Students' Comprehensive Anxiety Levels and Their SchoolPerformance: A Correlate Study

Dr. Keisham Shitaljit Singh
Assistant Professor
Department of Education
Manipur University, Canchipur-795003
Email: jackeisham@gmail.com

Introduction

One of the serious problems of 21st century is the problem of mental disorder. Our existing social environment has contributed in giving birth to the problem of anxiety and stress among the people of all ages in every corners of the world. In our life, we may have many aspirations and ambitions but it is not possible to achieve all the desires. There are many situations when we fail in our attempt and get frustration. Frustration sometimes causes mental conflict. Our frustration and failure may bring injury to our ego and thus give birth to feeling of inferiority and anxiety. With the advancement of science and technology our standard of living has been changed to a great extent. There is stiff competition among the persons in every sphere of life. One of the serious problems of present day is anxiety which is greatly influenced by the environment. Our state Manipur also has a favorable environment which has created a problem of anxiety and depression among individuals. An imbalance law and order condition has created a serious threat to all the citizen of the state. In all these affairs, students the future generation of the nation have to suffer a lot.Anxiety is a state of emotional and physical disturbances induced in a person by real or imagined threat. In psychiatry, the term refers to disturbances caused by threat that are only apparent to the individuals and the cause him to behave in a way that is not relevant to the true situation. Anxiety is a general term of several disorders that cause nervousness, fear, apprehension and worrying. These disorders affect how we feel and behave. They can manifest real, physical and psychological symptoms. Mild anxiety is vague and unsetting while severe anxiety can be extremely debilitating having a serious impact on daily life. Human beings are considered as emotional beings. Emotion is the preferred term as it encompasses a wide range of feelings characterized by subjective sense of distress. Anxiety is a part of emotional or affective disorder. Anxiety can be conceptualized as a normal and adaptive response to threat that prepares the organism for

flight or fight.   This preparation is accompanied by increased somatic and autonomic activity controlled by the interaction of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. Anxiety becomes abnormal when it is excessive or its timing is inappropriate with regard to the threat. It is a mood state characterized by a markedly negative affect and somatic symptoms of tension in which people anticipate future danger. Anxiety is called normal when its intensity and the character are appropriate in a given situation and when its effects are not disorganizing and maladaptive. It is often a root of laughter and enjoyment. Anxiety is even courted as recreation. Pleasure Park and county fair usually have special contrivances for making people anxious for which people wait in line and pay for this privileged.   Television, moving pictures, competitive sports, car racing, horse racing, etc. provide anxiety for millions of willing spectators. Anxiety disorder differs from normal feelings of nervousness. Untreated anxiety disorder can push people into avoiding situations that trigger or worsen their symptoms. People with anxiety disorder are likely to suffer from depression and they also may abuse alcohol or other drugs in an effort to gain relief from their symptoms.

Job performance, school works and personal relationships can also be affected by anxiety. It is natural for a normal human being to worry when things does not work out and complicated. But if worries become overwhelming one may feel that they are ruining their life and if one spend an excessive amount of time feeling worried or nervous or one's feels difficulty in sleeping, in paying attention to normal daily activities, then it may be a symptom of anxiety disorder. Anxiety is a natural human reaction that involves mind and body. It serves an important basic survival function. It is an alarm system that is activated whenever a person perceives danger or threat.

Anxiety among Adolescence

The genetic causes of anxiety are generally not inherited but a general sensitivity may be inherited by the person which may lead to an increased tendency to worry for most of the things happening in the man's life. High intact of caffeine, nicotine and use of stimulant drugs have been reported to increase anxiety in a person who has predisposition to it. Deficiencies of certain vitamins such as calcium, vitamin B6 and magnesium and people withdrawing from using benzodiazepines, alcohol and barbiturate drugs may result in increase of anxiety level. A few environmental situation may also precipitate high level of anxiety namely experience of childhood as being criticized, put down regularly, being over protected, lack of nurturing, affection, support, encouragement of assertive behavior and independence; cumulative stress; adverse life events and major loss such as threat to security, a death of a love one, break up of a marriage relationship, financial hardship, loss of a job; major life changes such as a frequent change in jobs, having no children or children living at home or in a hostel for their schooling etc. (Brourne, 1995). Negative unrealistic and irrational thought patterns, unhealthy beliefs, suppressed emotions, lack of self-esteem, self-worth, assertiveness and meaning of life have been also reported as precipitating factors behind high level of anxiety (David, 1980).Adolescence period which is also known as teenage period starts from 12 and

