



Library Anxiety Among The Students Of Jamia Millia Islamia: A Survey

Md. Firdaus^{1*}, and Dr. Dharamvir Singh²

^{1*}Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Mangalayatan University, UP, India,

Email- golapfirdaus.amu@gmail.com

²Associate Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Mangalayatan University, UP, India,

Email- hodlibrarysrdc@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Library anxiety is discomfort and emotional distress experienced in library environments, influencing cognition, emotions and behavior. This study investigates library anxiety among students at University using a survey approach. A total of 138 students participated, selected through a stratified random sampling method involving undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students from Jamia Millia Islamia (A central University in India). The research employed a modified and validated version of the Bostick's Library Anxiety Scale, originally developed by Anwar, Al-Kandari and Al-Qallaff in 2004, with permission obtained. The scale consists of 32 items categorized into four groups. The questionnaire included two parts: the first focused on demographic variables, and the second on the Library Anxiety Scale. Respondents rated their responses on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Levels of library anxiety classified as No, Low, Mild, Moderate, and Severe' were determined based on criteria established by Anwar et al. (2004). Statistical analyses, such as independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA, were performed using MS-Excel and Jamovi to evaluate significance.

Keywords: Library Anxiety, Library Anxiety Scale, Jamia Millia Islamia, Library Phobia

1. INTRODUCTION

Library anxiety refers to the negative emotions such as tension, fear, uncertainty, and helplessness that individuals may experience in a library setting. This psychological discomfort can hinder the effective use of library resources, particularly for those who are unfamiliar with libraries. University students, who need to gather information for learning and research, often face difficulties in meeting this requirement due to perceived gaps in their ability to use library resources and services efficiently. This lack of confidence leads to anxiety when interacting with the library. In educational contexts, anxiety is recognized as a psychological barrier that affects students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral well-being. Library anxiety states that people encounter while they are in a library setting and that influences their cognition, emotions, physiology, and behavior [1]. This phenomenon includes various negative psychological barriers such as tension, uncertainty, helplessness, fear felt within the library setting.

Gogoi, Singson & Thiyagarajan [2] conducted a survey method at the three universities chosen for the study. Studies have shown that factors such as inadequate knowledge of the library, feelings of inadequacy, and constraints contribute to varying levels of library anxiety among students. Singson, Firdaus & Thiyagarajan [3] their frustration of limited library resources, face-to-face enquiry service, confusing trying to find their way around the library. Library anxiety is a distressing feeling or emotional state experienced in a library environment, impacting thoughts, body responses, emotions, and actions, as noted by Onwueghuzie, Jiao, and Bostick [4]. It as involving unpleasant emotions or feelings in a library setting that can affect one's behavior, emotions, and thinking [5]. This condition manifests through negative emotions such as tension, fear, helplessness, self-defeating thoughts, uncertainty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "Library Anxiety" was first introduced by Mellon in 1986. However, similar investigations exploring the psychological challenges faced by students when using library resources had already been conducted. Early studies in this field include those by Swope & Katzer [6] which focused on the psychological barriers to library resource utilization. Mellon's [7] research highlighted the need for a suitable measurement scale to quantify Library Anxiety levels. Responding to this need, Bostick [8] developed and validated the Library Anxiety Scale (LAS), the first instrument specifically designed to assess Library Anxiety among college students. Bostick created the LAS as part of her doctoral research, aiming to construct a valid tool for measuring Library Anxiety (p.63). Building on this, Anwar in 2004 adapted Bostick's Library Anxiety Scale to fit the cultural context of Kuwait [9]. The construct of library anxiety within distance learners and its impact on their usage of academic library resources and services has been explored in these studies [10]. The definition, theories, models, research, and development of library anxiety scales, as well as prevention and reduction strategies, have also been discussed in the literature [11].

Reference librarians are actively engaged in preventing library anxiety by implementing various strategies and services. They focus on teaching patrons how to access library materials while also addressing the issue of library anxiety to ensure a positive user experience. By continuously developing services and following trends in reference departments, librarians aim to reduce overwhelming feelings among users explained by Brown [12]. A significant study by Mech and Brooks [13] involved 153 respondents and compared Library Anxiety to general trait anxiety. Using the Library Anxiety Scale (LAS), they found that Library Anxiety is distinct from trait anxiety. Following this, various scholars explored the causes of Library Anxiety. Notably, Jiao and Onwuegunzue [14] conducted a series of studies examining factors such as the relationship between Library Anxiety and other psychological characteristics, social interdependence and its correlation with study habits.

