Test Anxiety in Relation to Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Level Students of Assam

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Abstract:

Test anxiety is a combination of behavioural, physiological, and phenomenological reactions that go along with worry about potential bad outcomes or performing poorly on a test or other similar assessment scenario. It is a major psychological barrier that has impact on students' general wellbeing and achievement in higher education. Although this phenomenon is becoming more widely recognised, relatively little study has been done especially on test anxiety among undergraduate students in the northeastern states of India, especially in Assam, where distinct sociocultural and educational contexts may have an impact on anxiety symptoms and academic achievement. This study aims to determine levels of test anxiety and academic achievement among undergraduate level students and the correlation between test anxiety and academic achievement. It is anticipated that the results will help develop strategies for anxiety management and academic support, as well as offer valuable insights into the psychological problems of students.

Keywords: Test Anxiety, Academic Achievement, Undergraduate Level, Assam

1.0 Introduction:

Test anxiety is a common psychological issue that affects students at all academic levels, frequently hindering their ability to perform well in examinations. Test anxiety refers to the set of phenomenological, physiological, and behavioural responses that accompany concern about possible negative consequences or poor performance on an examination or a similar evaluative situation (Zeidner, 1998). It is characterised by extreme worry, anxiousness, fear of failing, and it can impair a student's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural functioning during examinations. When someone feels that expectations from the test environment exceed or far exceeding their intellectual, motivational, and social capacities, test-anxious behaviour is usually triggered. Test anxiety consists of two components: a cognitive component characterized by worry about the examination and a physiological component characterized by arousal and emotionality (Hembree, 1988). Undergraduate students frequently face increased academic pressure due to competition for limited educational and employment possibilities, as well as the transitional hurdles of going from secondary to higher education. Assam, a culturally diversified and educationally evolving state in Northeast India, confronts students with different academic stressors. These could include restricted access to quality educational resources in rural areas, language obstacles, and socioeconomic inequality. The competitive nature of undergraduate programs, combined with the demands of adjusting to new academic surroundings, can intensify test anxiety and have a negative influence on academic achievement. The purpose of this study is to find out the levels of test anxiety among undergraduate level

students of Assam, as well as the relationship between it and academic achievement. The findings are predicted to provide useful insights into students' psychological issues, as well as help in the development of academic support and anxiety management measures.

1.1   Significance of the Study:

Academic achievement has a significant impact on future career prospects and personal development of the student. Fostering a supportive learning environment requires an understanding of the factors that affect students' academic achievement. One of such factors affecting academic achievement is 'test anxiety'. It is a common psychological condition among students frequently results in poor performance on examinations in general, decreased concentration, and problems with memory entailed with feeling of inferiority complex leading to utter frustration in extreme cases. Despite its prevalence, there is a dearth of localised research that focusses on undergraduate students in Assam, an area with a wide range of socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural origins. Examining the relationship between academic achievement and test anxiety in this population can yield insightful information specific to their situation. According to research, giving students test-taking techniques and resources that foster both emotional intelligence and good physical habits can help them get over test anxiety and its symptoms while also enhancing their capacity with a built-up self-confidence to study and perform successfully on crucial examinations. Additionally, test anxiety has been defined as a rather constant personality trait that arises when parents have high expectations for their children and are too critical of their efforts to succeed. Understanding how test anxiety affects academic achievement might help educators and policymakers improve support systems in universities or higher educational institutions of Assam. The results of this study can assist policymakers, counsellors, and educational institutions in identifying students who may perform low on tests because of test anxiety. In order to reduce anxiety and to improve the academic achievement of students, specific strategies including counselling programs, stress management classes, and academic support services might be implemented. Additionally, by addressing regional gaps in the current body of knowledge, the findings can stimulate more research on the psychological aspects influencing student performance in northeastern India. The overall aim of this study is to advance a comprehensive strategy for academic success, student well-being, and the creation of helpful teaching methods in Assam.

1.2   Research Questions:

Based on the review of various related literature, the following research questions have been formulated:

1.2.1   What are the levels of test anxiety of undergraduate level students of Assam?

1.2.2   What are the levels of academic achievement of undergraduate level students of Assam?

1.3   Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1.3.1 To assess the levels of test anxiety of undergraduate level students of Assam.

1.3.2 To examine the levels of academic achievement of undergraduate level students of Assam.

1.3.3 To analyse the relationship between test anxiety and academic achievement of undergraduate level students of Assam.

1.4   Hypothesis of the Study:

On the basis of objectives stated above, the researcher put forward a null hypothesis which is given below:

H_0: There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and academic achievement of undergraduate

level students of Assam.

