

## Research Article

## Academic Anxiety towards Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students: A Psychological Study of Samastipur District, India

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**Abstract:** Psychological stress, anxiety makes bad and creates a problematic situations on students to perform better. The factors collectively hamper their performance leading to low academic achievement. Having surveyed the literature, it has been observed that in Bihar state a few studies have been witnessed especially in the field of academic anxiety and academic achievement of the students in last decades. Hence, the present study is aimed to fill that gap and efforts are made to find out the levels of anxiety towards academic achievement. Thus, for the present study one hundred eighty (N=180) students which comprises the students obtained above 70 % marks (n=60); 60 % to 69 % (n=60) and below 60 % marks obtained by the students in the half – yearly examinations (n=60) of IX th standard students studying in government schools located in and around the area of Samastipur district of North Bihar, India were selected randomly. For collecting the data on academic anxiety – a scale “Academic Anxiety Scale for Children” (AASC) developed by Singh and Gupta (2005) was used and on the other hand, academic achievement was measured on the basis of performance of half yearly examination of school test. Having collected the data on the items of the test, the individual scores were obtained as per norms and procedure of the tests for giving statistical treatment. Obtained results revealed that there are significant differences between the different groups of students in terms of their degree of academic anxiety towards their academic achievement, although all students had shown moderate levels of academic anxiety. Obtained results have been discussed in detail by giving appropriate reasons in the context of North Bihar, India.

**Keywords:** Academic Anxiety, Academic Achievement. Secondary School, Samastipur.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is the only means to empower children and adults alike to become active participants in the transformation of the society. It also helps in the enrichment and progress of society by equipping children with spiritual, moral and material knowledge but in the present changing scenario of the world of work there is much emphasis on preparing school children to be competitive in the academic world. It is generally seen that the children are pressurized by school as well as family to excel in the academics. The pressure leads to academic anxiety. This is the reason that more and more children seem to be succumbing to anxiety disorder.

Anxiety is a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with arousal of the nervous system [1]. The high level of anxiety causes a person’s normal life being difficult such as interfered activities and social life. Anxiety is one of the wide varieties of emotional and behaviour

disorders. Students with anxiety disorder exhibit a passive attitude in their studies such as lack of interest in learning, poor performance in exams, and do poorly on assignments. The anxiety’s psychological symptoms among students include feeling nervous before a tutorial class, panicking, going blank during a test, feeling helpless while doing assignments, or lack interest in a difficult subject whereas the physiological symptoms include sweaty palms, cold, nervousness, panic, fast pace of breathing, racing heartbeat, or an upset stomach [2]. The prevalence of anxiety among university students has been acknowledgement by students and educators. However, study anxiety is a real phenomenon; the importance of study anxiety is particularly related to the sources of anxiety and how to handle them.

While studying academic performance, anxiety has been found a major factor [3, 4] and various studies have demonstrated that it has a detrimental effect. Researchers have already revealed that high levels of anxiety influence on the decrease of working memory,

distraction, and reasoning in students [5]. Hemamalini [6] has been recognized that anxiety plays significant role in student's learning and academic performance; moreover anxiety has been known to have both facilitating and debilitating effects on academic achievement. Researchers have been looking at the correlation of anxiety and the effect of academic performance among school students; they found that among high school students with higher level of anxiety have lower academic performance [3] and greater anxiety would be associated with poorer academic achievement [7].

Anxiety is one of the psychophysiology difficulties [8]. The symptoms can be psychological physical or environmental challenges. There are various forms of anxiety which includes excessive worrying, a sense of fear, restlessness, overly emotional responses, and negative thinking. Some people when anxious they appear to be clam, but the brain never stops thinking. This will get so bad as well as interrupt the quality of life. Experts have many definitions to describe anxiety. Breuer [9] mentioned that all anxiety disorders are defined by the dual characteristics of excessive emotional fear and physiologic hyper arousals. Harris *et al.* [10] defined that anxiety is a basic human emotion consisting of apprehension and uncertainty that typically appears when an individual perceives an occurrence as being a threat to the ego or self-esteem. In its conceptualization, individuals with high levels of anxiety generally hold heightened levels of trait anxiety, but in evaluative situations, the state of anxiety also elevates. Definition of anxiety by Spielberger's [11] is emotional state consisting of feeling, tension, apprehension, and its effects on the nervous system. These are differentiated in state and trait anxiety. State anxiety is transitory emotional state reflective of one's interpretation of a particular stressful situation at a particular period of time or at that moment feeling. However trait anxiety is the enduring personality characteristic which refers to relatively stable individual differences that characterizes people's anxiety or general feeling of anxiety [1]. Spielberger's theory of anxiety has led to understanding the concept of anxiety. A person who has a certain level of anxiety has been found to be a facilitative tool for an individual to perform ineffectively. The combination of feeling anxiety can lead to interference with performance through mind blocking, attention resources, more cognitive interference, worries and fears induced by anxiety.

