

# Unveiling the Relationship Between Anxiety and Self-Esteem in Adult Populations

Sangeeta Kakkar<sup>1\*</sup>, Harkirat Singh<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the intricate connection between anxiety and self-esteem in adult Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) residents. A purposive sample approach was employed to select seventy people from this region. The study measured participants' self-worth and gathered pertinent background data using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and a sociodemographic data form. In the data analysis, a t-test was employed to assess significant differences between variables. Furthermore, the Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A) validity and reliability were assessed using two different populations. The initial sample, comprising 97 individuals with anxiety disorders, enabled a targeted evaluation of the scale's capacity to distinguish between different anxiety levels. The results highlighted the significance of treating individual variability in mental health disorders by revealing significant variations in participants' anxiety levels. The results of this study have greatly increased awareness of adult anxiety and depression symptoms, especially in cities like Delhi NCR. This study adds to the expanding body of information on mental health by demonstrating the relationship between anxiety and self-esteem. The findings can guide therapies and policies targeted at enhancing individuals' psychological health. These findings underscore the complex psychological interplay between anxiety and self-esteem among adults living in urban settings such as Delhi NCR. The study further emphasizes the influence of environmental pressures, lifestyle factors, and social expectations on emotional well-being. By identifying the interdependent nature of these variables, the research promotes a deeper understanding of how self-perception impacts anxiety management and overall quality of life, highlighting the importance of early interventions and supportive mental health strategies.*

**Keywords:** Adult mental health, anxiety, self-esteem, and delhi NCR, psychological well-being

## INTRODUCTION

Every period of life, from infancy to old age, is important. One of the most important stages of a person's life is adulthood, which is defined by complete physical and intellectual development. Particularly important is the early adult years, when people work to become financially and emotionally independent of their parents and build close ties with others outside of their family of origin. Transitional stressors include moving away from home, pursuing an education, and selecting a career. Apart from time and budgetary limitations, self-doubt is a major barrier for adult learners. Many folks wonder if they are set to pursue the educational path they want to take. Adults frequently experience stress to have everything sorted out, so going back to school can occasionally feel more like a backward than a step forward. [1]

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Anxiety is a natural stress reaction that might be helpful in some situations. It functions as an alert

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system, assisting us in recognizing threats and being watchful. However, anxiety disorders are distinct from typical emotions of worry or anxiety. They entail extreme fear or worry, which has a major detrimental effect on daily living. Anxiety is a complicated set of emotions that includes intense negative feelings, fear of prospective threats or danger, and a sense of inability to foresee or manage such risks. [2]

The concept of self-esteem emerged in the late 1800s. The term was first used by doctors, with psychologist William James being the first known psychologist to discuss it. James described self-esteem as a measure of a person's potential for success, suggesting that those who achieve more are likely to experience greater life satisfaction. While psychologists like James discussed self-esteem in the 1890s, it wasn't until the 1940s that the concept began to be extensively studied. During this period, researchers started investigating how self-esteem influenced various aspects of life such as happiness and success. The findings from these studies motivated psychologists to explore ways to help their patients develop healthier self-esteem. [3]

Self-esteem encompasses how individuals perceive themselves, including their self-liking, happiness, and satisfaction with their abilities. It reflects an overall assessment of one's competence and worthiness, which can fluctuate over time due to external circumstances. Generally, self-esteem tends to increase slightly with age, mirroring changes in one's overall self-perception. [4] One of the most significant aspects of personality is self-esteem. It is widely regarded as a personality characteristic that captures an individual's general sense of worth and value. A person's identity and ability to adjust to society are greatly influenced by their sense of self-worth. It shows how much people value themselves and if they have good or negative feelings about themselves. In essence, self-esteem entails self-evaluation, which can result in either a positive or negative judgment. [5]

