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TEST ANXIETY OF M.Ed. TRAINEES DURING COVID-19 IN RELATION TO THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract: The COVID 19 pandemic has led to the closing down of all institutions imparting face-to-face mode of teaching and evaluation globally. In India, the UGC instructed all its institutions to run regular courses and opt for online classes during the pandemic. The state of West Bengal is adhering to the decision of the UGC. The present study intends to study the test anxiety of M.Ed. trainees in relation to their academic performance during COVID 19 with regard to their gender, educational qualification, and academic stream variation. 100 M.Ed teacher trainees studying in West Bengal University of Teachers' Training Education Planning and Administration WBUTTEPA were selected purposively. A self-developed Test anxiety scale was used to assess the level of anxiety among the M.Ed. Trainees. Last end semester examination marks were considered for assessing the academic achievement of the students. Significant differences in the level of test anxiety of students in relation to gender, academic stream, and educational qualification variation were revealed. Significant differences in the level of academic achievement were also observed in the case of gender and academic qualification variation. But even though academic stream-wise there was observed no significant difference in science and non-science students, there was a difference to a pretty good level. A significant negative relationship was observed between test anxiety and academic achievement in the case of the total sample, female and science students. In all others, a negative relationship was there but it was not significant. The test of significance of the difference between the means of scores on academic achievement of high and low levels of test anxiety for the total sample yielded a significant relationship at 0.01 level of significance showing that high test anxiety and low test anxiety differentiated academic achievement significantly. This study has clearly shown that exam anxiety was highly prevalent among bachelor students in Saudi Arabia during the COVID-19 crisis and Female students showed a higher level of exam anxiety. Findings from this study necessitate that implementing a strategy for facilitating an exam environment is highly recommended to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on students' performance and psychological well-being.

Index Terms - Test Anxiety, Academic Achievement, M.Ed Trainee, COVID-19.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the present socio-economic and cultural context, the world is becoming more and more competitive, when the quality of performance is regarded as the key factor for personal progress. Great emphasis is placed on achievement right from the beginning of the formal institution. This desire for a high level of achievement puts a lot of pressure on students, teachers, schools in particular and the educational system in general. Such a systematic hierarchy indicates as if the whole system of education revolves round the academic achievement of the students, although various other outcomes are also expected from the system. As a result, a lot of time and effort of the schools are used to help students achieving better in their scholastic endeavour. Therefore the importance of scholastic achievement has raised several important issues for educational researchers. Among them the following questions are important. What factors promote achievement in students? How far do the different factors contribute towards the academic achievement? What are the correlates of achievement? A synoptic review of the researches conducted in the field so far indicates that the term achievement is elucidated through the studies conducted in all the domains of cognitive, conative and psychomotor. Dave (1968) found that there exists relationship between intelligence and certain other demographic variables with achievement. Studies which have tried to probe into the relationship of personality variable with achievement include the studies of Ahuja (1977), Sharma (1971), Chaudhury (1980), Patel (1981), Menon (1982), Jakaria (1982), Singh and Kumar (1977). They investigated the existing relationship of anxiety and achievement. Ravinder (1977) used a variety of tools to find out the effects of state-trait anxiety, psychological stress and intelligence on learning and academic achievement. The study had the findings that general anxiety along with intelligence had a considerable impact on predicting academic performance. Chaudhury (1980) inferred that self-concept anxiety and SES are important correlates of a achievement. Achievement as also a function of creativity is put forth by research studies of Acharyulu (1978), Menon (1980), Singh (1982). It is undoubtedly true to infer that there is a strong interactive effect of intelligence and creativity upon achievement in different school subjects. Researches which probed into the relationship of variables like aptitude, attitude and values in relation to academic achievement include the studies of George (1966), Reddy (1978), Zacharia (1977), Soman (1977) and Chopra (1982). They found out the impact of certain nonintellectual correlates of academic achievement like home, healthy, social and emotional adjustment, study habit and their attitude towards education. There has also been the impact of institutional characteristics on academic achievement. Researchers like Rani (1980), Sasidhar (1981) have substantiated the view. The correlates of academic achievement may therefore be influenced by inherent variables of students, teaching variables, sociological variables and other variables.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The COVID 19 pandemic has led to closing down of all institutions imparting face to face mode of teaching globally. In India, UGC instructed to all educational institutions to run regular courses in online mode and also conduct exam in online mode during the pandemic. The state of West Bengal too is adhering to the decision of the UGC. The present proposed study intends to study test anxiety of M.Ed trainees in relation to their academic performance. The UG, PG and research students engagement during and after online classes characterized by reading of digital study materials, reading of PPTs, noting down and listening to online lectures. Such a situation creates serious problems like poor network connectivity, physical discomfort and so on relates to attending online classes. The government of West Bengal has implemented online teaching programme in its higher education institutions without any baseline survey on the readiness of relevance and required factors due to scarcity of time. Much of the early research on online instruction focused on accessibility on needed technologies for creating a sense of engagement, foster the sharing of information and promote individual gratification among the students. The pedagogical organizational and institutional issues along with mental health issues were not given due consideration. Researchers like Dwivedi et al. (2009), Zhou, Li, Wu and Zhou (2020) found that in online teaching some teachers copy the classroom teaching content to online teaching courses, ignoring subjective guidance, lacking teacher student interaction. In such situation students are influenced by psychological imbalances.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“Test Anxiety of M.Ed. Trainees during COVID 19 in relation to their Academic Achievement”

