

## **ACADEMIC ANXIETY AMONG ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IMPACTED BY COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**Ruqia Mohi-ud-Din**

Doctoral Scholar, School of Education, Central University of Kashmir, Ganderbal, J&K(India)

**Dr. Mohammad Sayid Bhat**

Sr. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Central University of Kashmir, Ganderbal, J&K(India)

### **ABSTRACT**

A study was conducted to find the academic anxiety of adolescent students who were impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic. The study was an attempt to explore the Impact of Gender, Academic Stream, and Type of School on Academic Anxiety of adolescent students. The investigation is grounded on the data collected from 200 adolescent students of Kashmir division of J&K (India) who were impacted by the pandemic directly or indirectly. Academic Anxiety scale developed by the researchers was used to collect the data. The study could not ascertain the influence of academic stream on academic anxiety among adolescent students. However, the results revealed that academic anxiety of adolescent students is affected by gender and type of school. The study concluded that male adolescent students possess high academic anxiety then female ones. Students studying in Private schools also possess more academic anxiety then those enrolled in Government.

**Key Words:** COVID-19 Pandemic; Academic Anxiety; Adolescent students;

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

COVID-19 was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization (Zarocostas, J, 2020) and as a Pandemic on the 11th of March 2020 (Cucinotta, D, 2021). A Pandemic is a global health crises which affects people and society and causes distraction, anxiety, stress, and chauvinism(Javed et al., 2020)Abrupt spread of COVID-19 all over the world, took a toll on physical as well as mental health and forced people to keep social distancing. This social distancing and social restrictions has created a psycho-emotional disorder with an increase in mental health problems (Savitsky, et al., 2020) that ultimately increased substance use (Gritsenko, et al., 2020) and sometimes suicidal ideation (Mamun, et al., 2020).The abrupt changes due to the possible risk of death caused by COVID-19 occurred like isolation, lockdown, institution (schools, colleges and universities) closures which has increased the anxiety and stress level to the general public(Tian et al., 2020) especially students (Cao et al., 2020). On the one side physically closing educational institutions proved to be an effective way of curtailing the spread of the virus, but on the other it has led to many challenges for both students and teachers (Owusu-Fordjour et al., 2021).

Adolescence is a stage of life that is characterised by physical, emotional and social development. It is a period of stress and strain where numerous mental health issues can occur (O'Reilly et al., 2018). Due to abrupt closure of educational institutions, social distancing and quarantine because of COVID-19, adolescents lost their access to the outside world which resulted in the significant disruption in their social life.

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The existing research is reviewed and presented here briefly to demonstrate the association between COVID-19 and adolescents academic anxiety. Previous studies consistently point to the detrimental impact of COVID-19 on adolescents. For example, research conducted among 1210 respondents during the early stages of the crisis in China found that more than half (53.8%) rated the negative impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on their psychological health as moderate to severe (Wang et al. 2020). Another study conducted in China reported COVID-19 has increased in generalized anxiety, which were found to be more pronounced in younger people (<35 years) compared to older age groups (Huang and Zhao 2020). A meta-analysis of 13 studies of mental health among healthcare workers found that almost a quarter exhibited elevated COVID-19 related symptoms of anxiety (23.2%) and depression (22.8%), and more than a third (38.9%) experienced problems with insomnia (Pappa et al. 2020).Another study also found high levels of depression and anxiety in Chinese adolescents during the peak of the Pandemic, although lower levels were reported among males and youth that regularly engaged in physical exercises

(Chen et al. 2020). A survey of 1054 Canadian adolescents found that adolescents were most concerned about the impact on their schooling, followed by general concerns about the COVID-19 crisis, and not feeling connected to friends (Ellis et al. 2020). Review study conducted by Jehi et al., (2021), indicated higher occurrence of anxiety among females than males besides facing financial hardships, living in rural areas, working full-time, spending time in isolation, uncertainty of future etc. were some factors that were associated with increased anxiety among students during Pandemic. Jeelani et al., (2022), also revealed the prevalence of higher anxiety among female adolescents (27.72%) than male adolescents (14.05), whereas Brahma & Barman, (2022), shows no difference of academic anxiety among boys and girls of secondary schools during COVID-19 Pandemic period as both groups possess significantly high academic anxiety.

