

Aggression and Anxiety in Tiffin vs. Non-Tiffin Feeder School Children: A Comparative Study

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Abstract—School environments play a vital role in shaping children’s psychological development. The present study compared aggression and anxiety levels between Tiffin feeder and Non-Tiffin feeder school children. A total of 60 students aged 13–14 years were selected (30 Tiffin feeder and 30 Non-Tiffin feeder) from a school in Mirzapur, India. Standardized scales for aggression and anxiety were administered, and group differences were examined using *t*-tests. Findings revealed that Tiffin feeder children displayed higher aggression scores compared to their Non-Tiffin counterparts. Anxiety patterns varied: Tiffin feeder children scored higher in some subscales (separation anxiety, social phobia), while Non-Tiffin feeder children scored higher on panic/agoraphobia and general anxiety. These results suggest that differences in school routines and support systems may influence emotional well-being. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions to reduce anxiety and aggression among school children.

Keywords: Aggression, Anxiety, School children, Tiffin feeder, Non-Tiffin feeder, Emotional development

I. INTRODUCTION

Childhood is a formative period in which school experiences, social interactions, and environmental conditions play a crucial role in shaping psychological well-being. Among the many emotional and behavioral characteristics that emerge during this stage, **aggression and anxiety** are particularly important because they influence not only how children relate to others but also how they perform academically and adapt to challenges in later life.

Aggression can be defined as behavior aimed at causing harm, whether physical, verbal, or psychological. Various theoretical perspectives have attempted to explain its origins. For example, *social learning theory* emphasizes that children often acquire aggressive patterns by observing and imitating others, while *cognitive-neoassociation theory* highlights the role of negative emotions in triggering aggressive reactions. Other frameworks, such as *excitation transfer theory*, suggest that lingering arousal from one situation can spill over into another, increasing the likelihood of aggressive responses. These perspectives underline that aggression is not merely an instinctive act but rather a complex interplay of environment, cognition, and social context.

Anxiety, by contrast, reflects a heightened state of tension and worry in response to real or perceived threats. For school-age children, anxiety can manifest in multiple forms, including separation anxiety, social fears, obsessive-compulsive tendencies, and panic-like symptoms. Although occasional anxiety is a normal part of development, persistent or intense anxiety can interfere with learning, friendships, and self-confidence. Research shows that school-related stressors—such as peer comparisons, academic demands, and social exclusion—can significantly elevate anxiety levels in adolescents.

Within this context, daily school routines may influence children's emotional states in subtle but important ways. One such factor is whether students bring food from home (Tiffin feeder) or not (Non-Tiffin feeder). This seemingly simple difference may affect their sense of belonging, peer acceptance, and overall comfort during school hours. For instance, eating habits and group interactions during breaks may either promote inclusion and emotional security or lead to feelings of isolation and stress.

Despite these potential implications, little research has systematically compared aggression and anxiety between Tiffin feeder and Non-Tiffin feeder students. Addressing this gap is essential, as understanding these differences can inform school-based interventions designed to foster healthier emotional development.

Therefore, the present study seeks to examine and compare the levels of aggression and anxiety in Tiffin feeder and Non-Tiffin feeder children. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the growing field of educational psychology and to provide insights that may support school counselors, teachers, and policymakers in developing strategies to enhance student well-being.

I.II. LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON AGGRESSION

Aggression is a multifaceted construct often defined as intentional behavior intended to harm others, either physically or emotionally. Numerous theoretical views offer frameworks for understanding its emergence in children:

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1973): Proposes that a significant proportion of aggressive behavior is learned through observation and imitation of role models, such as parents, teachers, and peers. Reinforcement—both direct and vicarious—plays a key role in the acquisition and expression of aggression. This framework suggests interventions targeting behavior modeling and positive reinforcement may mitigate aggressive tendencies.

Cognitive-Neoassociation Theory (Berkowitz, 1990): Highlights the importance of negative emotional states, such as frustration and anger, which can prime aggressive responses when triggered by external cues. This model underscores the cognitive processes mediating aggression, suggesting a reactive, situational aspect to aggressive acts.

Excitation Transfer Theory (Zillmann, 1979): Posits that arousal generated from one situation may carry over to another, thus increasing the likelihood of aggressive responses, especially when provoked. This emphasizes the role of physiological arousal and mood regulation in managing aggression.