According to the researches that has already done in past about anxiety among students, the study of anxiety is a specific-situation that refers to anxiety conditions that are experienced during study process and could be disturbance of academic performance. Hence, the present piece of research work is an effort to see the levels anxiety among secondary school students of Samastipur district of North Bihar, India.

### **Rationale of the present study**

Having surveyed the literature available, it has been observed that various studies have been conducted on the variables from different psychological angles but none of the studies have been found of anxiety towards academic achievement with reference to Samastipur district of North Bihar, India. Hence the present piece of research work is of utmost value in the sense that the sample area undertaken for the present study is still an unexplored area. The finding of such study will fill the void of knowledge in the area concerned. The cognitive anxiety is the component that most strongly affects performance [12, 13]. According to Fazy and Hardy [15] cites cognitive anxiety has a positive relationship with performance when physiological arousal is low. An important research demonstrated that students with higher level of anxiety tend to obtain lower marks in their end-of-semester examination [16]. Researcher has been conducted to see the correlation of anxiety and the influence of academic achievement, student with high anxiety levels would have lower academic achievement among high school students [3]. Others expressed the opinion that the high level of anxiety will be associated with low academic performance [14]. A number of previous studies have found a significant relationship between academic achievement and anxiety, a positive relationship between high degrees of academic achievement and low anxiety [17]. Moreover, it is generally observed that moderate level of stress and anxiety is the result of good performance.

Secondary students have a responsibility to maintain their optimal academic performance. Anxiety among students are created by insensible teaching or an over demanding syllabus. This then pushes students towards the surface approach as a coping strategy, stress and anxiety due to personal or family related problems also leads to a feeling of anxiety as generally observed by the psychologist. It is common for students to perform poorly when they experience pressure with their tasks and when they experience high level of anxiety during their studies. There are many sources of created anxiety during study, according to Guerrero [18] anxiety sources can be interpreted on difference age level, social class, high activity, greater familiarity, gender, and culture ecosystem. Under certain circumstances, actually anxiety can help us to evaluate and mobilize resources in order to improve performance in some tasks. Therefore, study anxiety should be taken seriously. This relationship also could possibly lead to reaction of anxiety that interferes with students' performance through blocks of memory, concentration, attention resources, or cognitive interference from the worries and fears induced by anxiety during their study.

It is also to point out that learning difficulties may also create students' anxiety of feeling -

discomfort, which means that feeling anxious in the classroom does not improve learning. Soler [19] observed that students who felt satisfied and had low levels of anxiety achieved a higher academic performance. Therefore, anxiety has been regarded as the most significant factors in determining students' achievement in academic performance.

It is also important to view that available literature have documented a number of inputs that have impact on students' academic achievement these include classroom environment [20], teacher support [20]. Certain characteristics of the students and their family are also important, including parents education [21].

Academic anxiety is a common psychosocial disorder in school going students but most of the cases academic anxiety could be underestimated, it's linked with perceived social support [22]. Parents' high educational expectations are one of the most negative factors for poor academic achievement and committed self-harm activities [22]. The teachers, counselors, administrators, and peers are all school setting can be a first line of defense for students in dealing with mental health concerns and to bring awareness to anxiety, stress and educate helpful ways to cope stress and anxiety [23, 24].

On the basis of above findings of the studies, present study has been undertaken to find out the levels of academic anxiety among secondary school students towards academic achievement with special reference to Samastipur district – a well-known district of North Bihar, India.

**Hypotheses**

On the basis of the broad aims and objectives of the present study the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There will be no significant difference between the groups of A & B category of students in terms of their degree of Academic Anxiety towards Academic Achievement.
2. There will be no significant difference between the groups of B & C category of students in terms of their degree of Academic Anxiety towards Academic Achievement.
3. There will be no significant difference between the groups of A & C category of students in terms of their degree of Academic Anxiety towards Academic Achievement.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Sound research methodology has been used in the present piece of research work to achieve the objectives of the study.

**Sample**

For the present piece of research endeavor one hundred sixty (N=160) IX th standard class students were selected on their academic performance obtained in the half – yearly examinations conducted by the Schools and they obtained their marks after assessment. Similarly, three categories of students were taken on the basis of their academic performance/ academic achievement. Total subjects' age were ranged between 13 to 15 years. The break –up of the total sample are given below.

