Achievement Motivation Among Distance Learners in Relation to Gender and Residential Background

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Abstract: *Learning is signified by a change in behaviour or a movement from one state of behaviour to another through acquisition of new knowledge or skills for personal use. The level of one's tendency to achieve is referred to as resultant achievement motivation. Resultant achievement motivation is the tendency to acheive as determined by the tendencies to approach success and to avoid failure. This paper deals with the findings of a study conducted — to inviting to the relationships of gender (male female) and residential background (rural, urban) on three components namely – work, mastery and competitiveness, of achievement motivation of distance leaners. At the end paper relates the findings with its educational implications.*

Introduction

Learning is signified by a change in behaviour or a movement from one state of behaviour to another through the acquisition of new knowledge or skills for personal use. Learning takes place as adults interact with objects, people and events in their environment in order to gain new relevant information that may be useful in some way (Verduin, Miller and Greer, 1977). This new information is available for use whenever the adult sees fit and may be stored for alter use.

From the learner's viewpoint, learning is the conscious effort to acquire new knowledge and skills that lead to a personal goal of some sort. As adults acquire new knowledge and skills, or cognitive and psychomotor behaviours, and achieve personal goals, they also respond in some fashion to the value of the information being learnt. This affective dimension must come into play whenever adults attempt to gain new cognitive information or psychomotor skills. The motivation of adult students is strongly tied to the value they place on an educational experience. The importance of the three domains — cognitive, psychomotor and affective — lies in the fact that they have an impact on the performance of adults and the proficiencies that they possess. Much of learners' intentional learning activity is motivated by the desire to move from their current proficiency level to the new proficiency level. Discrepancies between an adult's current level and desired proficiency level directly affect motivation and achievement in both learning activities and life roles. Proficiency or capability to perform efficiently, if given the opportunity, usually depends on some combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes

that the adult possesses (Know, 1980). The cognitive, psychomotor and affective domain actually define the behavioural package that each adult possesses.

But if a job requires some creative and original input thereby providing a sense of personal accomplishment, a high need achiever will probably work harder and persist longer than most of us. May be this is why researchers sometimes find a positive correlation between need for achievement and academic performance (Spence and Herlmreich, 1983), but sometimes do not (Mc clelland, 1980).

The need for achievement, as described by Murray, is the desire to accomplish something difficult; to master, manipulate or organise to overcome obstacles and attain a high standard to excel one's self. One of the prominent features of high need achievers is that they are only moderate risk takers. They want to succeed, but they are also highly motivated to avoid failure. They take small risks. Another characteristic related to a higher need for achievement is an energetic approach to work. But high need achievers do not simply work harder at everything. They usually only get pumped up for tasks with the potential for some personal achievement. Routine and boring jobs hold no more interest for them than for anyone else.

High need for achievement people also prefer jobs that give them personal responsibility for outcomes. They want credit for success but are also willing to accept blame for failure. In fact, the opportunity to receive concrete feedback about performance is important to high need achievers. This need for immediate feedback is complemented by the high need for achievement person's need to anticipate future possibilities and make long-range plans. These people succeed in profession in part because they look ahead, anticipate many courses of action and possible pitfalls, and thereby increase their chances of obtaining the goal of achievement. Although a person's need for achievement is related to the achievement behaviour, other personality variables play a role as well.

John Atkinson, who worked with Mc Clelland on the original need for achievement studies, has examined some of these additional variables. In his original formulation, Atkinson (1957) concluded that the tendency to achieve could be predicted from the motive to approach success, similar to Mc Clelland's need for achievement, and the tendency to avoid failure. Atkinson described this latter concept as "a disposition to avoid failure and / or a capacity for experiencing shame and humiliation as a consequence of failure". In other words, an achievement situation such as a final exam, is a highly traumatic event for many people. Their concern for what will happen, if they fail pulls them in the opposite direction for their achievement need. Mathematically, the tendency to approach success (Ts) and the tendency to avoid failure (Taf) determine the tendency to achieve (Ta) in the following manner:

$Ta = Ts - Taf$

This level of one's tendency to achieve is referred to as resultant achievement motivation. Resultant achievement motivation is the tendency to achieve as determined by the tendencies to approach success and to avoid failure.

