

**ACADEMIC ANXIETY, ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AND**  
**ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study was conducted with an aim to explore the relationship of academic anxiety and achievement motivation with academic achievement of high school students. The sample of study consists of 300 students (178 males and 122 females) from 5 different schools of Bhopal. Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation (n-ACH) Scale (Prathibha Deo & Asha Mohan, 1985) and Academic Anxiety Scale (SK Pal, K.S. Misra & K Pandey 1985) were used to measure achievement motivation and academic anxiety. Academic achievement was measured by the grades or percentage of marks obtained by a student in the annual examination in different classes in last three years. Results of the study reveal a significantly higher score of female in academic achievement as well as achievement motivation. Achievement motivation was positively related to academic achievement. Academic anxiety has a significantly negative relationship with achievement motivation but its relationship with academic achievement was statistically insignificant.

**Key words:** Academic Anxiety, Achievement Motivation, Academic Achievement.

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Running Head: Academic Anxiety, Achievement Motivation, Academic Achievement.

The determinants of achievement are not studied by the behavioral scientists alone. The determinants are also continuing topics of everyday conversation. Ability factors alone, however, are not sufficient to account fully for individual differences in academic success (Chamorro, Premuzic & Furnham, 2006; Conard, 2006). Thus, researchers have sought to identify non-cognitive predictors of academic performance, including variables related to personality dispositions (Connor and Paunonen.2007). Regardless of emphasis, however everyday discussion of achievement typically portrays stable characteristics of the individual as the source of high achievement. Personality theories have shown considerable discrepancy between the potential and scholastic performance and hold that personality attributes, especially anxiety and achievement motivation (nAch) as a significant factor in producing this discrepancy (Sharma and Rao, 1984; Sud and Sharma, 1989; Sud, 1994; Sud and Sharma, 1990, Tuncay Ergene, 2011, Das et.al 2014).

Many researchers have suggested that high test anxious persons are not deficient in intellect, but they exaggerate and personalize, inordinately the threat of evaluation in a given situation. Anxiety arises from a threatened deprivation of an anticipated satisfaction when the threat does not carry complete cognitive certainty. With the development of ego psychology it was posited that anxiety is the manifestation of some present or future threat as perceived by the individual, which up to a certain degree mobilizes human energy in the defense of the ego, and initiates various psychological and behavioral adjustment in an attempt to preserve its integrity, and as such serves as a motivating force by which the individual tends to activate and intensify the capacities towards a higher level of functioning, learning and new forms of adjustment. Thus with its absence or presence in low intensity the individual is not particularly motivated to achieve more than what he is potentially expected to achieve, and as such his actual achievement remains at par with his expected achievement. However when anxiety increases beyond certain minimum, it provides an incentive for the individual to exert himself, to achieve more than his ability. But when anxiety further increase and exceeds a certain limit, it leads to the disorganization, disruption, and regression of behavior. It

is this excess of anxiety, which has debilitating effect on mental activity, disabling the individual from achieving, thereby reducing him to a failure or underachiever.

Motivation has been regarded as one of the major domains of psychology and education. It constitutes an integral part of the scientific endeavors to interpret human and infra human behavior. The psychologists who are concerned with predicting behavior have realized that prediction of behavior is possible only when information about motivational and personological factors is taken into consideration. On the importance of motivation, Dutt and Sambhartwal (1973) state, "even at the risk of repeating the platitude it must be said that the present century has rightly been called the century of motivation; whatever in education or in industry, in general learning or in doing a sophisticated job, motivation confronts everyone interested in studying achievement visa-vise the degree of excellence involved therein. The term motivation refers to any organismic state that mobilizes activity which is in some sense selective or directive with respect to the environment.

According to Slavin (2006), motivation is what gets one going, keeps one going, and determines where one is to go. Motivation is one of the factors that contribute to academic success. It is important for both parents and educators to understand why promoting and encouraging academic motivation from an early age is very important. Motivation is crucial to a student's academic success at any age. Because students form self-concepts, values, and beliefs about their abilities at a young age, the development of early academic motivation has significant implications for later academic careers.

Achievement motivation which is the acquired tendency and is one of the most important social needs, that has been referred to as the need for achievement (abbreviated as n-achievement), a wish to do well. McClelland, the pioneer in the field of achievement motivation, defined it as a disposition to strive for success in competition with other with some standard of excellence, set by the individual. Achievement motivation is thus a learned motive to compete and to strive for success. As almost any activity from gardening to managing an industrial organization, can be viewed in terms

of competition and success versus failure, the need to achieve influences behavior in a large number of quite diverse situations.

The findings about effect of gender on achievement motivation are controversial. Some studies suggest higher achievement motivation in girls (Gokulnath, 1972) while others find boys to have higher achievement motivation (Jasmine Ahmed, 1998). Higher level of achievement in boys is attributed to greater pressure for achievement on boys in Indian society during later years of adolescent. The study by Mishra (1986) found girls to be performing better than boys, but Beedawat (1984) did not find difference in the two groups. Kaur Rajendra and Gill (1993) in her study found that achievement in English and total achievement was independent of sex where boys scored higher than girls in Punjabi, mathematics and science. In a study on determination of academic success of rural girls Dubey and Misra (1997) concluded that in upper class girls, permissiveness, rejection, physical and social variables were the significant predictors of academic success. Masson, Hoyois , Cadot, Nahama, Petit, Ansseau (2004) in a study of 616 students of Belgian Universities reported an alarming escalation in the higher success rate of female students in comparison to male students. Dropout rates were also found to be increasing in male students resulting in majority of university students being represented by females. Penner and Paret (2008) using international data-including math achievement scores from the Third International Mathematics and Sciences Study and country-level data from the World Bank, the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the World Values Survey, and the International Social Survey Program the cross-national variation in gender differences with country-level predictors reveals that differences among high achievers are related to gender inequality in the labor market and differences in the overall status of men and women.

