

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This purpose of the study was to determine the level of Achievement Motivation among MBA students. The sample comprised of 120 students (60 male and 60 female) in the age range of 20-23 years. Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) was used to gather information. Results of TAT analysis showed significant gender differences in Achievement Motivation. Female students were found to have higher levels of achievement motivation as compared to males. Also, it is observed that students whose age is comparatively higher possessed higher achievement motivation levels; similarly, students whose parental occupation is farming and business possess higher achievement motivation levels. The study yielded an interesting finding that while selecting TAT picture for interpretation, most of the male students preferred to write a story on 'a girl standing in front of a beach' while female students preferred a boy sitting on a stone, dropping his head and thinking.

Keywords: TAT, Achievement Motivation, Students, Accomplishment

INTRODUCTION

Achievement motivation is the desire to accomplish difficult tasks and to meet standards of excellence. This motive implies the desire for success. It is present whenever someone is concerned with attaining some sort of standard, set by himself or others. Parental expectations and cultural influences appear most important in the development of achievement motivation as well as cognitive factors underlying the self-concept which is the way in which a person thinks about herself or himself in a global sense. In its theoretical formulation, Atkinson (1957) and Mc Clelland's (1985) theory of achievement motivation combined n Achievement with cognitive expectations of success and with the value of such success to a person.

Growing evidence suggest that countries in which achievement motivation is strong tend to experience more rapid economic growth than countries in which such motivation is relatively weak. The early study of achievement motivation generally owes much in terms of theory and methodology to the work of Mc Clelland and his associates (Atkinson, 1958; Atkinson & Feather, 1996; Atkinson & Raynor, 1974). This early work gave impetus to much research into the range of issues to need achievement. According to need achievement theory, achievement behavior is characterized by a psychological need to excel, a desire to enter the competitive race for social status, and a willingness to adopt the high value placed on personal achievement and a success in Western societies. This early Mc Clelland's position held that such achievement motivation was a personality trait that develops in some people more than others as a result of early socialization pressures, in particular independence and mastery training and emotional accomplishments. Many cross cultural research on motivation has adopted Mc Clelland; need-achievement framework. Mc Clelland defines achievement motivation as a personality

disposition to compete with the standard of excellence and he links the motive's development in individuals and cultures to child-rearing practices that stress early self-reliance and a sense of personal mastery over successful task performance. These conceptualizations may be culture bound in its emphasis on individualistic and competitive striving for personal goals and its minimal attention to diverse cultural meanings and modes of achievement.

Research on motivation has burgeoned over the past four decades. As a result, much has been learned about the nature of students' motivation. During the past half century, a variety of crucial motivational beliefs, values, and goals have been identified and examined (Wigfield, 1997). Some studies have focused on competence-related beliefs as a valuable measure of an individual's achievement motivation (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Males and females were found to have different competence-related beliefs during childhood and adolescence (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Results revealed that boys had higher competence beliefs in sports activities and math compared to girls. However, girls had higher competence beliefs in reading, English, and social activities compared to boys. Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) posited that competence beliefs are important because they predict performance and task choice. These beliefs also affect the student's motivation to succeed and achieve a goal.

Elizur & Beck (1994) detected no special tendency for women to score higher than men on affective responses in achievement motive questionnaire (Elizur 1979, 1986; Shye 1978). Their results support the view that gender differences in achievement motive are rooted in socialization processes rather than in basic differences between women and men. Nagarathanamma & Rao (2007) found no significant difference between boys and girls with regard to achievement motivation level. Similar findings were reported by Kaushik & Rani (2005). Adsul et al. (2008) investigated the effects of gender, economic background and caste differences on achievement motivation possessed by college students on the basis of societal transformation. Along with other findings male students were found to be having a high achievement motivation while female students having a below average level of achievement motivation. Liu & Zhu (2009) found significant differences in achievement motivations of male and female senior high school students, male students have higher achievement motivations than female students; the achievement motivations of students studying science and students studying arts have difference closely to significant difference.

Upadhyay & Tiwari (2009) evaluated the effect of academic majors on achievement motivation of the students. Results showed students of science faculty had significantly higher achievement motivation in comparison to Social Science, Humanities and Commerce faculty, but it does not significantly differ from the vocational courses. Fouladchang et al. (2009) with the purpose to investigate the effect of gender and grade level differences on goal orientations of undergraduate students in an Iranian university collected a sample of 302 Iranian students by random cluster sampling. It was found that males had a greater performance-approach goal orientation than females. Also, last graders reported higher scores on mastery goal orientation than first graders. There was no significant interaction effect of gender and grade level. Salili (1996) investigated age, sex and cultural differences in achievement motivation. The study was conducted on British high school and Chinese students aged 13-55. Results revealed that Chinese high school students had significantly higher n-Ach scores than their British counterparts. Female

subjects of both cultures had higher scores than males, although this difference was significant for British female subjects only. Further research has shown that there is an interest in Achievement Motivation as it relates to students.