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objective-1: To examine the level of test anxiety of M.Ed trainees.

Objective-2: To compare the test anxiety of M.Ed. trainees in relation to gender, academic stream and educational qualification variation.

Objective-3: To compare the academic achievement of M.Ed. trainees in relation to gender, academic stream and educational qualification variation.

Objective-4: To find out the relationship between the level of anxiety and academic achievement of M.Ed trainees in relation to gender, academic stream and educational qualification variation.

HYPOTHESIS

Ho1 : There is no significant difference of test anxiety between male and female M.Ed trainees.

Ho2 : There is no significant difference of test anxiety between Undergraduate and Postgraduate M.Ed trainees.

Ho3 : There is no significant difference of test anxiety between Science and Arts M.Ed trainees.

Ho4 : There is no significant difference of academic achievement between male and female M.Ed trainees.

Ho5 : There is no significant difference of academic achievement between Undergraduate and Postgraduate M.Ed trainees.

Ho6 : There is no significant difference of academic achievement between Science and Arts M.Ed trainees.

Ho7 : There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and academic achievement M.Ed trainees in relation to their gender, educational qualification and academic stream variation.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS

‘**Test Anxiety**’ is taken as a more generalized academic anxiety that has chronic effects on performance and the context of performance is test like in character. It denotes an emotional state of tension, mark for fear and apprehension.

‘**Academic Achievement**’ is conceived here as the achievement of the students in their previous semester end term examination. As the examination maintains uniformity in standard, evaluating procedure and teaching curriculum the marks obtained by the students in the examination has been considered to have possessed higher validity and reliability evidence.

‘**Trainees**’ here refers to the pupil teachers pursuing their M.Ed. course during the academic session 2019-21.

DELIMITATION

- The present study is delimited to M.Ed college affiliated to WBUTTEPA in West Bengal.
- The study is delimited to variables Test Anxiety and Academic Achievement.

II. REVIEWS OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Dwivedi et al. (2019) conducted a study on factors affecting student’s engagement with online content in blended learning and found that promptness of instructor’s response to online activities, queries of students’ increases students’ engagement with online content in blended learning.

Anisha and Miranda (2011) conducted a study on Influence of Anxiety on Performance of University students and found that examination anxiety has been a major problem for many students all over the world.

Frischenschlager, Haidinger, and Mitterquer (2005) in a study of factors associated with a academic success at Vienna Medical school found that examination anxiety varies from one individual to another as it depends upon different variables such as life style issues, lack of required information, studying style and psychological factors.

