



Academic Anxiety and Academic Performance: A Comprehensive Stance

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Abstract

The present research paper has been aimed to develop a comprehensive model explaining the dynamism of relationship between academic anxiety and academic performance. For that purpose, extensive review of the literature has been conducted to identify wide array of factors that are found to affect academic anxiety and academic performance in the literature. The literature has been found to be scattered in explaining the dynamism of academic anxiety and academic performance comprehensively from great many angles. Thus, the present research work has integrated different taxonomies and developed a model named as AP model with potential of explaining the relationship between academic anxiety and academic performance robustly. Based on the development of the model, road map ahead has been suggested in the concluding paragraphs of the present research composition.

Keywords: academic, anxiety, familial, performance, personal, students,

Introduction

Anxiety has received considerable attention in the research ecosystem. Defined as an emotion, wherein, individuals feel tensed as well as worried and have apprehensive thoughts resultant of the arousal of nervous system, anxiety comprised of ubiquitous cerebral health conditions faced by individuals (Amstadter, 2008). Although anxiety up to a certain level can be fruitful in attaining the desired objective, the extended level of anxiety can be detrimental for individuals if remain unaddressed (Muskin, 2021). Higher level of anxiety causes obstruction in normal life of individuals. It affects the ability of individuals to think, interpret and act in any given scenario (Amstadter, 2008). Related with the thought process, anxiety may also alter personality of individuals in some cases. Thus, analyzing anxiety levels among individuals attracts considerable attention.

Like other individuals, students also experience anxiety in their academics (Mazzone et al., 2007). Termed as academic anxiety, it is the feelings of dreadfulness, worrisome, or tension experienced by students in the academic settings, such as, examination time, assignments, class behaviour, etc. (Vitasari et al., 2010). Such feelings, if remain unaddressed, affect their ability to learn, gain knowledge and understand the subject- matter, thereby, eventually affecting their academic performance (Vitasari et al., 2010). For instance, a highly tense student may not be able to write examination paper correctly. This substantiates the need to study dynamics of academic anxiety among students. Indeed, the need to identify the

existence and level of anxiety and its antecedents is more crucial for younger school-going students which comprised of the students of pre-primary school category, primary school category and middle school category (Commodari and Rosa, 2021; Rao and Chaturvedi, 2017). They are not grown-up enough to identify the existence and cause of academic anxiety explicitly by themselves. Therefore, it is very important for the parents, teachers, and other stakeholders like school administration to focus not only on exploring the prevalence of academic anxiety among such students but also the factors that triggers such anxiety keeping in view the fact that academic anxiety exhibit substantial bearing on academic performance (Wen et al., 2020). Indeed, the need to examine dynamics of academic anxiety and academic performance is more crucial for the developing nations like India (Ul Rehman, 2016). The developing nations are on the path of streamlining their growth

and development prospects including planned as well as some spontaneous changes. Among such changes, one of the promising changes is the continuous development of the education system resulting in numerous changes in teaching practices, curriculum, etc. (White, 2020). Such changes are made to keep the educational system on track with the developed nations since education system shapes the future of India (Campbell, 2006).

This clearly indicates the need to focus on academic anxiety experienced by students as well as their performance in academics in developing nations. However, the review of the extant literature has indicated lack of comprehensive framework explaining the dynamics of academic anxiety among school-going students in the Indian context. Thus, the present research paper has made an attempt to develop a comprehensive framework explaining the dynamism of academic anxiety among school-going students in India.

Further to have a more lucid picture regarding the existing literature pertaining to academic anxiety and academic performance, the existing literature has been reviewed and various research gaps have been identified which have facilitated in shaping the framework of the present research work. Accordingly, the next section discusses some of the literature evidence.

Literature Review

Mazzone et al. (2007) have attempted to analyze role of anxiety in the performance of the students in school among children and adolescents. Accordingly, a sample of 131, 267 and 80 students have been collected from students registered for elementary school: intermediate school and high school, respectively. It has been found that as the students start experiencing anxiety, their academic performance starts diminishing.

