

## A Study of Test Anxiety Among High School Students in Relation to Sociological Variables

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was to determine whether the test anxiety affect the high school students in relation to sociological variables. The study also aimed to find out the effect of locality and gender on test anxiety among high school students. A random sampling was employed to select the sample of 200 students from the IXth and Xth class students studying in schools of Jammu district. Sarason Test Anxiety Scale was administered to the students. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of high school students in relation to sociological variables.

**Keywords:** *Test Anxiety, Sociological Variables*

Anxiety is not a new thing but has made the present age as age of anxiety. It is considered as a block to an activity. An individual suffering from anxiety may not be able to devote his full energy to his performance on a task. It is therefore, considered that anxiety interferes in activity and so learning is impeded. The emphasis on competitions in schools, colleges etc. also create anxiety in a person.

Anxiety is also used to refer to a personality trait that remains relatively stable otherwise. Emotion laden behaviour often occurs as a response to anxiety. Anxiety is not always undesirable thing, as some of us tend to think. At normal levels, it is highly beneficial from the stand point of one's maximum self - realization without which he would remain forever childish, ignorant and incomplete.

According to May (1950), anxiety is, "the apprehension caused off by a threat to some value which the individual holds essential to his existence as self".

Test anxiety, on the other hand, is a state of mind where a student has either a sense of insecurity, loss of confidence or incompetence while undergoing an examination or when the individual is overstressed, worried or tense in the moments when he is to be evaluated. The performance on a test may be influenced by the anxiety of the child because he often pays more attention to his responses than to the task. In this given situation, when the child becomes aware that he is being tested, his basic capacity may get impaired with the increase

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in test anxiety. This response of the mind can be anticipated because of ills arising from lack of confidence within child's personality which is caused due to his own drives and impulses and unresolved problems in his life.

It is generally said that anxiety works as a drive and when it becomes intense it might become a hindrance in the performance of the individual. It is very important for an educationist to understand the anxiety level of adolescent boys and girls, for they need special attention in order to develop healthy personalities, become creative and useful members of the society. This clearly stresses the need of the study based on test anxiety. Anxiety is higher during adolescence period. Adolescence is a state of stress and strain. During this stage, large number of changes are taking place in a student-physically, emotionally, mentally, socially etc. At the adolescence stage considerably large number of students are found to be suffering from anxiety problems. There may be wide variety of individual differences in the test anxiety which will be influenced by the factors like sex, mother's status, family size, ordinal positions, locality, culture etc.

On the other hand, parental pressure too make adolescents more anxious. Expectations of parents towards the children are very high. Parents want their children to achieve the things which they have not be able to achieve. This causes stress and strain in adolescents which leads to anxiety. Anxiety is there because of fear of failure, fear of loosing, fear of not fulfilling dreams of parents etc. Anxiety is there to achieve more and more forward, to fulfill the dreams of parents.

A test anxiety is defined as a tendency to respond with fear in the achievement of test related contents, the disposition to engage in activities which are instrumental to the avoidance of achieving such tasks.

Studies conducted by various schools of thought show anxiety associated with evaluation of the test have positive response in higher strata whereas other studies have shown negative response in lower strata.

Psychologist like Lynn (1959) and others have proved that anxiety acts as strengthening agent for upper level students to enhance the capacity and attainment of top level in academic fields. Infact they say that anxiety and hard labour are found to be correlated.

Students come from different strata of society with differing level of intelligence, social conditions and their backgrounds. The low achievers are usually subjected to excessive stress and strains by test anxiety and remain extra anxious and worried. They always avoid testing situations as a resultant outcome of I.Q. and non availability of proper guidance.

One may have more anxiety than one is aware of, or may have anxiety without being aware of it at all. Anxiety may be hidden beyond feelings and physical discomfort. The labels normal and neurotics are used by some authors in discussing anxiety. Broadly speaking a person beyond the stage of early childhood has normal anxiety, which is also referred to as objective, uncomplicated and realistic anxiety, when he consciously recognizes the nature of his conflict, is aware of the feeling connected with it, and seeks to resolve it as best he can, in a thoughtful constructive way. By contrast, a person is said to have neurotic anxiety if he is not aware of the underlying conflict, does not recognize why he feels as he does and uses unconscious defence mechanisms to deal with the conflict.