These models collectively argue that aggression is not solely innate but largely shaped by the interplay of environmental cues, social influences, and cognitive appraisals.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON SCHOOL AGGRESSION

Empirical investigations provide extensive evidence on the prevalence and predictors of aggression in school settings. Dodge et al. (2006) found that classroom management practices, peer modeling, and teacher support significantly affect rates of aggression among students. Wentzel & Looney (2007) reported that inclusive, supportive school environments correlate with lower aggression and better adjustment. Additionally, bullying research consistently demonstrates that both victims and perpetrators of school aggression exhibit heightened emotional distress, peer rejection, and academic difficulties.

ANXIETY IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Anxiety is characterized by pervasive feelings of fear, tension, and worry. In children, anxiety can span a spectrum from mild situational reactions (such as test anxiety) to diagnosable disorders affecting everyday functioning:

Subtypes in Children: Separation anxiety, social anxiety, generalized anxiety, panic/agoraphobia, obsessive-compulsive tendencies, and physical symptoms (e.g., stomachaches, headaches).



Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979): Views anxiety as a product of interactions among multiple environmental layers, including family, school, peer groups, and broader community contexts. The theory suggests that children's emotional health is shaped by both proximal influences (parents and teachers) and distal factors (school policy, social norms).

Impact on School Functioning: Research by Essau et al. (1999) and Lawrence et al. (2019) confirms that heightened anxiety impedes learning, socialization, and self-esteem. Children with chronic anxiety are at higher risk for absenteeism, academic underachievement, and social withdrawal.

SCHOOL FEEDING ROUTINES AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recent literature explores indirect effects of school routines—including nutrition, meal patterns, and related social context—on psychological well-being:

Nutrition and Mood: Benton & Roberts (1988) demonstrated that regular access to nutritious foods at school is linked to improved mood, reduced anxiety, and better stress resilience.

Social Integration: Haycraft et al. (2012) indicated that structured meal routines—such as eating with peers in supportive environments—foster a sense of belonging, reinforce positive social identities, and provide emotional security.

Peer Acceptance: School routines pertaining to meals can shape peer interactions; exclusion from communal eating settings can precipitate feelings of isolation and anxiety, while participation supports positive socialization.

Though little research directly contrasts Tiffin feeder and Non-Tiffin feeder children, related findings suggest that these routine differences may impact aggression (through competition, exclusion, or peer comparison) and anxiety (through comfort, inclusion, or insecurity).

CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE AND CROSS-CULTURAL INSIGHTS

International research confirms that variations in school routines and support structures can produce meaningful differences in children's psychological adjustment. For example, studies in diverse cultural contexts demonstrate that students who receive structured support during meal times report lower anxiety and aggression, highlighting the universal importance of routine and social support in schools.

Recent reviews also point to the need for context-specific interventions, recognizing that emotional development is influenced by localized factors such as culture, family values, and resource availability. Suldo et al. (2009) and other scholars affirm that perceived school support directly predicts mental health—not only in Western settings but globally.

RELEVANCE TO PRESENT STUDY

The reviewed literature establishes aggression and anxiety as complex phenomena shaped by intersecting individual, social, and environmental factors. The present study, focusing on Tiffin feeder versus Non-Tiffin feeder populations, is thus justified by broader evidence on the influence of routine, social identity, and environmental context on child development.

I.III. OBJECTIVES

1. To assess aggression levels and compare them between Tiffin feeder and Non-Tiffin feeder children.
2. To evaluate anxiety and its subtypes among the two groups.
3. To explore whether differences in school routine contribute to variations in aggression and anxiety.

I.IV. HYPOTHESES

- There will be no significant difference in aggression between Tiffin feeder and Non-Tiffin feeder children.

- There will be no significant difference in anxiety (and its subtypes) between Tiffin feeder and Non-Tiffin feeder children.

II. METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

The sample comprised 60 children (30 Tiffin feeder, 30 Non-Tiffin feeder) aged 13–14 years from a school in Bidapur, Mirzapur, India. The mean age of the Tiffin feeder group was 12.26 years, while the mean age of the Non-Tiffin feeder group was 12.36 years.

TOOLS

1. Aggression Scale – An 11-item standardized scale measuring overt aggression.
2. Anxiety Scale – A 45-item instrument with six subscales: separation anxiety, social phobia, obsessive-compulsion, panic/agoraphobia, physical anxiety, and generalized anxiety.

PROCEDURE

Students were assessed in classroom settings under supervision. Responses were scored, and mean differences between groups were analyzed using *t*-tests at 0.05 significance level.