### **CORRELATION BETWEEN ANXIETY AND SELF-ESTEEM**

The relationship between low self-esteem and anxiety as is now commonly known is the emotion we feel when we are threatened, and low self-esteem can be seen as a threat to the individual and their ability to thrive and survive. Low self-esteem is not like an external threat. Rather it is an internal threat where the individual because of their negative self-image and associated negative behaviors becomes a threat to themselves and their well-being. From the relatively minor like always backing down in an argument and feeling second best to the much more serious act of self-harm because the person feels they deserve to be punished low self-esteem is a very real form of threat. [6]

Our emotional brain whose duty it is to alert us to threats, does not fundamentally distinguish between types of threats. For instance, a threat remains a threat regardless of its source or origin. However, if low self-esteem is not considered a possible cause of someone's anxiety, then any attempts at dealing with it might potentially be unsuccessful. Concentrating on physical symptoms of anxiety and or assumed or real external threats without considering low self-esteem might be detrimental to someone's chances of recovery. [7] A person with low self-esteem is essentially put in a constant state of worry and fight, flight, and freeze. Examining the connections between our history, present, and future is one of the roles of our emotional brains. People with low self-esteem often have difficult or problematic pasts, pasts that are constantly woven into their present with all the implications this has for their futures. In this instance, anxiety is the emotional brain's attempt to communicate with its owner to do something about this negative, repetitive, and threatening process. The longer it continues, the greater the levels of anxiety. Neuroscience has identified parts of our brains whose duty it is to go into our future and based on an assessment of our present approach to life determine the likely future ahead of us. If the conclusion is for a negative future, then this is again a threat to us. The result is anxiety. [8]

Anyone who experiences anxiety will testify it is an unpleasant emotional state to be in. Understandably people seek ways out of this state but when these attempts are problematic the anxiety

becomes worse because the threat level has increased. The original threat the low self-esteem is now compounded by behaviors that often provide only a short-term escape from the anxiety. These typically include avoidant, addictive, and obsessive-compulsive behaviors all of which threaten the present and future well-being of the individual. A vicious circle of anxiety can be set in motion when people make understandable if unhelpful attempts to deal with it. [9]

A research on the academic achievement of 88 female secondary school pupils in Kabba, Kogi State, Nigeria. The study looked into how parenting practices affected female students' academic achievement using a descriptive survey approach. A random sample methodology and IPSAPFSSS structured questionnaire was utilized in the study to gather participant data. With an index of 0.76, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to prove the validity and reliability of the instrument. The limitation of the study is that they selected only a girl. The implications was that understanding parenting styles can improve the academic performance of female student. [10]

Social anxiety concerning self-esteem among university students in Jordan in this research study he showed how social anxiety affects students and what impacts self-esteem among students with social anxiety This result is attributed to the level of social anxiety among students negatively affects their activities, self-expression in various situations, and assessment of these situations. Their self-awareness, particularly in relation to their peers, reflects this in turn. It also causes low self-esteem and sadness. We can conclude that self-esteem and social anxiety are related. People with high anxiety have behavioral preparations for incompatibility because they have a bad self-perception. People who are less anxious are more confident in themselves and have better behavioral preparations for compatibility. exhibit several behavioral characteristics that have a detrimental impact on their characteristics and self-esteem, such as anxiety, trepidation, worry, and fear of the future. [11]

The connection between gender, one of the subject variables, and test anxiety among English as a Second Language learners. 114 students were given the 22-item test-anxiety measure as part of the study, and the collected data was statistically examined. He concluded that, except from learners' lack of confidence and low desire, there is no discernible relationship between test anxiety and participants' gender. They looked into the relationship between test anxiety and parenting style. [12] The relationship between teaching aptitude and self-esteem of DTED students. 97 DTED students, selected randomly from different teacher training institutes constituted the sample for the study. The findings revealed the existence of a significant, positive correlation between self-esteem and teaching aptitude, and the variables are independent of the gender of the students. [13]