CATEGORY	Academic Achievement on the basis of obtained marks	Total
A	70 % and above	60
B	60 % - 69 %	60
C	Below 60 %	60
Total		180

**Materials Used**

The following materials were used to carry out the present piece of research work:

1. **Academic Anxiety Scale for Children (AASC):** For measuring academic anxiety among school students, a scale developed by Singh and Gupta [28] was used. The scale consisted of 20 items only. The maximum possible score is 20. In this scale each item of the test is scored 1 – 0. There are two types of

items – positive and negative. All positive which are endorsed by the subjects as “Yes” and all Negatives items are only 04 items which are endorsed by the subjects as “No” are given a score of 1. A score is zero is awarded to all other answers. Thus, high score on the test indicates high academic anxiety and low score on the test indicates low academic anxiety. Score awarded details are given below:

Statements	Yes	No	Item-wise Serial No.	Total
Positive	1	0	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20,	16
Negative	0	1	4, 9, 16, 18	04
TOTAL				20

The reliability coefficient for Academic Anxiety Scale for Children reported by the author

is given below which confirms the efficacy of the test.

Method	Coefficient of Correlation	P
Test - Retest	.60*	.01 (* significant)
Split - half	.65*	.01 (*significant)

- Biographical Information Blank (BIB):** For tapping biographical information, a biographical information blank was prepared. It includes, age, class, area of locality, family income, Mother’s Qualifications, Father’s Qualifications, Number of brothers and sisters, caste, religion and type of family, etc.

**Procedure**

Having selected the subjects on the basis of their academic achievement, all the students were asked to sit comfortably and rapport established with brief general talks with the IX th class students of government school. They were instructed that to read instructions carefully as printed on the test. If there is any confusion regarding the instructions, they must ask by raising their hand and told them that there is nothing wrong and right in the answer. There is no fixed time limit for the completion of the test. They were also assured that the information provided by them will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for research purposes. As soon as the subjects finish their work, test materials were collected. Finally, obtained data were tabulated according to norms and procedures of the test for giving statistical treatment to test the hypotheses formulated. In this way one hundred eighty children were measured on academic anxiety test on the

basis of their obtained results in school half-yearly examinations.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In order to achieve the objective of the present study and to test the hypotheses, the obtained results are presented in the following tables.

Table - 1 clearly reveals the fact that there is highly significant difference between the A and B group of students in terms of their degree of academic anxiety towards academic achievement. Group A category of students had obtained 70 % and above marks in the half – yearly examination in the school and they have reported higher degree on academic anxiety test as the Mean score is 15.53 with an SD 3.65 than B category of students who scored 60 % to 69% in the half – yearly school examination as the Mean score on academic anxiety test is 13.23 with an SD 2.96 which low degree than A category of students. Hence, the proposed hypothesis i.e. there will be no significant difference between the groups of A & B category of students in terms of their degree of academic anxiety towards academic achievement, stands rejected as the ‘t’ – 3.93 has been found statistically significant at .01 level of confidence.

**Table-1: Showing Mean, SD and t for the two groups (A & B) of subjects On Academic Anxiety Test**

GROUP	Mean	S.D	t	Level of Significance
A	15.63	3.65	3.93*	0.01
B	13.23	2.96		

**Table-2: Showing Comparative Levels of Perceived Reactions on Academic Anxiety towards Academic Achievement between A & B Category of Students**

Levels	Category A		Category B	
	N=60	Percentage	n=60	Percentage
High	41	69.33 %	36	60 %
Moderate	11	18.33 %	13	21.67 %
Low	08	13.33 %	11	18.33 %

Table – 2 is the extension of table – 1 regarding the comparative levels of perceived reaction on academic anxiety towards academic achievement between A and B category of students. From the table – 2, it could be observed that 68.33 percent of A category students have reported higher degree of academic anxiety towards their academic achievement in comparison to B category of students as they reported 60 percent only. 18.33 percent of A category of students had shown moderate level of academic anxiety as compared to B category of students i.e. 21.67 percent which is higher than the group of A category students.