1.5   Delimitation of the Study: The researcher has delimited the study in the following aspects:

1.5.1 The study is delimited to only general degree students i.e., B.A., B.Sc., and B.Com. students of Assam.

1.5.2 The study is delimited to those undergraduate level students of Assam who are enrolled in the session 2022-2023.

1.5.3 The study is delimited to only the undergraduate level students studying in colleges affiliated to Dibrugarh University.

1.6 Profile of the Study Area:

The profile of the study area covers all the general degree colleges of Assam. There are total 336 no. of general degree colleges in Assam. In this study, the researcher has selected 10 colleges randomly. These are viz., S.M.D. College, Charing; Dikhowmukh College; Jorhat College (Amalgamated); Bahona College; Kamargaon College; Marangi Mahavidyalaya; Sapekhati College; Govt. Model College, Deithor; Margherita College; Bihpuria College, Lakhimpur.

2.0   Review of Related Literature:

The research pertaining to the current study is briefly summarised in the review of related literature. A selection of relevant findings from the researcher's review of a large number of research publications, theses, dissertations, abstracts, journals, and so on are included below:

Rana, R. K. & Mahmood, N. (2010) studied on "The Relationship between Test Anxiety and Academic Achievement". The result of the study showed that there is a significant negative correlation between students' achievement scores and their test anxiety scores.

Olaitan, A. W. and Moroluyo, A. T. (2014) investigated about "Contribution of Test Anxiety, Study Habits and Locus of Control to Academic Performance". It was found that test anxiety, study habit, and locus of control are positively correlated with each other and also had a combined effect on the academic performance of students.

Chaliha, A. (2015) conducted research entitled as "Scholastic achievement of the postgraduate students of Dibrugarh University: a study of some associated variables". The study found a negative and insignificant relationship between post-graduate students' academic achievement and anxiety at Dibrugarh University.

Bas, G. (2016) had done research on "Teaching-Learning Conceptions and Academic Achievement: The Mediating Role of Test Anxiety". According to the results obtained, it was found that there were significant relationships amongst teaching - learning conceptions, test anxiety, and academic achievement. Furthermore, it was concluded that test anxiety mediated the relationship between teaching-learning conceptions and academic achievement significantly.

Mallik, P. S. (2016) investigated about "Test anxiety of scheduled caste students and its relation with academic achievement". The findings of the study revealed a gender-based discrimination among students regarding test anxiety. Again, in relation to locality (urban and rural), no significant difference was found.

Baruah, G.S. (2017) studied "A study on the influence of anxiety and feeling of security on the academic achievement of students in higher secondary examination of Kamrup District of Assam". The study reveals that High Anxiety has negative influence on Academic Achievement. And that more students fall under

Normal Anxiety than High Anxiety.

Alemu, B. M. & Feyssa, T. (2020) had done research on "The relationship between test anxiety and academic achievement of grade ten students of Shirka Woreda, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia". The findings of the study showed that test anxiety is one of the factors that contribute to students' underachievement and poor performance, but it can be controlled by providing them with the right kind of training on how to handle the situations that lead to test anxiety.

By reviewing the above research work, it leads to perceive that the study conducted in Assam is found to be relatively less in comparison to that in some other states in India. Additionally, the analysis of related literature highlights the fact that significantly less research has been done on the undergraduate level students' academic achievement who are studying in the colleges of Assam. Besides, there is a dearth of studies seen on associated variables of academic achievement i.e., test anxiety among the undergraduate level students of Assam So, this is the knowledge gap between the previous and present study which researcher will attempt to fill.

3.0   Methodology: The method and procedure adopted is described below:

3.1   Method used:

The 'descriptive survey method' is used to prepare this research article.

3.2   Population:

The population of the study encompass all the undergraduate level students of Assam.

3.3   Sample:

The sample of the study comprises 200 undergraduate level students of Assam. The sample are selected by using incidental sampling technique.

3.4   Tools used:

In order to collect data, one standardized tool of test anxiety i.e., 'Test Anxiety Scale' developed by V. P. Sharma (1978 and 2000) is used. For scholastic achievement, the scores of last End Semester Examinations is used. A brief description of the tool is given below:

3.4.1   Test Anxiety Scale, by V. P. Sharma (1978 and 2000):

This Test Anxiety Scale was developed and standardized by Dr. V. P. Sharma. This is a five-point scale consisting of 25 items, each item having 5 responses ranging from minimum to maximum levels of Test Anxiety. Time was limited to 30 minutes to conduct this test. The scale was developed in a way that enabled precise manual scoring. Scores showing 75th percentile and above that indicated the level of High Test Anxiety, whereas, scores showing 25th percentile and below that indicated Low Test Anxiety. Again, scores above 25th and below 75th percentile indicated the level of Normal Test Anxiety.