Richars and Ridley (1997) conducted a study on factors affecting college students' persistence in online computer managed instruction found that the factors such as prior computer knowledge on online experiences helped students to persist in taking online courses.

Henbree (1988) investigated on correlates, causes, effects and treatment of test anxiety and observed that females have a higher level of examination anxiety than males.

Gupta (1987) studied the relationship between locus of control, anxiety, level of aspiration, academic achievement of secondary school students. The major findings of the study showed anxiety having a significant negative correlation with academic achievement with total sample, arts and science group, boys and girls. Thus the reviews substantiate strong contribution of the psycho-social variables towards academic achievement.

Mansuri (1986) in a study on achievement motivation in relation to some psycho-socio factors found that students with low anxiety level show high achievement motivation compared to the students having high anxiety level.

Chaturvedi (1981) studied the effects of state trait anxiety and field independence upon cognitive competence. One of the objectives of the study was to measure teachers' characteristics with regard to two major but different characteristics anxiety and cognitive style. The major findings of the study were – (i) low state anxious teachers performed significantly better in each of the measures of cognitive competence than high state anxious teachers, (ii) At low level of state anxiety there was no difference between field dependent and field-independent teachers, whereas at high level of state anxiety, field independent teachers performed significantly better than field dependent teachers in each of the cognitive measures. (iii) Low trait anxious teachers performed significantly better in each of the measures of cognitive competence than high trait anxious teachers. (iv) High state anxious teachers performed significantly better in each of the measures of cognitive competence than low state anxious teacher. (v) Low trait anxious teachers performed significantly better in each of the measures of cognitive competence than high trait anxious teacher.

Sheel (1981) studied the task performance as a function of n-achievement, anxiety and creativity among male and female adolescents. He found that task performance of male students having high level of n-achievement and test anxiety was better than students of HL, LL and LH level of n-achievement and test anxiety. Similarly, SS having LH level had better performance than LL and HL levels of n-achievement and test anxiety. The success of male adolescents on task performance was influenced by their anxiety levels. High anxiety students had better task performance. Among females low anxiety students had better task performance than high anxiety students. Anxiety was dependent either on fluency or on originality.

Singh (1981) studied anxiety and need achievement in relation to tester's set. He found that the subject having high anxiety scores showed higher experimenter's effect confirmation than those who had low anxiety scores.

Shivappa (1980) studied several factors affecting the academic achievement. Among the other factors, manifest anxiety was taken into the purview of research. It was found that personality adjustment and manifest anxiety were significantly negative correlates of academic achievement.

Taylor (1951) in a study on relatively constant anxiety developed a scale for its measurement known as manifest anxiety scale. The test was devised solely to select subjects differing in general drive level. The items on the scale were selected by clinicians as referring to manifest anxiety and were employed in a number of studies to determine the relationship between drive level and performance in learning situations. The results of this study have demonstrated that groups with high and low scores on Manifest Anxiety Scale differ. Anxious subjects show a greater number of condition responses than do non-anxious subjects. The number

of errors for anxious subjects is positively related with the difficulty of choice point at which they are made. In verbal learning, anxious group have been found to differ from non-anxious group in the learning. Anxious subjects were inferior in performance compared to non-anxious students.

Review of related literature and studies concluded the fact that online teaching during COVID 19 influence students' learning and results. It generates fear and worry with regard to their performances. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the level of test anxiety in relation to academic achievement of M.Ed trainees during Covid-19. Based on the above discussions, the following research questions emerged.

- Do the M.Ed trainees possess test anxiety? If so to what extent?
- Do gender, academic stream and academic qualification play any significant role in test anxiety and academic achievement of M.Ed trainees?
- Does the level of test anxiety have any role to play in the field of academic achievement?
- Is there any relationship between level of test anxiety and academic achievement?