III. RESULTS

Aggression: Tiffin feeder scored higher ($M = 8.57$) in comparison to Non-Tiffin feeder ($M = 6.37$) on Aggression. Mean has been showing on Table-1 and Its Graphical presentation was shown in Figure-1. Furthermore, these data submitted to *t* value reach at significant level ($p = 0.07$). *t* Score are show in Table-1

Table-1: Mean and variance as function of Aggression in Tiffin feeder and Non-Tiffin Feeder.

	Mean	Variance	df	t Stat	p-value
Group1	8.57	32.81	58	1.47	0.07
Group2	6.37	34.59			

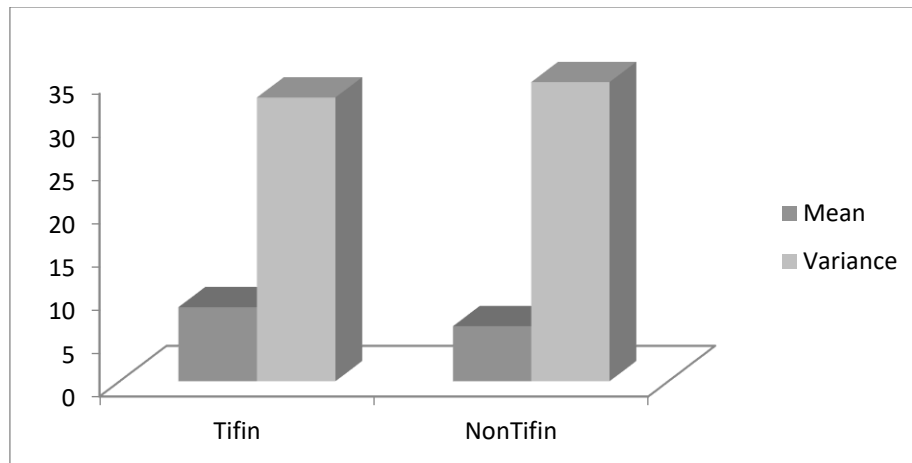


Figure-1: Mean variance as function of Aggression in Tiffin Feeder and Non-Tiffin group.

III.I. ANXIETY

Separation Anxiety: Tiffin Feeder scored higher (M= 6.4) in comparison to Non Tiffin Feeder (M =5.8) on Separation Anxiety. Mean and variance has been shown on Table-2 and It's Graphical presentation were shown in Figure-2. Furthermore, these data submitted to T test. Results reach at significant level ($p = 0.30$). Score are shown in Table-2

Table-2: Mean and variance as function of Separation Anxiety in Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

	Mean	Variance	df	t Stat	p-value
Group1	6.4	9.42	58	0.65	0.30
Group2	5.8	16.17			

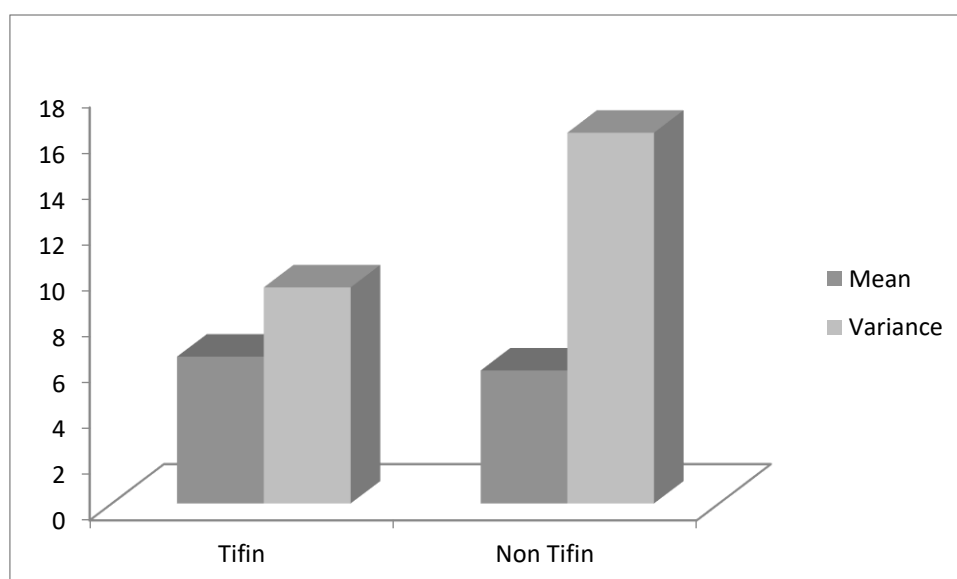


Figure-2: Mean and variance as function of Separation Anxiety in Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

