



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION: CONCEPT AND THEORY

Dr. Sandeep Kumar

Lecturer, Department of School Education Govt. of Haryana

ABSTRACT

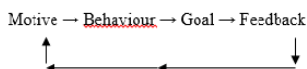
Academic Achievement motivation is the most important contributor to students' academic success. Academic Achievement motivation refers to a person's need to achieve academically and his willingness to do things that he or she considers important or valuable and endeavours to achieve perfect results. Students who are oriented towards achievement, in general, enjoy life and feel in control. Gesinde (2000) posits that the urge to achieve varies from one individual to the other, while for some individuals need for achievement is very high whereas for others it may be very low. Being motivated keeps them dynamic and gives them self-respect. Standards of excellence, precise goals and clear roles motivate these students. This paper is intended to highlight the basic concept, importance, and theory of academic achievement motivation.

KEYWORDS : Academic Achievement Motivation, Self-respect, Standards of excellence.

INTRODUCTION:

While there are a number of factors that affect performance in school, one of the most influential is motivation. Motivation is generally defined as internal condition that stimulates, directs and maintains behavior. It is obvious that students who are not motivated to succeed will not work hard. Motivation is a starting point of any work in a certain course, it directs students' activity and helps them to persist in study tasks through the school year.

The process of motivation has been shown below:



Continuing with the same motive or switching over to new motive.

Motivation stemming from a desire to perform well or a striving for success is called achievement motivation. Need for Achievement (nAch) (McClelland, 1961) is one of the psychological motives that play an important role in success and achievements of a person. McClelland defines achievement motivation as the extent to which individuals differ in their need to strive to attain rewards, such as physical satisfaction, praise from others and feelings of personal mastery. People with high achievement motives will act in ways that will help them to outperform others, meet or surpass some standard of excellence, or do something unique. People in whom need for achievement is strong, seek to become accomplished, and to improve their task performance. (McClelland et.al, 1953).

A form of process in context of achievement motivation is:-
 $\text{Goal/Target} + \text{Ability} + \text{Motivation} = \text{Achievement Motivation}$

The motivation applied for achieving academic objective is termed as **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION**.

Academic Achievement motivation is the most important contributor to students' academic success. Motivation, as an academic engagement, refers to "cognitive, emotional, and behavioural indicators of student investment in and attachment to education" (Tucker, Zayco & Herman, 2002).

Academic Achievement Motivation may be expressed as follows:
 $\text{Achievement of Academic Goal/Target} + \text{Motivation} = \text{Academic Achievement Motivation}$

In an academic environment, achievement motivation is the enthusiasm for learning, the eagerness to acquire knowledge and grow in self-improvement. It is the moving force that instils within a child, the desire to accomplish or achieve.

Academic Achievement motivation refers to a person's need to achieve academically and his willingness to do things that he or she

considers important or valuable and endeavours to achieve perfect results. Academic Achievement motivation is a stable learned characteristic in which satisfaction comes from striving for and achieving a level of excellence. According to the views of psychologists, the main motivations for students studying are reflected on achievement motivation and researches show that achievement motivation is the key element that influences students' self-monitoring capacity and study efficiency. Achievement motivation is expectancy of finding satisfaction in mastery of difficult and challenging performances whereas in the field of education in particular it stands for the pursuit of excellence.

In other words, academic achievement motivation could be seen as self-determination to succeed in whatever activities one engages in the field of academics be it challenging assignments, tiring homework, classroom tasks, group discussions, self-learning, examination and so on.

Gesinde (2000) posits that the urge to achieve varies from one individual to the other, while for some individuals need for achievement is very high whereas for others it may be very low. However, there are high achievers and low achievers. What is responsible for the variation could be the fact that achievement motivation is believed to be learnt during socialization processes and learning experiences.

The U.S. famous psychologist Atkinson believes that achievement motivation has two factors, respectively, the motivation to pursue achievement and the motivation to avoid failure. What is more, the two motivations might be different in their force. Atkinson found that if an individual's motivation to pursue success is stronger than the motivation to avoid failure, the individual will have higher subjective probability estimation on success; similarly if an individual's motivation to avoid failure is stronger than the motivation to pursue success, the individual will have higher subjective probability estimation on failure.

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivations are fundamental constructs in conceptualizations of achievement motivation. Extrinsic motivation refers to engagement generated by external forces, such as incentives and rewards. Intrinsic motivation refers to the performance of activities for the sake of the pleasure or satisfaction inherent in the activity itself. Much research has shown that more often than not extrinsic rewards undermine intrinsic motivation. According to the authors, the most important single ingredient in achievement motivation is a feeling of self-directed competence.

IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION:

Achievement motivation in academics forms to be the basis for a good life. Students who are oriented towards achievement, in

general, enjoy life and feel in control. Being motivated keeps them dynamic and gives them self-respect.

