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ACADEMIC ANXIETY AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF AIZAWL CITY AND BILKHAWTHLIR TOWN IN RELATION TO THEIR STREAM OF STUDY

ABSTRACT

This study explored academic anxiety among higher secondary school students in Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town, using convenient sampling. T-test was employed to compare mean difference of academic anxiety levels between male and female students, and one way ANOVA was conducted to compare students from Science, Arts, and Commerce streams. The findings revealed that most students experienced a moderate level academic anxiety, with only a few facing higher levels of anxiety in both locations. There were no significant differences in anxiety levels based on gender or academic stream. These results suggest that academic anxiety is a common experience among students, regardless of gender or stream, and highlight the need for further research into its causes and effective ways to support students' mental well-being, considering factors such as teaching methods, counseling, socioeconomic background, and cultural influences.

Keywords: Academic Anxiety, secondary school students

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a common human experience, often triggered by personal, social, or professional challenges and influenced by factors like relationships, academic pressures, or societal expectations. It can manifest as generalized anxiety, panic attacks, social anxiety, or phobias, all characterized by excessive worry or fear that disrupts daily life. Academic anxiety, a specific form affecting students, arises from fears of failure, evaluation, or competition and can impair memory, creativity, and performance. If unaddressed, it may lead to long-term mental health issues. Understanding anxiety's causes and effects is essential to developing effective coping strategies and support systems. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), anxiety disorders are among the most prevalent mental health conditions worldwide, affecting an estimated 264 million people globally (WHO, 2019). Research has shown that anxiety can have severe consequences on an individual's daily life, including impaired social relationships, decreased productivity, and increased risk of comorbid mental health conditions (Hofmann et al., 2010; Kessler et al., 2005).

REVIEWS OF RELATED LITERATURE

2 The literature review highlights those studies in Mizoram, shows no significant differences in
33 academic anxiety based on gender, class, or locality (Dawngliani et al.,2021). In contrast,
34 research from other regions in India and abroad reveals notable disparities, particularly
35 between male and female students and among different academic streams. This divergence
36 underscores the importance of contextual factors in understanding academic anxiety, with
37 rural students often experiencing higher levels of anxiety due to heightened parental
38 expectations (Kaur, 2023). The literature review also emphasizes the multifaceted nature of
39 academic anxiety, influenced by parenting styles, motivation, socioeconomic status, and
40 parent-child relationships (Radhika & Niranjana, 2024). Furthermore, the literature review
41 emphasizes the multifaceted nature of academic anxiety, illustrating how parenting styles,
42 motivation, socioeconomic status, and parent-child relationships significantly influence
43 students' academic performance and mental well-being. Findings from the review indicates
44 that male students may experience more stress due to interpretational relationships and
45 environmental factors, while female students often face anxiety related to their academic
46 choices, particularly when they feel their stream of study was not a personal decision and
7 47 academic anxiety extends beyond individual students, affecting various aspects of
48 educational institutions, including subjects, instructors, exams, and extracurricular activities.

49 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

50 Academic anxiety among higher education students is a pressing issue, significantly
51 influenced by parents and their stream of study. By examining the variations in
52 academic anxiety across science, commerce, and arts streams, and the role of parental
53 influence, this study enables them to develop targeted interventions and support systems
54 to alleviate academic anxiety, promote mental well-being, and foster academic resilience
55 among students. Moreover, this study's outcomes will inform the development of stream-
56 specific counselling programs, parental education initiatives, and school-based anxiety
57 management strategies, ultimately enhancing the educational outcomes and overall quality of
58 life for higher secondary students. By addressing the knowledge gap in this area, this study
59 has the potential to positively impact the lives of students, making it a timely and significant
60 contribution to the field of educational psychology of higher secondary school students in both
61 Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town.

3 62 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.To find out the level of academic anxiety among higher secondary school students in Aizawl

City and Bilkhawthlir Town.

2.To find out the differences in academic anxiety levels between male and female in Higher Secondary School students of Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town.

3.To find out the differences in anxiety levels between arts, science and commerce in higher school students of Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H₁. There is a significance difference in anxiety levels between arts, science and commerce higher secondary school students of Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town.

H₂.There is a significant difference in the level of academic anxiety between male and female in higher secondary students of Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town.

H₃.There is a significance difference in the level of academic anxiety due between Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town higher secondary school students.

NULL HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H₀.There is no significance difference in the level of Academic Anxiety between male and female in Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town higher secondary school students.

H₁.There is no significance difference in the level of Academic Anxiety due between Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town higher secondary school students.

H₂.There is no significance difference in anxiety levels between arts, science and commerce higher secondary school students of Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town.