The relationship between anxiety and self-esteem; the findings seem consistent with previous research that found a negative relationship between anxiety level and self-esteem, while stable self-perception and self-assessment were linked to lower anxiety and higher self-esteem. The same conclusion is supported by a number of other studies, which show that people who have a tendency to have a more unstable self-image—which Rosenberg equates with feelings of insecurity about the self—are more dissatisfied with themselves and that a "split" self-image is likely linked to a variety of psychological issues. Instead of being "objective qualities," anxiety and self-esteem relate to people's interior experiences, thus it's crucial to create supportive interventions based on their subjective evaluations of themselves. [14]

The existence of a negative, but significant interrelationship between test anxiety and parents' democratic attitude and parental acceptance of the child. They concluded that promoting greater acceptance of parents among children and inculcating a democratic style of parenting may prevent test anxiety.

The role of social connectedness as a mediator in the relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem. In this article, they all demonstrated how their research was intended to explore the function

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of social connectedness as a mediator or in the relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem. The authors of this study outlined how social anxiety can lower self-esteem, and they both linked social connectedness to this function. [15]

The importance of social support, self-esteem, and ethnic identity in alleviating internalizing symptoms in African American youngsters (N = 227). The study showed that the relationship between depression and social support was somewhat mediated by ethnic identification and self-esteem. While the social support effect for females is explained by self-esteem, ethnic identity had more effect on males. The mediation model for depression was found reinforced in women with self-esteem more significantly than ethnicity. [16]

The effectiveness of two models (Crocker, and Major's SPH [self-protective hypothesis] and Harter's Additive Model) in predicting the relation of self-esteem to skin color and residential locale among Jamaican children. The study was carried out in African-Caribbean elementary school children (n = 200) from eastern Jamaica. The study supported both of these models. Specifically, the SPH projected higher self-esteem among children from rural areas and the Additive Model predicted higher self-esteem among elder children for whom self-identification and idea self-skin color were both white. [17]

Self-esteem which is of utmost importance for mental health in their research finding the challenge and adjusting these negative thoughts into more positive ones. It's also critical to learn how to cherish and take care of your body and mind by leading a healthy lifestyle. Regaining emotional and physical confidence can begin with meditation, exercise, and a healthy diet. It's crucial to give our loved ones our whole attention. One of the best ways to begin building self-esteem is to feel liked and supported and to be able to return the favor. Consider volunteering or joining a support group if you don't have any close friends or family. One of the best ways to help yourself is to help others. According to the author, this is a potentially harmful style of living when combined with low self-esteem, mental health problems, and a poor quality of life.[18]

The study looked into how first-year college students' coping mechanisms differed by gender and how these tactics affected their academic performance and sense of self. The results showed a significant gender difference in academic achievement and coping strategy participation. In particular, male students showed stronger self-esteem, were more likely to exhibit emotional inhibition, or "bottling up of emotions," and shown a greater capacity to detach from the emotions of a scenario. the self-esteem, gender, and scholastic performance of first-degree learners. The participants (N = 153, 105 = male, and 48 = female), selected based on cumulative grade point average (CGPA), took the Persian adaptation of the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES). The multinomial logistic regression analysis and t-test were carried out to find valid answers to the objectives. It was reported that when gender is controlled, there exists a strong significant correlation between self-esteem and classroom accomplishments. [19]

A study on 125 students on how anxiety and self-esteem impact university students and their findings show the very marked presence of anxiety in the Kosovo student sample (a cumulative 45.2% of students falling in the category of mild-moderate anxiety to severe anxiety) but only 14.3 % of mild-moderate anxiety. show the direct relation between anxiety and self-esteem whenever high levels of anxiety lower self-esteem levels in students. [20]

A comparative study on test anxiety of adolescents of the higher and lower socio-economic strata. The investigation concluded that comparatively the boys are more anxious in the classroom interactions followed by the examinations, and moral standards of behavior whereas the girls are more anxious about higher performance in the examination followed by moral standards and classroom interaction. [21]