Library anxiety among off-campus adult learners is a significant concern, influenced by various factors such as age, gender, physical distance from an academic library and access to materials Veal [15]. Both personal and institutional factors influence anxiety in libraries. On a personal level, various elements can deter academic use of the library. These include limited knowledge of the subject matter, lack of experience with library resources, unfamiliarity with the library's information retrieval systems, low research confidence, deficiencies in information literacy, and a lack of understanding of the information search process. These issues have been investigated by numerous researchers [16-18].

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

- RQ1. What is the level of library anxiety among the Jamia Millia Islamia students?
 RQ2. What is the level of library anxiety among the gender in university students?
 RQ3. Does generation of education influence Library anxiety among these students?
 RQ4. Does the course affect Library anxiety among these students?

4. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a survey method, involving the participation of 138 students selected through a stratified random sample technique. The stratified random sample included both undergraduate and postgraduate students from Jamia Millia Islamia (A central University in India). The study employed a modified and validated version of the Bostick Library Anxiety Scale, initially developed by Anwar, Al-Kandari, and Al-Qallaf in 2004, for which permission was obtained. The scale consisted of 32 item statements grouped into four categories. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first focused on demographic variables, while the second employed the Library Anxiety Scale as defined by Anwar, Al-Kandari, and Al-Qallaf in 2004. Respondents rated their agreement with the statements on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The levels of library anxiety No, Low, Mild, Moderate and Severe were determined based on the mean values proposed by Anwar, Al-Kandari, and Al-Qallaf (2004). The significance testing involved descriptive statistics, with the data analyzed using MS-Excel and Jamovi software.

A. Analysis and Findings

Table 1: Demographic analysis

Variable	N	Variable	Counts	% of Total
Gender	138	Male	88	64%
		Female	50	36%
Age	138	Below 23	27	20%
		23-26	50	36%

		27-30	13	9%
		Above 30	48	35%
Course	138	UG	84	61%
		PG	54	39%
Experience of School Library	138	No	38	28%
		Yes	100	72%
Experience of College Library	138	No	6	4%
		Yes	132	96%
Generation	138	No	74	54%
		Unsure	23	17%
		Yes	41	29%
Community	138	General	94	68%
		OBC	36	26%
		SC	6	4%
		ST	2	1%
Medium	138	Both	26	18%
		English	74	54%
		Regional Language	38	28%

The table 1 represents a snapshot of a sample of 138 individuals across various demographic and experiential dimensions. The gender distribution is skewed towards males, who constitute 64% (88 students), while females make up 36% (50 students). Age-wise, the largest group is between 23-26 years (36%, 50 students), followed by those above 30 years (35%, 48 students). Students below 23 years account for 20% (27 students), and those aged 27-30 years represent 9% (13 students). In terms of their academic level, 61% (84 students) are undergraduates, and 39% (54 students) are postgraduates. Regarding library experience, a significant majority have utilized school libraries (72%, 100 students) and college libraries (96%, 132 students). The generational experience shows that 54% (74 students) do not have it, 29% (41 students) do, and 17% (23 students) are unsure. Community-wise, the majority of students belong to the General category (68%, 94 students), with 26% (36 students) from OBC, 4% (6 students) from SC, and 1% (2 students) from ST. Lastly, the medium of instruction predominantly is English (54%, 74 students), followed by those using a regional language (28%, 39 students), and a smaller portion using both English and a regional language (19%, 26 students).

B. Cronbach's alpha: A test for reliability of Library anxiety:

Table 2: Reliability Analysis		
Factor	Cronbach's α of current study	Anwar's Cronbach's α (2004)
Staff Approachability	0.946	0.911
Feelings of Inadequacy	0.872	0.799
Library Confidence	0.901	0.788
Library Constraints	0.840	0.711

Across the factors, Staff Approachability exhibited a high level of reliability, with a Cronbach's α of 0.946 and Anwar's Cronbach's α of 0.911. Feelings of Inadequacy also demonstrated a strong internal consistency, registering Cronbach's α at 0.872. Library Confidence exhibited reliable results with a Cronbach's α of 0.901. However, Library Constraints, while still demonstrating acceptable reliability, showed a slightly higher level with a Cronbach's α of 0.840 as compared to Anwar's Cronbach's α of 0.711.