RESEARCH TOOLS

For conducting the present study, the researcher used Academic Anxiety Scale developed and standardized by Siddiqui & Rehman (2017).

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERM USED

AcademicAnxiety: Feeling of fear or worry about academic performance.

Stream of study: Specific academic program (e.g. science,commerce,arts) pursued in higher secondary school.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

In the present study, the sampling frame comprised 141 students from class XI and XII, representing science, arts, and commerce streams in higher secondary schools located in Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town. The sampling area was selected to include these two locations, reflecting a diverse student population across different academic streams. Schools were chosen based on their accessibility and willingness to participate, and the students were selected using convenience sampling technique, ensuring representation from each stream within the selected schools.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

The following statistical techniques were utilized for data analysis in the present study:

- i. t-test was employed to compare the difference in levels of academic anxiety between male and female students
- ii. One way ANOVA was conducted to assess variations in mean academic anxiety scores among arts, science and commerce students.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF AIZAWL CITY AND BILKHAWTHLIR TOWN HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Table 1

Distribution of Grades on Last Exam of Higher Secondary School Students in Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town

Grade	Frequency	Percentage
Distinction	6	4.3%
First	48	34%
Second	67	47.5%
Third	19	13.5%
Promoted	1	0.7%
Total	141	100%

111

112 Table1 shows that higher secondary students in Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town had a
113 moderate level of achievement. A majority (47.5%) secured a Second Division, while 34%
114 attained a First Division. Only 4.3% achieved a Distinction, 13.5% received a Third Division,
115 and 0.7% were Promoted.

116 2. GENDER, STREAM AND LOCALITY-WISE COMPARISION OF 117 ACADEMIC ANXIETY LEVELS OF STUDENTS

118 Table 2

119 Academic anxiety level of higher secondary school students in Aizawl City

Levels of Academic Anxiety	No of Respond	Percentage
Extremely High Academic Anxiety	3	3.23%
High Academic Anxiety	9	9.68%
Above Average Academic Anxiety	17	18.28%
Average Academic Anxiety	31	33.33%
Below Average Academic Anxiety	15	16.13%
Low Academic Anxiety	9	9.68%
Extremely Low Academic Anxiety	9	9.68%
Total	93	100%

120

121 The table 2 shows that most students (33.33%) fall into the "Average Academic Anxiety"
122 category, indicating that their anxiety levels are within the normal range. A smaller but
123 significant portion (18.28%) students show "Above Average Academic Anxiety," suggesting
124 they experience slightly higher stress levels. Similarly, a few students (16.13%) exhibit
125 "Below Average Academic Anxiety," indicating lower-than-average anxiety. Only a few
126 students (3.23%) fall into the extremes, with very high or very low academic anxiety levels

127 Table 3

128 Academic anxiety level of higher secondary school students in Bilkhawthlir Town

Levels of Academic Anxiety	No of Respond	Percentage
Extremely High Academic Anxiety	3	6.25%
High Academic Anxiety	3	6.25%

Above Average Academic Anxiety	9	18.75%
Average Academic Anxiety	13	27.03%
Below Average Academic Anxiety	11	22.91%
Low Academic Anxiety	7	14.58%
Extremely Low Academic Anxiety	2	4.16%
Total	48	100%

129

130 Table 3 shows that that only a few students experience very high or high anxiety. A notable
 131 portion experienced slightly below average or low academic anxiety. Specifically, the
 132 percentage of students experiencing extremely high academic anxiety is the same as those
 133 experiencing high academic anxiety. A larger percentage of students experienced above-
 134 average anxiety, while the largest group experienced average anxiety. Additionally, a sizable
 135 percentage reported below-average anxiety, with a smaller percentage experiencing low and
 136 extremely low academic anxiety.

137

138 **Table 4**

139 **Overall: Academic Anxiety level of Higher Secondary school students in Aizawl City and**
 140 **Bilkhawthlir Town**

Levels of Academic Anxiety	No of Respond	Percentage
Extremely High Academic Anxiety	17	12%
High Academic Anxiety	20	14.2%
Above Average Academic Anxiety	30	21.3%
Average Academic Anxiety	43	30.5%
Below Average Academic Anxiety	20	14.2%
Low Academic Anxiety	8	5.7%
Extremely Low Academic Anxiety	3	2.1%
Total	141	100%

141

142 Table 4 shows a distribution of academic anxiety levels among higher secondary students in
 143 both Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town. While 30.5% exhibit average anxiety, 14.2% show
 144 below-average anxiety, and 5.7% display low anxiety. Conversely, 21.3% experience above-
 145 average anxiety, 14.2% face high anxiety, and 12% struggle with extremely high anxiety.

