Study of Achievement Motivation in Relation to Academic Achievement of Students

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One of the most important factors that lead one to their goals is the drive. This drive is known as motivation. It is a zest and determination with a kind of excitement that leads one to persevere to reach greater heights, in no matter what avenue of their life; be it – personal or professional. The drive may come from an internal or external source. The individual determines this. The factors that motivate an individual keep changing as one climbs the ladder of age and maturity. And also, achievement of one goal sets the ball rolling for another one to be achieved. Thus, to be motivated is a constant need. There are times when one faces a period of de-motivation and everything seems bleak. It is then that they need to find what would motivate them back into action.

For every individual there is a variable driving force. In fact, it is not just a single factor, but a combination of factors that lead people to achieve their goals. The fact is that with routine monotony steps in and then everything seems like stagnant waters. It feels like there is nothing new. Breaking this cycle of monotony has helped many bounce back with enthusiasm. This is why human resource managers create a training calendar, which will take away employees from the routine they are stuck to, as well as enhance their skills in various areas.

Others pursue hobbies during the weekend, thus giving them something to look forward to, as each week comes to a close. There are people who redefine their goals and ambitions from time to time in order to fill them with newer levels of enthusiasm to achieve greater feats. One needs to take stalk every now and then and find the motivator required to carry them through. The word motivation is coined from the Latin word "movere", which means to move. Motivation is defined as an internal drive that activates behavior and gives it direction. The term motivation theory is concerned with the processes that describe why and how human behavior is activated and directed. It is regarded as one of the most important areas of study in the field of organizational behavior. There are two different categories of motivation theories such as content theories, and process theories. Even though there are different motivation theories, none of them are universally accepted.

Also known as need theory, the content theory of motivation mainly focuses on the internal factors that energize and direct human behavior. Maslow's hierarchy of

needs, Alderfer's ERG theory, Herzeberg's motivator-hygiene theory (Herzeberg's dual factors theory), and McClelland's learned needs or three-needs theory are some of the major content theories.

Motivation is the activation of goal-oriented behavior.Motivation is said to be intrinsic or extrinsic. The term is generally used for humans but, theoretically, it can also be used to describe the causes for animal behavior as well. This article refers to human motivation. According to various theories, motivation may be rooted in the basic need to minimize physical pain and maximize pleasure, or it may include specific needs such as eating and resting, or a desired object, hobby, goal, state of being, ideal, or it may be attributed to less-apparent reasons such as altruism, selfishness, morality, or avoiding mortality. Conceptually, motivation should not be confused with either volition or optimism.[1] Motivation is related to, but distinct from, emotion.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation refers to motivation that is driven by an interest or enjoyment in the task itself, and exists within the individual rather than relying on any external pressure.[2] Intrinsic motivation has been studied by social and educational psychologists since the early 1970s. Research has found that it is usually associated with high educational achievement and enjoyment by students. Explanations of intrinsic motivation have been given in the context of Fritz Heider's attribution theory, Bandura's work on self-efficacy,[3] and Deci and Ryan's cognitive evaluation theory. Students are likely to be intrinsically motivated if they:

Extrinsic motivation comes from outside of the individual. Common extrinsic motivations are rewards like money and grades, coercion and threat of punishment. Competition is in general extrinsic because it encourages the performer to win and beat others, not to enjoy the intrinsic rewards of the activity. A crowd cheering on the individual and trophies are also extrinsic incentives.

Social psychological research has indicated that extrinsic rewards can lead to over justification and a subsequent reduction in intrinsic motivation. In one study demonstrating this effect, children who expected to be (and were) rewarded with a ribbon and a gold star for drawing pictures spent less time playing with the drawing materials in subsequent observations than children who were assigned to an unexpected reward condition and to children who received no extrinsic reward.

Achievement Motivation

Motivation is generally regarded as the drive to achieve targets and the process to maintain the drive. Motivation provides an important foundation to complete cognitive behavior, such as planning, organization, decision-making, learning, and assessments (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Spence and Helmreich (1983) defined achievements as task-oriented behavior. Performances of individuals are often compared against standards or with others for assessments. The differing perspectives

of scholars result in various definitions of achievement motivation. The original definition of achievement motivation was from Atkinson (1964), who defined it as the comparison of performances with others and against certain standard activities. Atkinson and Feather (1966) suggested that achievement motivation is a combination of two personality variables: tendency to approach success and tendency to avoid failure. Bigge and Hunt (1980) defined achievement motivation as the drive to work with diligence and vitality, to constantly steer toward targets, to obtain dominance in challenging and difficult tasks and create sense of achievement as a result. This definition consists of three elements: the stimulation of personal capabilities, constant efforts with drive and obtaining of sense of satisfaction.