Basco and Olea (2008) have aimed to correlate academic anxiety with performance of students in their academic curriculum with focus on students enrolled in BS biology course. The output of the study has shown moderate level of anxiety among the sampled students pertaining to their academic curriculum and this academic anxiety is significantly related with their performance in the said course.

Huberty (2009) has attempted to explore connection between tests and performance anxiety. For that reason, adolescents have been taken and it has been found that the sampled respondents, who experienced severe anxiety performs low in examination and if such anxiety remain unattended, it led towards low self-esteem, reduced efforts, and lack of motivation for performing school tasks.

Vitasari et al. (2010) aimed to study affiliation of academic anxiety with performance in academics among engineering students. A sample of 205 students has been considered and the result of correlation statistics has found that academic anxiety of students is inversely related with their performance in the said course.

Ader and Erktin (2010) have focused on children going to high school with the aim to examine self-regulation of anxiety among students. The responses of 751 students have been taken and the results have unveiled that the achievement in the subject of mathematics depends on mathematical background of the sample students. Further, the said achievement has also unveiled factors, such as test anxiety, self-efficacy and cognitive domain as noteworthy predictors of achievement of students in mathematics.

Dobson (2012) has explored phenomenon of anxiety among students with disabilities and without disabilities. Accordingly, anxiety has shown negative impact on the accomplishment level of the sample in their academics. However, it has been argued that some levels of anxiety is advantageous for the students whether with disabilities or without disabilities. Further, it has been deduced that anxiety reduces support of not only teachers but also students and their parents.

Nandini (2013) has aimed to explore impact of academic anxiety on course performance of secondary school students. For this reason, a total of 300 secondary school students enrolled in various schools in the city of Bangalore have been collected and the results of correlation coefficient depict statistically significant association of academic anxiety with academic performance. Further, it has also been

reflected that academic achievement of sampled boys are statistically different from the sample girls and the sampled boys found to have score relatively higher on academic achievement than the other groups. Adding more, the students with low and moderate level of anxiety are also noted to exhibit varied level of performance in the said course.

Shakir (2014) gathered responses from 352 secondary school students in Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh, India). The aim of taking the said sample is to explore connection of academic anxiety with academic achievement. The academic achievement has been measured from the achievement scores of students recorded with Controller of Examination of the sampled schools and academic anxiety has been assessed through a standardized scale. The results have indicated that when the level of anxiety pertaining to the course increases, the performance of the students in academics diminishes and vice versa. Noteworthy variations have been unveiled in the academic performance of the sample experiencing high and low academic anxiety. Further,

this research work has also found significant difference in the aforesaid aspects on account of gender of students.

Das, et al. (2014) have explored variation in academic achievement and academic anxiety among girls and boys. The sample includes a total of 237 secondary level students with 128 boys and 109 girls enrolled in secondary school in West Bengal, India. The interpretation of the results was based on descriptive statistics and results of correlation as well as t-test. Accordingly, the results of descriptive statistics have

shown that the sampled girls have shown more academic anxiety than the sampled boys. While the scores of academic achievements are found to be comparatively higher in case of boys than the girls. Although the results of descriptive statistics have shown difference in the level of academic achievement and anxiety, such difference is not found to be statistically significant in case of achievement of the sampled students in their academics.

Singh (2015) aimed to determine variation in academic achievement of students on account of the anxiety they feel. The study is focused on students of undergraduate program. A sample of 500 students have been considered with ages ranging from 19-22 years selected from various universities of the city of Varanasi. The computation of results was based on t-test statistics and descriptive statistics. Accordingly, the academic performance of the sample was noticed to be positively connected two levels of anxiety (that is, low and moderate level), whereas higher inverse connection was detected between higher level of anxiety and the academic achievement of the sample. Further, the outcome has also indicated that academic achievement is not affected by extreme sources of anxiety. Female students are also found to score more on academic performance and academic anxiety than the male complements.