### 3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Almost every facets of human life gets affected due to COVID-19 Pandemic, and education is no exception to it. In fact students particularly adolescents got severely affected due to the institutional closure since March, 2020. Students not only lost their physical access to schools but their access to the teachers, mentors, school library, laboratory, school canteen, playground and their peers etc. This social distancing and social restrictions have created a psycho-emotional disorder around the sphere with an increase in mental health problems, including anxiety, despair, sleep disorder, as well as anxiety and stress among the students (Abbasi et al., 2020). COVID-19 has also affected the normal life in Kashmir also where closure of educational institutions, social distancing and other restrictions were put in place. Through the current research investigation, an attempt was made to study the academic anxiety of adolescent students impacted by COVID-19 in Kashmir, one of the two divisions of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (India).

### 4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study have been formulated which reads as:

To compare adolescent students of Kashmir Province impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic on academic anxiety in relation to Gender (Male/Female), Academic Stream (Arts/Science) and Type of School (Private/Government).

### 5. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the data collected from 200 adolescent students (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> classes) who were directly or indirectly impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The data was collected from various senior secondary schools (both private and Govt.) of Kashmir Valley through multistage sampling. In the first stage 611 adolescent students were identified who were directly or indirectly impacted by the COVID-19. In the second phase 200 adolescent students (100 male and 100 female) were selected randomly keeping in view their academic stream and their type of school. The data was collected through self-constructed and standardised tool on Academic Anxiety consisting of 32 statements, 24 of which are positive and 08 negative. The CVR (Content Validity Ratio) coefficient of the scale ranged from .50 to .1 which indicated a good content validity as per Lawshe's (1975) procedure. The calculated reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of the scale was 0.858 specifying good internal consistency of all the items. Data as such collected were tabulated in SPSS for further analysis.

### 6. DATA ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Showing the Mean Comparison between Male and Female Adolescent Students Impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic on Academic Anxiety.**

|                  | Gender | Mean  | SD   | n   | t-value | Significance Level |
|------------------|--------|-------|------|-----|---------|--------------------|
| Academic Anxiety | Female | 91.08 | 8.99 | 100 | 5.612   | 0.01 level         |
|                  | Male   | 98.28 | 5.68 | 100 |         |                    |

Table 1 shows overall mean difference of male and female adolescent students on academic anxiety. The table reveals that on academic anxiety, there is a noteworthy mean difference between male (M= 98.28) and female (M= 91.08) adolescent students impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic. The calculated t-value

which came out to be 5.612 is significant at 0.01 level ( $>2.58$ ). The table further reveals that male adolescent students showed significantly higher academic anxiety than their female counterparts. The investigators compared adolescent students on academic anxiety with respect to type of school and analysed the data by applying t-test. The result is presented in the table 2.

**Table 2: Showing Mean Comparison between Government and Private Adolescent Students Impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic on Academic Anxiety.**

|                  | School Type | Mean  | SD   | n   | t-value | Significance Level |
|------------------|-------------|-------|------|-----|---------|--------------------|
| Academic Anxiety | Private     | 97.47 | 4.83 | 100 | 3.231   | 0.01 level         |
|                  | Government  | 93.08 | 8.53 | 100 |         |                    |

The table 2 depicts the mean score of government and private adolescent students impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic on Academic Anxiety. The perusal of the table reveals the significant mean difference between government (M= 93.08) and private (M=97.47) adolescent students on academic anxiety. The calculated t-value 3.23 is therefore significant at 0.01 level ( $>2.58$ ). The data presented in the table clearly reveals that adolescent students enrolled in private schools possess significantly higher academic anxiety than students enrolled in government schools.

