

Anxiety Among Adolescent Students in Relation to their Intelligence and Family Climate

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Abstract

The present study aimed at evaluating the anxiety of adolescent students in relation to their intelligence and family climate. Participants were 200 adolescent students from government schools of Amritsar city who completed the SCAT, GGTI & FCS tools used in the study. The findings of the study reveal a significant positive relationship between anxiety and intelligence of adolescent students. The study also indicated that there is a negative relationship between anxiety and family climate of adolescent students.

Keywords: anxiety, intelligence and family climate

Introduction

Today, the world is becoming more and more competitive and complex and quality of performance has become the key factor for personal growth in this changing world. Excellence particularly, in academics and generally in all other fields has become as an important part of life. This excellence becomes more difficult to achieve when it comes to adolescents as they undergo change in almost all aspects

of life. Out of all the stages of one's life, adolescence represents a difficult developmental period whereby many demands are imposed on the adolescents by others and by themselves as well (Tung & Sandhu, 2008).

Parents want their children to grow academically and vocationally, to attain acceptance in the society and finally reach at the highest level of achievement. Child achievement influences the reputation of the family, with academic failure bringing disgrace and shame to parents and ancestors (Ho, 1987; Hsu, 1985). This desire of a high level of achievement puts a lot of pressure on them and ultimately they are under stress and attain high level of anxiety which is paralyzing factor in the field of education.

Anxiety and stress are inevitable during this span of life. Anxiety is the subjective feeling and tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of autonomic nervous system (Spielberger, 1983 p.15). The individual under the influence of anxiety is unable to accomplish the tasks which are reflected in school examination, cognitive abilities and activities, interaction with teachers, peer

group, family etc. Anxiety is a state characterized by emotional arousal, worry about perceived threats, cognitions involving specific fears, poor concentration, and physical symptoms such as sweating, muscle tension, heart palpitations, and trouble breathing (Barlow, 2002). In the View of Wilson, Nathon, O'Leary and Clark (1996) anxiety as a psychological disorder that is associated with significant suffering and impairment in functioning. It is blend of thoughts and feeling characterized by a sense uncontrollability and predictability over potentially aversive life events.

Adolescents as a human being cannot escape either from genetic makeup or from the socio-cultural environment in which he lives. Out of the socio-cultural environments, family environment plays the most important role in regulating the behavioural patterns of the individual. Ecological theory uses a person-process-context model that suggests that individuals are influenced at multiple levels: the level of their own individual characteristics, the family level, and the cultural level (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Parent-child interactions constitute an important context that may elicit and maintain a child's social and behavioral problems (Chen, Rubin, & Li, 1997; Shek, 1996).

A child who is brought up in a healthy environment has more IQ than a child brought up in a different and unhealthy environment. Goebert et.al. (2004) described the influence of family adversity indicators on school performance and intelligence among adolescents. The findings of the study revealed that family

distress, conflicts and environment have significant impact on school performance, intelligence and behavioural problems. Conolly, Casewell, Stewart, Silva and O'Brien (1993) found that children from alcoholic families had lower IQ, low arithmetic, reading and verbal scores. Intelligence is a sort of mental energy in the form of cognitive abilities, available within an individual which determines how well we cope with changes in our environment.

On the other hand, inconsistent family environment leads to depression and anxiety in children. Children with unsupportive parents will have fewer resources to cope with a range of life stressors, paternal warmth significantly predicted social competence, school adjustment and academic achievement, but maternal warmth did not (Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000). Many studies have investigated how the familial factors influence children's anxiety. Poor family environment in terms of parental hostility, rejection and inconsistencies can all contribute to psychological problems viz., anxiety, stress, neuroticism, depression and many others (Sharma, Verma & Malhotra, 2008). Stress and anxiety are the offshoots of inadequate interaction with the environment and family environment is the chief cause (Joshi & Tomar, 2006). Chauhan (2006) in her study revealed that family environment contributed 85% of variance in neuroticism which is all emotionality and anxiety disorders.

Based on the literature review, anxiety is associated with adolescents' intelligence and family climate So, a need was felt to anxiety among adolescent students in

relation to their intelligence and family climate.

From the above review of literature, following hypotheses are formulated

- There exists relationship between anxiety and intelligence of adolescent students.
- There exists relationship between anxiety and family climate of adolescent students.

Methodology

Research Design

A correlational design was used to find out the relationship between the anxiety and variables-intelligence and family climate.

Sample

The sample consisted of 200 adolescent students (100 boys and 100 girls) from government secondary schools of Amritsar district.

Tools Used

In the present study the following tools were used:

1. Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test (SCAT) (Sinha & Sinha, 1973)
2. General Group Test of Intelligence (GGTI) (Ahuja, 2005)
3. Family Climate Scale (FCS) (Shah, 2001)

Procedure

After finalizing the tools and receiving the consent of the principals of Government Secondary schools, the adolescent students were requested to fill the tools (SCAT, GGTI & FCS) . All the completed tools were used for data analysis using statistical measure - Pearson's product moment correlation.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis I

To find out correlation between anxiety and intelligence of adolescent students ,

correlational analysis was employed. The results are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Showing the relationship between Anxiety and Intelligence of Adolescent Students

Variables	Correlation value of 'r'	Df	Inference
Anxiety Intelligence	0.88	198	Significant

Table 1 reveals that the value of 'r' between anxiety and intelligence came out to be 0.88 which was found to be statistically significant at 0.01 level of confidence; showing a positive relationship between anxiety and intelligence. It means that adolescents with high anxiety level are more intelligent. Thus the null hypothesis I which states "There exists relationship between anxiety and intelligence of adolescent students" is not rejected. The possible explanation for this result comes from learning theory. According to this theory, increasing stimulus strength increases arousal, which increases performance up to a certain point. After which the stimulus strength becomes too much and starts to hinder performance (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908). The same relationship was later shown with emotional arousal (i.e. stress, anxiety) and performance (Broadhurst, 1957). The adolescents who are anxious in the present study are found to be intelligent. Findings of Basu and Bose (1979) also support the above results.

HYPOTHESIS II

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between anxiety and family climate of adolescent students. The results are entered in table 2.

Table 2: Showing the relationship between anxiety and family climate

Variables	'r'	Degree of freedom	Inference
Anxiety	-0.152	198	Significant
Family Climate			

Table 2 reveals that the value of 'r' between anxiety and family climate came out to be -0.152 which is significant at 0.05 level of confidence. Results indicate a relationship between anxiety and family climate. Anxiety and family climate are negatively correlated. The negative sign indicates that higher the anxiety scores of adolescents less favourable will be the family climate and vice versa. The probable reason for this result is that deteriorated family environment may have interparental conflict or lack of family cohesion result in adolescents' feelings of loneliness as well as deficiency in social skills. The adolescents with these feelings find difficulty in engaging in social interaction outside the family environment and leading to anxiety among them. The results of the study are in line with Johnson, 2001. Hence null Hypothesis II "There exists relationship between anxiety and family climate of adolescent students" is not rejected.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of findings of the study it can be inferred that anxiety and intelligence are positively correlated and a negative relationship exists between anxiety and

family climate. It means that intelligence and family climate have an impact on the anxiety of adolescent students. Family climate may either hinder or enhance the adolescents' ability to cope with the developmental stage of adolescence. Hence, in this present scenario, there is a dire need for healthy and supportive family environment so that the adolescents can mentally, physically, socially and intellectually healthy.

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