Helmreich & Spence (1978) consolidated the theories concerning achievement motivation and compiled the Work and Family Orientation Questionnaire (WOFO). Meanwhile, they conducted a factor analysis and argued that achievement motivation consists of four elements, i.e. mastery of needs, work orientation, competition, and personal unconcern. After further studies, they found that the interaction of the first three elements is the key reason that contributes to excellent performance of individuals. It is highly related to personal achievements (Spence & Helmreich, 1983).

1. Mastery of needs: An individual prefers jobs that are challenging, intellectually demanding, and thought-oriented. He or she enjoys playing a leadership role in groups and is able to complete tasks already started.
2. Work orientation: An individual takes a proactive attitude toward work and loves what he or she does. He or she obtains sense of satisfaction from work and pursues self-realization and growth.
3. Competition: An individual hopes for victory and has the desire to win over others.
4. Personal unconcern: An individual does not consider success or stellar performance to be the cause of being rejected by others. In other words, there is no fear of success.

According to the above literature, achievement motivation is a subjective and internal psychological drive, enabling individuals to pursue work they perceive to be valuable and prompting them to reach their goals. Meanwhile, achievement motivation is also a mentality to compete and compare with others.

According to definitions, as proposed by the previously mentioned scholars, achievement motivation is a subjective, internal, and psychological drive, enabling individuals to pursue work they perceive to be valuable and eventually achieve their goals. Sparrow (1998) found that motivations have influence on the formation of psychological contracts. Motivations include meaningful work, job security, and a sense of achievement, promotional channels, and opportunities.

Over the years, behavioral scientists have noticed that some people have an intense desire to achieve something, while others may not seem that concerned about their achievements. This phenomenon has attracted a lot of discussions and debates. Scientists have observed that people with a high level of achievement motivation exhibit certain characteristics. Achievement motivation is the tendency to endeavor

for success and to choose goal oriented success or failure activities.

Achievement motivation forms to be the basic for a good life. People who are oriented towards achievement, in general, enjoy life and feel in control. Being motivated keeps people 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. Achievement motivated people prefer to work on a problem rather than leaving the outcome to chance. It is also seen that achievement motivated people seem to be more concerned with their personal achievement rather than the rewards of success.

It is generally seen that achievement motivated people evidenced a significantly higher rate of advancement in their company compared to others. Programs and courses designed, involves seven "training inputs." The first step refers to the process through which achievement motivation thinking is taught to the person. The second step helps participants understand their own individuality and goals. The third assist participants in practicing achievement-related actions in cases, role-plays, and real life. A fourth refers to practicing of achievement-related actions in business and other games. A fifth input encourages participants to relate the achievement behavior model to their own behavior, self-image, and goals. The sixth program facilitates participants to develop a personal plan of action. Finally, the course provides participants with feedback on their progress towards achieving objectives and targets.

Achievement motivation is a stable learned characteristic in which satisfaction comes from striving for and achieving a level of excellence.

Achievement motivation is a drive to excel in learning tasks combined with the capacity to experience tried in accomplishment (Eggen, Manchak, 1994, David Mc Clelland and Atkinson were the first one to concentrate on the study of achievement motivation. Mc Cleland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell, (1953). People who strive for excellence in a field for the sake of achieving and not for some reward are considered to have a high need for achievement. This need has labeled n-achievement for convenience.

The latest approach in Achievement Motivation is an integrative perspective as lined out in the "Onion-Ring-Model of Achievement Motivation" by Heinz Schuler, George C. Thornton III, Andreas Frintrup and Rose Mueller-Hanson. It is based on the premise that performance motivation results from the way broad components of personality are directed towards performance. As a result, it includes a range of dimensions that are relevant to success at work but which are not conventionally regarded as being part of performance motivation. Especially it integrates formerly separated approaches as Need for Achievement with e.g. social motives like dominance. The Achievement Motivation Inventory (AMI) (Schuler, Thornton, Frintrup & Mueller-Hanson, 2003) is based on this theory and assesses three factors (17 separated scales) relevant to vocational and professional success.

Achievement Motivation

Defined as the need to perform well or the striving for success, and evidenced by

persistence and effort in the face of difficulties, achievement motivation is regarded as a central human motivation. Psychologist David McClelland (The Achieving Society, 1961) measured it by analysing respondents' narratives; rather more controversially he hypothesized that it was related to economic growth. Lack of achievement motivation was, for a period during the 1950s and 1960s, a fashionable explanation for lack of economic development in the Third World—notably among certain American modernization theorists.

Atkinson (1964) states , "The theory of achievement motion attempts to account for the determinants of the direction, magnitude and persistence of behaviour, in limited but very important domain of human activities. In the words of Dave and Anand (1979) "Achievement Motivation is a desire to do well relative to some standard of excellence." Colman, A.M. (2001) has defined achievement motivation as a social form of motivation involving a competitive desire to meet standards of excellence.

