



Impact of trait anxiety and gender on the academic motivation of secondary school students

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Abstract

Anxiety is a bodily response to a perceived threat or danger. It is triggered by a combination of biochemical changes in the body, the patient's personal history and memory, and the social situation. Present study was being conducted to study the levels of trait anxiety among the secondary school students and to study the impact of trait anxiety on the academic motivation of low trait anxiety and high trait anxiety of secondary school students. Data were collected from two hundred secondary school students. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory by Spielberger and Keele's Academic Motivation Inventory were used to collect data. Results revealed there was no significant difference in trait anxiety of boys and girls secondary school students. There was no significant difference in academic motivation of boys and girls having high anxiety and low anxiety. There was no significant difference in academic motivation of students having high trait anxiety and students having low trait anxiety.

Keywords: trait anxiety, academic motivation, low trait, psychological

Introduction

Anxiety is the most pervasive psychological phenomenon of our time. There is hardly any systematic conception of personality, specifically in relation to its development, which does not attribute anxiety, a role of great significance. Anxiety is a common psychological disorder in this age of speed and tension and it appears as one of the major mental health problems today. The importance and pervasiveness of anxiety in the different cultures and its ubiquitous influence on human behaviour is being increasingly recognized. Anxiety has become the concern of not only psychologists, learning theorists, but the science, art, religion and literatures also deem to be overpowered with the thought.

Anxiety is beyond the boundaries of time, space, country, religion, language, and caste. Though anxiety is timeless, it is the twentieth century, which has been termed as the "age of anxiety". Every nook and corner of human endeavor seems to be affected somehow by anxiety. An evolutionary viewpoint, anxiety must have some functional value for it to have evolved as an inherent response potential in all human species. Man's effort to escape anxiety is a major theme in human thought and experience. The importance of anxiety as a powerful influence, in contemporary like is increasingly recognized, and manifestations of current concern with anxiety phenomena are ubiquitously reflected in literature, arts, science and religion as well as in many other facets of our culture.

The feeling of anxiety is an intrinsic part of the condition of human being. It is a natural response, built into the human design, to certain environmental and psychological factors. Presumably, man has always experienced anxiety, as long as he has existed as a species, though the contents of his anxieties, and the ways in which these affects are felt and categorized phenomenally, as well as the kinds of circumstances that give rise to them, are, to a considerable

degree, a function of the assumptions of the cultures in which he has lived.

In philosophy Socrates changed the emphasis of the study from the external to the internal forms of reference and furthered the shifts towards a personal, self-oriented worldview. His contributions, as reported by Plato, do not seem to have added directly to the developing concept of anxiety, but they affect. Aristotle, for his part, discussed the emotion fear at some length. In his delineation fear, the concept is fairly close, though not identical, to that of anxiety. Anxiety arises when the person becomes aware of threats to vital concerns. The term "Anxiety" was appearing as a standard term in medico-psychiatric. Freud proposed the delineation of a new diagnostic entity, the "Anxiety Neurosis". Two early contributions to science, those of Darwin and of Freud, established anxiety as a subject of scientific study. Subsequently, Spence Taylor, Sarason, Spielberger and their respective associates transformed the concept of anxiety into measurable and useful psychological construct.

Sigmund Freud is undoubtedly the most important contributor to our present understanding of anxiety phenomena. He conceptualized anxiety neurosis as a discrete clinical syndrome to be differentiated from neurasthenia, and subsequently came to regard anxiety as the fundamental problem in all neurotic symptom formation. He defined anxiety as "something felt", an unpleasant emotional (affective) state that is universally experienced. For Freud, anxiety was not only a central-problem in neurosis, but understanding anxiety was also essential to develop a comprehensive theory of human behaviour.

Concept of Trait-State Anxiety

Spielberger (1972) distinguished between two different anxiety constructs: State Anxiety (A-state) and Trait Anxiety (A-trait).

A-state is defined as a transitory emotional state that varies in intensity, fluctuates overtime, and is characterized by furling of tension and apprehension, and by heightened activity of the automatic nervous system. A- Trait refers to relatively stable individual differences in the disposition to respond to situations perceived as threatening with elevations in the intensity of state anxiety.

Trait-state anxiety theory provides a conceptual frame of reference for classifying the major variable that should be considered in anxiety research and suggest possible interrelationships among these variables. The theory is especially concerned with classifying the properties of A-state and A-trait as psychological constructs, and with specifying the characteristics of stressful stimulus condition which evoke differential levels of A-state in persons who differ in A-trait. The theory also recognizes the centrality of cognitive appraisal in the evocation of an anxiety state, and the importance of cognitive and motoric processes (defense mechanisms) that serve to eliminate or reduced anxiety states.