An intervention package designed to help elementary school students reduce test anxiety. The package was administered by following standard tests to a selected sample of 16 children who

couldn't secure a passing minimum or who had reported extreme feelings of stress and anxiety. All sixteen students reported feeling less stressed and anxious about upcoming tests. [22]

Relationship between anxiety, depression, social appearance anxiety, and self-esteem in women of all ages. This study demonstrates that the intensity of depression exacerbates anxiety related to social appearance and self-esteem. The purpose of this study was to ascertain how anxiety and depression symptoms affected self-esteem and social appearance anxiety. Methods: 176 volunteers, aged 12 to 24, were chosen at random to participate in the study. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), a sociodemographic data form, was given to the participants. Economic hardships exacerbate anxiety over one's appearance. Additionally, there is a connection between self-esteem and social appearance anxiety. [23]

A comparative study to investigate young people's self-esteem. According to this study, men generally had higher levels of self-esteem than women. According to the survey, men generally had higher levels of self-esteem than women. It was also determined that women's self-esteem was typical. This study's results were consistent with those of 2009, which found that men had higher self-esteem scores than women. The aforementioned study also found no significant relationship between gender and self-esteem, indicating that gender had no bearing on or impact over self-esteem. The results of this study were consistent with the gender effect study, which found no significant relationship between gender and self-esteem. [24]

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The rationale of the study "Unveiling the Relationship Between Anxiety and Self-Esteem in Adult Populations is to investigate the complex relationships between anxiety and self-esteem among adults in the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR). Positive attitudes toward oneself, such as self-compassion and self-esteem, are important for general health and psychological functioning. The study aims to know - 1) How do socially anxious people balance their self-compassion and self-esteem? 2) Can self-compassion reduce the harmful effects of poor self-esteem on anxiety regarding social situations?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sampling Method**

A purposive sampling method was employed for the present study.

### **Objectives:**

1. To compare the level of anxiety among adults.
2. To assess the impact of the level of anxiety on the self-esteem of adults.
3. To assess the differences in self-esteem in males and females.

### **Hypotheses:**

1. There would be a significant difference in the level of anxiety among adults.
2. There would be a significant impact on the level of anxiety on self-esteem of adults.
3. There would be a significant difference in the level of self-esteem among males and females.

### **Inclusion Criteria:**

- Adult population age (20 to 30)
- Education above 10th pass

### **Exclusion Criteria:**

- Subjects who are not interested in participating in a study

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**SAMPLE**

A sample is a subset chosen from the total population under study. A sample is chosen for the technique since it is challenging to study the complete population. The field of research determines the sample. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, will be employed in this investigation. For this study, adults who reside in the same area will be selected. The researcher will get in touch with them at the local library, parks, and neighborhood. 70 will be the sample size that will be used in this research. [25-30]

**Tools Used for Data Collection*****Hamilton anxiety rating scale (HAM-A)***

The Hamilton Scale of Anxiety Rating One of the earliest rating scales created to gauge the intensity of anxiety symptoms was the HAM-A, which is still frequently used in clinical and research contexts today. The 14 items on the scale, which are each characterized by a set of symptoms, assess somatic anxiety (physical complaints associated with anxiety) as well as psychic anxiety (mental agitation and psychological discomfort). [26] Despite its continued widespread usage as a clinical trial outcome measure, the HAM-A has drawn criticism for its occasionally inadequate capacity to distinguish between somatic anxiety and somatic side effects, as well as between anxiolytic and antidepressant effects. Nevertheless, the scale's reported interrater reliability scores seem to be within acceptable bounds. Validity Y, in contrast to the anxiety scale and clinical evaluation. has a total score range of 0-56, where <17 denotes light severity, 18-24 mild to moderate severity, and 25-30 moderate to severe. The scale ranges from 0 (not present) to 4 (severe). [31-34]

**Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RES)**

Rosenberg created this scale in 1965. Item response theory was used to examine this scale, a popular self-report tool for assessing personal self-esteem. a 10-item scale that gauges one's overall sense of self-worth by assessing both positive and negative self-perceptions. It is thought that the scale is one-dimensional. A 4-point scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, is used to answer all of the questions. [35-38] Validity and reliability - The Rosenberg self-esteem scale had strong reliability ratings, with a minimum coefficient of reproducibility of at least 0.90 and internal consistency of 0.77. Alpha coefficients for a diverse range of independent investigations, each utilizing samples like parents, men over 60, high school students, and civil servants, ranged from 0.72 to 0.87 (all pretty high). Test-retest reliability was calculated to be 0.85 for the 2-week interval and 0.63 for the 7-month period. The Cooper Smith self-esteem inventory and the RES are closely related. This test is scored on a scale that goes from 0 to 30. Scores below 15 indicate low self-esteem, whereas scores between 15 and 25 fall within the typical range.

Two distinct samples (n = 97) with anxiety disorders and one sample (n = 101) with depressive disorders were used to examine the validity and reliability of the Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A). The HAM-A and its subscales demonstrated adequate concurrent validity and reliability.

**STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

After collecting data, the scores obtained from standardized test anxiety and self-esteem scales will be statistically treated. To test various hypotheses, paired t-tests, the mean, and the standard deviation will be used. A meaningful interpretation will be made of the numerical results that were acquired. All presumptions will be examined prior to the use of parametric testing. SPSS version 2.0 will be used to analyze all of the data.

**RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

After gathering data, the researcher examined the data because it was hard to interpret the raw data, which is just a collection of facts or observations from some tests and has no significance. The data was statistically analyzed using the proper design and technique, keeping in mind the study's goals and the hypotheses that went along with it. Therefore, in order to make appropriate deductions, the

data must be processed and examined once it has been gathered.

**Table 1.** Demographic data.

S.N.	Characteristics	Anxiety	Self esteem
1	No. of Participants	70	70
2	Gender Distribution	Male – 35 Female – 35	Male – 35 Female – 35
3	Age Group	20-30 years	20-30 years

**Table 2.** Level of anxiety among the adulthood population.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error
Level of anxiety	70	30.57	4.38	3.65

In Table 1, to compare the level of anxiety and self-esteem among adulthood in Delhi NCR 70 participants have been selected. Out of 70, 35 were male and 35 were female. Age criteria for both males and females were 20 to 30 years.

## TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

### *Hypothesis 1:*

There would be a significant difference between the level of anxiety among the adult population

### **Interpretation:**

The above table 2 shows the level of anxiety among the adult population. The mean value of anxiety was 30.57 and the S.D. value of anxiety among adults is 4.37. Considering this result, it can be interpreted that anxiety levels are found in most of the sample of adulthood. Thus, the hypothesis There exists a level of anxiety among the adult population has been accepted.

### **Interpretation:**

The above Table 3 shows the impact of anxiety on self-esteem in adulthood. The mean value of anxiety was 22.75 and the mean value of the level of self-esteem was 30.46. The S.D. values of anxiety and self-esteem were found to be 3.75 and 3.55 respectively. It was observed that the t-value was significant. In light of this result, it can be interpreted that there exists a significant impact of anxiety on self-esteem in adulthood. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted.

### **Interpretation**

Male and female anxiety levels differ significantly, as the accompanying table 4 illustrates. Males had an average anxiety level of 22.10, while females had an average anxiety level of 23.40. Males and females were found to have anxiety S.D. values of 3.30 and 3.90, respectively. The t-value, which was found to be 1.50, was significant. Given this finding, it may be concluded that men and women will have significantly different levels of anxiety. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted.

## Findings

Table 1 shows the level of anxiety among the adult population. The mean value of anxiety was 30.57 and the S.D. value of anxiety among adults is 4.38. Considering this result, it can be interpreted that anxiety levels are found in most of the sample of adulthood.

