

A STUDY ON TEST ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Test anxiety is a multidimensional occurrence that holds cognitive, physiological and emotional conditions of students with respect to their tests or examinations and it is a particular format of performance anxiety that happens in circumstances where persons are subjected to assessment and it is featured by unwarranted fright of poor performance in tests that is frequently leading to higher degree stress and strains. Secondary school students are Secondary school students are also facing anxiety during their study because of numerous pressures they experience throughout academic years such as anxiety during tests. Consequently, test anxiety and academic stress of secondary school students are largely interconnected and they are happening together in most times and academic stress is highly visible in the format of test anxiety facing anxiety during their study because of numerous pressures they experience throughout academic years such as anxiety during tests. The outcomes this study explicate that significant difference is prevailed amid profile of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety excluding their Medium of Instruction. Test Anxiety of Secondary School Students is having significant, positive and moderate relation with their Academic Stress. Therefore, secondary school teachers should use various evaluation methods namely performance in activities and project oriented evaluation to decrease test anxiety of their secondary school students and ease of the academic stress. Secondary school teachers must focus on continues evaluation and improve skills of their secondary students. Besides, they should create inclusive and fair learning atmosphere for promoting holistic development of students and success in their academics and they must adopt evidence based strategies for decreasing test anxiety and also their academic stress. In addition, secondary school students should prepare in advance for their tests and adopt suitable and efficient learning style for decreasing their test anxiety and academic stress.

KEYWORDS: Academic Stress, Secondary School Students, Test Anxiety

1. INTRODUCTION.

Test anxiety is a nervousness faced by students during the time of tests or examinations (Baltas, 2002) and it is also described as the condition of restlessness along with panic by students who are subjected to assessment. Test anxiety is the condition of exhilaration, apprehension and uncertainty felt by individual with the cognitive, behavioral and affective aspects which avoids individual from success in tests or examinations (Rana and Mahmood, 2010). Test anxiety comprises of uneasiness, edginess, nervousness and troubles that students are experiencing during the courses of test or exams and it is frequently and significantly disturbing and affecting performance in their academics and it is leading to physical and mental well being issues (Trifoni and Shahini, 2011). Test anxiety is escorted by heavy thoughts of fear and worry on probable failures emotionally (Cassady and Gridley, 2020) and it is also apparent that it is increasing beats of heart, nausea and sweating (Zeidner, 2020). Test anxiety is also resulting in issue of focus, recalling ability and memory and problem solving capabilities and low performance and high degree of anxiety is leading to manifold issues among students (Salend, 2021). It is a multidimensional occurrence that holds cognitive, physiological and emotional conditions of students with respect to their tests or examinations (Khosravi and Bigdeli, 2008). Test anxiety is a particular format of performance anxiety that happens in circumstances where persons are subjected to assessment and it is featured by unwarranted fright of poor performance in tests that is frequently leading to higher degree stress and strains (Putwain and Daly, 2021). In school educational atmospheres, test anxiety is a widespread problem having deep impacts on learning outcomes of school students.

Further, higher anticipation of parents, teachers and schools on their students and personality features of students who are taking tests or examinations are main cause for test anxiety among students (Bonaccio and Reeve, 2010). When students are not able to fulfill their expectations, self esteem of students is adversely affected (Deb et al. 2015) and they are failed though having knowledge and this creates academic stress among them (Subasi, 2000).

Academic stress is a condition that students have to overcome for successful in their academics and it is usually increased by heavy coverage of syllabus, inadequate resources, learning difficulties, test relating fearsome and imbalance among academic and extra curricular activities (Paparao and Devi, 2021)

Meanwhile, academic stress is connected with demands from secondary school students for their academic activities for attaining their objectives in academics and because of it they are facing challenges of writing assignments, quizzes, home works, examinations or tests, getting good marks and fulfilling anticipations of their parents and teachers (Kumar et al. 2012). Secondary school students are also facing anxiety during their study because of numerous pressures they experience throughout academic years such as anxiety during tests. Consequently, test anxiety and academic stress of secondary school students are largely interconnected and they are happening together in most times and academic stress is highly visible in the format of test anxiety (Wang and Ding, 2003). Secondary school students are having a lot of pressure arising out of their anxiety for tests and they are facing difficulties in managing test anxiety as it is causing academic stress among them (Sidana et al. 2012) and academic stress is acting as main driver of test anxiety of secondary school students and high academic stress atmosphere, fearsome for failure and pressure of academic activities increasing test anxiety amidst them significantly and directly (Xiao, 2013). Hence, it is necessary to study test anxiety and academic stress among secondary school students.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Fátima and C ambiar (2026) found that more than half of undergraduate students had higher degree of exam anxiety and no significant disparity was seen in exam anxiety amidst their gender and academic stream. Besides, it was negatively related with their academic self regulation.