III. METHODOLOGY

Variables:

- Major Variables-
 - Academic Achievement
 - Test Anxiety
- Categorical Variables-
 - Gender (Male and Female)
 - Educational Qualification (Graduate and Postgraduate)
 - Academic Stream (Science and Non-science)

Population & Sample:

The sample for the study is confined to 100 M.Ed teacher trainees studying in West Bengal University of Teachers' Training Education Planning and Administration (WBUTTEPA). The sample has been selected purposively. While selecting the sample the variations of gender, educational qualification and academic stream was considered to be the intervening variables. On the basis as mentioned above, the sample has been categorized under these three types.

Sampling: Structure of sample showed in table-1

Table-1 : Structure of Sample

Variation	Group	Number	Total
Gender	Male	50 (50%)	100
	Female	50 (50%)	
Educational Qualification	Graduate	40 (40%)	100
	Post graduate	60 (60%)	
Academic stream	Science	55 (55%)	100
	Non-science	45 (45%)	

Tools Used:

The following tools were used for the study.

- i. A self-developed test anxiety scale was used to measure anxiety.
- ii. Last semester examination results were referred to determine the scores of academic achievement.

Self Developed Anxiety Scale:

For assessing the test anxiety of the teacher trainees, a self-developed scale was used. It contains 25 items having 5 options in each. The respondent is required to put a tick mark against the reactions of his / her choice in the item. Each statement was stated in the form of a situation having five alternative answers arranged in a hierarchical presentation. Thus, the first answer would show the minimum test anxiety and the fifth answer the maximum. The necessary indications were made in them to ensure that the situations are intelligible to the students. The scale consists of 25 test situations with five alternative answers. Weights as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 for the first, second, third, fourth and fifth item respectively are given while scoring. Scoring is to be done by calculating the answers ticked by the respondents and the summation of weights assigned to and indicated by the respondents. The sum of all the weights assigned would be the total anxiety score of the individual. The higher the score, the higher is the level of test anxiety expressed by the respondents.

Try Out: Initially the researcher select 33 questionnaire to prepared this questionnaire but after the content validity checked by expert, few statements were omitted from this questionnaire and a final form of this questionnaire was ready to use.

Techniques of Data Analysis:

Techniques of analysis for the present investigation include techniques for collection of data, scoring, interpretation of scores in relation to the objectives stated and hypotheses formulated. Questionnaire technique was adopted for collection of data. The data was collected through Google Form.

For interpretation of scores in test anxiety both descriptive and inferential statistics have been used. Descriptive statistics have been made use of to determine the respondents' standing in the predicting situations where as inferential statistics have been used, to find out intra-variable effects. To find out relationship between test anxiety and academic achievement, product moment correlation has been adopted.

The Design

The study design was a correlational study of descriptive design. It was also an ex-post-facto study for the fact that test anxiety and academic achievement have been studied as they are.

Statistical treatment:

In this research the researcher applied two types of statistical analysis of data.

➤ Descriptive Statistics :

Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error

➤ Inferential Statistics :

Independent sample t-Test and Correlation

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Objective-1: Study the Level of Text Anxiety

Considering the total sample as the base, the P_{90} , P_{75} , P_{50} , P_{25} and P_{10} values were calculated and categorization of the sample was made for indicating the level of anxiety of students. Out of the total sample below 10th percentile and above 90th percentile score on the Text Anxiety scale were marked as extremely low anxiety and extremely high anxiety level respectively. The P_{75} , P_{50} , and P_{25} scores were considered as the cut-off mark for the high test anxiety, normal test anxiety and low test anxiety, Thus 25 percent of the total sample were regarded to have high level of anxiety and 47 percent having low whereas only 28 percent exhibited normal anxiety. The table-2 below represents the percentage of the sample according to different levels of test anxiety.