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A further characteristic of anxiety is that it precipitates strategies or defences for coping with the distress and inner conflict. All the above mentioned characteristics about test anxiety have common conception that test anxiety is a state of tension, worry and stress in testing situations faced by the students belonging to different gender and locality.

Torano et al. (2020) studied test anxiety in adolescent students: Different responses according to the components of anxiety as a function of socio demographic and academic variables. Results revealed that adolescents show a differential response of test anxiety based on the physiological, cognitive, and motor components, mediated by the variables of gender, age, grade, academic performance and type of exam.

Mishra & Muduli (2021) conducted a comparative study on anxiety among college students from rural and urban areas. Results revealed that the rural college students have more anxiety compared to urban college students.

Wadi, Yusoff, Rahim, Lah (2022) studied the factors affecting test anxiety: a qualitative analysis of medical students' views. This study provides a solid foundation for policymakers and decision makers in medical education to improve current assessment practices and student well-being.

Bhave, Joshi, Kharbanda, Saxena, Yadav, Sovani (2023) conducted an exploratory study of subfactors of test anxiety among school students. The findings indicated that culture-specific elements of test anxiety in Indian youth associated with exam performance.

### ***Hypotheses***

- H1 There will be no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of boys and girls.
- H2 There will be no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of students belonging to urban and rural local
- H3 There will be no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of boys belonging to urban and rural locality.
- H4 There will be no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of girls belonging to urban and rural locality.
- H5 There will be no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of boys and girls belonging to urban locality.
- H6 There will be no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of boys and girls belonging to rural locality.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### ***Sample***

The sample of the study comprised of 200 students of IX<sup>th</sup> and X<sup>th</sup> class studying in schools of Jammu. Out of 200 students, 100 were boys and 100 were girls i.e., both accounting for 50% of the sample.

### ***Tool used***

Sarason Test Anxiety Scale was developed by Sarason in 1958. There are 37 items in this scale and each item to be responded by the student either in (True) or (False).

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### *Data Collection*

The data was collected from students by visiting their schools. After establishing a proper rapport with the subjects, The questionnaires were distributed with clear instructions. On an average 10-15 minutes interaction with the subjects was required. Then answered questionnaires were collected from the subjects and scored as per manual.

### *Statistical Techniques*

Critical ratio technique was employed to the test anxiety scores in order to see its difference between boys and girls students of urban and rural locality.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In order to analyse the data, descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, Standard Error of Mean ( $SE_M$ ), Standard Error of Difference Between Means ( $SE_{DM}$ ) and inferential statistics critical ratio have been used. According to the information obtained from the sample, findings are presented in above tables.

***Table 1 Significance of mean difference in Test anxiety scores of boys and girls***

Category	N	Mean	S.D	$SE_M$	$SE_{DM}$	C.R value	Level of Significance
Boys	100	20.30	5.57	0.56	0.81	0.93	NS
Girls	100	19.55	5.85	0.59			

Perusal of table 1 shows that the calculated value of (CR=0.93) is less than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level. Hence, Hypothesis No.1 that there is no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of boys and girls is accepted. The mean test anxiety score of boys is 20.30 and that of girls is 19.55. It can be interpreted that the boys show more test anxiety as compared to girls.

***Table 2 Significance of mean difference in Test anxiety scores of urban and rural locality students***

Category	N	Mean	S.D	$SE_M$	$SE_{DM}$	C.R value	Level of Significance
Urban Students	100	22.07	4.34	0.43	0.88	1.6	NS
Rural Students	100	20.66	7.74	0.77			

Perusal of table 2 shows that the calculated value of (CR=1.6) is less than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level. Hence, Hypothesis No.2 that there is no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of urban and rural locality students is accepted. The mean test anxiety score of urban students is 22.07 and that of rural students is 20.66. It can be interpreted that the urban students show more test anxiety as compared to rural students.

