

The Influence of Parenting Style on Test Anxiety and Academic Self-Efficacy of Higher Secondary School Students

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Abstract—This study examines the influence of parenting styles on test anxiety and academic self-efficacy among higher secondary school students in Sabour and Nathnagar blocks of Bhagalpur district, Bihar, India. A sample of 200 students was classified by parenting styles—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful—as well as by gender and academic streams (Science, Commerce, Arts). Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, t-tests, and ANOVA were applied to analyze the data. Results revealed that authoritative parenting is associated with the lowest levels of test anxiety and the highest academic self-efficacy. Neglectful parenting, in contrast, led to the poorest outcomes. Gender and academic stream did not significantly influence these variables. These findings emphasize the importance of promoting effective parenting practices to optimize students' academic and psychological well-being.

Index Terms—Parenting Styles, Test Anxiety, Academic Self-Efficacy, Authoritative Parenting, Psychological Well-being, Adolescent Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

The transition to higher secondary education is often accompanied by increased academic pressure and psychological challenges. Among these challenges, test anxiety and academic self-efficacy emerge as critical determinants of students' academic success and overall well-being.

Test Anxiety

Test anxiety is a debilitating condition characterized by excessive worry and tension in evaluative situations (Zeidner, 1998). It negatively impacts students' cognitive functions, such as memory and concentration, and is a significant predictor of poor

academic performance (Cassady & Johnson, 2002). Studies in Indian schools highlight the prevalence of test anxiety, particularly among students preparing for high-stakes board examinations (Deb et al., 2015).

Academic Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, defined by Bandura (1997) as the belief in one's ability to organize and execute tasks, is an essential component of academic resilience. High self-efficacy motivates students to set higher academic goals, persist in the face of challenges, and employ effective learning strategies (Schunk & Pajares, 2005).

Parenting Styles

Parenting plays a pivotal role in shaping students' psychological traits. Baumrind's (1971) typology—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting—remains a foundational framework in understanding the interplay between parenting and child development. Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and discipline, has been consistently linked to positive academic and psychological outcomes (Steinberg, 2001). In contrast, neglectful parenting, marked by a lack of involvement, is associated with adverse outcomes such as low self-esteem, high anxiety, and poor academic performance (Turner et al., 2009).

Studies such as those by Gonzales et al. (1996) and Grolnick and Ryan (1989) have emphasized that parenting styles influence students' emotional regulation, academic competence, and resilience. However, limited research exists on the intersection of these variables in the Indian context, particularly in rural and semi-urban settings like Bhagalpur

district. This study seeks to address this gap by examining how parenting styles affect test anxiety and academic self-efficacy among higher secondary school students.

II. OBJECTIVES

The study aims to:

1. Analyze the relationship between parenting styles and test anxiety.
2. Analyze the relationship between parenting styles and academic self-efficacy.
3. Compare gender differences in test anxiety and academic self-efficacy.
4. Examine differences in test anxiety and self-efficacy across academic streams (Science, Commerce, Arts).

III. HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is a significant relationship between parenting style and test anxiety.
2. Students with authoritative parents exhibit lower test anxiety than those with authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful parents.
3. There is a significant relationship between parenting style and academic self-efficacy.
4. Students with authoritative parents exhibit higher academic self-efficacy than those with authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful parents.
5. There is a significant difference in test anxiety between male and female students.
6. There is a significant difference in academic self-efficacy between male and female students.
7. There is a significant difference in test anxiety and academic self-efficacy across academic streams (Science, Commerce, Arts).

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample

The study included 200 higher secondary school students aged 15–18 years from Sabour and Nathnagar blocks of Bhagalpur district, Bihar. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure proportional representation of gender and academic streams:

Academic Streams: Science (70), Commerce (65), Arts (65).

Gender: Male (100), Female (100).

4.2 Tools

1. Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ): Based on Baumrind's typology, the PSQ classified students' perceptions of their parents' behaviors into four categories: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful.
2. Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI): This standardized scale measured students' anxiety levels during academic assessments.
3. Academic Self-Efficacy Scale: A validated tool designed to assess students' confidence in their ability to perform academic tasks.

4.3 Procedure

Data collection was conducted in schools with prior consent from parents, school authorities, and students. Students completed the questionnaires under the guidance of trained researchers. Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS.

4.4 Statistical Techniques

1. Descriptive Statistics: Mean and standard deviation.
2. Correlation Analysis: Examined the relationship between test anxiety and self-efficacy.
3. t-Test: Compared gender-wise differences in test anxiety and self-efficacy.
4. ANOVA: Analyzed differences in test anxiety and self-efficacy across academic streams.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis revealed significant differences in test anxiety and academic self-efficacy across parenting styles. Students with authoritative parents reported the lowest test anxiety scores ($M = 30.64$, $SD = 3.93$) and the highest academic self-efficacy scores ($M = 85.49$, $SD = 4.76$). Conversely, neglectful parenting was associated with the highest test anxiety scores ($M = 44.35$, $SD = 5.09$) and the lowest self-efficacy scores ($M = 60.96$, $SD = 5.54$).

5.2 Correlation Analysis

A significant negative correlation was found between test anxiety and academic self-efficacy ($r = -0.618$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that as test anxiety decreases, self-efficacy increases, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these psychological variables.

5.3 Gender Differences (t-Test)

No significant gender differences were observed in test anxiety ($t = 0.65$, $p = 0.52$) or academic self-efficacy ($t = 0.45$, $p = 0.65$). These findings challenge common assumptions about gender-based differences in academic performance and psychological traits, particularly in rural Indian settings.

5.4 Academic Stream Differences (ANOVA)

The analysis of variance revealed no significant differences in test anxiety ($F = 0.37$, $p = 0.69$) or academic self-efficacy ($F = 0.23$, $p = 0.80$) across academic streams. This indicates that parenting styles have a more profound impact than academic specialization on these variables.

VI. DISCUSSION

The findings align with existing literature emphasizing the positive impact of authoritative parenting on adolescents' psychological well-being and academic success (Steinberg, 2001). The absence of significant gender or stream differences highlights the universality of these effects, regardless of contextual or demographic factors.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study highlights the critical role of parenting styles in shaping students' psychological traits. Authoritative parenting fosters the most favorable outcomes, characterized by low test anxiety and high self-efficacy. Neglectful parenting has the most adverse effects. Gender and academic streams do not significantly influence these variables.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Parental Workshops: Educate parents about authoritative parenting techniques, emphasizing communication, support, and constructive discipline.
2. Stress Management Programs: Implement mindfulness, yoga, and time management workshops for students to reduce test anxiety.
3. Counseling Services: Provide school-based psychological counseling for students with high anxiety or low self-efficacy.
4. Teacher Training: Equip educators with skills to identify and manage anxiety in the classroom.
8. Limitations and Future Research

1. The sample was restricted to two blocks of Bhagalpur district, limiting generalizability.
2. Future research should explore these variables in diverse cultural and geographic settings.
3. Longitudinal studies could investigate the long-term effects of parenting styles on students' academic and psychological development.

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