Table-2: Level of test anxiety

Degree of Test Anxiety	No. of students	Percentage of students
Extremely high level	10	10
High Test Anxiety	15	15
Normal Test Anxiety	28	28
Low Test Anxiety	24	24
Extremely Low Test Anxiety	23	23

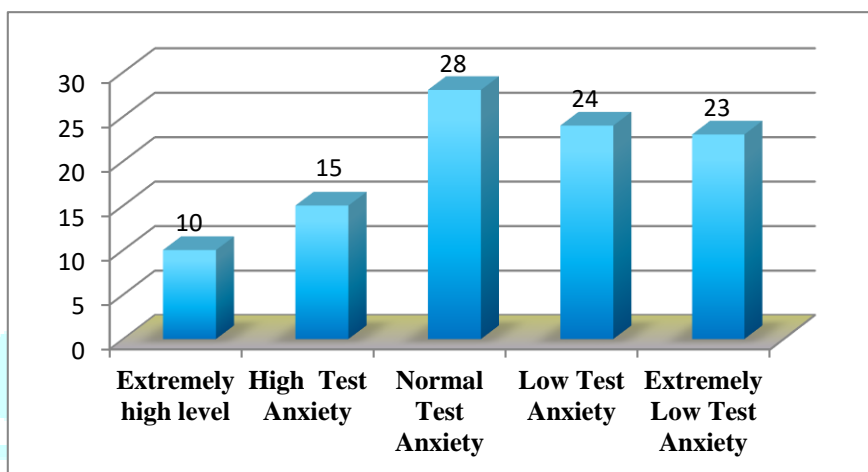


Figure- (i): Bar Diagram showing the categorization of data according to differential levels of test anxiety

Objective-2: Compare the test anxiety of M.Ed. trainees in relation to gender, academic stream and educational qualification variation.

Testing of Ho1, Ho2 & Ho3 :

For studying the score distribution on Test Anxiety scale a frequency distribution table was prepared from the data sheet and the mean and variances of the total sample as well as all sub-samples were calculated. The mean of the total sample was 55.85 whereas the standard deviation was found out to be 22.37. The mean anxiety score of the male students was 59.68 whereas the mean anxiety score of the female students was remarkably 49.00 with a standard deviation value of 22.01. Mean and SD of the total sample along with its sub-samples has been presented here in a table-2

Table-3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the score of Text Anxiety scale_ Gender, Academic Stream, Educational Qualification basis

Variations	Groups	N	M	SD
Gender	Male	50	59.68	24.22
	Female	50	49.00	22.01
Academic stream	Science	55	58.50	21.18
	Non-Science	45	50.42	24.86
Educational qualification	Graduate	40	44.74	22.94
	Post-graduate	60	61.70	24.20
	Total	100	55.85	22.37

From the table-3 it was revealed that the subsamples of male, science and post graduate students have higher mean scores compared to the total mean score. The male, science and post graduate students were perceived to have more test anxiety than their counterparts.

The mean test anxiety scores of the subsamples along with the total scores has been shown in figure (i).