The investigators compared adolescent students on academic anxiety with respect to academic stream also. The results are presented in the table 3.

**Table 3: Showing Mean Comparison between Science and Arts Adolescent Students Impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic on Academic Anxiety.**

|                  | Academic Stream | Mean  | SD    | n   | t-value | Significance Level |
|------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-----|---------|--------------------|
| Academic Anxiety | Science         | 94.80 | 18.40 | 100 | .931    | Insignificant      |
|                  |                 |       |       |     |         |                    |

The data depicted in table 3 provides the mean comparison of science and arts adolescent students impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic. The data existing in the table reveals that on the academic anxiety, no significant mean difference exists between science (M= 94.80) and arts (M= 94.54) adolescent students who were impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic. The obtained t-value .931 is thus, insignificant. The results revealed that both science and arts adolescent students who were impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic show same level of academic anxiety.

## 7. DISCUSSION ON RESULTS

While analysing the collected data related to the academic anxiety of adolescent students impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic in Kashmir Valley (U.T., J&K, India), it has been found that male adolescent students possess significantly higher academic anxiety than female adolescent students. It is because male students spend much time outside their homes, they learn from their peers, teachers and friends. When restrictions were placed due to COVID-19 Pandemic and educational institutions remain closed they gradually develop anxiety related to their academics. Female students mostly remain inside their homes and they involve themselves in different chores and activities and closure of educational institutions had less impact on them. Thus, their academic anxiety was not high. This finding is in contrast with the findings of **Jeelani et al., (2022)** & **Jehi et al., (2021)**, who found that females possess more academic anxiety than male adolescent students. Another study conducted by **Brahma & Barman, (2022)**, shows no difference of academic anxiety among boys and girls of secondary schools during COVID-19 Pandemic period.

## 8. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Due to the abrupt closure of educational institutions, academic anxiety was found among most of the students particularly adolescents. It is suggested that counselling sessions, motivational programmes should be organized in order to overcome the problems faced by the students especially when teachers sense at any stage that their students have developed academic anxiety.
2. It has been observed from the findings of the present research that male adolescent students possess high academic anxiety than female students. It is because female students can engage themselves in number of house hold activities while as male adolescent students usually prefer outdoor activities. Here the role of teachers and parents is of immense importance as they can motivate and engage these students in different activities in order to reduce the stress caused due to COVID-19 Pandemic.
3. Due to parental expectations and societal pressure academic anxiety of the private school students is more than government school students as has been found in the present study. The attitude of parents and society towards these students should be encouraging. Parents should not expect too much from their children, neither should they pressurize their children to score more marks or to opt particular stream which in turn creates stress and anxiety among them.

## LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research study is related to only central Kashmir and studies the academic anxiety among adolescent students impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic only. Thus the researcher recommend that it should be extended to the whole U.T of J&K and more studies should be conducted on different age groups also in order to cope with the anxiety and stress caused due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

