

Research Paper

Comparative Study of Happiness and Academic anxiety among Higher Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to compare the Happiness and Academic anxiety among higher secondary school students of CBSE affiliated schools and schools affiliated by state board of Madhya Pradesh. It is a quantitative survey in nature. The sample drawn from one CBSE affiliated school and one MP Board affiliated school, both of the schools are located in Indore city of Madhya Pradesh. Convenient sampling method was employed. 167 students (106 Male, 61 Female) participated from a CBSE affiliated school and 113 students (57 Male, 56 Female) participated from a school affiliated to State Board of MP. A total of 278 students participated in this survey. Independent t-test was used for data analysis. Hypotheses were tested at $\alpha=0.05$ level. Based on the results obtained in this study it can be concluded that Happiness among higher secondary school students is independent of type of school Affiliation as well as Gender of students. Female students were found to have more Academic anxiety in comparison of male students, out of which female students of CBSE schools were found higher Academic anxiety than female students of MP Board affiliated schools.

Keywords: *Happiness, Academic anxiety, Higher Secondary School students*

Happiness is expression of satisfactory experience of body and/or mind from outer world or meditation. It is not a permanent state of mind. Therefore, for fostering happiness among people, a nation or society should create healthy cultural practices, comfortable/satisfactory conditions and sufficient resources for good quality of life. The main thought behind understanding of happiness is that what a person experience from the outer resources or outer/inner activities. The World Happiness Report - 2025 ranked Finland as the happiest nation for the eighth consecutive year, while India was placed at 118 (Helliwell et al., 2025). The New Education Policy – 2020 emphasized the importance of Happiness, Well-being and Mental health among students. Study of happiness helps in making strategies for increasing happiness among students. Keeping the need of future efforts for improvement in happiness index, Government of Madhya Pradesh established Department of Joy in the state. Since 2016, Rajya Anand Sansthan (RAS) is continuously engaged in providing tools and techniques of incorporating positivity and joyful healthy habits for holistic growth and overall peace in Madhya Pradesh. Researchers have reviewed

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Received: September 27, 2025; Revision Received: October 08, 2025; Accepted: October 11, 2025

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many studies related to Happiness and Academic anxiety. Baroun (2006), Weaver and Habibov (2010), Alimoradi et al., (2011), Rajan and Easvarados (2012), Nair and Haripriya (2013), Mehradi et al. (2016), Pahsyntiew & Rymbai (2019), Thapliyal (2023), Kumar and Sahoo (2024), Sucheta and Prasad (2024) and Hazarika and Begum (2024) worked on Happiness. Baroun (2006) found that boys had significantly higher mean scores than girls on happiness. Weaver and Habibov (2010) & Alimoradi et al., (2011) revealed the same result. On the other hand, Rajan and Easvarados (2012) opposed this finding by a result 'females were happier and more grateful compared to males'. This finding was supported by Nair & Haripriya (2013), Thapliyal (2023), Kumar & Sahoo (2024) and Sucheta & Prasad (2024). Mehradi et al. (2016) found no significant relationship between Gender and Happiness. Pahsyntiew & Rymbai (2019) revealed that private school students were found happier than Government school students. Science students were found happier than commerce and arts students. Hazarika and Begum (2024) found that mean Happiness score of students of private schools was significantly higher than that of Government school students. Further Hazarika and Begum (2024) also concluded that Gender difference of happiness among secondary school students is insignificant.

Goswami (2000), Bhansali & Trivedi (2008), Nadeem, Ali, Maqbool & Zaidi (2012), Afolayan et al. (2013), Attri & Neelam (2013), Rao (2014), Rao et al. (2017), Jabeen & Andrabi (2018), Monica & Batra (2018), Nag et al., (2019) and Bhat (2020) worked on Academic anxiety. Jabeen & Andrabi (2018) showed that gender and school type had significant influence on the academic anxiety in favour of male. Goswami (2000) and Rao et al. (2017) found no significant difference between the academic anxiety of boys and girls. Bhansali & Trivedi (2008) found significant differences, this result was supported by Attri & Neelam (2013), Nag et al., (2019) and Rao (2014). Nadeem and others (2012) found a negative relationship between anxiety and academic achievement. On the contrary Afolayan et al. (2013) found no statistical difference between gender and academic performance of students. Bhat (2020) found that JKBOSE students have more Academic anxiety than CBSE students on overall composite score of academic anxiety. No study was found about Happiness and Academic anxiety among higher secondary school students of CBSE affiliated schools and MP board affiliated schools.

There are much diversities in these findings. Only two studies were available about Academic anxiety and Happiness namely Mahinay et al. (2022) and Mehrzad et al. (2022). Both of these studies found that happiness is correlated with anxiety. Mehrzad et al. (2022) suggested that happiness is negatively correlated with anxiety. Due to limited research the researcher found that there is a need for further studies in this area of research. Therefore, the researcher took this study in hand.