C. Levels of library anxiety

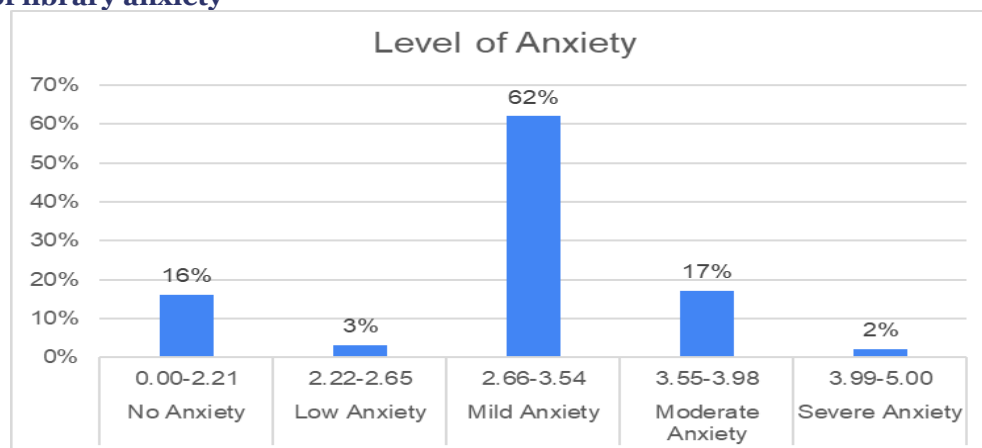


Fig 1: Levels of library anxiety

The figure categorizes individuals based on their reported levels of anxiety as measured by a range of mean scores (Anwar et, 2004), with corresponding percentages. The majority of respondents, comprising 62%, fall into the category of Mild Anxiety. Following this, 17% report Moderate Anxiety. Meanwhile, 16% of respondents exhibit No Anxiety. Additionally, 3% report Low Anxiety, and 2% experience Severe Anxiety of the present study.

D. Gender wise Library Anxiety Scores

Category	Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Staff Approachability	Female	50	1.83	1.45	0.942	1.00	3.91
	Male	88	1.94	1.63	0.861	1.00	4.91
Feelings of Inadequacy	Female	50	2.38	2.16	0.952	1.00	3.83
	Male	88	2.43	2.15	0.962	1.00	4.67
Library Confidence	Female	50	4.12	4.22	0.783	2.00	5.00
	Male	88	3.88	4.01	0.910	1.00	5.00
Library Constraints	Female	50	2.61	2.53	0.743	1.38	4.00
	Male	88	2.63	2.43	0.862	1.00	5.00
Total	Female	50	2.62	2.69	0.473	1.94	3.75
	Male	88	2.77	2.55	0.515	1.21	4.17

The table presents a detailed comparison of library anxiety scores between male and female students across different categories. In terms of staff approachability, males have a slightly higher mean score (1.94) compared to females (1.83). For feelings of inadequacy, males (2.43 mean) exhibit slightly higher scores than females (2.38 mean). However, females demonstrate higher confidence in using the library (4.12 mean) compared to males (3.88 mean), though both genders show variability in confidence levels. In terms of perceived library constraints, both genders have similar mean scores (2.63 for males and 2.61 for females). Overall, males tend to report slightly higher total library anxiety scores (2.77 mean) than females (2.62 mean), reflecting their perceptions across all measured dimensions.

E. Course wise Library anxiety Scores

Category	Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Staff Approachability	UG	84	1.88	1.64	0.83	1.00	4.27
	PG	54	2.05	2.00	0.86	1.00	3.91
Feelings of Inadequacy	UG	84	2.31	2.17	0.95	1.00	4.67
	PG	54	2.31	2.50	0.96	1.00	4.17

Library Confidence	UG	84	4.04	4.14	0.84	1.00	5.00
	PG	54	4.18	4.43	0.96	1.14	5.00
Library Constraints	UG	84	2.60	2.38	0.86	1.00	5.00
	PG	54	2.73	2.63	0.80	1.38	4.88
Total	UG	84	2.71	2.61	0.51	1.43	4.17
	PG	54	2.82	2.85	0.46	1.97	3.57

Table 4 presents the library anxiety scores categorized by course (UG and PG). Across various dimensions of library anxiety, including staff approachability, feelings of inadequacy, library confidence, and library constraints, the data shows nuanced differences between undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students. For staff approachability, UG students reported a mean score of 1.88 (SD = 0.83), slightly lower than PG students with a mean score of 2.05 (SD = 0.86). Similarly, in feelings of inadequacy, both UG and PG students had similar mean scores of 2.31, but PG students showed a higher variability (SD = 0.96) compared to UG students (SD = 0.95). In terms of library confidence, PG students indicated higher confidence (mean = 4.18, SD = 0.96) than UG students (mean = 4.04, SD = 0.84). Conversely, for library constraints, both groups reported comparable mean scores (UG: 2.60, PG: 2.73), with UG students showing slightly less variability (SD = 0.86) compared to PG students (SD = 0.80). Overall, the total library anxiety score was slightly higher for PG students (mean = 2.82, SD = 0.46) compared to UG students (mean = 2.71, SD = 0.51).