stretches up to 19 or 20 years. It is the most crucial period in human life and considered to be the time when the surge of life reaches its highest peak. The adolescent's life is full of hopes and they are eager to interact with new experience, find new relationship to examine resources of inner strength and fathom the strength of inner ability. It represents a period of intensive growth and chance in nearly all aspects of child's physical, mental, social and emotional life. Adolescence is the corridor which leads from the fair houses of childhood to the gates of maturity. It is considered as the Renaissance Age of the individual. The period of adolescence is the spring time of one's life. It is the most stirring and impressionable period in the life of an individual and its problems are vast, varied and of outstanding importance in one's life. Stanley Hall regards it as 'a period of great, stress and strain, storm and strife'. It is a period of extreme pessimism and optimism. Sometimes the world appears to them to be full of roses and at other a hard place to live in. An adolescent experiences emotional instability. It is the period of heightening of all emotions like anxiety, fear, love, anger, etc. At no stage an individual is as restless and emotionally perturbed and touchy as in adolescence. Ross stated that the adolescent lives an intensely emotional life in which we can see once more the rhythm of positive and negative phase of behavior in his constant alternation between intense excitement and deep depression. As result, adolescents are more prone to emotional or affective disorder than any other else. The affective disorder are the commonest of all seen by psychiatrists, the term including those abnormal state in which disturbances of mood and emotion are the prime features. The most common mental health problems that occur in adolescents are anxiety disorder. According to one large scale study of 9 to 17 year olds, entitled "Methods for the Epidemiology of Child and Adolescent Mental Disorder (MECA)", as many as 13 percent of young people had an anxiety disorder in a year. Many youth nowadays have mental health problems that interfere with normal development and functioning. In the United States, 1 in 10 children and adolescents suffer from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment. As per the findings of prospective community based investigations revealing differential peak periods of onset of specific anxiety and specific phobias in middle childhood, over anxious disorder in late childhood, social anxiety disorder in middle adolescence, panic disorder in late adolescence, generalized anxiety disorder in young adulthood and obsessive-compulsive disorder in early adulthood. Some of the evidence is consistent with the notion that adolescents experience high levels of stress. Smith and Crawford (1986) found that more than 60% of students in secondary school reported at least one instance of suicidal thinking and 10% had attempted suicide.

Anxiety and Students School Performance

Anxiety is not a bad thing. It is true that high level of anxiety interferes with concentration and memory, which are critical for academic success. Without anxiety, most of us would lack motivation to study for exam, write papers or do daily homework. A moderate amount of anxiety actually helps academic performance by creating motivation. Anxiety is associated with substantial negative effects on children's social, emotional and academic success. Specific effects include poor social and coping skills often leading to

avoidance of social interactions, loneliness, low self-esteem, perceptions of social rejection and difficulty forming friendships. According to Science Daily (June 26, 2009), the effect of anxiety on academic achievement is not always obvious but new research by the Economic and Social Research Council suggests that there may be hidden costs. The research found that anxious individuals find it harder to avoid distractions and take more time to turn their attention from one task to the next than their less anxious fellow students. This research was conducted by Eysenck (2009). These findings have clear practical implications in the classroom. A lot of the negative effects of anxiety appear to be caused by difficulties with controlling attention. The relationship between anxiety and academic performance has been described in a number of findings relevant to the understanding of adolescents (Phillips, 1978; Sarason, 1980; Tobias, 1979). First anxiety interferes more with academic performances during adolescence than during childhood. In a culture that judges an individual's intellectual abilities and ascribes status on the basis of academic performance, it is perhaps not surprising that students become more anxious over their academic success and failure as they age. Secondly, the relationship between an adolescent's academic success and anxiety is curvilinear- a minimal amount of anxiety tends to enhance academic performance but excessive anxiety undermines academic performance (Mc Donald, 2001). Base on literature, test anxiety is related to lower performance and it is estimated that about 25.0 % of primary and secondary school students in America and 10 million students suffered lower academic performance as a results of test anxiety (Hembree R,, 1988; Hill and Wigfield, 1984). There are number of research reporting test anxiety as one of the major cause for student's under achievement and low performances at different levels of their educational life (Oludipe, 2009). Gaudry and Spielberger (1971) also discussed that high test anxiety is considered as one of the main factor for low performance of students at University level. Apart from it, anxiety has been reported to affect the individual performance and determine social behavior like conformity, dependence, social responsiveness, peer rejection and acceptance and sexual attraction (Mc Candles, Castenda and Parlermo (1956); Sarason (1966), Kissel (1967) and Philips, Martin and Meyers, (1972). Anxiety does have a debilitating effect on complex learning (Passi and Singh, 1972; Gakhar and Luthra, 1976; Reevs and May, 1977), maze and motor learning (Nijhawan and Cheena, 1971) and learning procedures (Akhtar and Sowaid, 1972). The detrimental effect of anxiety has also been found on memory, (Borkowski and Maun, 1968, Sinha and Krishna, 1972), perceptual processes and performance (Naraynan, 1973); Natrajan and Naraynan, 1974) and academic performance for some, the reverse might be true for others (Sud and Prabha 1995). A negative relation between examination (test) anxiety and socio-economic status was reported (Srivastava, Sud and Thakur, 1980) and socially deprived girls experience higher test anxiety than their non-deprived counter parts. (Sud and Sud, 1997).