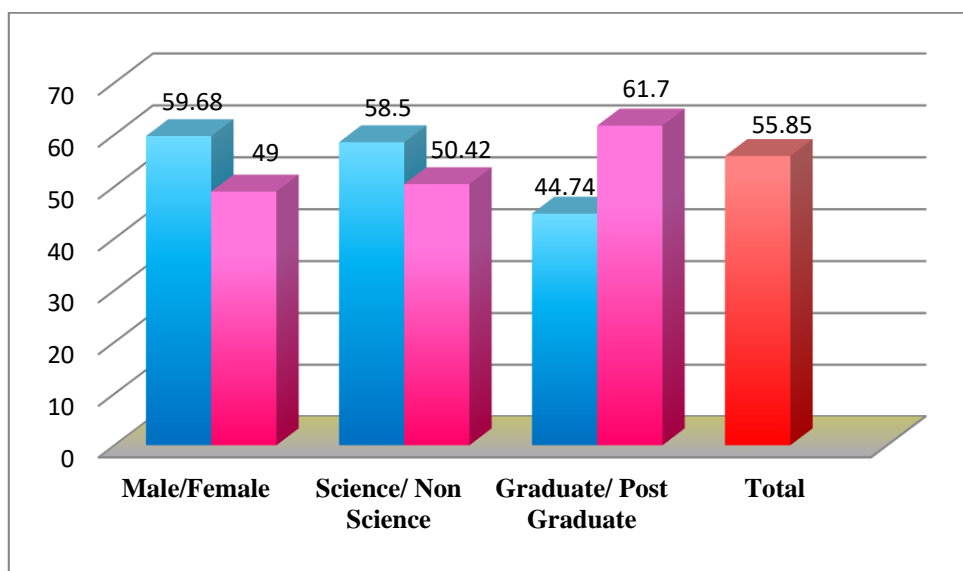


Figure- (ii) : Bar Diagram_Mean Scores of Test Anxiety_Gender, Academic Stream, Educational Qualification variation

The sample was split into different sub-samples like Male and Female, science and non-science and Graduate and Post graduate groups for verification of null hypotheses stated earlier. As such three contrasts were built in as Male vs Female, Science stream vs Non-science stream, Graduate vs Post graduate. For determining the significance of difference between the means of each of the contrasts the 't' test was adopted and the values of 't' ratio are presented in table-4.

Table-4: t- test of Test Anxiety_ Gender, Academic Stream, and Educational Qualification variation

Groups	N	M	SD	SE _D	't'	Remark
Male Vs Female	50	59.68	24.22	4.66	2.29	p < .05
	50	49.00	22.32			
Science Vs Non-science	55	58.50	20.18	4.03	2.007	p < .05
	45	50.42	19.9			
Graduate Vs Post graduate	40	44.74	22.91	4.82	3.51	p < .01
	60	61.70	24.20			

't' critical at 0.01 = 2.63 at df 98 and 0.05 = 1.98

From the results presented in table-4 it was revealed that the 't' ratio in case of all the sub-samples was significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance. This indicates that in case of variations like gender, academic stream and educational qualification, the test anxiety had shown significant result. In case of gender variation, the 't' ratio being 2.29 is more than the table value of 't' which is 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance at 98 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there does not exist statistically significant difference between the level of anxiety of male and female students was rejected. In this case the females have shown higher level of test anxiety than the male students. The studies of Kapadia (1985) and Roy (1990) have also indicated higher level of anxiety in girls. Mohanty (1998) has shown also that girls are more anxious than the boys. But studies of Ansari and Rahman (1981) however could not find out gender differences in the level of anxiety. Basing on such earlier researches, the investigator desires to conclude that there exists significant differences in level of anxiety in relation to gender variation.

In relation to the contrasts of science and non-science students, the 't' ratio was found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance, the 't' value being 3.51 as against table value of 2.56 for 98 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis that "there does not exist statistically significant difference in the level of anxiety of science and non-science students" was rejected. The study is in conformity with the earlier study of Chouhan (1992) who has obtained result in test anxiety where academic

stream contributed too much. The result obtained by the investigator in the present study may be considered appropriate because, at this stage, the students choose the future line of their profession and hence remain highly anxious to attain the goal.

The test of significance of difference between the mean scores due to the contrast of educational qualification also yields a 't' ratio of 2.17 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there does not exist statistically significant difference in the mean scores on test anxiety scale in relation to educational qualification variation is rejected.

Objective-3: Compare the academic achievement of M.Ed. trainees in relation to gender, academic stream and educational qualification variation.

Testing of Ho4, Ho5 & Ho6 :

The achievement scores of 100 M.Ed. Trainees of different variations have been calculated in percent from the total marks obtained by them in their last Examination. The marks in aggregate have been converted to percent. In case of decimal fraction percentage above 0.5 has been considered as the next highest score and below it has been neglected. Thus, a student having 70.5 percent is considered as 71 whereas 70.4 are considered as 70. Study of measures of Mean and Standard Deviation has been made by applying appropriate formulae and the result has been presented in table-5.