F. Generation Education Wise Library Anxiety Scores

Table 5: Generation Education wise Library anxiety Scores							
Category	Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Staff Approachability	No	74	1.87	1.68	0.89	1.00	4.27
	Unsure	23	2.11	2.01	0.96	1.00	4.91
	Yes	41	1.74	1.55	0.66	1.00	3.91
Feelings of Inadequacy	No	74	2.23	2.45	1.12	1.00	4.67
	Unsure	23	2.43	2.45	0.99	1.00	3.83
	Yes	41	2.10	1.88	0.81	1.00	4.00
Library Confidence	No	74	3.87	4.09	0.91	1.00	5.00
	Unsure	23	3.88	3.77	0.79	2.57	5.00
	Yes	41	4.15	4.22	0.87	1.00	5.00
Library Constraints	No	74	2.49	2.27	0.83	1.13	5.00
	Unsure	23	2.79	2.88	0.76	1.38	4.88
	Yes	41	2.55	2.66	0.79	1.00	4.63
Total	No	74	2.66	2.52	0.54	1.43	4.17
	Unsure	23	2.57	2.64	0.43	2.10	3.46
	Yes	41	2.64	2.45	0.47	1.21	3.53

Table 5 presents the library anxiety scores categorized by the variable "Generation Education." Each category No generational experience, Unsure, and Yes generational experience shows distinct mean scores across various aspects of library anxiety. For Staff Approachability, participants who were Unsure about generational education had the highest mean score (2.11), indicating moderate levels of anxiety, while those with No generational experience had the lowest (1.87). In Feelings of Inadequacy, the Unsure group again showed the highest mean score (2.43), suggesting higher anxiety levels, compared to the lowest score in the Yes group (2.10). For Library Confidence, participants with generational experience (Yes) exhibited the highest confidence (4.15), while the Unsure group showed slightly lower confidence (3.88). In Library Constraints, all groups had similar mean scores, indicating comparable perceptions of constraints in library usage.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study reveals some interesting insight into the level of library anxiety students in Jamia Millia Islamia. The current study demonstrates a high level of internal consistency, as indicated by the high Cronbach's α as compared to Anwar's Cronbach's α . These metrics collectively indicate the reliability and consistency of the measurement scales for each factor. The majority of respondents, comprising 62%, fall into the category of Mild Anxiety in students of Jamia Millia Islamia. The study reveals a notable gender difference, with females expressing lower anxiety (mean = 2.62) compared to males (mean = 2.77). The difference between the mean scores of both genders is large and confirms the trend reported by Jiao et al. [19] that male students were more anxious than female students, [20]. These findings suggest that while there are some differences in specific aspects of library anxiety between UG and PG students, both groups generally experience moderate levels of anxiety, with PG students showing slightly higher confidence but also higher variability in certain anxiety dimensions. Research on library anxiety among undergraduate and postgraduate students reveals interesting findings. Studies show that a significant proportion of undergraduates' experience moderate levels of library anxiety, with the most prevalent aspect being inadequate knowledge of the library Adeeko & Adetimirin [21]. While there are variations, the data highlight nuanced differences in library anxiety perceptions based on generational education background among the surveyed participants. Library anxiety varies across different generations and student groups. First-year university students often experience library anxiety due to their generational education from high school to higher education Scoyoc [22]. Different generations experience library anxiety differently, with multicultural individuals showing slightly higher levels Jihyun [23]. The phenomenon of library anxiety among university students remains a significant concern, as evidenced by this survey. It is clear that many students experience varying levels of anxiety and apprehension when navigating library resources and services. This anxiety can manifest in avoidance behaviors, decreased academic performance, and overall negative impacts on student well-being. Addressing library anxiety requires a multifaceted approach. First, universities should prioritize awareness campaigns and workshops, orientation aimed at educating students about library resources and how to effectively use them. Creating a welcoming and supportive environment within the library through accessible assistance from librarians and staff can also mitigate anxiety levels. Additionally, improving digital literacy skills and providing remote access to library resources can accommodate diverse learning styles and preferences, reducing anxiety associated with physical library visits.

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