3.5   Source of Data:

Generally, the sources of data are of two types i.e., primary and secondary. In the present study, the researcher has collected data both from primary and secondary sources. The researcher has collected data from students by visiting the colleges of Assam. Secondary sources of data included books, journals, articles, theses, encyclopaedias, and different e-resources.

3.5.1   Statistical Techniques used: For analysing and interpreting the data, the researcher has used percentage, graphical representation and Pearson coefficient of correlation.

4.0   Analysis and Interpretation of Data: The researcher carried out an objective-wise analysis under the following sections in order to assess and interpret the data gathered from the sample students using the standardised tool viz., the test anxiety scale:

Objective 1: To Assess the Levels of Test Anxiety of Undergraduate Level Students of Assam.
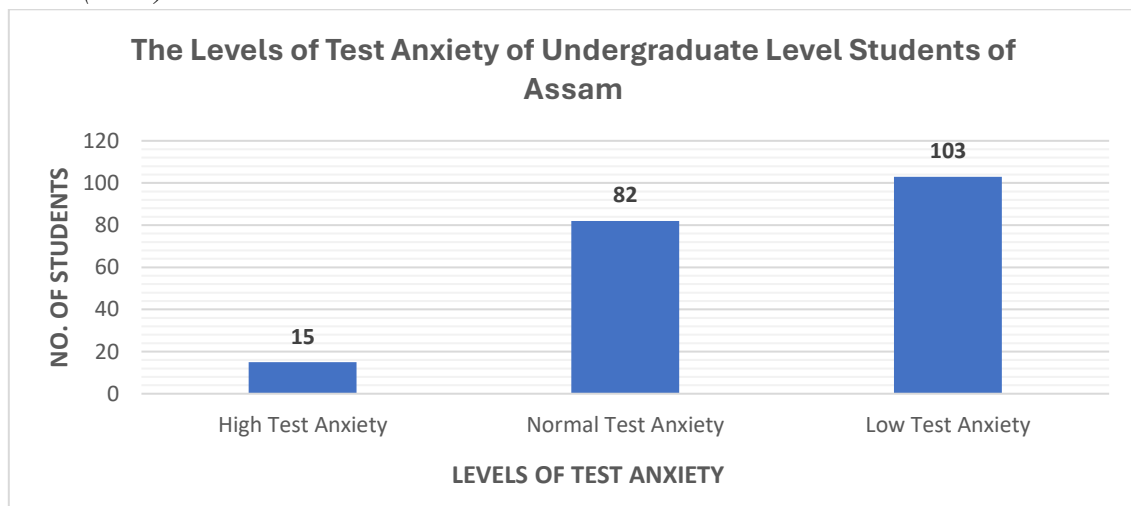
Table No. 4.1

Table shows the Levels of Test Anxiety of Undergraduate Level Students of Assam

Sl. No.	RANGE	Levels of Test Anxiety	No. of Students	Percentage
1	84 and above	High Test Anxiety	15	7.5%
2	68 to 83	Normal Test Anxiety	82	41%
3	67 and below	Low Test Anxiety	103	51.5%
		Total	**200**	**100%**

Source: I. Based on data obtained from field survey, 2024

II. Manual of Test Anxiety Scale of V.P. Sharma (1978 and 2000)

III. MS-Excel (2007)

Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Levels of Test Anxiety of Undergraduate Level Students of Assam

Table 4.1 and Figure 1 reveals the levels of test anxiety of undergraduate level students of Assam. It is observed that there are three levels of test anxiety among undergraduate level students. Out of 200 students 15 students have found to be high test anxiety, 82 students have found to be normal test anxiety, and 103 students have found to be low test anxiety. That means only 7.5% students have high test anxiety which is very less in comparison to normal and low test anxiety. 41% students have normal test anxiety and 51.5% students have low test anxiety. It is found that highest percentage lies in low test anxiety. Therefore, it may be concluded that the majority of undergraduate students either have little or no test anxiety.