In the present study academic achievement refers to the grades or percentage of marks obtained by a student in the annual examination in different classes in last three years.

## **Aim**

The study was conducted with an aim to explore the relationship of academic anxiety and achievement motivation with academic achievement of high school students.

## **Method**

### **Sample:**

The study was conducted on 300 students (178 males and 122 females) studying in class 10<sup>th</sup> in 5 different schools of Bhopal.

### **Tools**

1. Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation (n-ACH) Scale (Prathibha Deo & Asha Mohan, 1985).

Deo Mohan Achievement motivation scale was administered to measure achievement motivation of the subjects. It is a 50-items scale based on (a) academic factors (b) factors related to general interest (c) factors of social interest. Detail instructions are printed on the booklet. Answers are recorded in a separate answer sheet. There is no time limit but the subjects were expected to give their honest frank and first response to each item as quickly as possible. For scoring purpose two stencil keys were used one for positive items and one for negative items. A positive item carries the weight of 4,3,2,1 and 0 respectively for the categories of always, frequently, sometimes, rarely and never. The negative items are scored as 0,1,2,3 and 4 for the same categories respectively. The total score is the summation of all the positive and negative items. The minimum score obtained can be 0 and the maximum scores can be 200, other scores ranging in between. Higher scores represent higher level of achievement motivation in the individual.

2. Academic Anxiety Scale (SK Pal, K.S. Misra & K Pandey 1985)

Academic anxiety scale (AAS) was administered to measure fear of failure as perceived by the students due to perceived inability to perform better in an

academic front. It provides a measure of psychological social and psychological problem due to perceived failure in school situation. Operational definition of the term academic anxiety is a “Fear of failure to meet a standard or fear that one does not hold the appropriate standard concerning performance in school.” AAS contains 35 items related to bodily and psychological manifestation of the subject’s behavior due to fear of failure and stresses of low academic performance during the whole session and for the annual examination. The scale requires pupils to tell their agreement/disagreement about a particular behavior as perceived by him/her or not i.e he/she is required to tell whether a particular behavior (as mentioned in statement) is being experienced by him/her not. The responses are to be given on the booklet itself. Against each item of the scale two different alternatives are given in the form of agreeable and disagreeable responses 1 mark is assigned to ‘Yes’ and 0 to ‘NO’ response. Higher scores represent higher amount of academic anxiety in the individual.

### **Results**

**Table I: Comparative scores of male and female students on academic achievement, academic anxiety and achievement motivation**

Sex	Male N= 178		Female N= 122		
Variables	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t
% in 1 <sup>st</sup> year	75.92	11.95	77.25	12.63	.90
% in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	59.81	1.37	68.13	13.44	4.78**
% in 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	58.58	13.02	66.06	12.31	4.48**
Average %	64.77	12.78	70.48	12.79	3.71**
Academic anxiety	11.79	6.97	11.30	8.39	.54
Achievement motivation	123.12	25.93	131.33	25.38	2.66**

\*= P< .05, \*\*= P< .01.

The findings in table I indicate a comparative mean and S.D of the scores obtained by male and female students on their percentage of marks in last three years as well as average % of marks, academic anxiety and achievement motivation. The figures at a glance reveal a decline in academic achievement over a period of last three years in both male as well as female students. However the decline is more in male students. The t values indicate a significantly higher score on academic achievement in female students than in male students. The groups did not show significant difference in terms of academic anxiety. On achievement motivation female students reveal a higher score than male students.

Hence we find gender is a significant variable in determining academic achievement among these adolescents. Though level of academic anxiety is same in both the groups it is because of the higher achievement motivation that girls score higher academic achievement than boys.

**Table II: Inter-correlation of academic achievement, achievement motivation and academic anxiety**

Variable	Academic achievement	Achievement motivation	Academic anxiety
Academic achievement	1.00**		
Achievement motivation	.26**	1.00**	
Academic anxiety	.04	-.15**	1.00**

\*= P< .05, \*\*= P< .01.

The analysis of interrelationship among the individual variables and their relationship with academic achievement revealed that achievement motivation has significantly negative relationship with academic anxiety. Similarly academic anxiety has a significantly negative relationship with achievement motivation but its relationship with academic achievement was statistically insignificant.

### **Conclusion**

Gender plays a significant role in determining the achievement motivation and academic achievement. It does not affect the academic anxiety. Female students have significantly higher achievement motivation leading to higher academic achievement. Level of academic anxiety is same in both male and female students.

Achievement motivation is a significant predictor of academic achievement. Contribution of academic anxiety towards academic achievement was positive but statistically insignificant.

Understanding the relationship among some contributing factors like achievement motivation, test anxiety, and also prediction of academic success in the Indian context may contribute to the international knowledge base in this field.

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