Objectives of the study

Researcher formulated following objectives for the present study-

1. To compare the mean happiness score of male students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with male students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.
2. To compare the mean happiness score of female students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with female students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.
3. To compare the mean happiness score of students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.

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4. To compare the mean Academic anxiety score of male students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with male students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.
5. To compare the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with female students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.
6. To compare the mean Academic anxiety score of students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.
7. To compare the mean Happiness score of male higher school students with the mean Happiness score of female higher school students.
8. To compare the mean Academic anxiety score of male higher school students with the mean Academic anxiety score of female higher school students.

Research hypothesis

Researcher formulated the following null hypotheses for the present study:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean happiness score of male students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school and male students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean happiness score of female students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school and female students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean happiness score of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school students and MP Board affiliated higher secondary school students.
4. There is no significant difference between the mean Academic anxiety score of male students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school and male students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.
5. There is no significant difference between the Academic anxiety score of female students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school and female students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.
6. There is no significant difference between the mean Academic anxiety score of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school students and MP Board affiliated higher secondary school students.
7. There is no significant difference between the mean Happiness score of male higher school students and the mean Happiness score of female higher school students.
8. There is no significant difference between the mean Academic anxiety score of male higher school students with the mean Academic anxiety score of female higher school students.

Sample

The sample of the study includes 280 higher school students of two English medium schools located in Indore city of Madhya Pradesh. The sample is selected by using a convenient sampling technique. 167 students (106 Male, 61 Female) participated from a CBSE affiliated school and 113 students (57 Male, 56 Female) participated from a school affiliated to State Board of MP.

Research Method employed

The Survey method is adopted to conduct the present study.

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Research Tool

The Student Happiness scale developed and standardized by 'Bhardwaj and Das (2017)' was used for Happiness. Split-half reliability of the scale on a sample of 150 cases was determined with the use of Gutman and Spearman Brown formula and found to be .74 and .79 respectively. The product moment correlation between test and retest score was found to be 0.71 on a sample of 100 cases. The content validity of the scale is expected to be at a satisfactory level. The theoretical validity has been estimated between a range of .84 to .88. The Academic Anxiety scale developed and standardized by Siddiqui and Rehman was used to assess the Academic anxiety of students. It contains 44 items. The Scale has both 17 Positive Items & 27 Negative Items. The reliability of the scale was decided by split-half method (odd-even). It was calculated on N=600 and was found to be $r=+0.85$ which is highly significant at 0.01 level of significance.

Data Collection Procedure

Happiness and Academic anxiety of students are assessed by using the survey technique. Firstly, researchers granted permission from both school's principals to perform the research study. After getting permission, the sampled students are gathered at one place and researchers distribute the Happiness scale to all the students. Then instructions are given to them, and sufficient time is provided to fill the tool and also assurance is given to them that the information given by them in the tools will be used for the study only, not anywhere else. Same procedure employed after 15 minutes for the administration of Academic anxiety scale. Finally, the given tools are collected from the students and given a vote of thanks to the principal and students for their cooperation.

Data Analysis Procedure

As the sample size of the subgroups was large enough to use a parametric test, the independent sample t-test may be used for data analysis purposes only if the assumptions of independent sample t-test will be satisfied. Therefore, the researcher tested the assumptions of an independent sample t- test namely 1. Large sample size, 2. Independence of observations, 3. Normality, 4. No outliers & 5. Homogeneity of variance. Researcher found the data fit for the use of independent sample t-test.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The result and interpretation are presented objective wise as follows-

1. To compare the mean happiness score of male students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with male students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.

Table 1: Summary of Mean, SD and Independent t-test for Happiness of Male students

	Type of School	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t	p.
Happiness	CBSE Affiliated	106	88.0283	22.023	161	-0.543	0.588
	MP Board Affiliated	57	90.1053	25.508			

From table 1, it is evident that t value is -0.543, which is significant at 0.58 level of significance, therefore it is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. In the light of the above observation the null hypothesis that 'there is no significant difference between the mean happiness score of male students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school and the mean happiness score of male students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school' cannot be rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it may be concluded that the mean

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happiness score of male students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school do not significantly differ with the mean happiness score of male students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.

2. To compare the mean happiness score of female students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with female students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.

Table 2: Summary of Mean, SD and Independent t-test for Happiness of Female students

	Type of School	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t	p.
Happiness	CBSE Affiliated	61	97.91	20.764	115	1.432	0.155
	MP Board Affiliated	56	91.92	24.433			

From table 2, it is evident that t value is 1.432, which is significant at 0.15 level of significance, therefore it is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. In the light of the above observation the null hypothesis that 'there is no significant difference between the mean happiness score of female students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school and the mean happiness score of female students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school' cannot be rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it may be concluded that the mean happiness score of female students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school do not significantly differ with the mean happiness score of female students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.