Objective 2: To Examine the Levels of Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Level Students of Assam.
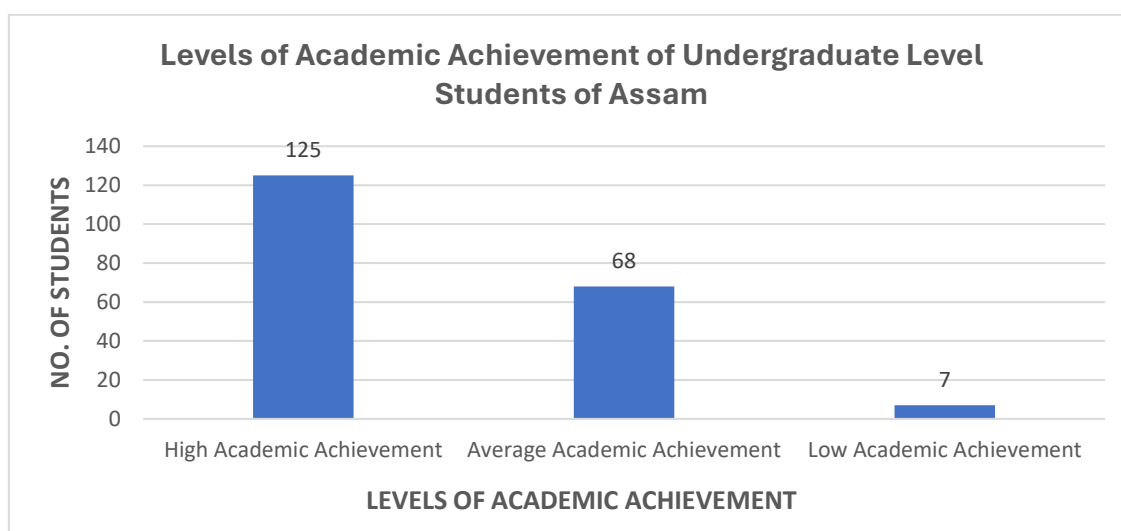
TABLE NO. 4.2

Table shows the Levels of Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Level Students of Assam

Sl. No.	LEVEL	Levels of Academic Achievement	No. of Students	Percentage
1	'B+' and above	High Academic Achievement	125	62.5%
2	'P' to 'B' Grade	Average Academic Achievement	68	34%
3	'F' & below 'P'	Low Academic Achievement	07	3.5%
		Total	**200**	**100%**

Source: I. Based on data obtained from field survey, 2024
II. Grading System of Dibrugarh University for B.A., B.Sc. B.Com. Programme in the CBCS
III. MS-Excel (2007)

Figure 2: Graphical Representation of Levels of Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Level Students of Assam

Table 4.2 and Figure 2 reveals the levels of academic achievement of undergraduate level students of Assam. There are three levels of academic achievement viz., high academic achievement, average academic achievement, and low academic achievement. Out of 200 students 125 students have high academic achievement, 68 students have average academic achievement, and only 7 students have low academic achievement. So, it can be said that 62.5% students have high academic achievement, 34% students have average academic achievement, and 3.5% students have low academic achievement. Thus, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the majority of students succeed well academically.

Objective 3: To Analyse the Relationship Between Test Anxiety and Academic Achievement Undergraduate Level Students of Assam.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and academic achievement of undergraduate level students of Assam.

Table No. 4.3

Table shows N, 'r' Value and Level of Significance between Test Anxiety and Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Level Students of Assam

Sl. No.	Variables	Sample	No. of Students	'r' value	't' value	Significance
1	Test Anxiety	Undergraduate level students	200	-0.003	-0.037	**Correlation not significant at the 0.05 level (2-tail test)
2	Academic Achievement					

Source: I. Based on data obtained from field survey, 2024

II. Pearson Coefficient of Correlation

III. MS-Excel (2007)

The co-efficient of correlation between test anxiety and academic achievement of undergraduate level students of Assam is -0.003. It is a negative and very low correlation. The correlation not significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted i.e. there is no significant relationship between test anxiety and academic achievement of undergraduate level students of Assam.

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

By summarising the results, the researcher put forward the major findings as given below:

- It is seen that there are three levels of test anxiety among undergraduate level students viz., high, normal, and low test anxiety. Most of the undergraduate level students has low test anxiety or it may be said as no test anxiety.
- In regards to levels of academic achievement, it is noted that the majority of students exhibit high levels of academic achievement. A very small percentage of students perform low academically.
- It is also revealed that there is no significant relationship between test anxiety and academic achievement of undergraduate level students.

In conclusion it can be said that though various studies are done on test anxiety and academic achievement of students, but these are not enough in this regard. It is necessary to done lots of researches in this field so that one can find out the reasons behind low achievement in academic test. Proper counselling by the teacher and parents is essential in this regard. Training should be arranged for teachers to identify and support anxious students. Curriculum should be redesigned to include mental well-being strategies. Again, test anxiety is not one and only factor affecting academic achievement. So, there is a need to study other intervening variables of academic achievement.

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