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Academic Anxiety Among Prospective Teachers in Relation to Their Gender, Locality and Course

Dr. Momin Sumaiya

Assistant Professor, Department of Education and Training, MANUU, Hyderabad

ABSTRACT

Academic anxiety poses a major challenge in teacher education, as it significantly affects not only learning efficiency and professional readiness and development, but the overall well-being of future teachers also. The present study has been conducted to study the academic anxiety among prospective teachers in relation to their gender, locality and course in which they are enrolled. The sample consists of prospective teachers enrolled in D.El.Ed. and B.Ed. programmes of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. The sample has been chosen through cluster sampling. Appropriate statistics were used. A standardized tool "Academic Anxiety Scale" developed by Dr. Anjum Ahmed and Mr. Roman Shafi Shawl. The findings reveals that there is a significant differences among gender, locality and course.

Keywords: Academic Anxiety, Prospective Teachers, Gender, Locality, Course

INTRODUCTION:

Education shapes an individual much like a flower that spreads its fragrance to its surroundings. For prospective teachers, education is not just a means of gaining or sharing knowledge, actually its a transformation which nurtures maturity, make responsible and helps the students to be adaptable. In a rapidly evolving society, teachers plays a crucial yet important role in helping children develop according to their needs, aspirations, and social demands. As we know that the ultimate goal of education is to prepare individuals for prosperous, significant, and worthwhile lives. Therefore, education should make empower to learners so that they can face challenges, solve problems effectively, and overcome obstacles gracefully which may encounter in their personal and academic journeys.

But, in today's competitive world, performance has become a key measure of success. Parents expect their children to achieve high in their academic, which gives pressure not only on students but also on teachers, institutions, and the education system as a whole. Though, education's primary focus is to develop various life skills and academic achievement but this environment contributes to different forms of anxiety such as examinations or academic tasks. For students, academic anxiety is triggered by expectations, assessments, difficult subjects, and interactions within academic institutions. But for prospective teachers, its a kind of stress arising from exams, coursework demands, teaching practice pressure, difficult subjects, or fear of failure, affecting their confidence, performance, and overall professional preparation.

PREVIOUS RELATED STUDIES:

Ghattas and El-Ashry (2024) studied on "Perceived academic anxiety and procrastination among emergency nursing students: the mediating role of cognitive emotion regulation". They found that almost half of the students reported high anxiety levels and a positive correlation between procrastination and academic anxiety. **Li et. al. (2024)** studied the "Effects of short-form video app addiction on academic anxiety and academic engagement: The mediating role of mindfulness". Their results indicate that short-form video app addiction has significant indirect effects on academic anxiety and engagement via mindfulness. **Sheeraz et. al. (2024)** conducted a survey on "Academic Anxiety among Smartphone Addict Adolescent Students: Does Gender and Subject Stream make any difference?". They found that the majority of smartphone addict students have an above-average level of academic anxiety but no significant difference was found between male and female students on academic anxiety. **Anupma & Sardana (2023)** studied on "Academic stress and levels of life skills among high school children". They found a strong relationship between these two variables. **Baro and Mishra (2022**) studied "Academic Anxiety among Adolescents in relation to their socio-economic status". They found a negative correlation between academic anxiety and socio-economic status. **Sudheer (2021)** conducted a study on "Gender differences in academic anxiety and educational aspiration of adolescents living in single parent families". Their results indicated higher level of academic anxiety among adolescent girls as compared to boys. **Teeli (2020)** assessed "The effect of anxiety on academic performance of university Students". The found a positive effect of anxiety on academic performance of university students. **Khesht-Masjedi et al. (2019)** conducted a study on " The relationship between gender, age, anxiety, depression, and academic achievement among teenagers". They found that girls were more anxious than boys and a significant negative correlation was found between anxiety and depression with academic achievement. **Sanjeet et. al. (2019)** examined "The relationship between test anxiety and academic performance". The findings revealed that test anxiety was significantly associated with academic performance of undergraduate medical students. **Sharma and Shakir (2019)** conducted a study " A study of academic anxiety of senior secondary school students in relation to locale and type of school". The study found that students residing in urban areas and private school students have more academic anxiety than rural and government school students respectively. **Azeem (2018)** examined the correlation between "Academic anxiety and academic achievement of secondary school students. Results indicated that no significant difference was observed in academic anxiety as well as academic achievement of students in relation to their gender and religion. Furthermore, significant negative correlation between the academic anxiety and academic achievement. **Kaur and Chawla (2018)** investigated "The academic anxiety of adolescents in terms of school adjustment". Results revealed that adolescent girls were academically anxious in comparison to their boys counterparts. **Banga and Sharma (2016)** studies the level of "Academic anxiety in relation to gender, locale, and social category". The results showed that the academic anxiety of secondary school boys students were higher than secondary school girls students. **Hasan (2016)** examined "Academic anxiety on the basis of gender in relation to the academic achievement of secondary school students". He found a negative relationship between academic achievement and academic anxiety of secondary school students. **Singh and Singh (2015)** studied the examination anxiety of B.Ed. students of government and private teacher training colleges of Allahabad. They found a significant difference in the examination anxiety of B.Ed. students before and after examination of government as well as private teacher training colleges of Allahabad.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

