

Academic Anxiety Among Specially-Abled Secondary School Students With Special Reference To Gender And Type Of Disability.

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Abstract

Children with special needs are vital contributors of society, showcasing excellence despite their disabilities. To ensure their growth and progress it's essential to offer prompt attention, nurturing education and research in this field. Keeping this in mind, the present research was conducted on 100 specially-abled secondary school students and the study shows that different people experience different levels of academic anxiety and that gender has no bearing on it. The present study explores academic anxiety among students with special needs and its adverse effects on their wellbeing. By combining existing literature and effective methodologies, it offers insights to create an inclusive educational environment for all high school students, including those with special needs. It provides valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers in creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Keywords: Academic anxiety, Secondary school children, Specially-abled.

Introduction

The manifestation of academic anxiety has the capacity to significantly hinder the attainment of knowledge and the overall well-being of students with disabilities. By identifying the fundamental causative factors that give rise to academic anxiety in students and creating customized interventions, educators and policymakers may promote a comprehensive learning environment that empowers learners to achieve their academic potential to the fullest extent possible. The present scholarly article endeavours to evaluate relevant literature, examine present interventions, and suggest practical strategies to support students with disabilities in overcoming academic anxiety. There are numerous reasons why studying disabled secondary school students' academic anxiety is important. First, it makes it easier to comprehend the particular difficulties these students face when it comes to their anxiety about their academic performance. To effectively address their specific needs, targeted interventions and support systems can be developed by gaining insight into these challenges. Second, learning about academic anxiety enables educators and support staff to provide disabled students with individualized assistance. They can assist in reducing anxiety and creating a conducive learning environment by personalizing their approaches and putting individual strategies into action. Rehman et al. (2021) discovered a negative correlation between test anxiety and academic achievement in Lahore's secondary schools. Additionally, girls outperformed boys when it came to test anxiety. Sawant (2020) found that academic anxiety influences academic achievement in higher secondary school students, with male students being more affected than female students under higher academic anxiety. However, boys and girls with lower levels of academic anxiety did not differ significantly in terms of academic achievement. Rahaman and Rana (2018) compared male and female secondary school students' levels of academic anxiety in the Murshidabad District of West Bengal, India, and finds no significant difference in academic anxiety between the two sexes. Attri and Neelam (2013) studied gender differences in academic anxiety and achievement among secondary school students, and results revealed significant differences, with girls showing higher academic anxiety and better academic achievement compared to boys. In addition, improving disabled students' academic performance necessitates addressing their academic anxiety. To improve their overall educational outcomes, appropriate strategies and accommodations can be implemented by determining the factors that contribute to anxiety. By emphasizing the significance of creating inclusive and supportive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of all students, this research also promotes inclusivity in education. It features the meaning of recognizing and tending to the particular nerves experienced by debilitated understudies to guarantee their equivalent admittance to training. Additionally, studying academic anxiety among disabled students' aids in the mental health and wellbeing of those students. Students' mental health can be negatively impacted by academic anxiety, which can be addressed by educators and support staff to improve mental health outcomes for disabled students. Additionally, policymakers, educators, and school administrators can learn about effective policies, practices, and interventions for assisting disabled students in achieving academic success. By consolidating the experiences acquired from concentrating on scholastic tension, instructive foundations can establish comprehensive and strong conditions that encourage the

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general development and improvement of debilitated auxiliary school understudies. In conclusion, it is essential to investigate academic anxiety among disabled secondary school students in order to effectively support, promote inclusivity, improve academic performance, and promote these students' well-being. Schools can ensure that disabled students have equal opportunities to succeed academically and thrive in their educational journeys by addressing their unique challenges, customizing support, and implementing appropriate strategies.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were laid down for the present study:

To compare the academic anxiety of orthopedically, visually and hearing impaired secondary school students on the basis of gender.

Hypothesis of the Study

For the purpose of this investigation, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Mean scores on "academic anxiety" very significantly between male and female orthopaedic, visual and hearing impaired Secondary school students.

