



ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AS A CORRELATE OF ACADEMIC STRESS: A STUDY AMONG MIZO SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

School education is one of the most important aspect in the life of any individual and its outcome plays a very crucial role in shaping of the individual's career. Students easily experience Academic stress at this crucial point in their lives. Achievement motivation plays an important and crucial role in academic achievement which seems to be the main goal in today's educational system. The present study aims to highlight if Achievement motivation plays any role in the academic stress of the students. 198 students from high and higher secondary schools were used as samples for the present study. Results showed a negative but not significant relationship between the two variables. When the two genders (boys and girls) were compared in both the variables, result showed a significant mean difference between boys and girls in academic stress with girls higher than boys. There was no significant gender difference in achievement motivation, though mean of girls was higher than mean of boys among Mizo school students.

Keywords: *Academic Stress, Achievement Motivation, Academic achievement, Educational System, Stress, Anxiety, Stressor.*

Introduction

In the world that we are living in today, stress has become a very common and integral part of student's academic life due to various internal and external expectation. The academic performance of a student plays a crucial role in deciding what

the next stage of their education would be, as this would in turn shape their careers as well as their future. Hence, adolescents are particularly very vulnerable to academic stress at this period of their lives. "Academic stress is a mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration associated with

academic failure or even awareness of the possibility of such failure” (Gupta & Khan, 1987). Students are likely to encounter many academic demands at this time of their lives, examinations, progress their subjects, homework and assignments, understanding lectures and courses, competing with their classmates, fulfilling academic expectations of teachers and parents and at the same time trying to balance leisure time with academic classes. As a consequence of all of these, they find themselves under stress as the demand in all of these is related to achievement of an academic goal. According to Bisht (1989), academic stress reflects perception of individual’s academic frustration, academic conflict, academic pressure and academic anxiety.

The educational system has been found to play an enabling role that subsequently leads to academic stress among the students and this further results in an increase in the overall stress level. This academic stress contributes to the development of major mental health problems and this in turn acts as a negative predictor of academic performance in students (Endler *et al.*, 1994). High school students have been found to attribute day to day stresses of school (e.g. tests, grades, homework, constant pressure of studying, too less time, future plans and academic expectations) among their greatest stressors (Crystal *et. al.*, 1994; Ang & Huan, 2006; Schafer, 1996).

Achievement motivation (nAch) has been defined as the striving to increase, or keep as high as possible, one’s own capacity

in all activities where competition is thought to be involved. Therefore, the execution of such activity can lead an individual to either succeed or fail (Heckhausen, 1967). The nature of the achievement goal can affect the way a person performs a task and his/her desire to show competence (Harackiewicz *et al.*, 1997). Achievement motivation may be considered as one of the basic for a good life. People who are achievement oriented, may enjoy life, feel that they are more in control, dynamic and have more self-respect. Those with achievement motivation set themselves moderately difficult but easily achievable targets, which in turn helps them, achieve these targets. They usually do not set themselves extremely difficult or extremely easy targets, thus ensuring that they achieve them. Achievement motivated people will work on their problems and are concerned with their personal achievement rather than leaving the result to chance.

A number of researches have found that students high in achievement motivation are more likely to have higher levels of academic achievement and have lower dropout rates (Blank, 1997) and high levels of academic stress was associated with lower course grades (Struthers *et al.*, 2000). Further researches have also found a negative correlation between the stress levels of college students and their academic performance (Blumberg & Flaherty, 1985; Felsten & Wilcox, 1992). These studies have shown the nature of effects that academic stress has on academic performance and achievement motivation is directly related to academic performance (Endler *et al.*, 1994).

Objectives of the Study

The study has been designed with the following objectives:

1. To highlight the nature of relation between Academic Stress and Achievement Motivation among Mizos school students.
2. To investigate if gender differences exist in Achievement motivation and Academic Stress.

Methodology

For the present study, survey method was used.

Sample

198 (males & females) Mizo school students were selected from different High and Higher secondary schools in Aizawl city. The subject's age range from 14 to 19 years of age. A presumption was made that the subjects used were homogeneous in nature.

Psychological Test

The Psychological tests used in the present study are:

1. Achievement Motivation Scale (n-Ach) (Deo & Mohan, 2002). The Achievement Motivation Scale has 60 items and five (5) response choices – always, frequently, sometimes, rarely & never
2. Scale for Assessing Academic Stress (Sinha, 2014). The Scale for assessing academic stress (SAAS) is

a 30-items self-report measure. It assesses all possible indicators of academic stress in terms of their presence or absence. There are two response choices – Yes or No.

Results & Discussion

The results were analysed and the following results were obtained. The First objective of the study was to highlight the nature of relationship between achievement motivation and academic. To meet this objective correlation coefficient was computed between achievement motivation and academic stress. Results **Table 1** shows that the correlation between the two variables is negative (-0.084). However, this correlation is not significant.

The Second objective of the study was to investigate if gender difference (males and females) exists in both Achievement Motivation and Academic Stress. Results in **Table 2** show the Mean and Standard deviation of the two gender groups in the two variables. In Achievement motivation the Mean of girls (93.79) is higher than the mean of boys (90.12). However, result of One-way ANOVA showed no significant difference between the two groups in gender. In Academic stress the mean of girls (16.66) is again higher than boys (13.88). Results of One-way ANOVA showed a significant difference between the two genders. Girls are significantly higher than boys in academic stress. Girls are significantly higher than boys in academic stress.

Table 1: Correlation Coefficient between Achievement Motivation & Academic Stress

Correlation Variables	N	R	Level of Significance
Achievement Motivation Academic Stress	198	-0.084	Not Significant

Table 2: Mean, SD & Result of One-Way ANOVA (Variables x Gender)

Variables	Gender	Mean	SD	F-ratio
Achievement Motivation	Females	93.79	13.63	3.122
	Males	90.12	15.41	
Academic Stress	Females	16.66	5.08	15.44*
	Males	13.88	4.67	

**Significant at .05 level of significance*

From the results of the present study we have seen that the mean of Academic Stress for both boys and girls is quite high as compared to those given in the test manual. We also see that girls are significantly higher than boys in this variable. Achievement motivation though not significant is also higher in girls than in boys. Academic Stress and Achievement motivation had a negative relationship. However, this negative relationship was not found to be significant among Mizo school students. This finding corresponds with other studies where academic stress was not found to be significantly correlated with academic achievement and achievement motivation (Kaur & Kaur, 2016) and that a lower level of stress leads to high achievement motivation (Ramaprabou & Dash, 2018).

Conclusion

Further extended studies are needs to be conducted to better understand the nature of relationships between the two variables. As we already know from prior studies that academic stress has a detrimental effect on academic performance. When a student experiences a high level of academic stress,

we know that it can have an impact on many aspects of his/her academic progress especially the ability to learn, memorize and obtain good results as well as effect his/her mental health. Academic performance as we also know is very closely related to achievement motivation. Therefore, it is very important for any student to control his/her level of stress so that he/she may be able to perform better as a student. The student may also need to adopt effective coping mechanisms to deal with the everyday stresses in his/her life, so that these stresses he would not have a negative impact on his level of achievement motivation as well as his ability to perform effectively.

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