Shibli et al. (2015) have examined affiliation of academic achievement with academic anxiety. The outcomes, computed from the sample of 75 male and 75 female students studying in various colleges of Faisalabad, have depicted no substantial of academic achievement with academic anxiety.

Steinmayr, et al. (2016) have considered adolescents with the aim to explore

interplay of idiosyncratic welfare of students, their achievement in academics and exam anxiety over the period of time. Accordingly, it has been highlighted that the apprehension element of exam anxiety is inversely linked with the subjective well-being, whereas academic achievement is positively related with the said aspect. Further, worrying has been found to negatively affect the performance of the students.

The research attempt of Ul Rehman (2016) has been aimed to explore factors affecting academic anxiety among students enrolled in higher education. The study was qualitative in nature, and it has been revealed that academic anxiety of students is affected by personal, family, institutional, social as well as political factors. Further, it has been highlighted that severe anxiety leads towards various issues, such as distortions, dysfunctional schema, psychosomatic complaints, headaches, stomachache, etc.

Saade et al. (2017) have inspected affiliation of academic performance with academic anxiety in case of students enrolled for the online courses. The sample of 1377 undergraduate students have shown that the academic performance is affected by their level of academic anxiety. Further, the male students are noticed to experience relatively less anxiety than the female sample.

Alam (2017) has focused on reviewing the literature related with academic anxiety and factors affecting it through a conceptual research attempt. This review has highlighted that personal, institutional, social, and political factors lead towards academic anxiety among students. Further, the review has unveiled that severe

anxiety leads towards problems, such as headache, stomachache, fainting, etc. Further, academic anxiety has also been found to exhibit negative impact on their academic performance. Adding more, anxiety is also noticed to be correlated with home environment of students. The study of Bisson (2017) has found that gender is relatively strongest predictor of academic performance as girls have shown more academic performance than boys. Further, the total effect of academic anxiety is found to be insignificant on the academic performance of students. However, past academic performance has shown significant impact on present academic performance. Further, Duraku (2017) has attempted to find out factors that affect anxiety of students. The study has considered test anxiety and the results have shown that level of confidence, study skills, failing fear, lack of preparation, familial errands, attributes of teachers and dearth of study skills.

Mirawdali et al. (2018) aimed to ascertain the degree to which the performance of students in their academics is affected by the anxiety they experience because of their course. The study took the sample of 132 undergraduate students enrolled in pharmacy courses and the results have highlighted significant role of academic anxiety on academic performance. Also, the academic performance of the sample has also been found related with competency and skills of students in academics. Further, it has been found that low academic performance of students is due to the perceptual course burden and the availability of the study material. Also, social as well as familial facets have also been unveiled as significant variables while examining role of academic anxiety in academic performance.

Reddy et al. (2018) intended to detect bases of academic anxiety in university students with a sample of 336 students. The results have revealed noteworthy variance in the level of anxiety experienced by students enrolled in different streams. However, all the students are found to experience academic anxiety. Besides, personal inadequacy, interpersonal differences, teacher-pupil relationship, and inadequate study facilities have been unveiled as significant predictors of academic anxiety.

Ratanasiripong et al. (2018) have explored the factors affecting anxiety of students enrolled in university for various courses. The results have shown that anxiety among students is affected by self-esteem and economic status of family.

Ajmal and Ahmad (2019) have focused on the exploration of facets of anxiety that affect students enrolled in distance learning courses. A sample of 322 students of Master of Education program have been taken as sample and the study is descriptive in nature. Accordingly, it has been found that the sampled students feel anxious because of the factors, namely, procedure of admission, assignments, distribution of books, course tutorials and presence of student support service. Further, male sampled students are found to be more anxious than the female counterparts. Also, significant impact of academic anxiety has been found on academic performance.

Adeyemi (2020) also attempted to explore stake of anxiety in the students' academic performance as an implication for counselling. Accordingly, it has been found that anxiety among students gets heightened because of multiple factors, namely, failing fear, school fear, separation anxiety, relationship with other students, violence fear,

fear of bullying and uncertainty regarding future. Heightened anxiety leads towards decreased academic performance.