The present study has endeavored to investigate the relationship of gender (two types) and residential background (two types) on three components of achievement motivation of distance learners.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study the achievement motivation on work, mastery, competitiveness component among male and female distance learners;
- To study the achievement motivation on work, mastery, competitiveness component among rural and urban distance learners;
- To study the achievement motivation of distance learners as a whole;
- To study the achievement motivation among distance learners in relation to gender and residential background on three components of achievement motivation i.e. work, mastery and competitiveness.

Hypotheses

The following were the hypotheses formulated for this study on the basis of above mentioned objectives:

- There will be no significant difference among male and female distance learners on work, mastery and competitiveness component of achievement motivation.
- There will be no significant difference among rural and urban distance learners on work, mastery and competitiveness component of achievement motivation.
- There will be no interaction effect of gender and residential background on achievement motivation of distance learners.

Deliminations

The deliminations of the study were as under:

- The study was delimited to distance learners who have enrolled themselves for M. Ed. Course from International Centre for Distance Education and Open Learning (ICDEOL), Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla.
- The study was delimited to only three Personal Contact Programme Centres from three states i.e. (Rajasthan); Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) and Shimla (Himachal Pradesh).

Sample

The study covered the target population of distance learners enrolled for M.Ed. one year (Two semesters) course from ICDEOL. H.P. University for the session 1998-1999. The sample covered 3 PCP centres viz. Bikaner (Rajasthan), Bhopal (M.P.) and Shimla (H.P.) The size of the sample was 224. Sample was grouped in four groups according to gender and residential background. The sample comprised of 224 M.Ed. distance

learners, out of which 124 were males and 100 were females, with regard to residential background 96 were from rural area while 128 were from urban area. The four groups were as follows:

Table-1: Gender and Residential background of the sample learners

Residential Background Gender	Rural	Urban	Total
Male	75	49	124
Female	21	79	100
Total	96	128	224

Tools

Achievement Motivation

Personality inventory of achievement motivation developed by Rober Helmreich and Janet Spence was used to collect data which divides the need for achievement into three factors. The work factor represents "the desire to work hard and to do a good job", the mastery factor reflects "a preference for difficult challenging task and for meeting internally prescribed standards for performance excellence," and the competitiveness factor describes "the enjoyment of interpersonal competition and the desire to win".

Collection and Analysis of Data

The study is based on the descriptive research. The information and data was gathered through survey method by using personality inventory of achievement motivation. The Ex-post facto design was used.

The scores on achievement motivation of distance learners on three components viz. Work, mastery and competitiveness were tabulated on the basis of gender and residential background. The data was analysed by calculating mean and S.D. The statistical technique of analysis of variance was used to find out the impact of main effects and interaction effects.

Table-2: Mean and S.D. of Work, mastery and Competitiveness Component of Achievement Motivation of Rural and Urban Distance Learners

Residential Background	Work			Mastery			Competitiveness		
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.
Rural	96	14.80	2.23	96	17.79	4.48	96	11.02	2.75
Urban	128	14.25	1.97	128	17.45	4.20	128	9.93	2.61
Total	224	14.49	2.09	224	17.59	4.32	224	10.40	2.72

The mean for the rural and urban students on work component for achievement motivation was around the same level being 14.80 and 14.25 respectively. However S.D. for the rural students was 2.23 as compared to 1.97 for urban students.

The mean for the rural and urban students on mastery component of achievement motivation was around the same level being 17.79 and 17.45 respectively. However S.D. for the rural students was 4.48 as compared to 4.20 for urban students.

The mean for the rural and urban students on competitiveness component of achievement motivation was being 11.02 and 9.93 respectively. However, S.D. for the rural students was 2.75 as compared to 2.61 for urban students.