The relationship between anxiety and academic performance has been described in a number of findings relevant to the understanding of adolescents (Phillips, 1978; Sarason, 1980; Tobias, 1979). First anxiety interferes more with academic performances during adolescence than during childhood. In a culture that judges an individual's intellectual

abilities and ascribes status on the basis of academic performance, it is perhaps not surprising that students become more anxious over their academic success and failure as they age. Secondly, the relationship between an adolescent's academic success and anxiety is curvilinear- a minimal amount of anxiety tends to enhance academic performance but excessive anxiety undermines academic performance (Mc Donald, 2001). Base on literature, test anxiety is related to lower performance and it is estimated that about 25.0 % of primary and secondary school students in America and 10 million students suffered lower academic performance as a results of test anxiety (Hembree R,, 1988; Hill and Wigfield, 1984). There are number of research reporting test anxiety as one of the major cause for student's under achievement and low performances at different levels of their educational life (Oludipe, 2009). Gaudry and Spielberger (1971) also discussed that high test anxiety is considered as one of the main factor for low performance of students at University level.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the anxiety level of higher secondary students of Imphal East.
2. To find out the relationship between anxiety level and the school performance of higher secondary students of Imphal East district.

Hypotheses of the study

1. There exists normal anxiety level among the higher secondary students of Imphal East district of Manipur State.
2. There exists a positive correlation between anxiety level and school performance of higher secondary students of Imphal east District of Manipur State.

Delimitations

The following are the delimitations of the study.

1. The study is delimited to the Imphal East district of Manipur only.
2. Only class XII students have been taken as a sample of the study.
3. Only 200 students have been taken to study.

Methodology

Normative Survey Method has been used in this study.

Population and Sample

Investigator selected four schools for the selection of the sample. Two of them are Government Higher Secondary and two are Private Higher Secondary Schools. Only 200 students were taken up as the sample for data collection. By using the random sampling technique, the following higher secondary schools have been selected as the sample of the present study:

Sl. No.	Name of the Institution	Category	No. of students	Sex	
				Male	Female
1.	Brighter Academy	Private	50	25	25
2.	Pioneer Academy	Private	50	25	25
3.	CC Higher Secondary School	Government	50	50	0
4.	Ananda Singh Higher Secondary School	Government	50	25	25

Tools of the study

In the present study, comprehensive test developed by H. Sharma, R.L. Bhardwaj and M. Bhargava was used. The investigator also collected the school performance of the students from the school records.

Statistical Technique Used

Percentage and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient method was used.

Table No. 1: Anxiety Levels based on the Comprehensive Anxiety Test (CAT) among the Higher Secondary School Students of Imphal East of Manipur

Sl. no.	Categories	Anxiety Score	No. of Students	Percentage
1.	Very High	Above 80	20	10
2.	High	Above 70 to 80	40	20
3.	Average	Above 30 to70	100	50
4.	Low	Above15 to 30	30	15
5.	Very Low	From 0 to 15	10	5

Analysis and Interpretation

As per table no 1, it can interpret that ten percent of the sample i.e. higher secondary students belong to a very high anxious group. They happen to be tensed, apprehensive, highly worried, dejected and are un-realistic and show a marked predominance of irrational thought. 20 percent of the students come under the category of high anxiety group and they possess similar characteristic trait of very high anxious groups. They always show lack of confidence in their action and decision and do not like to assert in socially interactive situation.

Fifty percent of the students belong to average or normal anxiety groups. They are vigilant, cautious and responsive to disturbing situations. Most of the students come under this category. They can deal with day to day problem. Fifteen percent of the students have low anxiety while five percent of the students and complain of having very low anxiety. They are non-caring, irresponsible and unconcerned with life environmental situation. They prefer to be helped by others even in a simple activity.

Thus, we can conclude that, most of the higher secondary students of Imphal East district were having normal anxiety even they belong to the adolescence stage of life where chances of developing anxiety depression and emotional imbalances are very high.

Table No. 2: Correlation Coefficient (r) between Various Levels of Anxiety Scores based on the Comprehensive Anxiety Test (CAT) and Students' Academic Performance in Higher Secondary Schools of Imphal East District of Manipur

Sl. No.	Anxiety level (Comprehensive Anxiety Test, CAT score)	Moment Correlation Value (r) Anxiety and Students' Academic Performance
1	Very high	-0.114

2	High	0.083
3	Average	0.442
4	Low	0.148
5	Very low	0.182

From table no. 2 it can be interpreted that, while comparing the academic achievement and anxiety score of the student belonging to very high anxiety level by using correlation method we found that there is negatively negligible relationship between the anxiety score and marks obtained by the students in their exam. For high anxious group there is positively negligible relationship (r =0.08) between the student anxiety score and academic achievement.