III.II. SOCIAL PHOBIA

Tiffin Feeder scored higher (M= 4.27) in comparison to Non Tiffin Feeder (M=4.8) on Social Phobia. Mean and variance has been shown on Table-3 and It's Graphical presentation shown in Figure-3. Furthermore, these data submitted to t stats. Results reach at significant level (p = 0.29). T Score are shown in Table-3

Table-3: Mean and Variance as function of Social Phobia in Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

	Mean	Variance	df	t Stat	p-value
Group1	4.27	8.20	58	-0.57	0.29
Group2	4.8	18.02			

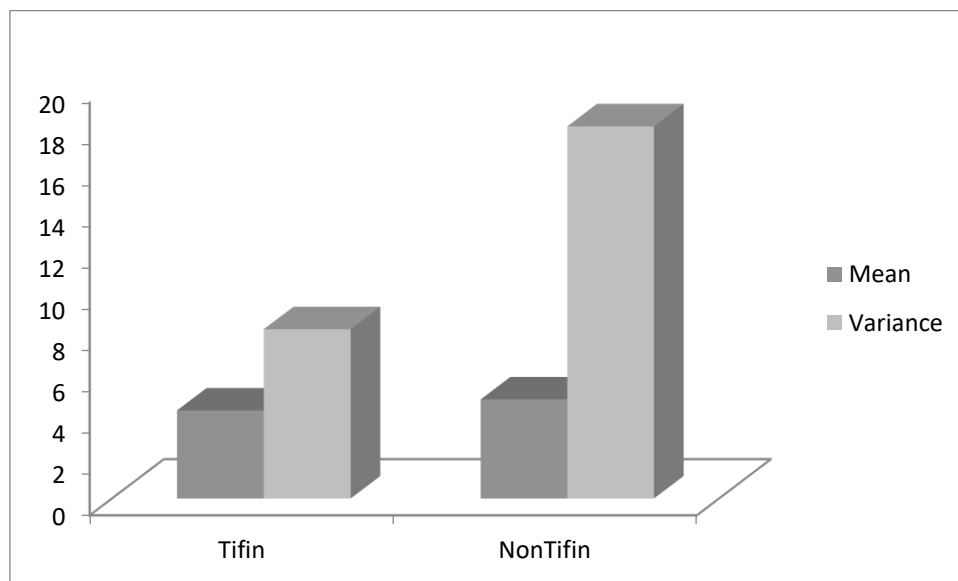


Figure-3: Mean and Variance as function of Social Phobia in Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

III.III. OBSESSION COMPULSION

Tiffin Feeder scored equal (M = 7.03) in comparison to Non Tiffin Feeder (M =7.03) on Obsession/Compulsion. Mean and variance has been shown on Table-4 and It's Graphical presentation were shown in Figure-4. Furthermore, these data were submitted to t stat. Results reach at significant level (p=0.5). Score are shown in Table-4

Table-4: Mean and variance as function of Obsession/Compulsion in Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

	Mean	Variance	Df	t Stat	p-value
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Group1	7.03	8.10			
			58	0	0.5
Group2	7.03	12.31			

