Parents and teachers need be well aware of the possibility of academic anxiety among their children and students. The significance of carrying out this research lies in its potential to enhance understanding of academic anxiety within the general population.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Mahato and Jangir (2012) examined academic anxiety among adolescents of Minicoy Island. The results showed that a majority of students experienced academic anxiety. While gender did not have a significant influence on anxiety levels, the type of school attended was found to be significantly related to academic anxiety.

Bihari (2014) studied academic anxiety among secondary school students in relation to gender and school management. The results indicated no significant difference in academic anxiety between boys and girls. Nevertheless, a significant difference was observed between students studying in government and private schools.

Siddiqui and Rehman (2014) explored academic anxiety among secondary school students with reference to gender and school type. Their findings revealed that female students experienced higher levels of academic anxiety than male students. However, no significant differences were observed with respect to school type.

Ghosh (2016) investigated academic stress among 200 government and private high school students in Ranchi. The findings indicated that students studying in private schools experienced higher levels of academic stress than those in government schools. The study also reported that female students exhibited greater academic stress compared to male students.

Rao and Chaturvedi (2017) investigated academic anxiety among 500 secondary school students in Bilaspur District, Chhattisgarh. The study found no significant difference in academic anxiety between male and female students of Class IX.

Azeem (2018) reported that most students experienced low to average levels of academic anxiety. Among the 340 students studied, 32.35% exhibited below-average anxiety, 30.29% average anxiety, and 25.29% low anxiety. Only a small proportion demonstrated above-average (8.23%), extremely low (2.05%), high (1.47%), or extremely high (0.29%) levels of anxiety. The study further revealed no significant gender differences in academic anxiety.

Dawngliani et al. (2021) studied academic anxiety among 90 secondary school students in Aizawl District. The study revealed that students generally experienced above-average levels of academic anxiety. However, no significant differences were found with respect to gender or class level (Classes IX and X).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city.
2. To compare the level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to management of schools.
3. To compare the level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to class.
4. To compare the level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to gender.

NULL HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to management of schools.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to class.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to gender

RESEARCH DESIGN

Descriptive Survey Method was used for conducting the present study.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study comprised all Class IX and Class X students enrolled in government, private and deficit secondary schools within Aizawl City. The total population consisted of approximately 12,300 students.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

A sample of 400 secondary school students was selected from government, private and deficit schools in Aizawl City. The sample included students from both Class IX and Class X.

SAMPLING METHOD

Stratified Random Sampling method was used for data collection.

TOOL USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was done using the Academic Anxiety Scale developed by Dr. Mohd. Aid Siddiqui and Dr. Atieq Ul Rehman (2017). The scale is specifically designed to assess the level of academic anxiety among students studying in Classes IX and X.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city.

Table 1
 Overall level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city

Grade	Level	No	Percent
A	Extremely High	8	2
B	High	66	16.5
C	Above Average	121	30.25
D	Average	148	37
E	Below Average	48	12
F	Low	8	2
G	Extremely Low	1	0.25
Total		400	100

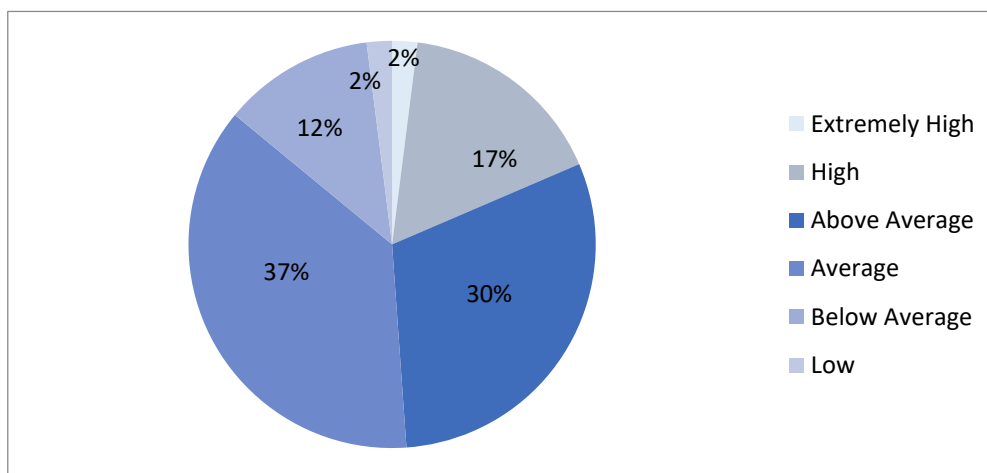


Fig 1

Pie chart showing overall level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city

