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Comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationships between examination anxiety, academic achievement, and problem-solving abilities among secondary level students.

[1]shashi kala, [2]Dr.sudha sharma

1. Ph.D Scholar, Department of Education, IIMT University, Meerut (India)
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, IIMT University, Meerut (India)

1. Introduction

Secondary education represents a critical developmental stage where students face increasing academic demands. During this phase, examination anxiety often emerges as a significant psychological factor influencing academic performance and cognitive functioning. At the same time, **problem-solving abilities**—a key component of cognitive and academic competence—play a central role in determining success across subjects. Understanding how these variables interrelate provides essential insights for educators, psychologists, and policymakers.

1.1 Anxiety and academic experience

Anxiety as it pertains to the academic experience of students was defined, and the impact of this anxiety on students' academic performance was shown using theories that take into account the link between anxiety and achievement in the classroom. Details about them are provided below. Some problems in psychophysiology include anxiety (Callahan, 2001).. The impact of test- taking dread is shown in a theoretical model in Figure 1 below.

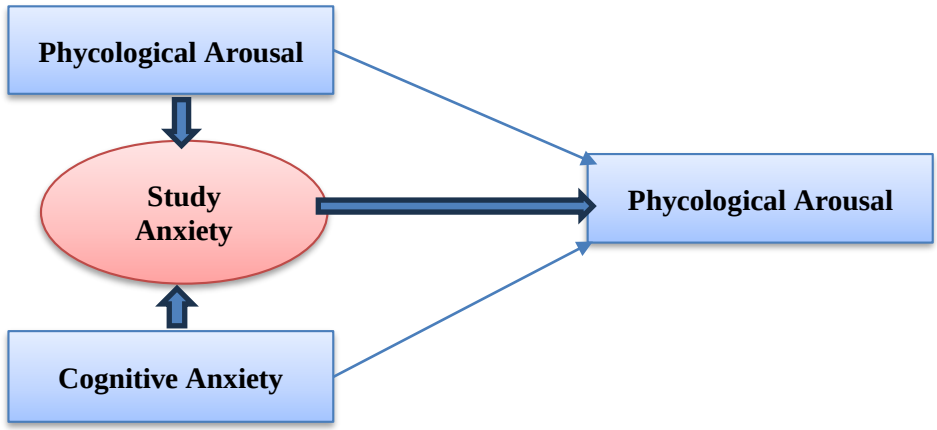


Figure 1: Theoretical model of study anxiety upon academic performance

Keywords: Academic anxiety, Examination Anxiety, Academic Achievement, Problem-Solving Abilities

1.2 Academic anxiety

Anxiety, tension, or dread that arises in response to school or academic-related activities is referred to as "academic anxiety." There are several factors that might contribute to anxiety about school, including tests, homework, specific classes (such as math, reading, or science), parental and peer expectations, and a general lack of comfort with study and group work. Anxieties about school may have a wide range of reasons, depending on the individual. According to the available data, however, these signs may be broken down into four groups: physiological, cognitive, behavioral, and (sometimes) social. Determine the many forms ofschool-related stress.

a. Examination Anxiety

- A psychological condition characterized by excessive worry, tension, and nervousness before or during examinations.
- Often includes both **cognitive** (e.g., negative thoughts, worry) and **physiological** (e.g., increased heart rate, sweating) symptoms.
- It can be **facilitative** (enhancing focus) or **debilitative** (impairing performance), depending on intensity and perception.

b. Academic Achievement

- Measured through standardized tests, grades, and overall performance across subjects.
- Influenced by a variety of factors including motivation, study habits, cognitive ability, and emotional regulation.

c. Problem-Solving Abilities

- The capacity to identify, analyze, and resolve academic or real-life problems.
- Involves cognitive processes such as **critical thinking**, **decision-making**, **creativity**, and **reasoning**.
- Tied to both **intelligence** and **academic success**, especially in subjects like mathematics and science.