They set moderately difficult but easily achievable targets, which help them achieve their objectives. They do not set up extremely difficult or extremely easy targets. By doing this they ensure that they only undertake tasks that can be achieved by them.

Academically achievement motivated students prefer to work on a problem rather than leaving the outcome to chance. It is seen that achievement motivated students seem to be more concerned with their personal achievement rather than the rewards of success. It is also seen that students with high achievement motivation evidenced a significantly higher rate of advancement in academics as compared to others. A great deal of research has found that students high in academic achievement motivation are more likely to have increased levels of academic achievement.

At this point, the significance of early academic motivation to future academic success should be clear. However, different types of academic motivation have different implications for academic achievement. If a student has high levels of academic motivation, knowing whether that student is extrinsically or intrinsically motivated may be important in making predictions about that student's academic career. As discussed earlier, students who are intrinsically motivated to learn to do so for the pleasure of learning, not to get external rewards. There are many differences between extrinsically and intrinsically motivated students, and the following list describes some of the most important differences.

Intrinsically motivated students:

- Earn higher grades and achievement test scores, on average than extrinsically-motivated students.
- Employ 'strategies that demand more effort and that enable them to process information more deeply'.
- Are more likely to feel confident about their ability to learn new material.
- Use 'more logical information-gathering and decision-making strategies' than do extrinsically-motivated students.
- Are more likely to engage in 'tasks that are moderately challenging, whereas extrinsically oriented students gravitate toward tasks that are low in degree of difficulty'.
- Are more likely to persist with and complete assigned tasks.
- Retain information and concepts longer, and are less likely to need remedial courses and review.
- Are more likely to be lifelong learners, continuing to educate themselves outside the formal school setting long after external motivators such as grades and diplomas are removed.

Achievement oriented students are driven to master complex challenges, to find solutions, overcome goals, and they love getting feedback related to the level of success. Standards of excellence, precise goals and clear roles motivate these students. This results in a non-conscious concern for achieving excellence through individual effort. They usually set challenging goals for themselves, assume personal responsibility for accomplishment and take calculated risks for achieving these goals. In simple words, they love to achieve and to measure that achievement.

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION THEORY:

David McClelland (1961) believes that the need for achievement is a distinct human motive that can be distinguished from other needs. One characteristic of achievement motivated person is that he seems to be more concerned with personal achievement than with the rewards of success. They do not reject rewards but the rewards are not essential as the accomplishment itself.

Atkinson (1966) theorized that orientation results from achieving success and avoiding failure. The motive to achieve success is determined by three things: (1) the need to succeed or need achievement (n-Ach); (2) the person's estimate of the likelihood of success in performing the particular task; and (3) the incentive for

success- that is, how much the person wants to succeed in that particular task. The motive to avoid failure is determined by three similar considerations: (1) the need to avoid failure which, like the need to achieve success, (2) the person's estimate of the likelihood of failure at the particular task; and (3) the incentive value of failure at that task, that is, how unpleasant it would be to fail (Atkinson, 1966).

Both McClelland and Atkinson's achievement motivation theory was based on a personality characteristic that manifested as a dispositional need to improve and perform well according to a certain standard of excellence. In order to assess people's need for achievement, they used a projective instrument called the Thematic Appreciation Test (TAT) that elicits unconscious processes. In this instrument, people are asked to write a story describing the thoughts, emotions and behaviours of a person in an ambiguous picture or drawing (for example, a child sitting in front of a violin). The stories are then coded for achievement-related content including indicators of competition, accomplishments, and commitment to achieve. This technique, labelled the Picture Story Exercise (PSE), was used in numerous studies that tested the relations of n-Ach with various indicators of performance.

REFERENCES:

1. Atkinson, J. W. (1966). Motivational determinants of risk-taking behaviour. In J.W. Atkinson & N.T. Feather. *A theory of achievement motivation* (pp 11-31). New York: Wiley.
2. Gesinde, A. M. (2000). Motivation. In Z.A.A. Omidoyi (Ed) *Fundamental of Guidance and Counselling*. Kanead Publishers: Ibadan.
3. McClelland, D. C. (1961). *The achieving society*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.
4. McClelland, D. C., Atkinson, J. W., Clark, R. A. & Lowell, E. L. (1953). *The achievement motive*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
5. Nagarathanamma, B. & Rao, V.T. (2007). Achievement motivation and academic achievement of adolescent boys and girls. *Indian Psychological Review*, 68, 131-136
6. Tucker, C. M., Zayco, R. A. & Herman, K. C. (2002). Teacher and child variables as predictors of academic engagement among low-income African American children. *Psychology in the Schools*, 39(4), 477-488
7. Walia, J. S. (2005). *Psychology of teaching-learning process*. Jalandhar: Paul Publishers.