

# The Influence of Test Anxiety on Academic Performance Among Young Adults

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## Abstract:

This study is to investigate the influence of test anxiety on academic performance in young adults. The study included 241 people (125 males and 116 females) for the present study and used a bivariate regression test and an independent t test for the gender difference. and data were collected with the help of the test anxiety scale by the author Sarason and the academic performance scale by Christopher Gregory. Test anxiety plagues the majority of young adults, which severely affects their ability to perform academically. We consider the relationship of test anxiety to performance in here and discuss what we know about it, with respect to both its psychological trappings as well as non-invasive measures that can reveal physiological effects. High levels of test anxiety impair working memory, negative affective states and loss in focus that can also hamper academic achievement. In addition, test anxiety often leads to avoidance behaviors and lower motivation that worsen academic problems.

**Keywords:** Test anxiety, Academic performance, Academic achievement, psychological effect

## Introduction

Test anxiety is a performance-based anxiety where the pressure is to do well and where performance really matters. It causes anxiety while an important test or interview, and it usually occurs on the day before exams when their preparation is not well. Individuals who suffer from test anxiety are mentally ill and experience significant distress or impairment while taking a test. Many people get the stress and anxiousness to a greater or lesser extent before/during their exams but test anxiety can affect learning processes as well as exam achievement. Test anxiety is one type of stage fright. Most of the time, when it is tight and performances count for everything here, they are that nervous they actually can't even perform hundred percent (Kendra cherry, 2024). Test anxiety poses a threat to students by having various degrees of severity, from mild to severe. Some students can still perform fairly well on exams even though they only exhibit moderate signs of test anxiety. However, others are so anxious that they almost have panic attacks in the days leading up to or during the exams; then they are performing horribly on tests or in other scenarios. Test anxiety is the feeling of nervousness that people experience especially before a performance that is of great importance. This stress condition commonly starts a few days before the test, but it usually hits high right before and during the test. Anxieties may be emotional or physical symptoms and they definitely are the causes which will make things a problem for you to do the activity given successfully. (Nicole Arzt, LMFT, 2022). Most of the people will experience a certain level of anxiety before you start. Funny, stress can be a good thing if it is not in excess and actually, it may have a positive effect on your test performance and can mean that you have a better memory, as well as, be more attentive. On the contrary, the sign of test anxiety is stress that leads to the persistence of discomfort, depression, and negative impact on the academic and test performance. Both physical and psychological symptoms such as perspiration, vomiting, back pain, convulsions, tight muscles, panic attack, feeling hard to breathe, and the thought of losing one's own mind can be seen as the sign of exam anxiety. Except for some special cases, the majority of treatments for test anxiety are similar to those for other forms of anxiety. Dealing with the exam stress, therapy is the technique that brings many effective suggestions and test-taking strategies along with relaxation and cognitive restructuring methods.

Academic success is a construct that is overlapped by a range of cognitive, emotional, and social factors.

In the meantime, psychology holds a very important place in designing students' academic performance.

Psychological sides include many things, namely the motivation, self-regulation, self-control, cognitive

abilities, personality traits, and emotional well-being. These aspects are intertwined in various forms, and they hugely influence the way students learn, memorize, and perform at the lessons. The examination of the psychological roots of academic performance is a necessity in establishing a good climate for learning for teachers, parents, and educational leaders. Motivation, one of the factors, is the driving force that students need to direct their studies, set goals, and be tough during failures. Cognitive skills, typically like memory, attention, and the ability to solve problems, play significant roles in one's success in gaining knowledge and excelling in academic matters. Furthermore, mental health and the emotional stability of students also have a large impact on students' productivity in terms of focus, stress management, and general performance. The importance of psychology in academic performance, setting the stage for an in-depth exploration of how various psychological factors contribute to educational outcomes and how interventions can be designed to support students in achieving their full potential.

### **Objectives**

1. To examine the test anxiety and academic performance of young adults with respect to gender
2. To assess the relationship between Test anxiety and Academic performance among young adults
3. To investigate the influence of Test anxiety on academic performance among young adults

### **Hypotheses**

1. Young adults do not differ in Test anxiety with respect to gender
2. Young adults do not differ in Academic performance with respect to gender
3. There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and academic performance among young adults
4. There is no significant influence of test anxiety and academic performance among young adults.

### **Methodology**

The survey method was used in this investigation. Self-reported questionnaires were used in conjunction with the personal data sheet to collect information for two of the study's variables. Under close observation, the standardized questionnaire was administered to the chosen college students (N=241).

### **Sample**

241 students from Cuddalore district colleges in Tamil Nadu made up the sample size for this study. The technique of random sampling was used. Students in college who were at least eighteen (18) years old were chosen. For this study, a total of 241 people were surveyed (125 males and 116 females). To choose the sample for this investigation, the purposive random sampling approach was modified.