Quílez-Robres et al. (2021) have focused on identifying various social, familial and educational factors that affect anxiety among children in Spain. The results of the study have anxiety level of children is governed by their age, gender, level of internet usage by mothers, family conflicts, assistance of parents in completing homework.

Semwal et al. (2022) have focused on finding precursors of academic performance in case of students pursuing undergraduate medical courses. Accordingly, it has been found that academic stress of students

affects their course performance. Further, the education level of students and their parental education also affects their performance in academics.

Research Gap

An insight into the relevant literature related to the dynamics of academic anxiety and academic performance has unveiled certain research gaps. More of the studies are focused on exploring co-relation between academic anxiety and achievement, some of the above-mentioned studies focus on primarily the factors that led to such an anxiety. More of the studies are focused on a specific antecedent of academic anxiety and/or academic performance, such as, gender, parental attributes, etc. But across these reviews the focus on the comprehensive approach is not available in the research reservoir.

Further, the literature is found to be substantially filled with research evidence in case of students enrolled in colleges or universities. **The evidence focusing on students**

going to pre-primary school, primary school and middle school are found to be sparse. Specifically, such research evidence is minimal in Indian context.

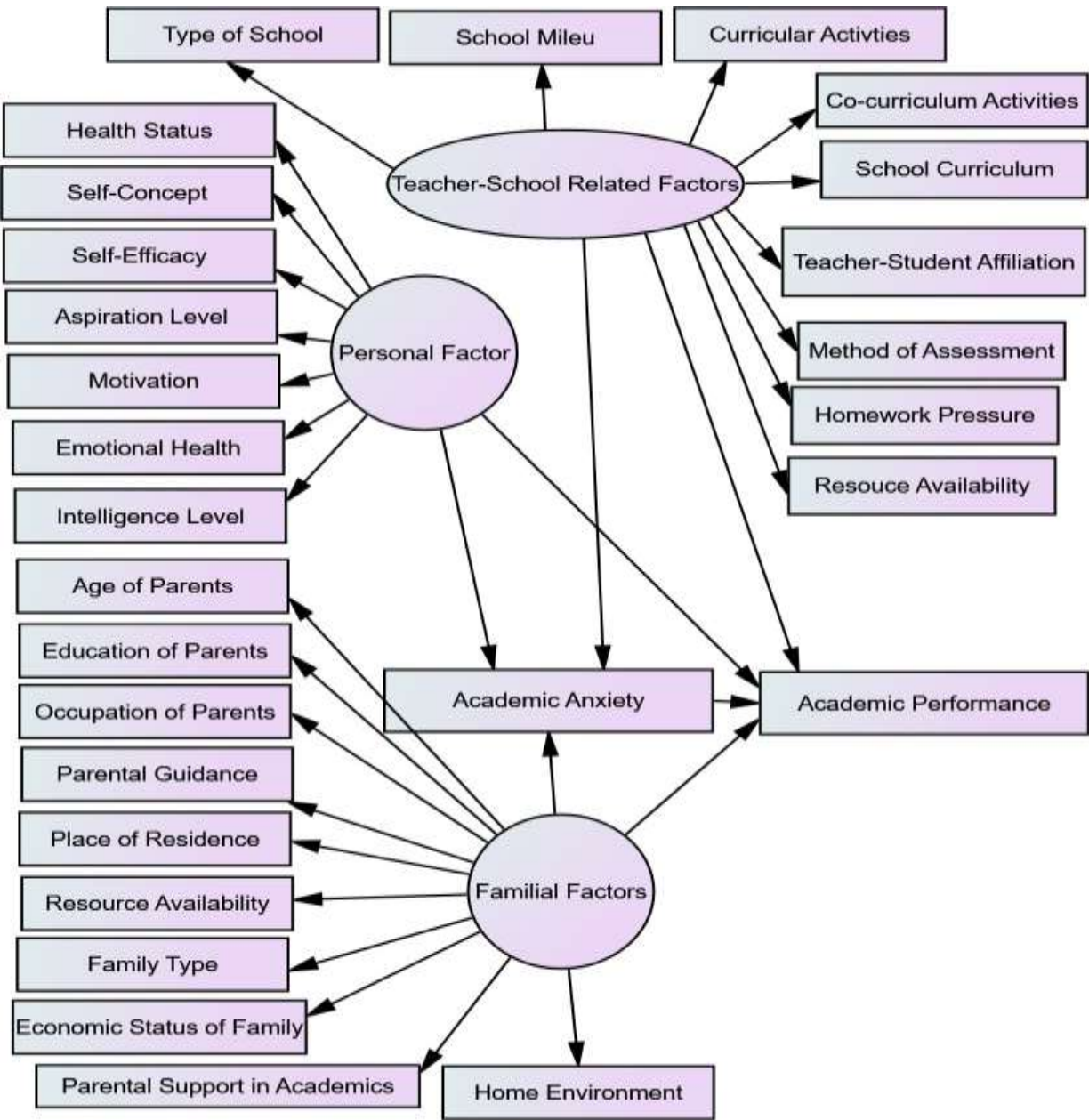
On that account, a very novel attempt has been made to focus on analysing the kinesic of both academic performance and academic anxiety in case of school-going students in India. To recapitulate, the current study has developed a framework named as Anxiety-Performance (AP) model assessing dynamism of academic anxiety and academic performance in case of school-going students in India.