Many studies have been conducted to discover what motivates students (Atkinson, 1999; Atkinson and Feather, 1966; Spence, 1983). With these studies came ideas on how to predict an individual's task performance (Atkinson and Feather, 1966; Grabe, 1979; Mukherjee, 1964). Other studies have been conducted to increase student motivation. These studies also have spawned new ideas on motivation (Accordino, Accordino, & Slaney, 2000; Atkinson, E., 1999; Bar-Tal, Frieze, & Greenberg, 1974; Grabe, 1979; Latta, 1974; McClelland & Alschuler, 1971; Rathvon, 1999; Simons, Van Rheenen, & Covington, 1999; Veroff, 1975). The present study is focused towards Business Administration students located in West Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. The topography where the students are undergoing the course is dominated with students from Agriculture background. The students from these families aspire for achieving something in life realizing the fact that their parents are struggling to make both ends meet. Hence, the investigator chose to study the achievement motivation of these students to find out whether these students actually possess the achievement motivation to succeed in their careers.

Thus the main objective of the present study was to explore the Achievement Motivation of Business Administration students. Two specific objectives relating to their Need for Achievement were also explored such as;

- To examine gender differences in Need for Achievement among business administration students.
- To find out whether demographic factors such as age and family background have any impact on need for achievement in business administration students.
- To analyze the reasons for the gender to prefer select TAT pictures for story writing.

The study subsequently formulated a null hypotheses and the same was tested.

H₀₁ - There is no gender difference in Need for Achievement among Business Administration students.

H₀₂ – There is no relationship between age and achievement motivation

H₀₃ – There is no relationship between parental occupation and achievement motivation.

METHOD

Sample

The sampling procedure followed for selecting respondents is *simple random sample*. The business administration course in the college has 4 sections comprising of 180 students. Out of 180 students, Section 1 and 2 consists of First and Final Year MBA students comprising of 90 students each. From each section two boxes are arranged to ensure that each box contains male and female student's names with their roll nos. From each box 30 names were pulled out. A total

of 120 students (60 boys and 60 girls) in the age range of 20-22 were selected. The respondents are from a Business Administration College in West Godavari Dist, Andhra Pradesh. The sample statistics are given in Table I.

Table 1 showing Sample Statistics

		Male (n=60)	Female (n=60)	Total
Age	20 years	18	16	34
	21 years	20	25	45
	22 years	22	19	41
Fathers Occupation	Farmer	19	22	41
	Business	10	08	18
	Self-Employed	15	5	20
	Govt.,	2	-	2
	Private	12	7	19

Table 1 shows the sample characteristics. The sample included 60 boys and 60 girls. The table indicates that most of the Business Administration students have age range of 21 and 22 years. The college is situated in the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh hence, majority of the student's family occupation is observed to be Farming. The table also shows that family income ranges between 1 lac and 3 lacs. Majority of the students belong to Other Caste category.

This present study was conducted around two major tools of investigation – a) Thematic Apperception Test, to understand the Need for Achievement and b) Personal Interview to find the reasons for the gender to prefer select TAT pictures for story writing.

Thematic Apperception Test, also known as TAT is a widely used projective technique used both in clinical as well as non-clinical setting. It was developed by Murray in 1935. According to Murray the purpose of TAT is to reveal “some dominant drives, emotions, sentiments, complexes and conflicts of personality. Students were asked to volunteer for the test. They were informed that the test results will be used only for research purpose and will not be shared with anyone and hence confidentiality issues are protected. In the present study 5 pictures were shown to the students and were asked to write a story on any one of the picture which motivated their thought process. It was informed to the students that the story should answer the following questions;

- a. What has led up to the event shown?
- b. What is happening at the moment?
- c. What the characters are feeling and thinking?
- d. What the outcome of the story was?

For scoring and analyzing Need for Achievement, McClelland, D.C., & Litwin, G. (1967) condensed *Brief Scoring Manual* has been used. The following paragraph briefly explains the scoring system;

1. The story has been examined for the presence of any one of the four clear signs of achievement motivation that is, for evidence of a desire for success in competition with others, competition with a self imposed standard of excellence, concern with unique accomplishment, or long-term involvement. If none of these were found present then further scoring was not attempted to score the story for Achievement motivation.
2. If there was clear evidence of a concern with Achievement motivation in the story, the investigator *counted up* how many of the following are present in relation to that kind of activity: Actual behavior, positive feelings about goal achievement and/or negative feelings about failure, anticipation of obstacles from the environment and/or personal limitations and taking steps to surmount them; Seeking help (or being helped), and using one’s feelings or emotions to carry out the task effectively.
3. As the present study is focused on examining Need for Achievement hence, the scoring has been limited to Need for Achievement and did not probe into Affiliation and Power motives of the students.