3. To compare the mean happiness score of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school students with the mean happiness score of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school students.

Table 3: Summary of Mean, SD and Independent t-test for Happiness of students

	Type of School	N	Mean	S. D.	df	t	p.
Happiness	CBSE Affiliated	167	91.64	22.033	278	0.223	0.823
	MP Board Affiliated	113	91.00	24.887			

From table 3, it is evident that t value is 0.223, which is significant at 0.82 level of significance, therefore it is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. In the light of above observation, the null hypothesis that 'there is no significant difference between the mean happiness score of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school students and the mean happiness score of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school students' cannot be rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it may be concluded that the mean happiness score of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school students do not significantly differ with the mean happiness score of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school students.

4. To compare the mean Academic anxiety score of male students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with male students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.

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Table 4: Summary of Mean, SD and Independent t-test for Academic anxiety of male students

	Type of School	N	Mean	S. D.	df	t	p.
Academic anxiety	CBSE Affiliated	106	91.53	19.671	161	-0.443	0.659
	MP Board Affiliated	57	93.00	20.896			

From table 4, it is evident that t value is -0.443, which is significant at 0.65 level of significance, therefore it is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. In the light of the above observation the null hypothesis that ‘there is no significant difference between the mean Academic anxiety score of male students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school and the mean Academic anxiety score of male students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school’ cannot be rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it may be concluded that the mean Academic anxiety score of male students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school do not significantly differ with the mean Academic anxiety score of male students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.

5. To compare the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with female students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school.

Table 5: Summary of Mean, SD and Independent t-test for Academic anxiety of female students

	Type of School	N	Mean	S. D.	df	t	p.
Academic anxiety	CBSE Affiliated	61	89.42	15.166	115	2.494	0.014
	MP Board Affiliated	56	82.03	16.886			

From table 5, it is evident that t value is 2.494, which is significant at 0.014 level of significance, therefore it is significant at 0.05 level of significance. In the light of above observation, the null hypothesis that ‘there is no significant difference between the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school and the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school’ is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. It may therefore be stated that the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school significantly differ with the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school. For further analysis the mean Academic anxiety values may be referred from table 5. It may be clearly observed from table 5, that the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of CBSE affiliated school is 89.42, which is significantly higher than the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of MP Board affiliated school which is 82.03. Hence it may be concluded that the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of CBSE affiliated school is significantly higher than the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of MP Board affiliated school.

6. To compare the mean Academic anxiety score of students of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school with students of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school

Table 6: Summary of Mean, SD and Independent t-test for Academic anxiety of students

	Type of School	N	Mean	S. D.	df	t	p.
Academic anxiety	CBSE Affiliated	167	90.76	18.136	278	1.398	0.163
	MP Board Affiliated	113	87.56	19.715			

From table 6, it is evident that t value is 1.398, which is significant at 0.16 level of significance, therefore it is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. In the light of above observation, the null hypothesis that ‘there is no significant difference between the mean Academic anxiety score of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school students and the mean Academic anxiety score of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school students’ cannot be rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it may be concluded that the mean Academic anxiety score of CBSE affiliated higher secondary school students do not significantly differ with the mean Academic anxiety score of MP Board affiliated higher secondary school students.

- To compare the mean Happiness score of male higher school students with the mean Happiness score of female higher school students.

Table 7: Summary of Mean, SD and Independent t-test for Happiness of students

	Gender	N	Mean	S. D.	df	t	p.
Happiness	Male	163	88.7546	23.24430	278	-2.258	0.70
	Female	117	95.0513	22.69621			

From table 7, it is evident that t value is -2.258, which is significant at 0.70 level of significance, therefore it is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. In the light of above observation, the null hypothesis that ‘There is no significant difference between the mean Happiness score of male higher school students and the mean Happiness score of female higher school students’ cannot be rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it may be concluded that the mean happiness score of male higher secondary school students do not significantly differ with the mean happiness score of female higher secondary school students.

- To compare the mean Academic anxiety score of male higher school students with the mean Academic anxiety score of female higher school students.