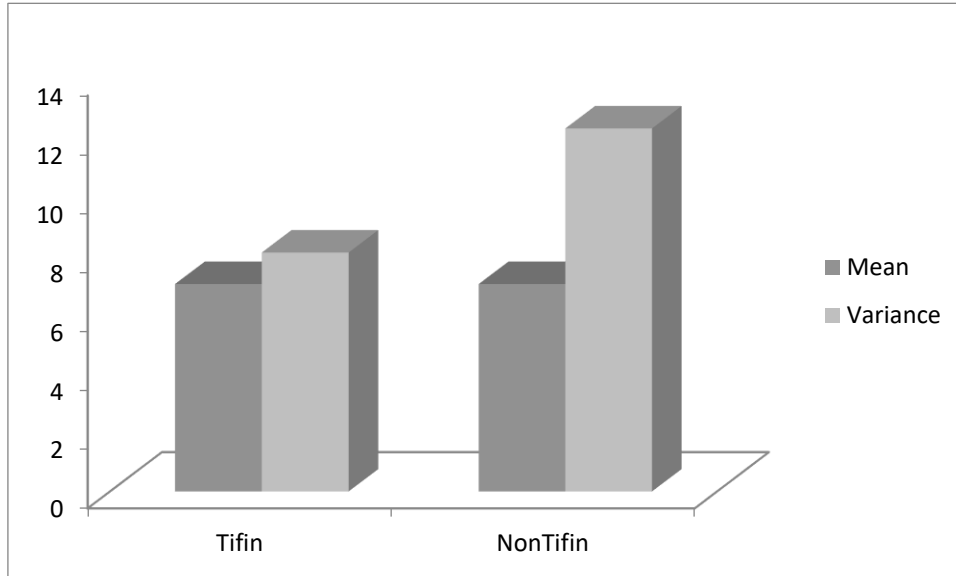


Figure-4: Mean and variance as function of Obsession/Compulsion in Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

III.IV. PANIC/AGORA PHOBIA

Tiffin Feeder scored lower ($M = 5.57$) in comparison to Non Tiffin Feeder ($M = 6.63$) on Panic/Agora phobia. Mean and variance has been shown on Table-5 and It's Graphical presentation were shown in Figure-5. Furthermore, These data were submitted to. t stat Results reach at significant level ($p = 0.14$). t stat Score are shown in Table-5.

Table-5: Mean and Variance as function of Panic/Agora phobia Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

	Mean	Variance	Df	t Stat	p-value
Group1	5.57	6.05			
			58	-1.09	0.14
Group2	6.63	22.65			

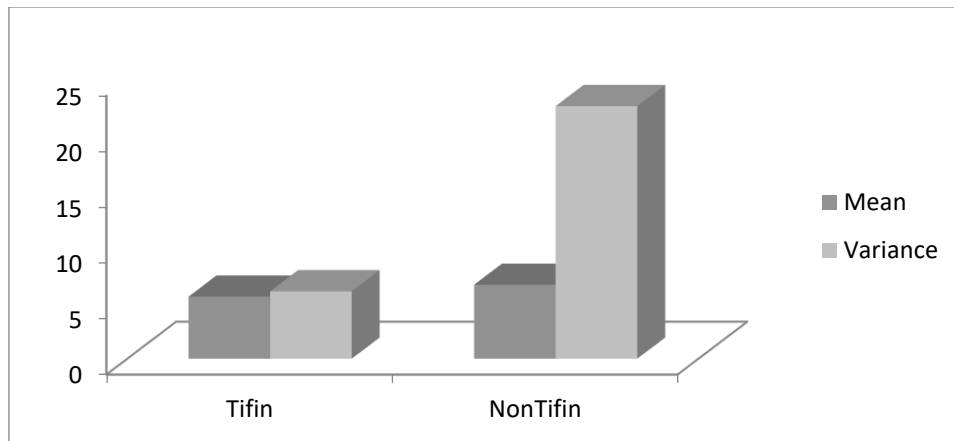


Figure-5: Mean and Variance as function of Panic/Agora phobia Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

III.V. PHYSICAL INJURY

Tiffin Feeder scored lower (M= 4.33) in comparison to Non Tiffin Feeder (M= 4.4) on *Physical Injury*. Mean and Variance has been shown on Table-6 and It's Graphical presentation were shown in Figure-6. Furthermore, These data were submitted to .t stat Result reach at significant level (p = 0.47). t stat Score are shown in Table-6.

Table-6: Mean and Variance as function of Physical Injury in Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

	Mean	Variance	Df	t Stat	p-value
Group1	4.33	7.40	58	-0.08	0.47
Group2	4.4	12.18			

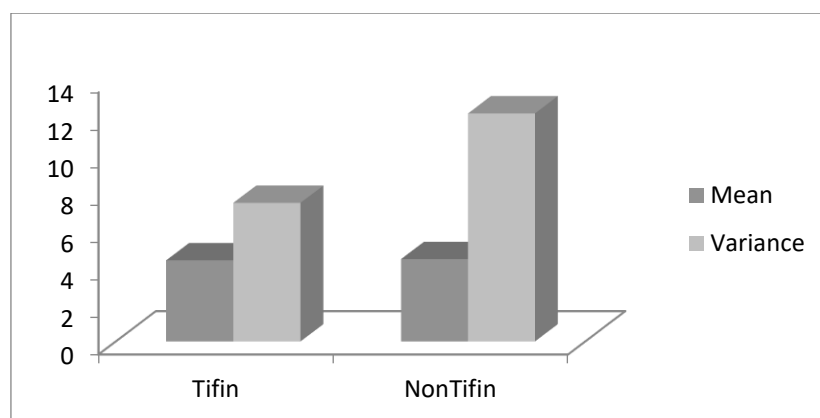


Figure-6: Mean and Variance as function of Physical Injury in Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