Table-5: Mean and Standard Deviation of scores on Academic Achievement_ Gender, Academic Stream, and Educational Qualification wise

Variations	Groups	N	M	SD
Gender	Male	50	58.0	9.35
	Female	50	51.84	11.60
Academic stream	Science	55	56.28	11.62
	Non-Science	45	51.89	10.1
Educational Qualification	Graduate	40	58.3	11.9
	Post Graduate	60	50.3	8.7
Total		100	51.6	15.3

On perusal of the table-5, it was observed that the mean scores on academic achievement of the sub-samples' Male, Science and Graduate students were more than the total mean scores. Therefore, it was considered obligatory to find out the significance of differences between two contrasts and interpret result. For this the 't' test was adopted. The results of 't' values have been presented hereunder for verification of the hypotheses formulated earlier.

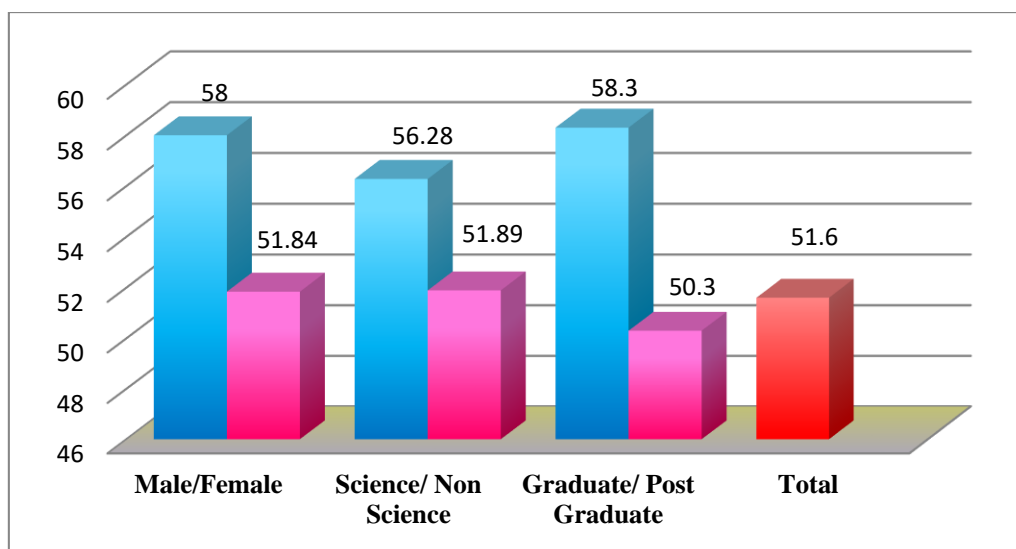


Figure- (iii) : Bar Diagram_ Mean Scores of Academic Achievement_ Gender, Academic Stream, and Educational Qualification variation

Table-6: t- test of Academic Achievement_ Gender, Academic Stream, Educational Qualification variation

Variation	Groups	N	M	SD	SE _D	't'	Remark
Gender	Male	50	58.00	9.35	2.1	2.93	p < .01
	Vs Female	50	51.84	11.6			
Academic stream	Science	55	56.28	11.9	2.26	1.94	NS
	Vs Non-science	45	51.89	10.1			
Educational Qualification	Graduate	40	58.3	11.9	2.08	3.85	p < .01
	Vs Post Graduate	60	50.3	8.7			

't' critical at 0.01 = 2.63 at df 98 and 0.05 = 1.98

On perusal of the table-6, it was observed that the 't' ratio in case of gender and educational qualification variations was significant at 0.01 levels of significance. Hence the null hypothesis that there does not exist significant of Academic Achievement in relation to gender and educational qualification variations was rejected.

The result was in conformity with the earlier studies of Mohanty (1998), Parida (2002) and Nayak (1993), Singh (1994), Rosen (1956) and Douglas (1964) found out higher level of academic achievement due to educational qualification variation. So far as the academic stream was considered significant difference in the level of academic achievement was observed in the studies of Nayak (1993) and Singh (1994). But in the present investigation the difference could not be significant only for small value of 0.04. Therefore, the investigator desires to conclude that there exist differences in the level of academic achievement by rejecting the null hypotheses (Ho₅, Ho₆). Thus the result obtained in the present study may be treated as appropriate.