Only 2.1% report extremely low anxiety and a significant portion of higher secondary students experience average or below-average academic anxiety, while a substantial minority struggle with above-average to extremely high anxiety levels.

Table 5

Statistical results of academic anxiety among higher secondary school students in Aizawl and Bilkhawthlir Town

No of students	Mean	Standard Deviation
141	81.9	10

Comparison of academic anxiety level between male and female in higher secondary school students of Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Mean Difference	Df	Level of Significance
Female	69	83.13	9.24	1.368	2.30	139	NS
Male	72	80.83	10.62				

The table compares the academic anxiety scores between male and female. The t-test results indicate no statistically significant difference in academic anxiety scores between male and female students ($p\text{-value} = 0.174 > 0.05$). Although the mean score for females (83.13) is slightly higher than for males (80.83), this difference is not statistically significant. The 95% confidence interval (-1.02 to 5.62) includes zero, reinforcing the conclusion that there is no significant difference between the means.

The t-value of 1.368, with 139 degrees of freedom (df), is not significant at the 0.05 level. Thus there is no significant difference in the level of academic anxiety between male and female in higher secondary school students of Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results for academic anxiety level by stream among higher secondary school students in Aizawl and Bilkhawthlir Town

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	196.2	2	98.10	0.98	0.37
Within Groups	13807.54	138	100.05		
Total	14003.745	140			

169

170 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

171 Academic Performance

172 Most students scored in the second division. Fewer students achieved first division or
173 distinction, and only a small number were promoted.

174 Academic Anxiety Level of Aizawl Higher Secondary School

175 Only a few students had extremely high academic anxiety. Most students showed average
176 anxiety, while some had above-average or below-average anxiety. Only a small group had
177 low or extremely low anxiety.

178 Academic Anxiety Level of Bilkhawthlir Higher Secondary School

179 A small number of students experienced high academic anxiety. Most students had average or
180 below-average anxiety. Only a few reported low or extremely low anxiety.

181 Overall Academic Anxiety Levels

182 Most students had average academic anxiety. Some had below average or low anxiety, and a
183 few had high or extremely high anxiety.

184 Gender Comparisons

185 Girls had a slightly higher average anxiety score than boys, but the difference was not
186 significant.

187 Academic Stream Impact

188 There was no significant difference in academic anxiety among students from different
189 streams such as Arts, Science, or Commerce.

190

191 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 192 •Examine various areas to decide what drives academic
- 193 anxiety in each location.
- 194 • Investigate the influence ofparental aspirations and household income on students'
- 195 academic anxiety.
- 196 • Identify effective teaching approachesand school settings that mitigate academic anxiety.
- 197 • Assesswhether counseling and stress-reduction initiatives
- 198 contribute to lower anxiety levels on school.
- 199 • Analyzeacademic anxiety and stress levels in urban educational
- 200 institutions compared to those in rural settings.
- 201 • Explorethe impact of peer relationships and competition among
- 202 students on anxiety and educational outcomes.
- 203 • Examine the role of culturalfactors in shaping individuals' perceptions of academic
- 204 stress and anxiety.
- 205 • Develop tailored strategies to helpstudents in managing academic pressure, taking
- 206 genderinto account.
- 207 • Investigate if participation in extracurricularactivities lowers academic anxiety and
- 208 enhances mentalwell-being.
- 209 • Analyze the effects of digital tools and onlineeducation on student stress levels
- 210 • Carry out longitudinalstudies to examine how academic anxiety evolves over time
- 211 and its impact on overall life.

212 DISCUSSIONS

14 213 This study explored the connection between anxiety and academic performance among
214 higher secondary students in Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town. Most students achieved
215 Second Division grades, with fewer obtaining First Division or Distinction. Anxiety was
216 found to impact academic performance, especially in science streams where students face
217 higher anxiety levels (Kaur, 2023). The research showed many students experienced average

218 anxiety, while others reported above average to extremely high levels. However, no
219 significant differences in anxiety were found across academic streams or genders, suggesting
220 it affects students universally (Patel et al., 2023). Aizawl Higher Secondary School had
221 higher anxiety levels compared to Bilkhawthlir, possibly due to urban-rural differences in
222 resources and environment (Das, 2022). Parental involvement emerged as a key factor
223 influencing both anxiety and academic outcomes. Supportive parents can help reduce stress,
224 while high expectations may increase it (Radhika & KP Niranjana, 2024; Gautam & Sharma,
225 2024). The study faced limitations like restricted sample diversity and access to schools,
226 highlighting the need for broader research to better understand these issues.

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