Moreover, 18.33 percent of B category students reported low levels of academic anxiety towards their academic achievement. Thus, the hypothesis formulated i.e. there will be no significant difference between the groups B & C category of students in terms of their degree of academic anxiety towards academic achievement also stands rejected. The presented results seem to be logical in the sense that A group of students are more anxious about their career, hence the significant difference was found (Table – 1). The present trend of results can be observed by the following diagram:

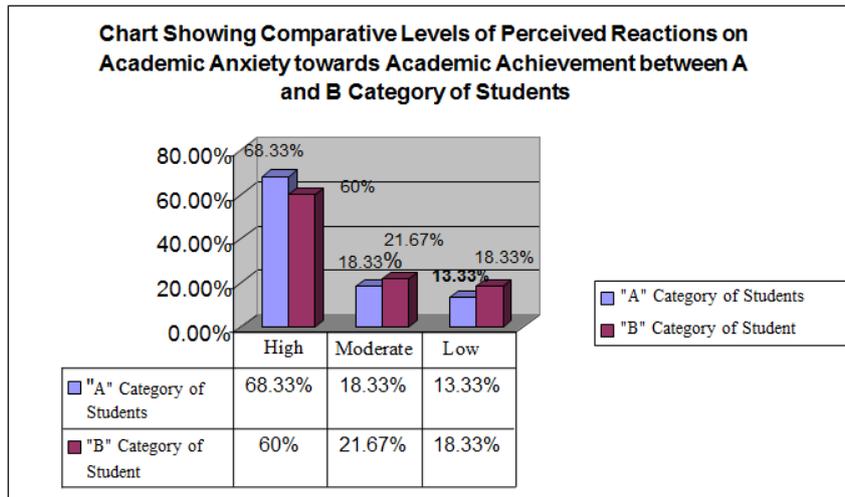


Table – 3 reveals the clear cut picture regarding the significant difference between the B and C category of students which has been found

statistically significant as obtained ‘t’ – value is 2.16 at .01 level of confidence

**Table: - 3 showing Mean, SD and t for the two groups (B & C) of subjects On Academic Anxiety Test**

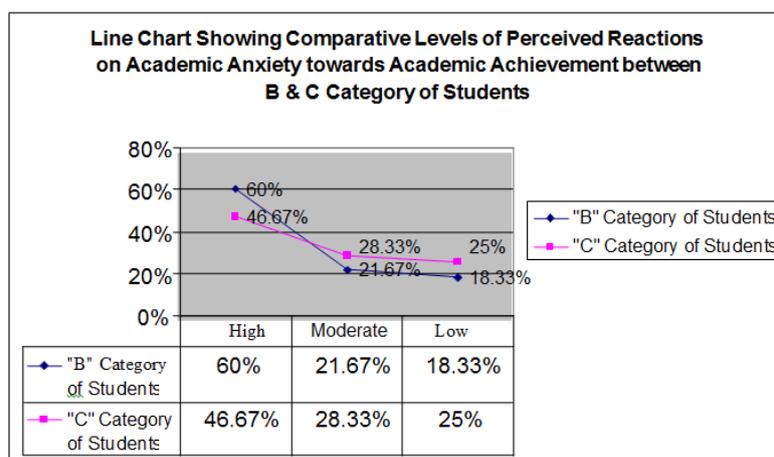
GROUP	Mean	S.D	t	Level of Significance
B	13.23	2.96	2.16**	.05
C	11.03	2.42		

**Table-4: Showing Comparative Levels of Perceived reactions on Academic Anxiety towards Academic Achievement between B & C Category of Students**

Levels	Category B		Category C	
	N=60	Percentage	n=60	Percentage
High	36	60 %	28	46.67 %
Moderate	13	21.67 %	17	28.33 %
Low	11	18.33 %	15	25 %

Table – 4 is also the extension of table – 3 pertaining to comparative levels of perceived reactions on academic anxiety towards academic achievement between the groups of B and C category of students. Table – 4 indicated that 60 percent of B categories of students have shown higher degree of academic anxiety in comparison to C category of students i.e. 46.67 percent which is low than B category of students.,

whereas, 28.33 of C category reported moderate level as compared from B category of students i.e. 21.67 percent. Moreover, 25 percent of C category of students had shown low levels on academic anxiety test towards academic achievement as compared from B category of students’ i.e. 18.33 percent which is low. The presented results can also be observed by the following diagram.