Academic Motivation

Academic motivation refers to the urge in the individual to achieve excellence in academic fields. It has been shown that academic motivation is an important factor influencing the achievement of the students in academic sphere. There is a difference between achievement motivation and academic motivation.

Very few studies have been conducted in the area of academic motivation, especially in India as most of the studies in the area of motivation are on achievement motivation. It is only in recent times that there is awareness among the researchers to conduct studies in this important but neglected area.

In a study by Mehta (1981) academic motivation has emerged independent of achievement which is quite contrary to expectation. Academic motivation is significantly related with academic achievement but 't' and 'F' ratio just missed the significance level. In college arts girls achievement orientation is significantly correlated with academic achievement of B.A. Part I, while test orientation shows a significant 'F' Ratio for academic achievements of B.A. Part II girls.

Significance of the study

The investigator, after having realized the dearth of empirical researches in the field of academic motivation, considered it worthwhile to undertake the present investigation. There is ample evidence that anxiety and gender have impact upon academic motivation. Studies are needed to explore the effect of these factors in great details so that effective remedial procedures and techniques may be developed for reducing anxiety levels and increasing academic motivation of the students. The knowledge of dynamics of these factors is very important in the area of education where little work has been done. Tensions in the family and control exercised by the parents over the children in the family, the discrimination between rights and duties of male and female offspring in a family, rejection and punishment to children by their parents is a phenomenon which is like wild fire even in our so called progressive society. Thus, the present study is all the more relevant.

Objectives of the study

Following were the objectives of the present investigations:

1. To study the levels of trait anxiety among the secondary school boys and girls students.
2. To study the impact of trait anxiety on the academic motivation of low trait anxiety and high trait anxiety of secondary school students.
3. To compare the trait anxiety of boys and girls students.

Hypothesis of the study

In the light of stipulated objective, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. There exists significant difference in trait anxiety of boys and girls students.
2. There exists significant difference in academic motivation of boys having high anxiety and boys having low anxiety.
3. There exists significant difference in academic motivation of students having high trait anxiety and students having low trait anxiety.
4. There exists significant difference in academic motivation of girls having high trait anxiety and girls having low trait anxiety.
5. There exists significant difference in academic motivation of boys having high trait anxiety and girls having high trait anxiety.
6. There exists significant difference in academic motivation of boys having high trait anxiety and girls having low trait anxiety.
7. There exists significant difference in academic motivation of boys having low trait anxiety and girls having high trait anxiety.
8. There exists significant difference in academic motivation of boys having low trait anxiety and girls having low trait anxiety.

Method

In order to collect requisite data for research problem, the investigator applied descriptive survey method.

Sample

A sample of 200 students studying in senior secondary classes among schools in Yamuna Nagar district was selected randomly from eight schools. The schools were drawn randomly from all the senior secondary school in Yamuna Nagar.

Tools used

Following tools were used for the collection data:

1. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory by Spielberger.
2. Keele's Academic Motivation Inventory.

Procedure

The investigator contacted the Principals of the selected schools for fixing up date and time for the administration of tests. The investigator made the students comfortable. Purpose of the study was explained to them and subjects were assured that their responses will be kept confidential. Both the tests are to be administered in one sitting. They responses were be scored and tabulated.

Statistical technique employed

The data were analyzed using t-test.

Results

Formation of comparison group

In order to make comparison in academic motivation between various groups of students, the sample was divided into groups on the basis of sex and scores obtained on State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). The usual method of formation of high, average and low groups was followed. The scores of the students on STAI were arranged in ascending order and then top 27% and bottom 27% students were selected to form high level group and low level group. For sex variable, two groups of boys and girls were formed.

Table 1: Comparison of Trait Anxiety of High School Boys and Girls

Comparison Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'
Boys	115	47.4	5.13	1.24
Girls	85	48.3	4.89	

df = 198, t = 1.96 at 0.05 level

Table 1 shows the means, S.D. and 't' value of scores for boys and girls obtained on State-Trait -Anxiety Inventory. It is clear from the table that the value of 't' for comparison group is 1.24 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This means that both the means do not differ significantly. Thus it may be said that both the groups do not differ significantly as for as their level of trait anxiety is concerned. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2: Comparison of Academic Motivation of Boys having high Anxiety and boys having low anxiety