Patra and Mahato (2025) concluded that major proportion of higher secondary students had moderate degree of test anxiety and it was differing significantly amidst their gender and academic stream and not amidst their locality of school.

Ray and Negi (2024) revealed that girls school students had higher test anxiety in comparison with their boys counterparts and significant difference was observed amidst gender of school students and their test anxiety.

Gupta and Gupta (2023) showed that majority of high school students were having moderate degree of test anxiety and it was not significantly differing amidst their gender and locality and was differing significantly amidst their locality of school.

Thomas et al. (2022) indicated that higher than one third of first year university students had mid level of test anxiety and it was significantly and positively related with their self esteem

Chishti and Rana (2021) found that students at secondary school had moderate degree of test anxiety and it had strong and negative relation with their performance in mathematics subject and it was also significantly differing amidst their gender.

Alemu and Feyssa (2020) concluded that most of grade ten students had higher degree of test anxiety and it was higher among female in comparing to male students and it had significant and negative relation with achievement in their academics.

Celik and Yıldırım (2019) revealed that major proportion of middle school students had moderate degree of test anxiety and it had significantly and positively related with motivation, self expectations and expectations of parents or teachers.

Hamzah et al (2018) indicated that first year university students had higher degree of test anxiety and it had negative and significant relation with performance in their academics and it was also differing among their gender significantly.

Duraku (2017) demonstrated that under graduate students had higher degree of test anxiety and no significant disparity was seen in test anxiety amidst under and post graduate students and also their respective gender.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine difference in Test Anxiety amid Gender, Type of School and Locality of School of Secondary School Students.
2. To study difference in Test Anxiety amid Medium of Instruction, Father's Education and Mother's Education of Secondary School Students.
3. To analyze relation amid Test Anxiety and Academic Stress of Secondary School Students.

4. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference in Test Anxiety amid Gender, Type of School and Locality of School of Secondary School Students.
2. There is no significant difference in Test Anxiety amid Medium of Instruction, Father's Education and Mother's Education of Secondary School Students.
3. There is no significant relation amid Test Anxiety and Academic Stress of Secondary School Students.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chennai district in Tamil Nadu state is chosen for this study. Random sampling method is adopted for selection of Secondary School Students and data are received from 920 of them through structured questionnaire. Test Anxiety Scale (TAS) is designed and validated by the Investigator and Research Supervisor in the year 2025 and Academic Stress Scale (ASS) is adapted to Indian conditions by Rajendran and Kaliappan (1990) and Rao (2012) and these two scales are used in this study. Percentages, t and ANOVA tests and correlation analysis are used for studying and testing hypotheses of this study.

6. RESULTS

6.1. PROFILE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The profile of Secondary School Students is given in Table-1.

Table-1. Profile of Secondary School Students

Profile	Frequency(n=920)	%
Gender		
Male	507	55.11
Female	413	44.89
Type of School		
Government	311	33.80
Government Aided	202	21.96
Private	407	44.24
Locality of School		
Urban	530	57.61
Rural	390	42.39
Medium of Instruction		
Tamil	321	34.89
English	599	65.11
Father's Education		
Illiterate	211	22.94
School	327	35.54
College	382	41.52
Mother's Education		
Illiterate	269	29.24
School	433	47.06
College	218	23.70

The results explain that 55.11% of Secondary School Students are males, whilst, 44.89% of them are females, 44.24% of them are studying in private schools, whilst, 21.96% of them are studying in Government aided schools and 57.61% of them are studying in urban schools, whilst, 42.39% of them are studying in rural schools. The results disclose that 65.11% of them in English medium, while, 34.89% of them in Tamil medium, 41.52% of their fathers are having college education, whilst, 22.94% of them are illiterates and 47.06% of their mothers are having school education, whilst, 23.70% of them are having college education.

6.2. PROFILE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR TEST ANXIETY

The difference amid profile of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is given below as:

6.2.1. Gender and Test Anxiety

The difference amid Gender of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is given in Table-2.