RESULTS

The results are categorized in two sections and the details are as follows;

Section 1- Examining Need for Achievement among genders through TAT scoring

Section 2- To find out whether demographic factors such as age and family background have any impact on need for achievement in business administration students

Section 3- To find out reasons for the gender to prefer select TAT pictures for story writing

Section 1 examined t-test to understand gender differences in Need for Achievement among Business Administration students.

Table 2 showing gender differences in Need for Achievement

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Need for Achievement	Male	60	1.80	.403	-1.984	.049
	Female	60	1.92	.279		

From **Table 2**, it is observed that the *t*-test result shows *t* statistic of 1.984. The corresponding two-tailed *p-value* is 0.049, which is lesser than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% significance level. The results conclude that there is significant difference between genders in Need for Achievement. The TAT scores of the students ranged from 36 to 100. Hence, for convenience of labeling high and low degrees of achievement motivation, the investigator assumed that students whose scores are 50 and above have higher degrees of Need for Achievement while students whose score is below is said to have low degree of need achievement motivation. The data was transferred to SPSS 16 and the Lower Levels of Need for

Achievement is coded as 1 and Higher Levels is coded as 2. The mean values in Table 2 indicate that both male and female students possess somewhat higher levels of need for achievement motivation. While comparing Male and Female students, it is observed that Female students have comparatively higher need for achievement motivation than male students thus rejecting the null hypothesis.

Section 2 examined whether demographic factors such as age and family background have any impact on need for achievement in business administration students.

Table 3 showing age and achievement motivation levels

		Male	Average N(Ach) score	Female	Average N(Ach) score
Age	20 years	18	19	16	28
	21 years	20	29	25	35
	22 years	22	52	19	57

The above table shows us some interesting facts. It is observed that while the age value is increasing the need for achievement score also increased thus realizing the fact that higher age students have greater achievement motivation levels. Also, we find that female students have comparatively higher achievement levels than their male friends.

Table 3.1 showing family background and achievement motivation levels

		Male	Average N(Ach) score	Female	Average N(Ach) score
Fathers Occupation	Farmer	19	27	22	42
	Business	10	24	08	29
	Self-Employed	15	18	5	11
	Govt.,	2	09	-	-
	Private	12	22	7	18

The above table shows that students whose parent occupation is farming has scored more in achievement motivation than students whose parents are government and private employees respectively. Professions like farming, business and self-employment have higher risk factors. It requires lot of calculated risk and perseverance in staying in the profession. The college is located in a geographic region in Andhra Pradesh that is dominated by farming and business. A close interaction with the students gave some important insights. Students whose parents are into farming and business have no or very less education. However, their belief that higher education will result in better living inspired their children to possess higher achievement motivation. Table 3.1 and 3.2 results indicated that the third null hypothesis is rejected.

Section 3 examined the reasons for the gender to prefer select TAT pictures for story writing. Although Murray recommended using 20 cards, most practitioners choose a set of between 8 and 12 selected cards, either using cards that they feel are generally useful, or that they believe will encourage the subject's expression of emotional conflicts relevant to their specific history and situation, Cramer, P. (2004). However, the present study tried to move away from the traditional approach of TAT analysis. The investigator feels that evaluating 5 different TAT pictures becomes complex than evaluating a single TAT picture. In the present study the investigator showed 5 pictures such as;

1. A picture of a girl writing on the book
2. A picture showing a boy engaging in carpentry work
3. A picture of a girl standing on the sea shore and staring at the beach.
4. A picture showing a boy sitting on a rock
5. A picture showing an adult woman clarifying a boy in the library

The pictures have been carefully selected by reducing bias in selection. The pictures contains two male images, two female images and one photo depicting male and female working together. The pictures are selected purposefully because the investigator feels that no TAT picture should prejudice the respondent in writing a story. By doing so the TAT story line may not reveal the significant aspects of achievement motivation in students. Hence, the investigator reserved the choice of placing the gender images for respondent’s selection and story-writing. Upon completion of the TAT test, the stories were analyzed.

Table 4 showing gender preferences on TAT pictures

Gender	Picture 1	Picture 2	Picture 3	Picture 4	Picture 5
Male	11	5	39	3	2
% within Male	18.33	8.33	65	5.33	3
Female	2	4	7	45	2
% within Female	3	7	12	75	3

Table 4 shows some surprising facts. We understand that 65% of male respondents chose Picture 3 for story-writing while 75% of Female respondents chose Picture 4 for story-writing. The pictures are extracted from Google image search engine and placed here to have detailed understanding of the analysis.



The results raised eyebrows and resulted in the following questions;

1. Why male respondents chose image showing a girl at the sea shore?
2. Why female respondents chose image showing boy sitting on a rock?