By understanding how academic anxiety affects prospective teachers' goals, confidence, and ability to cope with challenges will provide useful information for making teacher education programme more effective and training programs can be redesigned to better meet their needs. One major need for this study is to help teacher-education institutions include strategies that reduce academic anxiety. Training programs can add stress-management techniques, activities that promote a positive mindset, and easy access to mental-health support. These additions will help prospective teachers feel more confident, stay motivated, and manage the demands of coursework and teaching practice more effectively. Another need for this study is to encourage institutions to build strong support systems for teacher trainees. Counseling services, peer-support groups, mentoring, and stress-relief workshops designed especially for prospective teachers can greatly lower academic anxiety. These supports help trainees stay focused, build resilience, and maintain high educational aspirations during their training period. This study is also needed to guide policymakers in creating supportive and healthy environments for future teachers. Policies that encourage mental-health awareness, reduce unnecessary academic pressure, and provide access to guidance services can make a big difference in how prospective teachers experience their training. Such policies can help build a stronger, more stable, and more confident teaching workforce. Overall, the need for this study arises from the importance of improving teacher education and supporting the well-being of prospective teachers. By addressing academic anxiety, the study can help create emotionally strong and well-prepared teachers, which will ultimately improve the quality of education for future generations.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the level of academic anxiety among prospective teachers.
2. To study the difference between mean scores of academic anxiety of prospective teachers based on the gender.
3. To study the difference between mean scores of academic anxiety of prospective teachers based on the locality.
4. To study the difference between mean scores of academic anxiety of prospective teachers based on the course.

HYPOTHESES:

1. There will not be any significant difference in mean scores of academic anxiety among prospective teachers based on the gender.
2. There will not be any significant difference in mean scores of academic anxiety among prospective teachers based on the locality.
3. There will not be any significant difference in mean scores of academic anxiety among prospective teachers based on the course.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

To achieve the objectives, descriptive survey method was chosen for data collection. The sample of 235 prospective teachers (D.El.Ed. and B.Ed.) from Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad were selected by using cluster sampling. The tool used to measure an academic anxiety is “Academic Anxiety Scale” developed by Dr. Anjum Ahmed and Mr. Roman Shafi Shawl. It has 38 items with five

(5) dimensions namely Study Anxiety, Examination Anxiety, Social Anxiety, Future Anxiety and Psychophysiological Manifestation. The reliability of the scale is 0.84. Frequency, Percentage and unpaired t-Test were used for data analysis. The analyzed data are presented as follows.

DATA ANALYSIS:

Descriptive Analysis:

Table 1: Distribution of Data

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	109	47
	Female	126	53
Locality	Urban	82	35
	Rural	153	65
Course	D.El.Ed.	119	51
	B.Ed.	116	49