**Table 3.** Hypothesis: There would be a significant impact of anxiety on self-esteem in adults.

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	df	S.E.M	t-value	Level of significance
Anxiety	70	22.75	3.75	68	0.87	8.83	Significant
Self esteem	70	30.46	3.55				

*Significance at 0.01 & 0.05 levels*

**Table 4.** Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant difference in the level of anxiety among males and females.

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	DF	Standard error	T value	Level of significance
Male	35	22.10	3.30	68	0.86	1.50	Significant
Female	35	23.40	3.90				

*Significance at 0.01 & 0.05 levels*

The second hypothesis studied the impact of anxiety on self-esteem in adulthood. The mean value of anxiety was 22.75 and the mean value of the level of self-esteem was 30.46. The S.D. values of anxiety and self-esteem were found to be 3.75 and 3.55 respectively. It was observed that the t-value was 12.49, which was significant. In light of this result, it can be interpreted that there exists an impact of anxiety on self-esteem in adulthood.

The above table shows the significant difference in the level of anxiety among males and females. The mean value of anxiety among males was 22.10 and the mean value of the level of anxiety among females was 23.40. The S.D. values of anxiety among males and females were found to be 3.30 and 3.90 respectively. It was observed that the t-value was 1.50, which was significant. Given this finding, it may be concluded that men and women will have significantly different levels of anxiety. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted.

## CONCLUSION

Anxiety and self-esteem nowadays are hot topics that are studied greatly by researchers all over the world. Much research has been done about this topic in various age groups, cities, and countries and also based on different ethnicities. From the previous research, anxiety is often associated with various factors such as academic achievements, anxiety among elder people without a spouse, emotional maturity, mental health, and adjustment. Besides anxiety, self-esteem is another important factor that can be discussed nowadays. According to earlier studies, academic stress, anxiety, and depression are all linked to low self-esteem and have a substantial negative impact on quality of life. Thus, this study investigates the substantial correlation between anxiety and self-esteem. According to this study, adults' anxiety levels vary significantly from one another. The degree of anxiety that men and women experience differs significantly.

Seventy persons from Delhi NCR who were chosen by purposive sampling participated in this study. Rosenberg's self-esteem and the HAM-A were the instruments utilized to collect the data. The test was used to analyze the data. The study's findings indicate that people' anxiety levels vary significantly from one another. The degree of anxiety that men and women experience differs significantly. The present research contributes to comparing the level of anxiety and self-esteem among adults. Anxiety is a more defused blend of emotions that includes a high level of negative effects and worry about possible threats or danger. It is a normal stress reaction and can be beneficial in some situations but if someone feels anxiety regularly that can affect their self-esteem. Moreover, this study has helped to increase awareness of anxiety and self-esteem among adults and the general public about the side effects of low self-esteem and anxiety and how it can affect various age groups.

## LIMITATION AND SUGGESTION

Research is a continuous and expanding process. One research raises many issues and consequently generates future issues for the upcoming research. As the nature of the research suggests one study is not itself fulfilled to cover all aspects of the exploration. So this study also has some limitations in itself. Some of the limitations are discussed below.

- The sample taken for this study was small to generalize the findings although it provides a sense of insight for future research.

- The sample taken for this study was limited to only Delhi city. Therefore future research should be oriented toward including other states' participants to explore.
- It is also suggested that further research follow-up may be taken on hand with different samples, as well as by using some different techniques for data analysis, like multivariate techniques, regression analysis partial correlation.
- The sample taken for this study was limited to the participants of only the adulthood stage so future research should be oriented towards including early adult and middle adult participants and college students to explore.
- The qualitative approach like an interview as the respondent personally narrates should be taken into account for future research to give more clear and sufficient information.
- Therefore, it is advised that some additional cities be considered for further study. It is also advised to conduct an increasing amount of relevant and comparable study on this subject. because anxiety levels in maturity are influenced by a wide range of additional factors.

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