Development of Anxiety-Performance (AP) Model

The extensive review of the literature has revealed scant research evidence focused on the antecedents of academic anxiety as well as academic performance at concurrently. The available scattered research studies have indicated four broad categories of plausible antecedents of academic anxiety and academic performance, namely, personal factors, familial factors, teacher-school-related and demography of students. The personal factors include health status, self-concept, self-efficacy, aspiration level, motivation, emotional status, health status and intelligence level. Familial factors include age, education, and occupation of parents; level of guidance from parents; place of residence; availability of resources; economic status of family, family type, parental support in academic work and home environment. Teacher-School related factors include type of school, school milieu, curricular activities, co-curricular activities, school curriculum, teacher-student affiliation, method of assessment, homework pressure, teacher-pupil interaction, competency of teachers, educational qualification of teachers, teaching style, working experience of teachers,

learning environment and availability of resources. Further, demography of students, primarily, include gender and class. Based on this, a theoretical AP model has been developed and the same has been presented in the Figure 1.

Figure 1. Theoretical AP Model



As represented in the Figure 1, academic anxiety is said to affect academic

performance directly. Further, the personal factors, familial factors and teacher-school related factors are said to affect academic anxiety and academic performance in different research evidence. Thus, the theoretical AP model includes all such factors with the aim to examine direct as well as indirect impact of such factors on the relationship of academic anxiety on academic performance.

Discussion and Road Map Ahead

The dynamism of academic anxiety and academic performance of school-going students has not yet been studied comprehensively and entirely from different perspectives in the Indian context. Thus, the present study has attempted to integrate different taxonomies into a single framework aiming to get a holistic view. Such integration may be helpful in understanding relationship between academic anxiety and academic performance robustly. Indeed, the present research work has laid cornerstone for continuing the study focusing on academic anxiety and academic performance from an applied perspective. The empirical validation of the theoretical AP model will enable schools, parents and various other stakeholders in understanding the phenomenon of academic anxiety and academic performance of the school-going students enrolled in various schools across the length and breadth of the Indian nation.

However, the testing of the theoretical AP model should be done with certain limitations. Firstly, the said model has been focused on micro level factor. There can be macro factors like educational policy of Government, which might affect the level of academic anxiety among the students. Such factors can be identified and the same

can be included in the theoretical AP model for extending its validity further.

Secondly, the model can be validated in case of students enrolled for higher courses in school and college. But the same should be done cautiously after evaluating the relevance of various personal, familial and teacher-school related factors. Extending the theoretical AP model for the students enrolled for higher level of education that the school level may further nourish the existing anxiety-performance literature.

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