In the given Table 1 and Figure 1, the overall levels of academic anxiety among secondary school students in Aizawl city are presented. The data reveals that a considerable proportion of students experience moderate levels of academic anxiety, with 37% classified under the "Average" category and 30.25% falling under the "Above Average" category, together accounting for 67.25% of the total sample. Additionally, 16.5% of students reported a "High" level of anxiety, while 2% were found to have an "Extremely High" level, indicating that approximately one-fifth of the students may be at risk of experiencing severe academic stress. In contrast, 12% of the respondents reported "Below Average" anxiety, 2% "Low," and only 0.25% "Extremely Low," suggesting that very few students exhibit minimal academic anxiety. These findings imply that academic anxiety is prevalent among the student population, with a significant portion exhibiting above-average to high levels.

Discussion

These results indicated that most students experience academic anxiety within a moderate range, which is consistent with the findings of Azeem (2018), who also observed that the majority of students displayed low to average levels of academic anxiety. This suggests that while academic anxiety is present among students in Aizawl, it typically remains within a range that may not severely hinder academic performance but still warrants attention for early support and intervention.

2. Comparison of level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to management of school.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to management of school.

Table 2

Comparison of level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to management of school

Variants	Sum of square	Degrees of freedom	Mean Square	F - ratio	Significance
Between Group	30.87	2	15.43	0.119	Not Significant
Within Group	51587.92	397	129.94		
Total	51618.790	399			

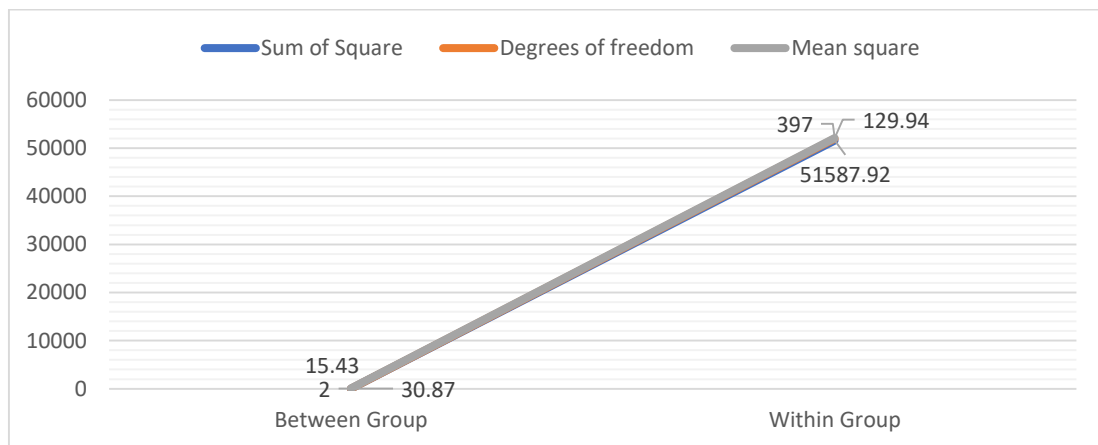


Fig 2

Graphical representation of sum of squares, degrees of freedom and mean square between and within groups in ANOVA

Table 2 and Figure 2 present the results of a one-way ANOVA conducted to examine differences in academic anxiety levels among secondary school students in government, private and deficit schools in Aizawl City. The between-group sum of squares was 30.87 with 2 degrees of freedom, yielding a mean square of 15.43 and an F-ratio of 0.11, which is considerably lower than the critical value of 3.02 at the 0.05 significance level indicating that the observed differences are not statistically significant. The within-group sum of squares was 51,587.92 with 397 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 129.94, suggesting that most of the variance lies within groups rather than between them. The ANOVA analysis confirmed that the slight variations in mean scores across management of school are not significant, leading to the conclusion that management of school type does not have a measurable impact on students' academic anxiety. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

The present study found no significant differences in academic anxiety levels among secondary school students in government, private and deficit schools in Aizawl City, suggesting that school management type does not influence academic anxiety. This aligns with Siddiqui and Rehman (2014), who also found no significant difference between government and private school students. However, it contrasts with findings by Mahato and Jangir (2012), Bihari (2014) and Ghosh (2016). The absence of significant differences in the present study may be due to the relatively similar academic environment and examination system experienced by students across government, private and deficit schools in Aizawl City.