Table-2. Gender and Test Anxiety

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Male	507	174.66	21.97	3.480	0.01
Female	413	179.82	22.86		

Female Secondary School Students (Mean=179.82) are having higher degree of Test Anxiety than Male Secondary School Students (Mean=174.66). The t-value of 3.480 elucidates that difference amid Gender of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is significant in 1% level.

6.2.2. Type of School and Test Anxiety

The difference amid Type of School of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is given in Table-3.

Table-3. Type of School and Test Anxiety

Type of School	N	Mean	SD	F-value	Level of Significance
Government	311	174.18	21.59	32.524	0.01
Government Aided	202	168.93	19.05		
Private	407	183.11	23.13		

Secondary School Students studying in Private Schools (Mean=183.11) are having higher degree of Test Anxiety than Government (Mean=174.18) and Government Aided Schools (Mean=168.93). The F-value of 32.524 elucidates that difference amid Type of School of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is significant in 1% level.

6.2.3. Locality of School and Test Anxiety

The difference amid Locality of School of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is given in Table-4.

Table-4. Locality of School and Test Anxiety

Locality of School	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Urban	530	179.48	21.31	3.960	0.01
Rural	390	173.58	23.64		

Secondary School Students studying in Urban Schools (Mean=179.48) are having higher degree of Test Anxiety than Secondary School Students studying in Rural Schools (Mean=173.58). The t-value of 3.960 elucidates that difference amid Locality of School of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is significant in 1% level.

6.2.4. Medium of Instruction and Test Anxiety

The difference amid Medium of Instruction of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is given in Table-5.

Table-5. Medium of Instruction and Test Anxiety

Medium of Instruction	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Tamil	321	176.05	21.36	0.913	0.05
English	599	177.47	23.10		

Secondary School Students studying in English Medium (Mean=177.47) are having higher degree of Test Anxiety than Secondary School Students studying in Tamil Medium (Mean=176.05). The t-value of 0.913 elucidates that difference amid Medium of Instruction of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is not significant.

6.2.5. Father's Education and Test Anxiety

The difference amid Father's Education of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is given in Table-6.

Table-6. Father's Education and Test Anxiety

Father's Education	N	Mean	SD	F-value	Level of Significance
Illiterate	211	163.01	13.67	118.900	0.01
School	327	172.77	24.26		
College	382	188.29	19.07		

Secondary School Students with Father's Education of College Education (Mean=188.29) are having higher degree of Test Anxiety than School Education (Mean=172.77) and Illiterate (Mean=163.01). The F-value of 118.900 elucidates that difference amid Father's Education of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is significant in 1% level.

6.2.6. Mother's Education and Test Anxiety

The difference amid Mother's Education of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is given in Table-7.

Table-7. Mother's Education and Test Anxiety

Mother's Education	N	Mean	SD	F-value	Level of Significance
Illiterate	269	176.47	20.58	56.047	0.01
School	433	170.93	20.38		
College	218	189.61	23.70		

Secondary School Students with Mother's Education of College Education (Mean=189.61) are having higher degree of Test Anxiety than Illiterate (Mean=176.47) and School Education (Mean=170.93). The F-value of 56.047 elucidates that difference amid Mother's Education of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety is significant in 1% level.

6.3. RELATION AMID TEST ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC STRESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The relation amid Test Anxiety and Academic Stress of Secondary School Students was studied by employing correlation analysis and the outcome is given in Table-8.

Table-8. Test Anxiety and Academic Stress of Secondary School Students

Particulars	Correlation Coefficient
Test Anxiety and Academic Stress of Secondary School Students	0.43**

** Significance in 1% level

The coefficient of correlation amid Test Anxiety and Academic Stress of Secondary School Students is 0.43 and it reveals that they have significant, positive and moderate relation among them.

7. CONCLUSION

The above findings imply that significant difference is prevailed amid profile of Secondary School Students and their Test Anxiety excluding their Medium of Instruction. Test Anxiety of Secondary School Students is having significant, positive and moderate relation with their Academic Stress. Therefore, secondary school teachers should use various evaluation methods namely performance in activities and project oriented evaluation to decrease test anxiety of their secondary school students and ease of the academic stress. Secondary school teachers must focus on continues evaluation and improve skills of their secondary students. Besides, they should create inclusive and fair learning atmosphere for promoting holistic development of students and success in their academics and they must adopt evidence based strategies for decreasing test anxiety and also their academic

stress. In addition, secondary school students should prepare in advance for their tests and adopt suitable and efficient learning style for decreasing their test anxiety and academic stress.

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