Considering the average or normal anxiety group the result of correlation method show that most of the higher secondary student comes under this category and while seeing the relationship between anxiety level and school achievement we found that there is positively marked relationship (r =0.44). Here anxiety act as a stimulus, and prepare the student to face the challenges coming up. It creates preparedness among the students and they are always in alert position to face difficulties of life.

The results of low anxious group show that there is negligible positive relationship between anxiety score and academic achievement of the higher secondary students (r = 0.14). The students belonging to this group are non-caring. Similarly as per result obtained from the correlation there is indifferent relationship between anxiety score and academic achievement of students coming under very low anxious (r = 0.18). They possess similar traits of above group. Most of the times they like help of others. They are not serious in any activity. So, even in their study they are careless and as a result they often secure low marks in exam.

Conclusion

Anxiety is a psychological disorder that is associated with significant suffering and impairment in functioning. It is a blend of thoughts and feeling characterized by a sense of uncontrollability and unpredictability over potentially aversive life event. Individual experiencing anxiety shows apprehension that often interferes with performance in everyday life as well as in academic situation. Higher the anxiety lower will be the academic achievement of students. Study shows that a little anxiety is sometime a good thing. Looking from its negative side anxiety can lead to chronic stress and anxiety disorder and phobias, but evolutionary speaking, anxiety holds some functional value. It can be a normal reaction to stress. It helps one to deal with a tense situation and study harder for exam. Thus in present study student having normal anxiety have a positive relation with their academic achievement. The moderate anxious person is more apt to be vigilant, cautious and reaction sensitive to slight stimulation. Moderate anxiety can actually increase endurance during an emergency and can give time a person for defensive preparation. Therefore a person, who completely lacks any anxiety, may be badly off as a person who is too anxious. The need for

hour is to develop positive thinking among our youth. Here lies the task of teacher and parent

REFERENCES

1. *Augustine, T.O,: Anxiety Management, Kalpaz publications, C-30, Satyawati Nagar, Ashok Vihar Phase-111, Delhi-1100052, 2002*
2. *Benjamin, J. N. Shaddock: Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry, Lippincott Williams and Wilkins 530 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106 U.S.A.2005*
3. *Bhatt, P.: Clinical Psychology Published by Educational Books, E-35/ 103, Jawahar Park, Luxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092, 2006*
4. *B Phillips School, Stress and Anxiety. New York, Human Science Press,1978*
5. *Cameron, A.: Personality Development and Psychopathology, Vakils, Feffer and Simon Pvt Ltd, Hague Building, Bombay 1-India, 1963*
6. *Cattel, R.B.,: Personality. A systematic theoretical and factual study. New York Mc Graw Hill 1950*
7. *Desai N.A.,: Psychaitry and Modern Life.Sterling Publishers Private Ltd.New Delhi 110002, 1988.*
8. *Donald Mc. A.S. (2001). The prevalence and effect of test anxiety in school children. Educational Psychology. 21(1). 89-101*
9. *Gaudry, E. And Spielberger C.D. (1971). Anxiety and educational achievement. New York; Wiley.*
10. *Gludipe,B. (2009) . Influence of test anxiety on performance level on numerical tasks of secondary schools physics students: Academic Leadership, Online Joural 7(4).*
11. *Hembree R (1988). Correlates, causes, effects and treatment of test anxiety. Review of Educational Research :58, 47-77*
12. *Hill, K.T. and Wigfield, A. (1984). Test Anxiety: A major educational problem and what can be done about it. Elementary School Journal. 85, 105-126*
13. *Klein, F.D,Gittelman,R,Quitkin F and Rifkin,A. Diagnosis and Drug Treatment of Psychaitric Disorder : Adults and Children, Second edition, The Williams and Wilkins Company,4286 Preston Street, MD 21202 USA.1980.*
14. *Krauss, S.,: Encyclopedic Handbook of Medical Psychology. Butterworth & Co Pub. Ltd., 1976*
15. *National Crime Records Bureau (2002) Accidental death and suicides in India, 2000. Delhi, India Ministry of Home affairs, Government of India.*
16. *Phillips, B(1978). School, stress and anxiety. New York Human Science Press*
17. *Rajamanickam, M,: Abnormal Psychology- Human Behavioural Problems. Author Press Global Network, E-35/105, Jawaharlal Park Luxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092, 2004.*
18. *Tobia, S. (1979). Anxiety research in Educational Psychology. Journal of Educational Psychology.71, 573-582*