## REFERENCES

- Abbasi, S., Ayooob, T., Malik, A., & Memon, S. I. (2020). Perceptions of students regarding E-learning during Covid-19 at a private medical college. *Pakistan journal of medical sciences*, 36(COVID19-S4), S57.
- Brahma, B., & Barman, P. (2022). Academic Anxiety of the Students During COVID-19, Assam, India- A Situational Analysis. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(3), 672-678.
- Cao, W.; Fang, Z.; Hou, G.; Han, M.; Xu, X.; Dong, J.; Zheng, J. The psychological impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on college students in China. *Psychiatry Res.* 2020, 287, 112934.
- Chen, N., Zhou, M., Dong, X., Qu, J., Gong, F., Han, Y., & Zhang, L. (2020). Epidemiological and clinical characteristics of 99 cases of 2019 novel coronavirus pneumonia in Wuhan, China: a descriptive study. *The lancet*, 395(10223), 507-513.
- Cucinotta, D. Parmensis MV-ABMA, 2020 Undefined. WHO Declares COVID-19 a Pandemic. Available online: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/7569573/> (accessed on 26 June 2021).
- De Miranda, D. M., da Silva Athanasio, B., Oliveira, A. C. S., & Simoes-e-Silva, A. C. (2020). How is COVID-19 Pandemic impacting mental health of children and adolescents? *International journal of disaster risk reduction*, 51, 101845.
- Ellis, W. E., Dumas, T. M., & Forbes, L. M. (2020). Physically isolated but socially connected: psychological adjustment and stress among adolescents during the initial COVID-19 crisis. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue Canadienne des Sciences du Comportement*, 52(3), 177.
- Gritsenko, V.; Skugarevsky, O.; Konstantinov, V.; Khamenka, N.; Marinova, T.; Reznik, A.; Isralowitz, R. COVID 19 Fear, Stress, Anxiety, and Substance Use Among Russian and Belarusian University Students. *Int. J. Ment. Health Addict.* 2020, 19, 2362–2368.
- Huang, Y., & Zhao, N. (2020). Generalized anxiety disorder, depressive symptoms and sleep quality during COVID-19 outbreak in China: a web-based cross-sectional survey. *Psychiatry Research*, 288 (112954). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.112954>.
- Javed, B.; Sarwer, A.; Soto, E.B.; Mashwani, Z.U.R. The coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic's impact on mental health. *Int. J. Health Plan. Manag.* 2020, 35, 993–996.
- Jeelani, A., Dkhar, S. A., Quansar, R., & Khan, S. M. (2022). Prevalence of depression and anxiety among school-going adolescents in Indian Kashmir valley during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Middle East current psychiatry*, 29(1), 1-7.

- Jehi, T., Khan, R., Dos Santos, H., & Majzoub, N. (2022). Effect of COVID-19 outbreak on anxiety among students of higher education; a review of literature. *Current Psychology*, 1-15.
- Mamun, M.A.; Chandrima, R.M.; Griffiths, M.D. Mother and Son Suicide Pact Due to COVID-19-Related Online Learning Issues in Bangladesh: An Unusual Case Report. *Int. J. Ment. Health Addict.* 2020, 1–4
- O'Reilly, M., Svirydzenka, N., Adams, S., & Dogra, N. (2018). Review of mental health promotion interventions in schools. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 53, 647-662.
- Owusu-Fordjour, C.; Koomson, C.K.; Hanson, D. The impact of COVID-19 on learning—the perspective of the Ghanaian student. *Eur. J. Educ. Stud.* 2020, 7, 88–101. Available online: [www.oapub.org/edu](http://www.oapub.org/edu) (accessed on 26 June 2021).
- Pappa, S., Ntella, V., Giannakas, T., Giannakoulis, V. G., Papoutsis, E., & Katsaounou, P. (2020). Prevalence of depression, anxiety, and insomnia among healthcare workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, 88, 901–907. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2020.05.026>.
- Savitsky, B.; Findling, Y.; Erel, A.; Hendel, T. Anxiety and coping strategies among nursing students during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Nurse Educ. Pract.* 2020, 46, 102809
- Tian, F.; Li, H.; Tian, S.; Yang, J.; Shao, J.; Tian, C. Psychological symptoms of ordinary Chinese citizens based on SCL-90 during the level I emergency response to COVID. *Psychiatry Res.* 2020, 288, 112992.
- Wang, C., Pan, R., Wan, X., Tan, Y., Xu, L., Ho, C. S., & Ho, R. C. (2020). Immediate psychological responses and associated factors during the initial stage of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID19) epidemic among the general population in China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17 (5), 1729.
- Zarocostas, J. What next for the coronavirus response? *Lancet* 2020, 395, 401.