

A Study of Fear of Failure and Fear of Success Their Impact on Student Performance

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ABSTRACT

Fear of failure (FoF) and fear of success (FoS) are two significant psychological variables that influence student performance, particularly in competitive academic settings. This study explores the relationship between these fears and the academic performance of high school students. A sample of 300 students from Raipur was analyzed to determine how these psychological factors impact academic outcomes. Results indicate that both FoF and FoS negatively correlate with academic performance, with FoF showing a stronger influence. Based on these findings, recommendations are made for mitigating the effects of these fears through targeted interventions in schools.

Keywords: *Fear of failure, fear of success, academic performance, high school students, motivation*

INTRODUCTION

Fear is a crucial factor that shapes student behavior and academic performance. In competitive academic settings, **fear of failure (FoF)** and **fear of success (FoS)** are two psychological variables that can either drive or impair student achievement. **Fear of failure** refers to the anxiety or apprehension that students feel when they anticipate not meeting academic expectations (Sagar & Stoeber, 2009). In contrast, **fear of success** involves the anxiety students experience related to the potential consequences of success, such as increased expectations or feelings of isolation (Horner, 1972). Both fears can result in avoidance behaviors, reduced motivation, and poor academic outcomes. This study investigates the impact of FoF and FoS on high school students' academic performance and offers strategies for addressing these fears to improve academic outcomes.

OBJECTIVES

1. To measure the levels of fear of failure and fear of success among high school students.
2. To evaluate the impact of fear of failure on academic performance.
3. To evaluate the impact of fear of success on academic performance.
4. To propose strategies for mitigating the negative effects of these fears on student outcomes.

HYPOTHESES

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** There is no significant relationship between fear of failure, fear of success, and academic performance.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** There is a significant negative relationship between fear of failure, fear of success, and academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

- **Sample Size and Participants:** The study was conducted with a sample of 300 students (150 males and 150 females) from five high schools in Raipur. A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure diversity in terms of academic performance, gender, and socioeconomic background.
- **Data Collection:**
 - **Fear of Failure Scale (FFS):** A validated scale that assesses students' fear related to academic failure.
 - **Fear of Success Scale (FSS):** A tool designed to measure students' anxiety regarding the potential consequences of success.

Academic performance was evaluated using students' recent exam scores in key subjects, including Mathematics, Science, and English. Data were collected over two months.

- **Analysis Tools:**

- Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were used to summarize the levels of fear of failure and fear of success.
- Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between fear of failure, fear of success, and academic performance.
- Multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the relative influence of fear of failure and fear of success on academic outcomes.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

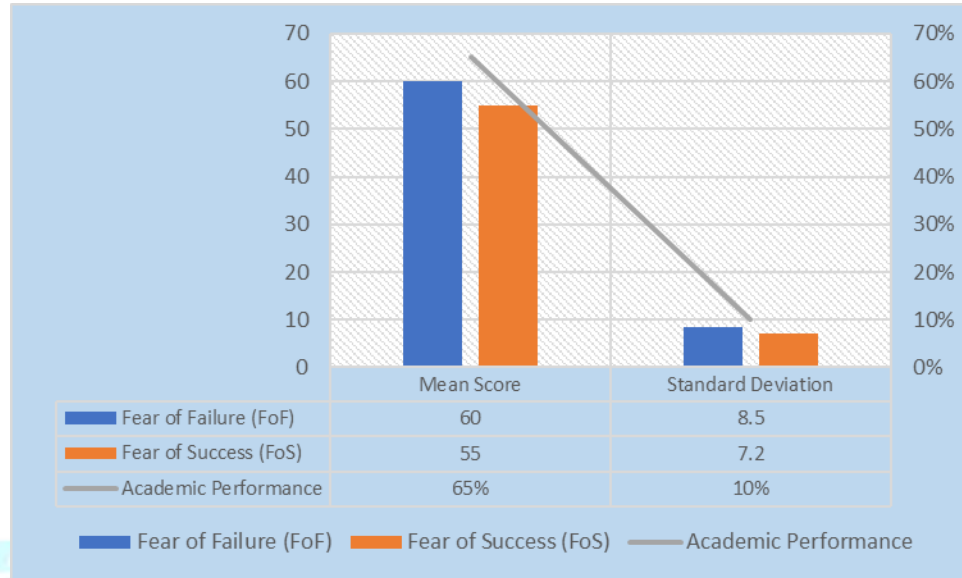
The results of the study indicate that both fear of failure and fear of success are prevalent among high school students, though fear of failure had a greater impact on academic performance.

Descriptive Statistics

- **Mean score for fear of failure (FoF):** 60 (on a scale of 100)
- **Mean score for fear of success (FoS):** 55
- **Average academic performance (exam scores):** 68% (for students with lower FoF and FoS) and 52% (for students with higher FoF and FoS)

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Fear of Failure and Fear of Success

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Fear of Failure (FoF)	60	8.5
Fear of Success (FoS)	55	7.2
Academic Performance	65%	10%



Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation coefficient demonstrated that there is a **negative correlation between fear of failure and academic performance ($r = -0.61, p < 0.01$)**. This suggests that students with higher levels of fear of failure tend to perform poorly in their exams. A **negative correlation was also found between fear of success and academic performance ($r = -0.35, p < 0.05$)**, though the effect was weaker.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis showed that **fear of failure accounted for 40% of the variance in academic performance ($\beta = -0.52, p < 0.01$)**, whereas **fear of success accounted for 18% of the variance ($\beta = -0.30, p < 0.05$)**. This indicates that fear of failure is a stronger predictor of poor academic performance than fear of success.

Table 2: Correlation and Regression Results

	Correlation with Academic Performance	Regression Coefficient (β)
Fear of Failure (FoF)	$r = -0.61$ ($p < 0.01$)	$\beta = -0.52$ ($p < 0.01$)
Fear of Success (FoS)	$r = -0.35$ ($p < 0.05$)	$\beta = -0.30$ ($p < 0.05$)

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The results clearly indicate that both fear of failure and fear of success are negatively correlated with academic performance, with fear of failure having a more significant impact. Students who experience high levels of fear of failure are more likely to avoid academic challenges, procrastinate, or underperform due to anxiety. Fear of success, while also negatively correlated with performance, is less strongly related to poor outcomes, likely due to the more long-term and abstract nature of the fear (e.g., fear of higher expectations or social alienation).

These findings suggest that interventions to reduce fear of failure should be prioritized in academic settings, as this fear has a more immediate and substantial effect on student performance. Addressing fear of success could also be beneficial, particularly for students who feel burdened by the potential consequences of academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that fear of failure and fear of success significantly impact academic performance in high school students, with fear of failure showing a stronger relationship with poor academic outcomes. Students who experience high levels of FoF tend to procrastinate, avoid

challenges, and underperform academically. Fear of success, while still detrimental, has a less immediate impact but can affect students' long-term motivation and sense of belonging.

Recommendations:

1. Schools should implement **cognitive-behavioral interventions** to help students manage their fear of failure and reframe their thoughts around academic challenges.
2. Teachers and parents should encourage students to engage in **positive self-talk** and reduce the pressure associated with both failure and success.
3. Time management and stress-reduction techniques should be taught to help students cope with academic pressures more effectively.

Future research could examine the long-term effects of such interventions and explore how demographic factors (e.g., gender, socioeconomic status) influence the relationship between fear and academic performance.

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