3. Comparison of level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to class.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to class.

Table 3
 Level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to class

Class	Number of Student	Mean	SD	SEMD	t-value	Inference
IX	200	80.73	12.07	1.136	1.453	Not Significant
X	200	82.38	10.60			

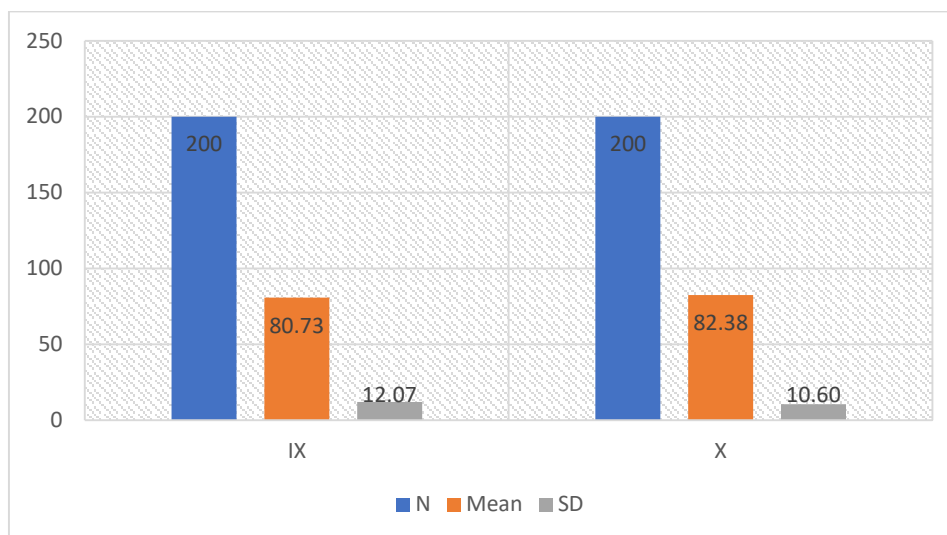


Fig 3

Graphical representation of level of academic anxiety of secondary school student in Aizawl city with regard to class

Table 3 and Figure 3 show the comparison of academic anxiety levels between Class IX and Class X secondary school students in Aizawl City. The mean academic anxiety score for Class IX students was 80.73 with a standard deviation of 12.07, while Class X students recorded a slightly higher mean of 82.38 with a standard deviation of 10.60. To determine whether this difference was statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was performed. The analysis yielded a t-value of 1.46 with 398 degrees of freedom, which did not reach the threshold for statistical significance at the 0.05 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in academic anxiety levels between the two groups is accepted.

Discussion

The present study found a marginally higher level of academic anxiety among Class X students compared to Class IX students in Aizawl City; However, this difference was not statistically significant, suggesting that academic anxiety is experienced at similar levels across both groups. This finding is similar with Dawngliani et al. (2021), which reported no significant difference in academic anxiety between Class IX and Class X students. This may reflect contextual factors in Aizawl's educational environment where academic expectations and pressure are similarly high across both classes which even out anxiety levels despite progression in grade.

4. Comparison of level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to gender.

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to gender.