Graph 1: Graphical Representation of Data

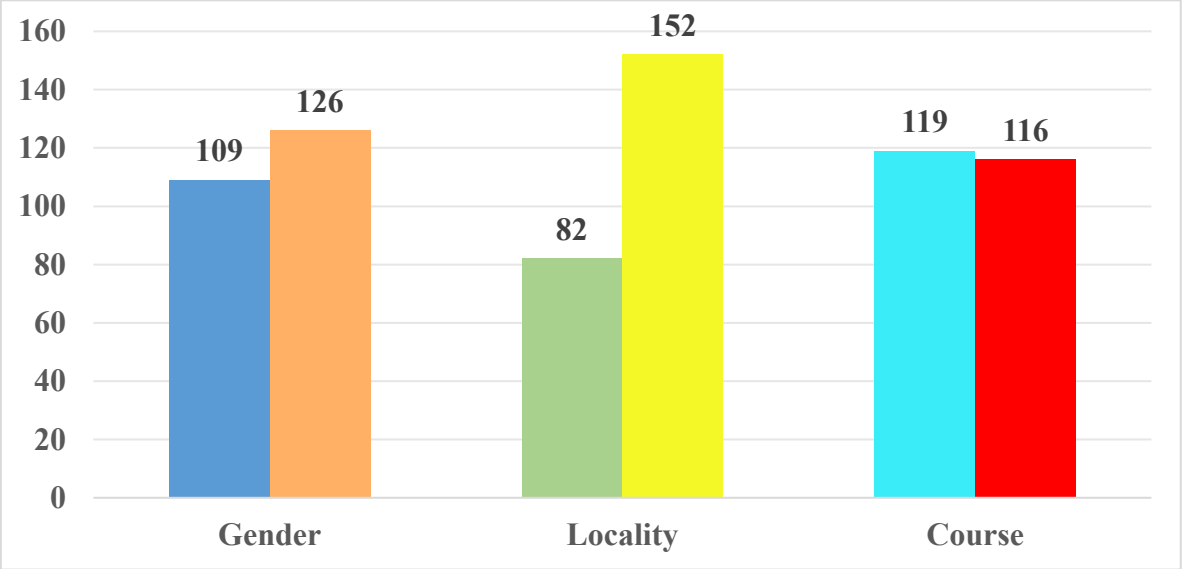

Table 2: Level of Academic Anxiety

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Severe Academic Anxiety	47	20
Moderate Academic Anxiety	144	61.35
Mild Academic Anxiety	44	18.65

Table-2 displays that 18.65% of prospective teachers are having mild level of academic anxiety, 61.35% are having moderate level and 20% are having a severe level of academic anxiety.

Inferential Analysis:

H_01: There will not be any significant difference in mean scores of academic anxiety among prospective teachers based on the gender.

Table 3: Gender-Wise Comparison of Academic Anxiety

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Calculated t-value	Table value
Male	109	127.36	25.50	233	2.80*	1.96 @ 0.05 level 2.59 @ 0.01 level
Female	126	134.89	26.10			

The mean value of academic anxiety of prospective teachers showed a significant differences. Thus, the null hypothesis "there will not be any significant difference in mean scores of academic anxiety among prospective teachers based on the gender" is rejected. Here, it can be concluded that level of academic anxiety are different for both the gender.

$H_0$2: There will not be any significant difference in mean scores of academic anxiety among prospective teachers based on the locality.

Table 4: Locality-Wise Comparison of Academic Anxiety

Locality	N	Mean	SD	df	Calculated t-value	Table value
Urban	82	124.28	27.0	233	2.96*	1.96 @ 0.05 level 2.59 @ 0.01 level
Rural	153	132.61	28.74			

The mean value of academic anxiety of prospective teachers showed a significant differences. Thus, the null hypothesis "there will not be any significant difference in mean scores of academic anxiety among prospective teachers based on the locality" is rejected. Here, it can be concluded that level of academic anxiety is not same for prospective teachers belongs to urban and rural locality.

$H_0$3: There will not be any significant difference in mean scores of academic anxiety among prospective teachers based on the course.

Table 5: Course-Wise Comparison of Academic Anxiety

Course	N	Mean	SD	df	Calculated t-value	Table value
D.El.Ed.	119	135.71	20.0	233	3.25*	1.96 @ 0.05 level 2.59 @ 0.01 level
B.Ed.	116	126.0	25.68			

The mean value of academic anxiety of prospective teachers showed a significant differences. Thus, the null hypothesis "there will not be any significant difference in mean scores of academic anxiety among prospective teachers based on the course" is rejected. Here, it can be concluded that prospective teachers from D.El.Ed. and B.Ed. courses have different level of academic anxiety.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

- More than 80% prospective teachers are having moderate and high level of academic anxiety.
- Academic anxiety level of male and female prospective teachers are different. If we see the mean scores, it can be clear that female trainees reported high academic anxiety. It may be due to social expectations, low confidence, fear of failure, or pressure from the family.
- Academic anxiety level of Prospective teachers from rural areas showed high level academic anxiety compared to their counterparts. The reason could be schooling background, limited educational exposure, limited access to resources or may be due to their adjustment in the metropolitan city and professional courses.
- A significant difference in academic anxiety found between D.El.Ed. and B.Ed. trainees. D.El.Ed. Trainees showed higher academic anxiety than B.Ed. Trainees. This could be due to short previous academic experience and young age having low maturity level as compared to B.Ed. Trainees.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

- Teacher training institutions should provide regular guidance and counselling, conducted various programmes or workshops to reduce anxiety and stress.
- Trainees should be provided an encouraging and non-threatening academic atmosphere to reduce fear of failure and provide constructive feedback rather than negative.
- Various bridge course or workshop should be conducted to strengthen trainees language skills, digital literacy etc. Arrange orientation and mentoring programmes to build confidence and friendly environment for newly admitted trainees.
- Peer learning, group discussion, simulation, micro-teaching, reflective practice activities etc should be incorporate in an effective way to reduce anxiety and build confidence.
- Encourage mindfulness practices, meditation, yoga, and time-management training. Learner-friendly pedagogies also foster participation and self-confidence among trainees.

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