Table-3: Mean and S.D. of Work, Mastery and Competitiveness Component of Achievement Motivation of Male and Female Distance Learners

Gender	Work			Mastery			Competitiveness		
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.
Male	124	14.74	2.35	124	17.81	4.40	124	10.83	2.75
Female	100	14.17	1.69	100	17.33	4.23	100	9.86	2.60
Total	224	14.49	2.09	224	17.59	4.32	224	10.40	2.72

The mean for the male and female students on work component of achievement motivation was being 14.74 and 14.17 respectively. However S.D. for the male students was 2.35 as compared to 1.69 for female students.

The mean for the male and female students in mastery component of achievement motivation was being 17.81 and 17.33 respectively. However S.D. for the male students was 4.40 as compared to 4.23 for female students.

The mean for the male and female students on competitiveness component of achievement motivation was being 10.83 and 9.86 respectively. However S.D. for the male students was 2.75 as compared to 2.60 for female students.

Analysis of Main Effects

The analysis of main effects are as follows:

Table-4: Effect of Gender and Residential Background on work Component of Achievement Motivation

Sources of Variation	d.f.	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Gender	1	8.511	8.511	1.961
Residential background	1	5.478	5.478	1.262
Gender × Residential Background	1	0.358	0.358	0.083
Error	220	954.651	4.339	
Total	223	968.998		

The result of two-way analysis of variance showing effect of gender and residential background on work component of achievement motivation is given in Table 4 which reveals that F ratio for main effect of gender was obtained to be 1.961, of residential background 1.262 and their interaction effect 0.083 with 1 and 220 d.f. which were not significant even at 0.05 the level of significance.

Table-5: Effect of Gender and Residential Background on Mastery Component of Achievement Motivation

Sources of Variation	d.f.	Sum of Squares	mean Square	F
Gender	1	15.238	15.238	.811
Residential Background	1	.000	.000	.000
Gender × Residential Background	1	18.458	18.458	.982
Error	220	4135.412	18.797	
Total	223	4169.108		

The result of two-way analysis of variance showing effect of gender and residential background on mastery component of achievement motivation is given in Table 5 which reveals that F ratio for main effect of gender was obtained to be 0.811, of residential background zero and their interaction effect 0.982 with 1 and 220 d.f. which were not significant even at 0.05 the level of significance.

Table-6: Effect of Gender and Residential Background on Competitiveness Component of Achievement Motivation

Sources of Variation	d.f.	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Gender	1	18.955	18.955	2.665
Residential Background	1	27.936	27.936	3.928*
Gender × Residential Background	1	0.349	0.349	0.049
Error	220	1564.833	7.113	
Total	223	1612.073		

*Significant at .05 level

It may be observed from the above-table that the value of F for 1 and 220 d.f. are 3.89 and 6.76 at .05 and .01 level of significance respectively. The result of two-way analysis of variance showing effect of gender and residential background on competitiveness component of achievement motivation is given in Table 6 which reveals that F ratio for main effect of gender was obtained to be 2.665 and their interaction effect 0.049 with 1 and 220 d.f. which were not significant even at 0.05 the level of significance. However the F-value for the main effect of residential background that is 3.928 comes out to be significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This shows that residential background has a significant impact on the competitiveness component of achievement motivation of M.Ed. students pursuing their course through distant mode.

Table-7 : Effect of Gender and Residential Background on All the Three Components (Total) of Achievement Motivation

Sources of Variation	d.f.	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Gender	1	10.5795	105.795	2.861
Residential Background	1	45.373	45.373	1.227
Gender × Residential Background	1	30.309	30.309	0.820
Error	220	8133.983	36.972	
Total	223	8323.929		

Note : None of the F-values is significant at .05 level

It may be observed from the Table-7 that the value of F ratio for main effect of gender was obtained to be 2.861, of residential background 1.227 and their interaction effect 0.820 with 1 and 200 d.f. which was not significant even at .05 level of significance. This indicates that neither gender nor residential background as well as their interaction has any effect on the three components (total) of achievement motivation of M.Ed.. students pursuing the course through distance mode of education. Hence the hypothesis No. 3 which is a null hypothesis is retained i.e. there is no significant interaction effect of gender and residential background on achievement motivation of distance learners.