Table 4

Comparison of level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to gender

Gender	Number of Student	Mean	SD	SMED	t-value	Inference
Female	200	81.61	11.50	1.139	0.105	Not Significant
Male	200	81.49	11.28			

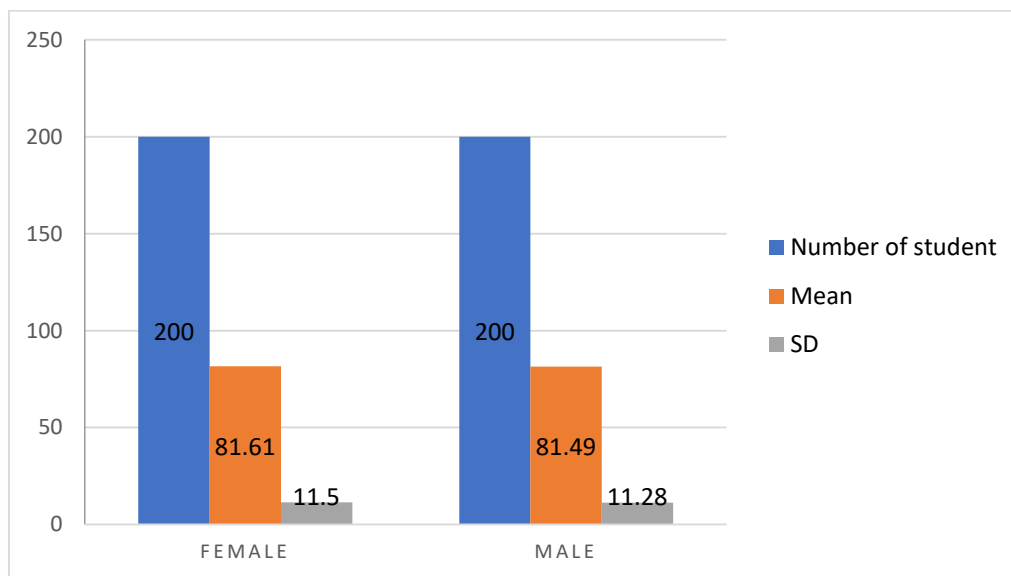


Fig 4

Graphical representation of the mean and standard deviation level of academic anxiety of secondary school students in Aizawl city with regard to gender

In the given Table 4 and Figure 4, the mean and standard deviation of academic anxiety levels among male and female secondary school students in Aizawl City are presented to assess Null Hypothesis 3. The results show that female students had a mean score of 81.61 (SD = 11.50), while male students had a mean of 81.49 (SD = 11.28). An independent samples *t*-test yielded a *t*-value of 0.11 with 398 degrees of freedom, which was statistically not significant. This indicates that the difference in anxiety levels between male and female students is negligible. Therefore, Null Hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that most secondary school students in Aizawl experience academic anxiety within a moderate range, with no significant difference between males and females. Like this study, Mahato and Jangir (2012), Bihari (2014), Rao and Chaturvedi (2017), Azeem (2018) and Dawngliani et al. (2021) found similar results. In contrasts, Siddiqui and Rehman (2014) and Ghosh (2016) reported higher anxiety levels in female students as compared to male student. The absence of significant gender differences in the present study may indicate that both male and female students in Aizawl City are exposed to similar academic pressures, parental expectations and school environment.

CONCLUSION

This study was undertaken to examine the level of academic anxiety among secondary school students in Aizawl City and to determine whether factors such as gender, class level and type of school management influence students' experiences of academic anxiety. Based on the analysis of the data and comparisons with existing literature, several key conclusions can be drawn.

It was found that most students in Classes IX and X experience academic anxiety at a moderate level. This suggests that while academic anxiety is commonly experienced among students, for most, it is not extreme. However, even moderate anxiety can have an impact on academic performance if left unaddressed, which highlights the importance of early support and intervention.

When comparing male and female students, the study found no significant difference in their levels of academic anxiety. This shows that both male and female students experience academic anxiety in similar ways, and that gender is not a major factor influencing anxiety levels in this context.

The comparison between Class IX and Class X students showed only a slight, statistically insignificant increase in anxiety among Class X students. This suggests that academic anxiety remains relatively stable across these two grade levels. The similar academic expectations and pressures across both classes may explain this pattern.

The study also found that the type of school management did not have a significant effect on students' academic anxiety. Although there were slight variations in anxiety levels among school types, these differences were not statistically significant. This implies that students across different types of schools face similar academic pressures and challenges, possibly due to a shared school environment and parental expectations.

In conclusion, these findings suggest a level of uniformity in the experience of academic anxiety. It shows schools and educators must provide common support systems for all students, rather than targeting specific groups.

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