

An Investigation of the Relationship Between Achievement Motivation and Academic Achievement

Partha Sarathi Biswas

Professor, Department of Psychology, Rajshahi College, Rajshahi, Bangladesh

Mobile: +8801716695707 | **Email:** psbiswas66@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between achievement motivation and academic achievement among college students. A total of 511 students aged 17-19 were categorized into three groups (high, average, and low) based on their scores on the Achievement Motivation Scale (Afsaruddin, 1995). Results revealed that students with higher achievement motivation demonstrated significantly higher academic achievement than those with average and low motivation. These findings suggest a positive correlation between achievement motivation and academic achievement.

Keywords: motivation, achievement motivation, academic achievement

Introduction

Academic achievement refers to students' examination results following a structured curriculum. It reflects their knowledge, skills, and application of learning, influencing their academic progression and career prospects. It also contributes to personal and social adjustment beyond school years.

Motivation, as defined by Crider et al. (1983), involves desires, needs, and interests that activate and direct behavior toward specific goals. Psychologists consider motivation a key factor influencing behavior, including academic performance. Achievement motivation, or the need for achievement (n-Ach), refers to an individual's drive for success, self-assertion, and recognition. McClelland (1953) described it as a learned anticipation of success in evaluative situations.

Individuals with high achievement motivation tend to set ambitious goals, strive diligently, and react strongly to success or failure (Atkinson & Birch, 1978; Secord & Backman, 1976). Research suggests that individuals with high achievement motivation perform better in tasks, learn faster, and excel in challenging situations (McClelland et al., 1953). Studies by Powers et al. (1985) and others have demonstrated a significant correlation between achievement motivation and academic success (Atkinson, 1950; McClelland, 1961; Morris & Fargher, 1974; Sarder & Hossain, 1976; Wolfendale, 1985; Oh, 1999; Adams, 2003; Bray, 2003).

Despite extensive research in Western contexts, limited studies have explored this relationship in Bangladesh. This study aims to examine the correlation between achievement motivation and academic achievement in Bangladeshi college students.

Hypothesis

Academic achievement is positively related to achievement motivation.

Methodology

Participants

The study sample consisted of 511 first-year college students (263 males, 248 females) randomly selected from colleges in Rajshahi City under the National University of Bangladesh. Participants were aged between 17 and 19 years.

Measuring Instruments

The Achievement Motivation Scale (Afsaruddin, 1995) was used to assess achievement motivation. The 44-item questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale (1=Very Low to 5=Very High). The raw scores were interpreted using percentiles, with a maximum score of 220.

Procedure

Participants' academic achievement was measured using their Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination scores. Students were

categorized into high (above 75th percentile), average (25th-75th percentile), and low (below 25th percentile) motivation groups.

Data analysis included Pearson's product-moment correlation, ANOVA, and t-tests to compare academic achievement across motivation groups.

Results

Pearson's correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between achievement motivation and academic achievement. ANOVA results (Table 1) showed significant differences in academic achievement among motivation groups ($p < 0.0001$).

Table 1

ANOVA for Academic Achievement Across Motivation Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	11048.047	2	5524.023	247.190	<0.0001
Within Groups	11352.397	508	22.347		
Total	22400.444	510			

Post hoc t-tests (Table 2) further confirmed that students with high achievement motivation had significantly higher academic achievement than those with average and low motivation ($p < 0.0001$).

Table 2

T-Test for Academic Achievement Across Motivation Groups

Groups Compared	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p	
High vs. Average	113	64.67	5.61	14.299	<0.0001
High vs. Low	113	64.67	5.61	19.788	<0.0001
Average vs. Low	229	57.22	3.89	11.800	<0.0001

These findings confirm that higher achievement motivation is associated with better academic performance.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the relationship between achievement motivation and academic achievement. The results indicate a significant positive correlation between the two variables, supporting the hypothesis. Students with high achievement motivation demonstrated superior academic performance compared to those with lower motivation levels.

These findings align with previous studies suggesting that achievement motivation influences academic performance (McClelland, 1953, 1961; Atkinson, 1950; Sarder & Hossain, 1976; Oh, 1999). The results also highlight the importance of motivation in educational success and underscore the need for strategies to enhance students' motivation for improved academic outcomes.

Despite its contributions, this study is limited by its sample size and geographic scope. Future research should explore additional motivational factors and extend the study to other regions in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

This study confirms a positive relationship between achievement motivation and academic achievement. Findings suggest that fostering achievement motivation can enhance students' academic performance. Educators and policymakers should consider interventions to promote motivation in students.

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