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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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

R.Lalchhanchhuahi¹, Gloria Lalchhanhimi², Vanlallawmkimi³, C. Lalremmawii³ and Henry VL Nghilhlova Zote³

1. MA IV Semester Assistant Professor Department of Education.
2. Department of Education ICFAI University, Mizoram ICFAI University, Mizoram.
3. Assistant Professor Department of Education ICFAI University Mizoram.

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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.

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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:-

The literature review highlights those studies in Mizoram, shows no significant differences in academic anxiety based on gender, class, or locality (Dawngliani et al., 2021). In contrast, research from other regions in India and abroad reveals notable disparities, particularly between male and female students and among different academic streams. This divergence underscores the importance of contextual factors in understanding academic anxiety, with rural students often experiencing higher levels of anxiety due to heightened parental expectations (Kaur, 2023). The literature review also emphasizes the multifaceted nature of academic anxiety, influenced by parenting styles, motivation, socioeconomic status, and parent-child relationships (Radhika & Niranjana, 2024).

Furthermore, the literature review emphasizes the multifaceted nature of academic anxiety, illustrating how parenting styles, motivation, socioeconomic status, and parent-child relationships significantly influence students' academic performance and mental well-being. Findings from the review indicate that male students may experience more stress due to interpretational relationships and environmental factors, while female students often face anxiety related to their academic choices, particularly when they feel their stream of study was not a personal decision and academic anxiety extends beyond individual students, affecting various aspects of educational institutions, including subjects, instructors, exams, and extracurricular activities.

Significance Of The Study:-

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

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 significant 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 significant 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 significant 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 significant difference in the level of Academic Anxiety due between Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town higher secondary school students.
- H₂. There is no significant 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:

Academic Anxiety: 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:

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

Data Analysis And Interpretation

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%

Table 1 shows that higher secondary students in Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town had a moderate level of achievement. A majority (47.5%) secured a Second Division, while 34% attained a First Division. Only 4.3% achieved a Distinction, 13.5% received a Third Division, and 0.7% were Promoted.

Gender, Stream And Locality-Wise Comparision Of Academic Anxiety Levels Of Students:

Table 2 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%

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

Table 3 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%

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

Table 4 Overall: Academic Anxiety level of Higher Secondary school students in Aizawl City and 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%

Table 4 shows a distribution of academic anxiety levels among higher secondary students in both Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town. While 30.5% exhibit average anxiety, 14.2% show below-average anxiety, and 5.7% display low anxiety. Conversely, 21.3% experience above-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			

Major Findings Of The Study:-

Academic Performance:

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

Academic Anxiety Level of Aizawl Higher Secondary School :

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

Academic Anxiety Level of Bilkhawthlir Higher Secondary School:

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

Overall Academic Anxiety Levels:

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

Gender Comparisons:

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

Academic Stream Impact:

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

Recommendations:-

- Examine various areas to decide what drives academic anxiety in each location.
- Investigate the influence of parental aspirations and household income on students' academic anxiety.
- Identify effective teaching approaches and school settings that mitigate academic anxiety.
- Assess whether counseling and stress-reduction initiatives contribute to lower anxiety levels on school.
- Analyze academic anxiety and stress levels in urban educational institutions compared to those in rural settings.
- Explore the impact of peer relationships and competition among students on anxiety and educational outcomes.
- Examine the role of cultural factors in shaping individuals' perceptions of academic stress and anxiety.
- Develop tailored strategies to help students in managing academic pressure, taking gender into account.

- Investigate if participation in extracurricular activities lowers academic anxiety and enhances mental well-being.
- Analyze the effects of digital tools and online education on student stress levels
- Carry out longitudinal studies to examine how academic anxiety evolves over time and its impact on overall life.

Discussions:-

This study explored the connection between anxiety and academic performance among higher secondary students in Aizawl City and Bilkhawthlir Town. Most students achieved Second Division grades, with fewer obtaining First Division or Distinction. Anxiety was found to impact academic performance, especially in science streams where students face higher anxiety levels (Kaur, 2023). The research showed many students experienced average anxiety, while others reported above average to extremely high levels. However, no significant differences in anxiety were found across academic streams or genders, suggesting it affects students universally (Patel et al., 2023). Aizawl Higher Secondary School had higher anxiety levels compared to Bilkhawthlir, possibly due to urban-rural differences in resources and environment (Das, 2022). Parental involvement emerged as a key factor influencing both anxiety and academic outcomes. Supportive parents can help reduce stress, while high expectations may increase it (Radhika & KP Niranjana, 2024; Gautam & Sharma, 2024). The study faced limitations like restricted sample diversity and access to schools, highlighting the need for broader research to better understand these issues.

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