Research Design

This research focuses on the specially-abled secondary school students of both sexes who are presently enrolled in government and private schools of the Kashmir valley. The Descriptive survey research approach was used for collection of the data. The goal of the study is to compare boys' and girls' experiences with academic anxiety. A random sample of 300 students was chosen for the present study. The Academic Anxiety Scale for Children was administered to these 300 male and female specially-abled secondary school students by the researcher during a personal visit to the selected schools. The students were given complete discretion to inquire about the meaning of unfamiliar words or sentences. In addition, respondents were given ample time and freedom to complete the scale. The Academic Anxiety Scale for Children (AASC), which was developed and standardized by Dr. A.K. Singh and Dr. A. Sen Gupta (2013), was utilized. Twenty items have been selected for the final version of this scale. There are two categories for both positive and negative items. The subjects gave responses of "yes" to every positive item and "no" to every negative item. Subjects who respond "No" receive a score of +1 for 4, 9, 16, and 18. The score for any other responses is zero. The highest possible score on this scale is 20. The Split-Half method yielded 0.65 and 0.60 respectively for the test's reliability, respectively. The validity of the test was determined to be 0.31 to 0.57. The t test, the mean, and the standard deviation were utilized as statistical data analysis tools in this study.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The present study focused on "Academic Anxiety of Specially abled male and female Secondary School students of Kashmir Division." To achieve this objective, a sample of 300 students, 100 each with visual, orthopaedic, and hearing impairments, was selected to complete this goal. The details of analysis of data collected from the selected sample on the variable 'Academic Anxiety' is presented as under:

Comparing Academic Anxiety Levels Among Specially Abled Students: An Examination of Impairment Groups and Genders. (N=100 each)

TableNo.	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Significance Level
1	Orthopedically Impaired	100	15.96	2.518	11.818	*** p < .01
	Visually Impaired	100	11.71	2.567		
2	Orthopedically Impaired	100	15.96	2.518	0.000	**
	Hearing Impaired	100	15.96	2.518		
3	Visually Impaired	100	11.71	2.567	-11.818	*** p < .01
	Hearing Impaired	100	15.96	2.518		
4	Male Orthopaedic Group	52	15.73	3.056	-0.947	**
	Female Orthopaedic Group	48	16.21	1.762		
5	Male Visually Impaired	52	11.73	2.529	-0.109	**
	Female Visually Impaired	46	11.67	2.617		
6	Male Hearing Impaired	52	15.73	3.056	-0.947	**
	Female Hearing Impaired	48	16.21	1.762		

** Not significant *** p value

Discussion

This study aimed to compare the levels of academic anxiety experienced by students with special needs. Three main comparisons were the focus of the analysis: It was observed that the Orthopedically Impaired group had higher academic anxiety compared to the Visually Impaired group because of many factors such as heavy school schedule, unrealistic expectation and demands of parents and teachers, low academic performance, poor study habits, and not

having enough time to deal with school's multiple priorities. However, results revealed no significant difference in academic anxiety between the Orthopedically Impaired and Hearing Impaired groups, suggesting that the type of impairment did not impact anxiety levels. The Visually Impaired group experienced lower academic anxiety than the Hearing Impaired group because the visual sense is more valuable as compared to all other senses viz.hearing, motor and speech as approximately 85% knowledge is received through sense of sight. Thus sense of sight is most accountable for neurotic behaviour such as anxiety, phobias, stress, anger and depression, etc. it was also found that there is no significant disparity between male and female students in the Orthopedically Impaired group. The study examined anxiety levels in visually impaired students, comparing males and females, and found that male visually impaired students reported higher anxiety levels than females. Additionally, the researchers explored academic anxiety in hearing-impaired students, considering both genders, and discovered that female hearing-impaired students experienced significantly higher academic anxiety than their male counterparts. Similar results have been reported by other studies namely Lenka and Kant (2012), Kumar and Kant (2012), Kumar, et.al., (2015) and Pandith, A. A. (2017).

Conclusions

In conclusion, the study's findings emphasize the urgent nature of the secondary school academic anxiety experienced by students with disabilities. This study sheds light on the difficulties these students face, including the pervasive effects of stigma, social isolation, and specific learning difficulties that increase anxiety. It is obvious that this issue needs to be recognized and addressed because academic anxiety affects students' overall well-being and academic performance. To really uphold these understudies, teachers, guardians, and policymakers should cooperate and show sympathy. Schools can create a stable and strong environment that reduces academic anxiety by implementing comprehensive practices and individualized instruction plans. This study adds a human touch by emphasizing the significance of empathy and understanding when carrying out designated mediations and recognizing the extraordinary experiences and needs of these students. Additional research is required to investigate the intricacies of academic anxiety in this population in order to develop evidence-based strategies that can reduce anxiety, promote academic success, and foster personal growth.

Recommendations

First and foremost, it is essential to develop specialized support programs that are tailored to the requirements of students with orthopaedic impairments, taking into account their higher levels of academic anxiety. Students with visual impairments should also receive individualized assistance, including the use of accessible learning materials and assistive technologies. Due to the distinct requirements of male and female students, orientation-specific mediations should be carried out in groups with hearing and visual impairments. To create a comprehensive support system, educators, professionals in the support field, parents and caregivers must work together. Students with special needs can benefit from regular monitoring and evaluation of their academic anxiety levels and will prove helpful in identifying those who require additional assistance. Finally, creating a supportive environment that is conducive to the academic success and well-being of all students with special needs will be made possible by promoting awareness, including all students, and providing educators with training.

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