Objective-4: Study the relationship between the level of anxiety and academic achievement of M.Ed trainees in relation to gender, academic stream and educational qualification variation.

Testing of Ho₇:

The relationship between test anxiety and academic achievement has been computed by applying the Pearson's Product Moment Method as per the formula (Garrett, 1981, p.143). The 'r' values are then treated for significance for interpretation of result.

Table-7: Coefficient of correlation between Test Anxiety and Academic Achievement_ Gender, Academic Stream, and Educational Qualification wise

Groups	N	r	Remark
Total	100	(-) 0.276	p < .01
Male	50	(-) 0.137	NS
Female	50	(-) 0.259	p < .01
Graduate	40	(-) 0.12	NS
Post graduate	60	(-) 0.23	NS
Science	55	(-) 0.301	p < .01
Non-Science	45	(-) 0.089	NS

From the above table-7 it is evident that there exists negative relationship in between test anxiety scores and scores in academic achievement in case of the total sample and all other contrasts of the sample.

But significant relationship was not found in case of the test anxiety and academic achievement in relation to graduate, post graduate students, non-science students and male students.

Significant relationship between anxiety and academic achievement of science students was found out in the studies conducted by Singh (2003) and Chouhan (1992). Considering the above, the investigator desires to conclude that the result is in conformity with earlier researches and hence may be considered appropriate.

FINDINGS:

- 1) There exist significant differences in the level of test anxiety of M.Ed trainees in relation to gender, academic stream and educational qualification variation.
- 2) Significant differences in the level of academic achievement were also observed in case of gender and academic qualification variation. But even though academic stream wise there was observed no significant difference in science and non-science students, there was difference to a pretty good level.
- 3) Significant negative relationship was observed between test anxiety and academic achievement in case of the total sample, female and science students. In all others negative relationship was there but it was not significant.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has clearly shown that exam anxiety highly prevalent among post graduate students in West Bengal during COVID-19 crisis and Female students showed a higher level of exam anxiety. Findings from this study necessitate that implementing a strategy for facilitating exam environment is highly recommended to minimize the impact of COVID-19 crisis on student's performance and psychological well-being. The students' orientation regarding online teaching, learning and evaluation will also be beneficial in reducing the anxiety and increasing the academic performance of the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been made basing on the findings of the present investigation.

(i) Using Defense Mechanism

Students adjust to stressful situation by engaging in unconscious psychological maneuvers designed to alter the way they see a situation so that it will seem less threatening. Such process, which modify the way a threatening situation is seen without in fact dealing with the actual source of danger are called defense mechanisms. To the extent that a defense mechanism is successful, the circumstances that evoke anxiety will be seen as less threatening and there will be corresponding reduction in state anxiety intensity.

(ii) Cordial relationship among the members of the staff

There must be cordial relationship among the members of the staff of an educational institution. Personal rivalry, jealousy among the peer group and the teaching faculty will lead to instability and stressful conditions in the institutional atmosphere. Therefore, the atmosphere may be made highly beneficial and conducive.

(iii) Reducing worry and emotionality

As test anxiety consists of two major components: worry and emotionality, it is primarily recommended that these two factors should be reduced to the minimum. Worry originates in the thoughts of the consequences due to the failure and the emotional component refers to the unpleasant feelings and the physiological reactions that are evolved by examination stress. Worrying thoughts direct the individual attention from the task. An intense emotional reaction leads to mistakes and causes repression that blocks memory. Good preparation in the subject will be a prerequisite for stress reduction.

(iv) Provision of Facilities for the students

The teachers of higher education should focus on how better students can learn the topic instead of how better they can deliver. Teacher should act like a facilitator who will create an environment for student learning. Online classes examination should be more of counseling where teachers should orient about the topic and clarify students' doubts. The academic calendar of each institution should be revised in the light of students' need, teachers' expertise and variety of the classes. Institutions should have adequate provision for digital learning equipment and software.

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