### **Tools Used**

Two standardized questionnaires were employed as psychological instruments in this study: one for test anxiety and the other for academic performance. These questionnaires were selected after a careful and comprehensive review of relevant research.

### **Test Anxiety**

The self-report questionnaire by Sarason (1978) measures test anxiety with 37 statements. However, subscale factor structures are unclear and few self-report instruments allow standardized comparisons. Validity of test anxiety scales requires empirical validation, finding suitable criteria, and establishing construct validity. The reliability of test anxiety is 0.77, and the validity of test anxiety is 0.87. To find the reliability, the Cronbach alpha test has been used.

### **Academic performance**

The APS consisted of (8) 5-point scale items. This 5-point scale assessment was carried out by Carson Birchmeier, Emily Grattan, Sarah Hornbacher, and Christopher McGregory of Saginaw Valley State University. For researchers who have a particular interest in academic performance among students, the APS promises to be a useful tool. Scale scores showed adequate internal consistency, 2-week test-retest reliability, and satisfactory concurrent validity. For the total score, an internal consistency of 0.89 and a test-retest reliability of 0.85

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 1** shows the mean, SD, and t value for test anxiety on the basis of gender.

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t' value
Test Anxiety	Male	125	15.24	9.039	0.983
	Female	116	14.10	8.985	N. S

Data show that the mean test anxiety score of male was 15.24 (SD = 9.039) and female was 14.10 (SD = 8.985); therefore, males had somewhat higher test anxiety, on average. The t-value of the comparison is 0.983, which means that the difference between the mean scores for male and female is small. From that, we can therefore conclude that the difference in test anxiety between males and females in this sample is not statistically significant. Hence hypothesis accepted.

**Table 2** shows the mean, SD, and t value for Academic performance on the basis of gender.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t' value
Academic Performance	Male	125	17.47	9.189	1.228
	Female	116	18.93	8.872	N.S

According to the findings, the mean academic performance score was 17.47 (SD = 9.189) for male and 18.93 (SD = 8.872) for female: suggesting that female average performance score was higher. The t-value was 1.228, which suggested that the group means were not extremely different. However, it was not statistically significant, implying that the observed difference in academic performance between females and males was not statistically significant. Therefore, anything small difference observed is most likely due to chance, providing us with evidence that there is no statistically significant difference in academic performance between male and female within this sample.

**Table 4** Test Anxiety and Academic performance of college students: correlation analysis.

Variable	Academic Performance
Test anxiety	-.754**

The results show a strong inverse relationship between test anxiety and academic performance, and with a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.754, the statistical significance is at the 0.01 level. This means that when test anxiety increases, academic performance dips. The negative correlation may stem from the idea that too much anxiety has a potentiality of interfering with students' desire to perform well academically. These findings are also in agreement with past research showing that anxiety affects concentration, memory recall, and cognitive functioning in tests, negatively influencing students' grades.

**Table 5** Regression analysis between test anxiety and Academic performance

IV	DV	R	R square	adjusted R square	B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig
T.A	A.P	-.754 <sup>a</sup>	.569	.567	-0.858	6.643	-0.846	-17.75	.001

T.A = test anxiety, A.P = academic performance

The results of the regression analysis demonstrate that test anxiety significantly impairs academic performance. In particular, academic performance declines with exam anxiety. This

statistically significant links suggest that, among the population under study, test anxiety has a major role in predicting their academic performance. The findings imply that strategies for reducing test anxiety may have the ability to enhance academic achievement; therefore, hypothesis is rejected. The  $R^2 = 0.569$  indicates that approximately 56.9% of the variance in academic performance (A.P.) can be explained by test anxiety (T.A.). This means that over half of the variation in academic performance is accounted for by the levels of test anxiety experienced by individuals.

### Conclusions

The relationship between test anxiety and academic performance across genders reveals that there is no statistically significant difference between males and females. The analysis was supported by t-tests. Efforts to mitigate test anxiety should focus on universal strategies applicable to all students rather than gender-specific approaches. While test anxiety is a common challenge affecting academic performance, its impact does not differ significantly between male and female students. There was a significant negative correlation between test anxiety and academic performance, which means that higher anxiety levels go with poor academic performance. Findings show the negative impacts of test anxiety on performance and also indicate that if addressed, academic achievement could be enhanced. Future research may investigate the efficacy of interventions that reduce test anxiety and thus improve student performance. Addressing test anxiety universally can lead to improved academic outcomes and a more inclusive educational experience for all students. An examination of the influence of test anxiety on young adults' academic performance indicates a significant negative connection. By implementing techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness training, and supportive learning environments, educators and policymakers can foster a more conducive atmosphere for academic success among all students.

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