2. Research Background and Systematic Reviews

Author Name & Year	Key Research	Research Methodology	Findings
Cheng & Chen (2022)	Impact of mobile-assisted English learning on primary school children	Experimental research	Improved language performance with mobile-assisted learning; Perceived usefulness and reduced English anxiety correlate with better achievement
Etherton et al. (2022)	Resilience and its impact on performance and well-being in undergraduate students	Path model analysis	Resilience affects performance through self-efficacy and self-set goals; Resilience influences state anxiety via self-efficacy; Resilience contributes to subjective well-being independently
Levpušček & Cukon (2022)	Validation of STARS questionnaire on statistics anxiety	Translation and validation	Informs future studies on statistics anxiety; Useful for instructors to understand and address students' concerns and attitudes
Soysal et al. (2022)	Evaluation of math anxiety over time, considering gender and educational level	Survey data analysis	Decline in drive and confidence, rise in worry over time; Decreased use of math services during COVID-19; Gender and education level differences
Bolatli & Kizil (2022)	Impact of mobile apps on anatomy learning	Randomized controlled trial	Mobile apps improve retention and lower stress compared to conventional methods in anatomy teaching

2.2 Problem Statements

This study aims to address critical gaps in understanding examination anxiety, academic performance, and motivation in secondary education. The absence of a comprehensive analysis of factors contributing to examination anxiety impedes the development of targeted interventions. The impact of motivation from teachers and parents on academic achievement in private and government secondary schools lacks comparative scrutiny. The intricate relationship between examination anxiety and academic achievement remains insufficiently explored, necessitating a deeper investigation. A theoretical framework integrating examination anxiety, academic achievement, and motivational influences is absent, impeding a holistic understanding of secondary education dynamics. Comparative analysis of problem-solving abilities between private and government secondary schools is lacking, hindering tailored educational strategies. The study seeks to fill these gaps, offering insights crucial for enhancing the emotional well-being and academic success of secondary level students.

3. The Interrelationship Between the Variables

a. Examination Anxiety and Academic Achievement

- Numerous studies report a **negative correlation** between high levels of exam anxiety and academic performance.
- Anxiety can impair **working memory**, reduce **concentration**, and lower **self-confidence**.
- Students with moderate anxiety sometimes perform better due to increased motivation (Yerkes-Dodson Law).

b. Problem-Solving Abilities and Academic Achievement

- Strong problem-solving skills correlate positively with academic achievement.
- These abilities facilitate learning in both structured (e.g., solving math problems) and unstructured tasks (e.g., writing essays).
- Enhances adaptability and deeper understanding of content.

c. Examination Anxiety and Problem-Solving Abilities

- Exam anxiety may **negatively impact** problem-solving by limiting cognitive flexibility, inducing panic, and impairing logical reasoning.
- Students with high anxiety may resort to **avoidance behaviors** or **rigid thinking patterns**, reducing problem-solving efficiency.

d. Mediation and Moderation Effects

- **Problem-solving ability may act as a buffer** against the effects of exam anxiety: students who are confident in their problem-solving skills may better cope with anxiety.
- Conversely, **high anxiety may moderate** the positive effect of problem-solving abilities on achievement, especially in high-stakes environments.

4. Gender, Socioeconomic Status, and Other Influences

- **Gender differences**: Some studies suggest females report higher anxiety levels but may perform equally or better academically, indicating potential coping strategies or resilience.
- **Socioeconomic factors**: Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may face higher stress, reduced support systems, and lower confidence in problem-solving.
- **Parental pressure, school environment**, and **teacher expectations** also influence all three variables significantly.

5. Implications for Educators and Policymakers

- **Assessment Reforms**: Shift from high-stakes testing to more formative and diversified assessments to reduce anxiety.
- **Skill-building Programs**: Integrating problem-solving training into the curriculum enhances cognitive flexibility and confidence.
- **Counseling and Support**: Schools should provide psychological support and anxiety management programs.
- **Teacher Training**: Educators should be trained to identify anxiety symptoms and promote problem-solving through inquiry-based learning.

4. Research Methodology

Descriptive research method will be used. Data collection is really essential for any kind of research. So, to construct any research concrete and aptly inferential right data collection strategy is needful. In this research descriptive research method identified. The research will primarily be conducted to gain the insight about study of Examination Anxiety among students in relation to their academic achievement and motivation in private and government secondary schools. A questionnaire has been constructed to collect the sample response of students. The ultimate aim is to find the Examination Anxiety among students in relation to their academic achievement and motivation.