Thus, the basis of achievement motivation is achievement motive, i.e. motive to achieve. Those who engage themselves in a task account of an achievement motivation. Achievement motivation is expectancy of finding satisfaction in mastery of difficult and challenging performances where as in the field of education in particular it stands for the pursuit of excellence.

Since need for achievement vary from one student to another, it may help in planning activities to know where students stands which students, for instance, have high achievement needs which are low in achievement and which seems primarily motivated by a need to avoid failure. Those who are more highly motivated to achieve are likely to respond well to challenging assignments, strict grading corrective feedback, new or unusual problems and the chance to try again. But, less challenging assignments, simple reinforcement for success, small steps for each task, lenient grading and protections from embarrassment are probably more successful strategies for those students who are very eager to avoid failure.

Important Implications for Future Academic Success

It is important for both parents, and educators, to understand why promoting and encouraging academic motivation from an early age is imperative. Academic 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. A great deal of research has found that students high in academic motivation are more likely to have increased levels of academic achievement and have lower dropout rates (Blank, 1997).

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 students? academic career. As discussed earlier, individuals who are intrinsically motivated to learn do so

for the pleasure of learning, rather than for external rewards (Slavin, 2006). In contrast, those who are extrinsically motivated to learn, are motivated to learn for external rewards that learning will bring (Slavin, 2006). 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 Motivation Theory
By Bill Bowman, eHow Contributor
Achievement motivation theory is one of a number of psychological theories concerning what makes people do what they do. Knowledge of this theory is useful to managers who wish to get the most out of their employees.

Identification
Adherents to achievement motivation theory believe people have an innate need to succeed or to reach a high level of attainment.

Significance
Psychologists who subscribe to achievement motivation theory consider achievement motivation---the need to succeed---as a foundation for all human motivation.

Features
Under the theory, achievement motivation tends to feed on itself. That is, people who experience great levels of success are motivated to strive for more success.

Expert Insight
Psychologists who are adherents to the theory, such as Bernard Weiner, have postulated that people who achieve high levels of excellence tend to regard those who do not as not having tried hard enough, while those who are not high achievers tend to see those who are as being lucky.

Fun Fact
The 1950s saw the advent of the theory that lack of achievement motivation---the lack of a need to succeed---was at the root of failure in developing countries.

Future of Achievement Motivation

Previous research has shown that the educational expectations of adolescents are correlated with their academic achievements (Bui, 2007; Sanders, Field, & Diego, 2001). Sanders, Field, and Diego's (2001) research revealed that high school students' educational expectations and academic achievements were reciprocally predictive. Such a reciprocal relationship was also reported in Bui's (2007) study, but the path from academic achievements to educational expectations emerged as stronger than the reverse path. However, the long-term reciprocal effects of educational expectations and academic achievements on adolescents are less clear.

Educational expectations, that is, students' own expectations about the highest level of education they will attain, represent a kind of expectation about future academic success. According to expectancy-value theory (Eccles et al., 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), expectations of success are a crucial component influencing achievement-related performance and are assumed to be influenced by perceptions of competence and by goals held by individuals. Such perceptions and goals are influenced by individuals' interpretations of their own previous achievements. In other words, expectations of success and outcomes of achievements presumably have a cyclical influence on each other. That is, individuals' expectations of success influence their achievements and their achievements further influence their future expectations. Consistent with the feedback mechanism of the expectancy-value model, adolescents are expected to have better long-term academic achievement outcomes if they have higher educational expectations during earlier periods. Through feedback mechanisms operating over time, educational expectations are assumed to facilitate academic achievements.

Adolescents are among those affected by it, as educators point out. They have noted a general lack of motivation, especially regarding school tasks, absence of guidance and uncertainty about the future, a marked "live-in-the-present" attitude associated with diminished capacity for delayed gratification, and lack of perseverance and capacity for effort. Undoubtedly this situation is closely related to adolescents' possibility of conceiving life goals capable of sustaining present action and providing it with meaning.

Contemporary motivation research provides valid answers to teachers' questions about how to intervene effectively in this respect. Two important theoretical approaches stand out in the literature of the last four decades: (1) achievement

motivation theory (Atkinson, 1966), and (2) future time perspective theory. The former explains motivation as a function of the value of what is aimed at and the individual's expectations of success. Both have been abundantly explored, giving rise to various theoretical constructs. These relate to goal value (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992; Eccles & Wigfield, 1995), to the different types of goals--learning goals, performance goals (Dweck, 1986), task or ego-involved goals (Nichols, 1984), mastery goals (Ames & Archer, 1988)--and to the role of beliefs in expectations of success (Wolters & Pintrich, 1996). This last factor originates in the locus of control concept (Rotter, 1966) and attribution theory (Weiner, 1984). The latter has led to the exploration of causality judgements about the results of a person's own actions, considering them as variables of the motivational process that condition expectations and self-regulation processes. Future time perspective theory stems from Lewin's (1935) psychology, according to which human behavior integrates into the present both the past and the future, which is the site of plans and goals. The relationship between the purposiveness of human behavior and its time horizon is discussed by Fraisse (1963) and Nuttin (1953), whose theory of human personality centers on the recognition of the role of time, especially the future dimension.