Conclusions

Main Effects

The F ratio for the main effect of gender on all components i.e. work, mastery, competitiveness of achievement motivation was found to be 2.861 for 1/220 d.f. it was found to be non-significant even at 0.05 level of confidence. This indicates that gender did not have any impact on all the components of achievement motivation of M.Ed. students pursuing the course through distance mode. Hence, the hypothesis No. 1 which is a null hypothesis is retained i.e. there is no significant interaction effect of gender on achievement motivation of distance learners.

The F ratio for the main effect of residential background on all components i.e. work, mastery, competitiveness of achievement motivation was found to be 1.227 for 1/220 d.f. It was found to be non-significant even at 0.05 level of confidence. This indicates that residential background did not have any impact on all the components of achievement motivation of M.Ed. students pursuing the course through distance mode. Hence, the hypothesis No. 2 which is a null hypothesis is retained i.e. there is no significant interaction effect of residential background on achievement motivation of distance learners.

Interaction Effects

The interaction effects of gender × residential background on three components of achievement motivation i.e. work, mastery and competitiveness were analysed by F ratio.

The F ratio for the interaction effect of gender × residential background on all components of achievement motivation was found to be 0.082 for 1/220 d.f. It was found to be non-significant even at 0.05 level of confidence. This indicates that interaction effect did not have any impact on all components of achievement motivation of M.Ed. students pursuing the course through distance mode. Hence, the hypothesis No. 3 which is a null hypothesis is retained i.e. there is no significant interaction effect of gender and residential background on achievement motivation of distance learners.

Relationship Among Different Components of Achievement Motivation

The individual scores of the three components of achievement motivation i.e. work, mastery and competitiveness are compared with the total score of achievement motivation.

Table-8: Relationship Among Different Components of Achievement Motivation

Components of Achievement Motivation	Work	Mastery	Competitiveness	Total Achievement Motivation
Work	—	0.0471	0.0548	0.3969**
Mastery	—	—	0.2418**	0.8225**
Competitiveness	—	—	—	0.6015**
Total	—	—	—	—

** Significant at 0.01 level.

The relationship of work component of achievement motivation with mastery as well as competitiveness components of achievement motivation is not statistically significant, whereas, the work component of achievement motivation is positively and significantly associated with the total scores on achievement motivation at 0.01 levels of significance. It can therefore, be concluded that the work component of achievement motivation did not have a discernible impact on mastery and competitiveness component, but it did influence the total scores on achievement motivation.

The mastery component of achievement motivation is positively and significantly related to competitiveness component as well as with total scores on achievement motivation at 0.01 level of significance.

The competitiveness component of achievement motivation is positively and significantly associated with total scores on achievement motivation at 0.01 level of confidence. Thus the competitiveness component also had a significant influence on the total scores on achievement motivation. This shows that the mastery component had a direct impact on the competitiveness as well as total scores on achievement motivation.

Results and Discussion

The investigator tried to achieve all the objectives set for the present study and accordingly the findings are as follows:

- Out of the total sample, majority were male i.e. 55%.

- A majority of the students were from urban area i.e. 57%.

- 78% male distance learners were from rural background.

- 62% female distance learners were from urban area.

- Highest mean was found in case of male distance learners on mastery component of achievement motivation, which was 17.81.

- Lowest mean was found in case of female distance learners on competitiveness component of achievement motivation, which was 9.86.

- The male distance learners from rural area had a better score on the work, mastery and competitiveness component of achievement motivation.

- There is no significant difference between male and female distance learners on work, mastery and competitiveness component of achievement motivation.

- There is no significant different between rural and urban distance learners on work, mastery and competitiveness component of achievement motivation.

- The effect of residential background is significant at 0.05 level of confidence. Hence, residential background affected significantly on the competitiveness component of achievement motivation in which distance learners from rural background exhibited higher tendency of competitiveness as compared to the distance learners from urban background.