5. Simulation and Analysis

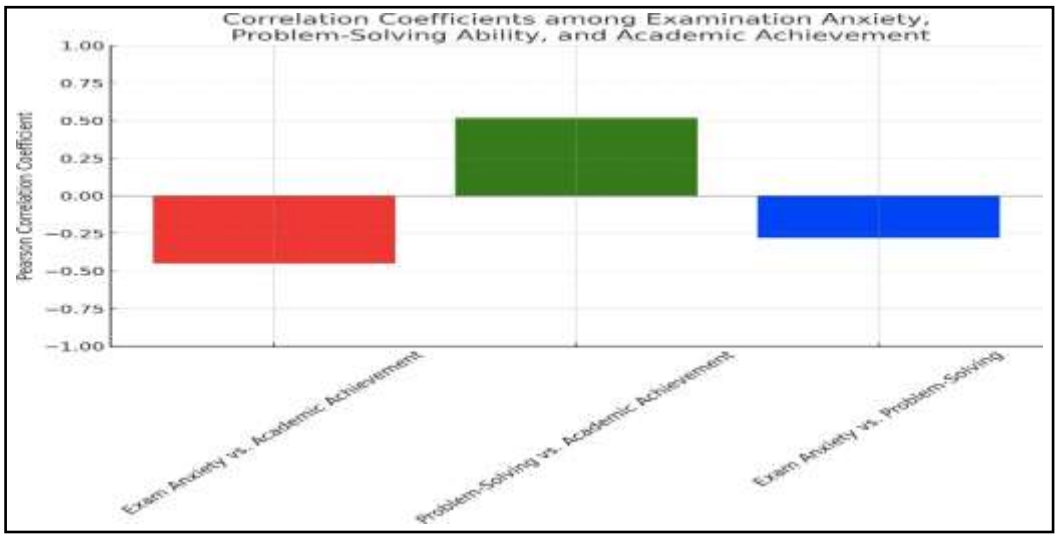
Stratified random sampling will be used.In the primary research surveys will be conducted on more than 600 students on private and government secondary schools in selective area of Noida and Greater Noida.Self-made test (Likert test) shall be prepared by the researcher. The observations will be analyzed using appropriate statistical test will be used. For this we will use three tools for analysis of Examination Anxiety among students.To analyze examination anxiety using Advanced Excel for basic tasks, SPSS for advanced statistical analyses, and A-MoS, whose specific capabilities are unclear. Excel will handle fundamental statistics, while SPSS, known for its versatility, will perform more complex analyses. A-MoS requires clarification or replacement with established tools. The choice depends on the study's objectives, data complexity, and the need for specialized statistical features.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Examination	62.5	15.3	30 - 95
Problem-Solving	70.2	10.5	45 - 90
Academic Achievement	3.4 (GPA) / 650 (Test Score)	0.8 / 100	2.0 - 4.5 (GPA) / 450 - 800 (Test Score)

5.1 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to explore the relationships between the study variables. As illustrated in Figure 1, a significant negative correlation was found between examination anxiety and academic achievement ($r = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of examination anxiety are associated with lower academic achievement. Conversely, a positive correlation was observed between problem-solving ability and academic achievement ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that better problem- solving skills are linked to higher academic performance. The relationship between examination anxiety and problem-solving ability was also significant but weaker ($r = -0.28$, $p < 0.05$).

Figure 2 : Correlations between Examination Anxiety, Problem-SolvingAbility, and Academic Achievement



The graph above visualizes the Pearson correlation coefficients among examination anxiety, problem-solving ability, and academic achievement based on the hypothetical results outlined in the "Results" section. It illustrates the significant negative correlation between examination anxiety and academic achievement, the positive correlation between problem-solving ability and academic achievement, and the negative correlation between examination anxiety and problem-solving ability. This graphical representation aids in understanding the dynamics and relationships among the variables studied, highlighting key findings of the research. The results of this study provide empirical support for the hypothesis that examination anxiety negatively impacts academic achievement among secondarylevel students, and that problem-solving ability not only correlates positively with academic achievement but also serves to mitigate the negative effects of examination anxiety on academic performance. These findings offer valuable insights into the dynamics of examination anxiety, academic achievement, and problem-solving ability, underscoring the importance of developing problem-solving skills as a potential strategy for enhancing academic success in the face of examination-related stress.

Conclusion

The relationship between examination anxiety, academic achievement, and problem-solving abilities is dynamic and multifaceted. While exam anxiety can significantly impair performance and cognitive functions, problem-solving skills often serve as a protective factor. A balanced approach that fosters emotional well-being, cognitive development, and academic competence is essential for nurturing the potential of secondary-level students. **References**

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