The words commonly perceived to the selected images are – alone, lonely, disappointed, thinking, helpless, isolated, solace etc. The investigator analyzed the TAT story lines and during personal interview with the students the following revelation were observed;

- a. Most of the students disclosed that pressing financial problems in the family is causing severe stress among students.
- b. A few of the students revealed that intense personal relationships and breakdown in the promises have caused psychological distress among them.
- c. Loss of parent or close guardian is another reason that influenced the students in choosing such isolated pictures.
- d. Personal inhibitions such as shyness, lack of confidence, mother tongue influence, lack of communication skills and medical problems among boys and girls is also a major factor among these students for preferring such isolated pictures.

The bottom-line is that even though the above reasons had an impact on story writing by students, still 70% of the students imaginative story shows evidence of the Need for Achievement, Subsequent Positive and Negative Feelings, Activities that he/she is undertaking to reach the goal, personal inhibitions and finally help taken to achieve the stated goals.

DISCUSSION

The study examined the gender differences in Need for Achievement among business administration students. Also, the study explored the reasons for the gender to prefer select TAT pictures for story writing. In the study, the investigator used Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) for understanding the degree of achievement motivation in the students. From the results, it is observed that male and female students have significant differences in their achievement motivation levels. Female respondents showed higher degree of achievement motivation levels than male respondents. In a study conducted by Raghav (1985) – “To see the effect of socio-economic level and educational background of Achievement Motivation of 9th grade students, it was found that there is no effect of sex role in Achievement Motivation, Sex role and perception of the person. The current study was not consistent with the previous study. The investigator feels that the previous study by Raghav (1985) was done on 9th grade students and the current study was done on students who are pursuing post graduate course.

The context, climate and individual differences may have influenced for contrasting results. However, in a more recent study conducted by Shanti Promod (1996) – A study on Achievement motivation, level of anxiety, educational achievement, potentiality and memory span in future on 11th grade students of 30 years girls, the findings showed that Achievement Motivation in girls is comparatively higher than in boys. In a study conducted by Prajapati Pankti – A study on Achievement Motivation of 11th grade in relation with gender role, different streams, educational achievement and mother education, it was found that there is a significant difference in Achievement Motivation between boys and girls. By reviewing the previous studies, the current study is significant because the study was focused towards post graduate students. There is limited research conducted towards understanding Achievement Motivation of Post Graduate students and hence the findings of the present study will open new avenues for further research on achievement motivation in post graduate students. Subsequently, the investigator interviewed the respondents to find out the reasons for choosing specific TAT images. The reasons stated are more personal, however, most of the students demonstrated their need for achievement in their TAT story line.

CONCLUSION

The study was intended to measure the level of achievement motivation among business administration students in West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. The Need for Achievement was probed through Thematic Apperception Test and the investigator undertook personal interview with the respondents for deeper understanding of their motives in the story line. While the t-test reported that there is a significant difference among male and female students in achievement motivation, the mean values indicated that female students possess higher levels of achievement motivation than their male counterparts. The results also indicated that demographic factors such as Age and Parental Occupation have significant relationship with level of Achievement Motivation. Students with higher age demonstrated greater levels of achievement motivation. Also, it is observed that students whose parental occupation is farming and business have higher scores of achievement motivation than students whose parental occupation is into government service. The personal interview sessions with the students revealed some important insights about the student's hidden motives.

Most of the students expressed personal and financial problems which had a direct impact on their thought process. They opined that the stress caused due to personal or financial issues has an impact on the day to day activities of the students. However, they stressed the point that no matter what had happened in the past or what is happening to them they are committed to achieve their personal goals. While observing the TAT images it can be understood that Picture 1, 2 and 5 shows some positive elements of working or achievement while picture 3 and 4 shows individual at an isolated place. The investigator feels that students thought process should not be restricted to working or staying alone but should also develop a social-interest. While analyzing the TAT stories, the investigator did not feel enough evidence of social interest among the students. Working alone or staying to one self may be seen predominantly a nature of introvert but the field of business administration needs the students to be more extroverts. Students are

expected to work in teams, co-ordinate activities and ensure they are meeting stated goals. The investigator feels that if students are not trained towards social interest the consequences of their actions will be individualistic which is highly undesirable to the society. Hence, the investigator concludes that the present study is more appropriate in designing methodologies for developing social interest among such students.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study has opened gates for better understanding of personalities of students. Some of the areas where further research can be conducted in extension to this paper are;

1. A study can be conducted to understand if there is any significant difference between TAT results and Social Interests of the students. TAT is a more appropriate tool to reveal whether the students actually possess intentions of social interest which is complimented with the Social Interest questionnaire results.
2. A longitudinal study should be conducted to find out whether the students who possessed higher achievement motivation levels had successful careers for a given time span.

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