Table 8: Summary of Mean, SD and Independent t-test for Academic anxiety of female students

	Gender	N	Mean	S. D.	df	t	p.
Academic anxiety	Male	163	92.0491	20.05603	278	2.732	0.004
	Female	117	85.8889	16.36848			

From table 8, it is evident that t value is 2.732, which is significant at 0.004 level of significance, therefore it is significant at 0.05 level of significance. In the light of above observation, the null hypothesis that ‘There is no significant difference between the mean Academic anxiety score of male higher school students with the mean Academic anxiety score of female higher school students’ is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. It may therefore be stated that the mean Academic anxiety score of male higher secondary school students significantly differ with the mean Academic anxiety score of female higher

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secondary school students. For further analysis the mean Academic anxiety values may be referred from table 8. It may be clearly observed from table 8, that the mean Academic anxiety score of female students is 92.04, which is significantly higher than the mean Academic anxiety score of male students which is 85.88. Hence it may be concluded that the mean Academic anxiety score of female students is significantly higher than the mean Academic anxiety score of male students.

Findings

The following were the findings of this study:

1. No significant difference was found between the mean Happiness score of male higher students of CBSE affiliated school and the mean Happiness score of male higher secondary students of MP Board affiliated school.
2. No significant difference was found between the mean Happiness score of female higher secondary students of CBSE affiliated school and the mean Happiness score of female higher secondary students of MP Board affiliated school.
3. No significant difference was found between the mean Happiness score of higher secondary school students of CBSE affiliated school and the mean Happiness score of higher secondary students of MP Board affiliated school.
4. No significant difference was found between the mean Academic anxiety score of male higher students of CBSE affiliated school and the mean Academic anxiety score of male higher secondary students of MP Board affiliated school.
5. Mean Academic anxiety of female higher secondary students of CBSE affiliated schools was found significantly higher than that of female higher secondary students of MP Board affiliated schools.
6. No significant difference was found between the mean Academic anxiety score of higher secondary school students of CBSE affiliated school and the mean Academic anxiety score of higher secondary students of MP Board affiliated school.
7. No significant difference was found between the mean Happiness score of male higher secondary school students and the mean Happiness score of female higher secondary students.
8. Mean Academic anxiety of female higher secondary school students was found significantly higher than that of male higher secondary students.

DISCUSSION

The result shows that the mean Happiness score of male students of CBSE affiliated school does not significantly differ with the mean Happiness score of male students of MP Board affiliated schools. It indicates that boys of both types of schools may have equal opportunity of co-curricular activities and extracurricular activities in school premises (Naurem & Meitei, 2023, Kumar et al. 2024). As both of the schools are located in the same locality the surroundings may also have the same impact on the students of both of the schools (Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995; Putnam, 2000; Lu & Gilmour, 2004) because surrounding includes cultural influences and social relationships. In India central government and state government of Madhya Pradesh also working for improvement in happiness index among pupils. Smt. Annapurna Devi (Minister of State in the Ministry of Education) answered in Rajya Sabha (upper house of the Indian parliament) that Indian government intends to implement a curriculum in schools for fostering happiness among school students (Govt. of India, 2023). Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has promoted a "Happy Classrooms" concept and other initiatives focusing on well-being, mindfulness, and social-emotional learning. In Madhya Pradesh state, Government of Madhya Pradesh established Department of Joy in the state. Since 2016, Rajya Anand Sansthan (RAS) is continuously

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engaged in providing tools and techniques of incorporating positivity and joyful healthy habits for holistic growth and overall peace in Madhya Pradesh. The result of the second and third objectives may also have the same reasons. The result shows that the mean Academic anxiety score of male students of CBSE affiliated school does not significantly differ with the mean Academic anxiety score of male students of MP Board affiliated school indicates that the male students of both types of the school face the same academic pressure from school and parents. But the result of the fifth objective, 'mean Academic anxiety score of female students of CBSE affiliated school is significantly higher than the mean Academic anxiety score of female students of MP Board affiliated school' indicates that girls of CBSE affiliated school have more academic pressure from home. The Academic anxiety of all sampled students of CBSE affiliated schools do not significantly differ with the of the Academic anxiety of all sampled students of MP Board affiliated schools. This may be because the students of both types of the schools face the same academic pressure from school and parents.

Result of gender wise comparison of happiness of higher secondary school students shows that Happiness among higher school students s free from any effect of gender. This result is supported by Mehradi et al. (2016). Although in many studies females were found happier than male students (Rajan and Easvarados, 2012; Nair & Haripriya, 2013; Thapliyal, 2023; Kumar & Sahoo, 2024 and Sucheta & Prasad, 2024). The efforts of the Indian government, CBSE and state government for fostering the happiness among students may be a reason behind this contrast. Another result about gender wise comparison of Academic anxiety of higher secondary school students shows that female students have more Academic anxiety than that of male students. Study conducted by Jabeen & Andrabi (2018) and Monica & Batra (2018) are in favour of present finding. Domestic obligations may be a leading cause behind higher academic anxiety among female students (PTI, 2023).

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Patel, N.K. & Dalal, F. (2025). Comparative Study of Happiness and Academic anxiety among Higher Secondary School Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(4), 022-032. DIP:18.01.003.20251304, DOI:10.25215/1304.003