The basic motivational phenomenon is "the active, persistent and selective orientation characterizing behavior" (Nuttin, 1973). Motivation is defined not only by tendency arousal, but also by its orientation, and therefore by the intervention of the cognitive function, because the goal should be cognitively and volitionally anticipated as intention.

Therefore, although needs account for tendency activation, tendencies are guided by knowledge: the goal-development process is crucial to motivation, just as knowledge of the results of one's action is crucial to setting new goals. Individuals become structured as personalities insofar as they set themselves goals whose conception depends both on their self-conception and on their worldview. The goals thus set lead to behavior self-regulation. Nuttin (1980a) claims that "the subjects' behavior is regulated, in the last analysis, by the goals they set themselves, which constitute and specify their self-conception" (p. 165). We might add that they also constitute the criteria for goal-setting through time; hence the subjects' vital projects may be approached by exploring their goals.

Nuttin (1980a) also contends that "human beings' development is partly self-transformation into what they set out to be" (p. 167). It is the constructive tension between their realistic self-conception and their ideal self-image that moves individuals to action; hence the educational importance of encouraging the former and contributing to the development of the latter by presenting students with valuable goals.

In view of this cross-cultural approach, it is interesting to explore Argentinean teenagers' FTP at a crisis point where the future is being perceived as uncertain and even threatening, especially by the members of the lowest socioeconomic stratum. A cultural transformation is taking place as well in terms of changing values. A more traditional society, with Hispanic roots, is giving way to a less unitary worldview. At the same time, since the 1980s, growing public discontent and especially with politics has led to adolescents' lack of interest and commitment in this regard.

Many FTP studies explore the influence of socio cultural and gender contexts on its various dimensions, especially on extension. Leshan (1952) was one of the first to tackle this issue. He points to a difference of extension in favor of the middle class which is associated with greater future planning capacity, with the lower classes seeing the future as uncertain. These differences would be strongly influenced by child-rearing practices, especially in relation to gratification delay. His conclusions have been challenged, particularly because of the relationship between method and result. Ellis and Mandel (1955) do not find any relationship between social class and frustration tolerance, but they do not dispute the existence of a relation between the former and FTP extension. According to other studies, the shorter FTP extension in lower-class subjects would be mediated by IQ (Lessing, 1968) or socialization practices (Lamm, Schmidt, & Trommsdorff, 1976). These would stress primary group belonging and the private sphere, whereas the middle classes would insist on the development of the skills required to set long-term goals, achievement motivation, optimism toward the future, and internal locus of control. This last variable, defined as the generalized expectancy that outcomes are contingent on personally controllable factors (Rotter, 1966), has been considered in relation to FTP, sex, and social class. Lamm, Schmidt, and Trommsdorff (1976) found that males perceive more internal control than do females in regard to hopes and fears, and middle-class adolescents are more long-term directed in their future orientation than lower class adolescents. This holds for hopes and fears related to private as well as public concerns (p. 324). Lower-class persons envision their future as controlled by external forces, which would influence FTP extension and optimism. More recent studies point to a significant correlation between locus of control and FTP connectedness (Shell & Husman, 2001). Locus of control also influences the connection between FTP and school investment (Peetsma, 2000).

Motivational categories have been drawn from the relational theory of motivation. They correspond to Nuttin's required interactions between human beings and their world, which stem from cognitive processing and the channelling of basic needs. These constitute the source of motivation and the basis of the action projects behaviorally realized.

Nuttin distinguishes among four categories of objects involving fundamental kinds of relationships directed to the constructive development of the subject's personality. They are: (1) the self with its physical, psychological, and character-related dimensions, expressing itself through responses such as "I wish to be thinner," "happy," "more friendly," "persevering"; (2) the others, i.e., social relationships; this category encompasses a continuum ranging from social contact aimed at selfish goals ("[I want, wish] others to help me," "to predominate") to symmetric social contact ("[I want, wish] to have friends"), close relationships ("[I want, wish] to have a boy/girlfriend"), and even altruistic social relationships ("[I want, wish] to help my friends," "my family to be happy"); (3) material objects, which give rise to interactions of a utilitarian or possessive nature or related to the pursuit of sensual pleasure ("[I want, wish] to have a car," "to eat well," "to have fun"); (4) spiritual realities, which include meaning and religious values, theoretical knowledge, political and social views ("[I want] more justice," "[I want, wish] to become a saint," "to

discover the truth"). These categories are combined with the different types of relationships to which they give rise.

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