III.VI. GENERAL ANXIETY

Tiffin Feeder scored lower (M= 4.00) in comparison to Non Tiffin Feeder (M= 5.23) on *General Anxiety*. Mean and Variance has been shown on Table-7 and It's Graphical presentation were shown in Figure-7. Furthermore, these data were submitted to .t stat. Results reach at significant level (p = 0.03). t stat Score are shown in Table-7.

Table-7: Mean and Variance as function of General Anxiety in Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

	Mean	Variance	Df	t Stat	p-value
Group1	4.00	3.45	58	-1.92	0.03
Group2	5.23	8.87			

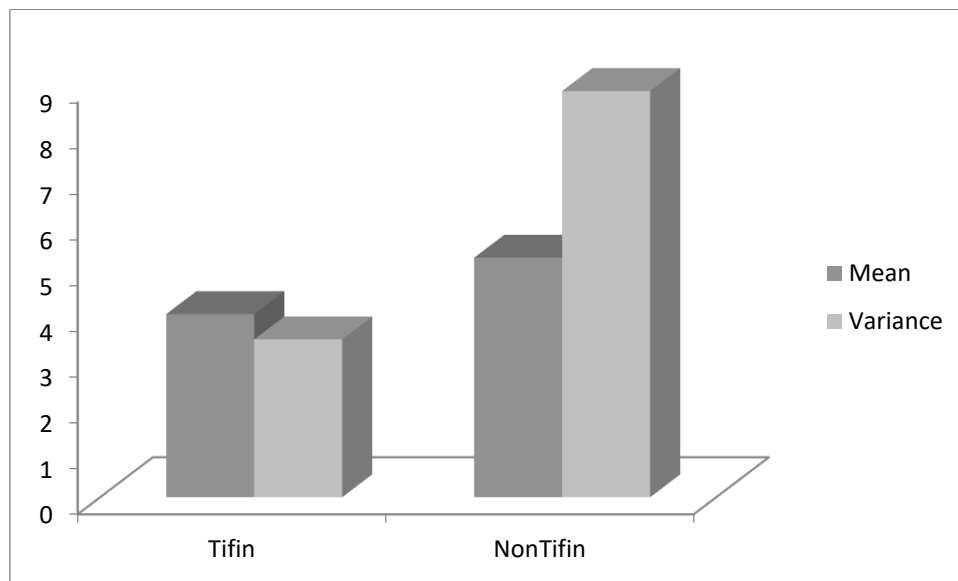


Figure-7: Mean and Variance as function of General Anxiety in Tiffin Feeder and Non Tiffin Feeder.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings provide important insights into how school routines may affect emotional health. Tiffin feeder children showed higher aggression, possibly due to greater peer comparison, competition, or lack of structured guidance during school breaks. Their higher scores on separation anxiety and social phobia also suggest sensitivity to peer acceptance.

Non-Tiffin feeder children, on the other hand, exhibited higher levels of general anxiety and panic/agoraphobia, which could be linked to reduced sense of belonging or insecurity about food and social interactions during school hours.

Although many of the group differences did not reach strong statistical significance due to the small sample size, the patterns highlight meaningful psychological tendencies. These outcomes align with earlier research showing that environmental factors and peer contexts strongly influence aggression and anxiety in adolescents.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Tiffin feeder and Non-Tiffin feeder children differ in their psychological profiles. Tiffin feeder children demonstrate higher aggression, while Non-Tiffin feeder children show greater general anxiety. These differences suggest that school policies and support systems should pay closer attention to how daily routines influence emotional well-being.

VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- The small sample size (60 participants) limits generalization.
- The study relied on self-report measures, which may be influenced by response biases.
- Future studies with larger and more diverse samples are recommended, along with qualitative insights into children's experiences.

VII. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

- School counselors can design intervention programs to manage aggression in Tiffin feeder groups.
- Non-Tiffin feeder children may benefit from confidence-building and anxiety-reduction strategies.
- Policies should encourage structured meal routines and peer-support systems in schools.

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