***Table 3 Significance of mean difference in Test anxiety scores of urban and rural locality boys***

Category	N	Mean	S.D	$SE_M$	$SE_{DM}$	C.R value	Level of Significance
Urban Boys	50	22.34	4.46	0.63	1.026	4.2	Significant at 0.01 level
Rural Boys	50	18.02	5.74	0.81			

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Perusal of table 3 shows that the calculated value of (CR=4.2) is more than the table value (2.58) at 0.01 level. Hence, Hypothesis No.3 that there is no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of urban boys and rural boys is rejected. The mean test anxiety score of urban boys is 22.34 and that of rural boys is 18.02. It can be interpreted that the urban boys show more test anxiety as compared to rural boys.

**Table 4 Significance of mean difference in Test anxiety scores of urban and rural locality girls**

Category	N	Mean	S.D	SE <sub>M</sub>	SE <sub>DM</sub>	C.R value	Level of Significance
Urban Girls	50	21.80	4.2	0.59	1.07	4.2	Significant at 0.01 level
Rural Girls	50	17.30	6.39	0.90			

Perusal of table 4 shows that the calculated value of (CR=4.2) is more than the table value (2.58) at 0.01 level. Hence, Hypothesis No.4 that there is no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of urban girls and rural girls is rejected. The mean test anxiety score of urban girls is 21.80 and that of rural girls is 17.30. It can be interpreted that the urban girls show more test anxiety as compared to rural girls.

**Table 5 Significance of mean difference in Test anxiety scores of boys and girls of urban locality**

Category	N	Mean	S.D	SE <sub>M</sub>	SE <sub>DM</sub>	C.R value	Level of Significance
Urban Boys	50	22.34	4.46	0.63	0.86	0.63	NS
Urban Girls	50	21.80	4.2	0.59			

Perusal of table 5 shows that the calculated value of (CR=0.63) is less than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level. Hence, Hypothesis No.5 that there is no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of boys and girls of urban locality is accepted. The mean test anxiety score of urban boys is 22.34 and that of urban girls is 21.80. It can be interpreted that the urban boys show more test anxiety as compared to urban girls.

**Table 6 Significance of mean difference in Test anxiety scores of boys and girls of rural locality**

Category	N	Mean	S.D	SE <sub>M</sub>	SE <sub>DM</sub>	C.R value	Level of Significance
Rural Boys	50	18.02	5.74	0.81	1.2	0.6	NS
Rural Girls	50	17.30	6.39	0.90			

Perusal of table 6 shows that the calculated value of (CR=0.6) is less than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level. Hence, Hypothesis No.6 that there is no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of boys and girls of rural locality is accepted. The mean test anxiety rural boys is 18.02 and that of rural girls is 17.30. It can be interpreted that the rural boys show more test anxiety as compared to rural girls.

### **CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the result, it is concluded that there was no significant difference between the mean test anxiety scores of the boys and girls and also the students of urban and rural locality. It was also observed in the above tables that the urban boys showed more test

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anxiety scores than the rural boys and similar was observed in case of urban and rural girls. The findings also indicated that the urban boys showed more test anxiety as compared to urban girls and rural boys showed more test anxiety as compared to rural girls.

The study may help the educators to locate more easily the specific factors that go into the formation of various personality traits. It will assist in understanding the causes of test anxiety among high school students and finding out various measures to reduce it to the minimum. It will further help in discovering various other ill effects of test anxiety situations.

The present study has also certain limitations. The sample size of the present study was relatively small. So, the findings may vary for a large sample. The study can be extended to other districts as it remained confined to Jammu district only. The test anxiety was studied in relation to only two sociological variables i.e., gender and locality. Other sociological variables like mother status, family background, socio-economic status and family system can also be studied.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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