Comparison Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'
Boys High Trait Anxiety	30	61.33	6.73	0.53
Boys Low Trait Anxiety	30	60.50	5.49	

df = 58, t = 2.00 at 0.05 level

Table 2 shows the means S.D. and 't' value of scores for boys having high trait anxiety and girls low trait anxiety on academic motivation. It is clear from the table that the value of 't' for comparison groups is 0.53 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This means that both the means do not differ significantly. Thus it may be said that both the groups do not differ significantly as for as their academic motivation is concerned. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3: Comparison of Academic Motivation of Students having High Trait Anxiety and Students having Low Trait Anxiety

Comparison Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'
Students High Trait Anxiety	54	47.22	5.86	1.06
Students Low Trait Anxiety	54	48.26	4.21	

df = 106, t = 1.98 at 0.05 level.

Table 3 depicts the means S.D. and 't' value of scores for students having high trait anxiety and students having low trait anxiety on academic motivation. It is clear from the table that

the value of 't' for comparison groups is 1.06 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This means that both the means do not differ significantly. Thus it may be said that both the groups do not differ significantly as for as their academic motivation is concerned. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4: Comparison of Academic Motivation of Girls having High Trait Anxiety and Girls having Low Trait Anxiety

Comparison Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'
Girls High Trait Anxiety	25	47.68	5.89	0.32
Girls Low Trait Anxiety	25	48.16	5.58	

df = 48, t = at 2.01 at 0.05 level.

Table 4 shows the means S.D. and 't' value of scores for girls having high trait anxiety and girls having low trait anxiety on academic motivation. It is clear from the table that the value of 't' for comparison groups is 0.32 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This means that both the means do not differ significantly. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5: Comparison of Academic Motivation of Boys having High Trait Anxiety and Girls having High Trait Anxiety

Comparison Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'
Boys High Trait Anxiety	30	48.17	5.89	0.30
Girls High Trait Anxiety	25	47.68	5.89	

df = 53, t = at 2.00 at 0.05 level.

Table 5 shows the means S.D. and 't' value of scores for boys having high trait anxiety and girls having high trait anxiety on academic motivation. It is clear from the table that the value of 't' for comparison groups is 0.30 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This means that both the means do not differ significantly. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 6: Comparison of Academic Motivation of Boys having High Trait Anxiety and Girls having Low Trait Anxiety

Comparison Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'
Boys High Trait Anxiety	30	48.17	5.89	0.0
Girls Low Trait Anxiety	25	48.16	4.58	

df = 53, t = at 2.00 at 0.05 level.

Table 6 shows the means S.D. and 't' value of scores for boys having high trait anxiety and girls having low trait anxiety obtained on academic motivation. It is clear from the table that the value of 't' for comparison groups is 0.0 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This means that both the means do not differ significantly. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 7: Comparison of Academic Motivation of Boys having Low Trait Anxiety and Girls having High Trait Anxiety

Comparison Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'
Boys Low Trait Anxiety	30	47.68	3.69	0.06
Girls High Trait Anxiety	25	47.68	5.89	

df = 53, t = at 2.00 at 0.05 level.

Table 7 shows the means S.D. and 't' value of scores for boys having low trait anxiety and girls having high trait anxiety on academic motivation. It is clear from the table that the value of 't' for comparison groups is 0.06 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This means that both the means do not differ significantly.

Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 8: Comparison of Academic Motivation of Boys having Low Trait Anxiety and Girls having Low Trait Anxiety

Comparison Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'
Boys Low Trait Anxiety	30	47.68	3.69	0.50
Girls Low Trait Anxiety	25	48.16	4.58	

df = 53, t= at 2.00 at 0.05 level.

Table 8 shows the means S.D. and 't' value of scores for boys having low trait anxiety and girls having low trait anxiety on academic motivation. It is clear from the table that the value of 't' for comparison groups is 0.50 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This means that both the means do not differ significantly.

Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Main Findings

1. There was no significant difference in trait anxiety of boys and girls.
2. There was no significant difference in academic motivation of boys having high anxiety and boys having low anxiety.
3. There was no significant difference in academic motivation of students having high trait anxiety and students having low trait anxiety.
4. There was no significant difference in academic motivation of girls having high trait anxiety and girls having low trait anxiety.
5. There was no significant difference in academic motivation of boys having high trait anxiety and girls having high trait anxiety.
6. There was no significant difference in academic motivation of boys having high trait anxiety and girls having low trait anxiety.
7. There was no significant difference in academic motivation of boys having low trait anxiety and girls having high trait anxiety.
8. There was no significant difference in academic motivation of boys having low trait anxiety and girls having low trait anxiety.

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