- There is no significant difference between gender and residential background as well as for their interaction effect on the over all total components of achievement motivation of M.Ed. students pursuing the course through distance mode.

- The relationship of work component of achievement motivation with mastery as well as competitiveness of achievement motivation is not statistically significant, whereas, the work component is positively and significantly associated with the total scores on achievement motivation at .01 level of significance. It can be concluded that the work component of achievement motivation did not have a discernible impact on mastery and competitiveness, but it did influence the total scores on achievement motivation.

- Mastery component of achievement motivation is positively and significantly related to competitiveness component as well as with total scores for achievement motivation at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the Mastery component also had a significant influence on the competitiveness as well as total scores on achievement motivation.

- The competitiveness component of achievement motivation is positively and significantly associated with the total scores on achievement motivation at 0.01 level of confidence. This shows that the competitiveness component had a impact on the mastery as well as the total scores on achievement motivation.

Educational Implications

Persons scoring high in need for achievement appear to be striving for achievement related goals and to engage in activities which will lead to these goals. These individuals also have greater ability to delay gratification. They tend to forego a smaller immediate reward to obtain a larger reward at a later time. This behaviour is not exhibited as frequently by subjects low in need for achievement.

The women should come forward to receive higher education in an increasing number is a very happy state of affairs for developing society like India. The induction of more women in higher education would not only make them economically self sufficient but also develop self-confidence among them.

Researchers have shown why people of high achievement motivation remain highly motivated where as people low in this need do not. High need for achievement people

who succeed see this as a sign of their superior ability of strong effort. When they fail, it's because of bad luck or some other unstable cause. With these attributions, people with high achievement motivation feel good about themselves and are motivated to continue their hard work, regardless of the outcome.

People with a high achievement need tended to see their successes as the result of the skill and to see their failures as the result of bad luck. Further research found those with a high need for achievement also are more likely to attribute their success to effort than are those with a low need for achievement (Kulkla, 1972; Touhey & Villemez, 1980).

In summary, research on need for achievement has expanded considerably since the original work on this trait appeared in the early 1950s. Murray's theory stimulated McClelland's work. McClelland identified and described the behaviour of high need for achievement people. He expanded his work to the questions of how parents influence a child's achievement motivation and how societies rise and fall economically as a result of different types of socialization. Atkinson and others added to the original formula for predicting achievement behaviour and Weiner demonstrated the role of attributions in this process. All of this suggests that Murray's original need for achievement concept was indeed a fertile one.

The educational implications of the present study are as follows:

● High achievement need can reduce the drop out rate of distance learners.

● The distance learners attend some of the counselling sessions at the study centers, the counsellor should be trained in such a way as to encourage them for higher education.

● There is a lack of two way communication between the distance learners and the teacher. The tutor comments on the assignments should be encouraging so as to increase their achievement motivation.

● In some courses where extended contact programme,, personal contact programmes are organized, there is an ample opportunity to understand the difficulties and limitations of the distance learners. Hence, the co-ordinator and other resource person should handle the distance learners carefully so as to raise their need for achievement.

● The training courses, orientation programmes and refresher courses should be organized for the co-ordinators and the resource persons meant for distance education and open learning.

● In the present study the distance learners are employed teachers, if they have a high need for achievement, they can excel in their performance and ultimately can develop high need achievement among their students.

● High need achievement also helps in developing different types of skills.

● High need achievement also motivates the students to take the responsibility of performing difficult tasks.

● High need achievement also helps the students to compete for showing their superior abilities.

- High need achievement keeps the students motivated through out their studies.

- High need achievement also helps them to pursue for further higher studies.

- It can be concluded from the present study that high need achievement should be developed among the distance learners through encouragement and awards on assignments as well as term end examination. High need achievement will reduce the drop-out rate and encourage the students to pursue different courses for better job performance, creativity, knowledge, skills in information technology, career advancement, excellent performance in every field wherever they have an opportunity to work.

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