**Table: - 5 Showing Mean, SD and t for the two groups (A & C) of subjects on Academic Anxiety Test**

GROUP	Mean	S.D	t	Level of Significance
A	15.63	3.65	4.34*	.01
C	11.03	2.42		

From the table – 5, it is apparently clear that there is a significant difference between the group of A & C category of students in terms of their degree of academic anxiety towards academic achievement, hence the formulated hypothesis i.e. there will be no significant difference between the groups of A & C category of students in terms of their degree of academic anxiety towards academic achievement also

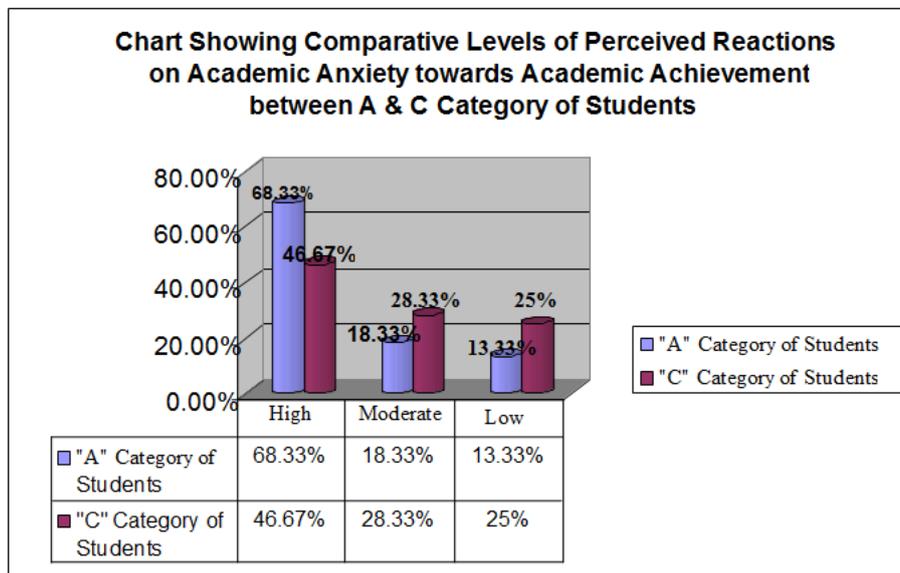
stands rejected as the ‘t’ value – 4.34 has been found statistically significant at .01 level of confidence. Present trends of result also seems to be logical that A category of students are more anxious towards their academic career and their family background is very sound in comparison to C category of students in government schools especially in Samastipur district.

**Table-6: Showing Comparative Levels of Perceived reactions on Academic Anxiety Towards Academic Achievement between A & C Category of Students**

Levels	Category A		Category C	
	N=60	Percentage	n=60	Percentage
High	41	68.33 %	28	46.67 %
Moderate	11	18.33 %	17	28.33 %
Low	08	13.33 %	15	25 %

Table – 6 reveals the clear cut picture regarding the levels of perceived reactions on academic anxiety towards academic achievement between A & C categories of students. From the table – 6, it can be understood that 68.33 percent of A category of students have shown higher degree of academic anxiety than C category of students, i.e. 46.67 percent. 28 .33 percent of C category students reported their moderate levels in

comparison to A category students i.e. 18.33 percent. Moreover, 25 percent of C category student have reported low degree on academic anxiety towards academic achievement in comparison to the students who belongs to A category of students, i.e. 13.33 percent. The presented results can also be observed from the following diagram:



Overall results presented above have been satisfactorily as assumed. It is undoubtedly fact that all the students of government schools are anxious about their future career; it is because of the fact that all the category of students scored above average levels of academic anxiety towards academic achievement especially from where the sample has been drawn. The obtained results support the studies conducted by Honnaraju [25]; Veena [26] and Sharma [27] as they

viewed the pressure from outside on the students and also the pressure within the students may have become cause for high anxiety. Moreover, Hemamalini [6] also found significant negative relationship between anxiety and academic achievement of high school students. Her study revealed that both ver high and very low anxiety levels lead to low academic achievement among high school students.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of the obtained results and its discussions the following conclusions drawn:

1. Significant difference between the groups of A & B category of students in government schools have been found in terms of their degree of academic anxiety towards their academic achievement.
2. Significant difference between the groups of B & C category of students in government schools have been found in terms of their degree of academic anxiety towards their academic achievement.
3. Significant difference between the groups of A & C category of students in government schools have been found in terms of their degree of academic anxiety towards their academic achievement.
4. Observations have revealed the fact that all the students who are studying in government schools need more attention towards their academic career. Hence, it is suggested that teachers, parents and many others who are associated with the education must take care regarding their school going children. Moreover, government must take necessary actions to reduce the extent of anxiety in case of high anxiety. It is also suggested that psychological guidance must be given in all the schools by appointing psychologists to check the extent of anxiety to the normal in case of low anxiety which in turn helps in improving the academic achievement and performance to all the students. It is undoubtedly fact that our students are backbone of our nation. Hence we must take care of our students in all respect.

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