Academic Performance: A Function of Achievement Motivation Among Education Students of Cross River University of Technology, Calabar

O. U Onete, CRUTECH Calabar, Nigeria
P. B., Edet, Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counseling, University of Calabar, Nigeria
F. U. Udey, CRUTECH Calabar, Nigeria
B. Peter Ogbor, University of Buea, Cameroon

Abstract

The study examined the relationship between first year education students’ achievement motivation and their academic performance. The design employed for the study was survey (expo-facto). A total of seven hundred and fifty (750) out of one thousand three hundred and fifty two students (1352) students of the 2010/2011 academic session were randomly selected for the study. To guide the study, two hypotheses were formulated on students’ academic achievement motivation and academic performance as well as students’ social achievement motivation and academic performance. Relevant literature was reviewed to back up the study. The instrument used for the study was tagged “Education Students’ Achievement Motivation Scale (ESAMS)” which was adapted from Cofer and Appley (1964) Achievement Imagery and Grandal and Grandal (1965) Modified Intellectual achievement Questionnaire (MIAQ). The instrument consisted of two parts, A and B. Part A consisted of items on respondent’s Bio–data while Part B comprised of 15 items which elicited responses from students’ achievement motivation. The results of the study after analysis of the hypotheses obtained data with “ANOVA” statistical analysis technique indicated that neither students’ academic achievement motivation nor students’ social achievement motivation had any significant influence on education students’ academic performance. Based on these findings, some recommendations were made.
**Key words:** Academic performance, Achievement motivation, academic performance, Social motivation

**INTRODUCTION**

From both the print and electronic media, the society on a yearly basis is informed about the number of youths who gained admission into the various programmes of the nation’s universities and other tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria. These individuals are usually referred to as tertiary institution students. They enter the university and other higher institutions with varied characteristics of personality as reflected in their behaviours. For instance, there are those who are likely to be almost always withdrawn, moody while others have feelings of being frustrated or are afraid that they may be frustrated in the course during their programmes of study, and may feel uncomfortable with almost every event in the school. These feelings make them become doubtful, solicitous, apprehensive and hopeless about their success in school. On the other hand, there are those who are found to be active, especially concerning their studies and other school activities. They raise issues for discussions, attend class activities regularly, ask questions and are ready to attempt answering questions from the lecturers. They seem to
enjoy and are encouraged by almost everything around them in the school environment. Students who behave this way are said to be motivated, perhaps from their home background influence, and as such, develop a hopeful feeling that they would excel in their academic pursuits. They are said to be achievement motivated.

Achievement motivation is possibly an intrinsic motive to achieve just for the sake of achieving rather than achievement in the service of some other motives (Sprinthall, Sprinthall and Oja, 1994). According to the authors, the most important single ingredient in achievement motivation is a feeling of self directed competence. Some theories have been propounded by some psychologists to explain the concept of motivation. For instance McClelland (1985) explained motivation in terms of achievement needs (‘Ach) by employing the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) to measure need for achievement. The study revealed a significant relationship between behaviour and needs achievement. Also, Atkinson (1964) in Asagwara (2000) explained that the tendency to approach an achievement goal is a product of three factors

1. The need achievement or the motive for success
2. The probability of success and;
3. The incentive value of success.

He also recognized that fear of failure can be aroused in an achievement related situation, and concluded that the tendency to avoid failure is a product of three facts:

- The motive to avoid failure
- The probability of failure and;
- The incentive value of failure.

Further, he asserted that the achievement motivation for any individual is the strength of the tendency to approach a task plus the strength to avoid it. Achievement motivation which is the drive for performance has been found to have an influence on students’ academic behaviour. The students’ perception of the worth of academic achievement is related to the fear of failure, parental, and peer group pressure for achievement. Nenty (1988) noted that achievement motivation is a society related factor and has the highest relationship with, and is the most valid prediction of students’ academic performance.

Weiner and Potepan (1990) in their study assessed test anxiety, achievement orientation, and intellectual achievement responsibility among 107 college students. The effect which they associated with the final examination was reported at various times following the mid-term feedback. Self-report ratings revealed that the change in the level
of fear as the examination approached was related to the level of achievement needs.

Subjects high in test anxiety, low in achievement orientation or low in resultant achievement motivation or low in resultant achievement orientation have greater fears about final examinations than subjects on the opposite motive group. They concluded that school or academic success is associated with high achievement orientation, low anxiety, self attribution of success to both effort and ability and a belief that failure is not caused by lack of ability. The issue of motivation of students in education and the impact on academic performance are considered as an important aspect of effective learning. It is well documented in literature that motivation plays an important role in influencing students’ academic behaviour. Several researchers have found that students use different motivational strategies in different learning situations. In general, students are found to value both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, (Pintrich, 2000; Pajares, 2000; Pietsch, walker and Champman, 2003, King (2007). However, individuals students may tend to have varying levels of achievement needs that do exert much influence on their performance, and determine the degree of their involvement in classroom activities. It is a truism that the level in which students are motivated either by their parents or teachers
are different, and this to a very large extent, goes a long way in influencing them in their learning and, consequently, their academic performance. Students' high in achievement orientations are more intrinsically motivated, primarily concerned with developing their competences, they tend to use internal standards for judging their improvement, (King 2007). Also, when students are demonstrating their competence to others, they are more likely to use social comparative standards (that is, they tend to evaluate themselves against the performance of others engaged in the same tasks, or to rely on others to evaluate their performances. In all cases, the level of achievement motivation may positively or negatively influence students' level of performance. As would be expected, students from “active” homes, for example (homes that are ready to provide the students with almost all their needs in school, provide time for the students to read and rest and have relevant learning materials for the students to use both at home and in school, have high achievement motivation and consequently achieve higher academically, (Ethothi, 2002).

However, Rosen (1991) reported no significant relationship between academic achievement motivation and subjects’ academic performance. On social achievement motivation and academic performance, several studies showed that the students’ social ranking positively correlates with the students’ academic performance, (Elkins, 1958): Crow and Crow, 1993; Ezewu, (1978) in Ethothi (2002).

Social position in the class is significantly correlated with academic achievement, implying that a student who is liked by his course-mates performs better than those not liked (Ezewu, 1978). Also, Anold, Cooper and Robertson (1995) observed that a person’s behaviour is influenced most fundamentally by social interactions which can determine his sense of identity and belonging, and this can equally affect his performance in life activities including academics. Also, studies by McCandles and Evans, (1978); Winterbotton, (1953); Dovan and Adelson, (1958) in Ethothi (2002) have found family factors as a determinant of achievement motivation and consequent academic performance among university students. Such factors include child rearing practices, social class, ethnic group, family values among others. For instance, children reared under an authoritarian condition according to the studies develop low achievement
motivation while children reared under democratic environment often develop high need for achievements, and higher performance academically. (Ethothi, 2002). It is a common knowledge today that teachers at all levels of our educational system (including university lecturers) are experiencing a great deal of stress teaching the students. Most of them are not interested in hard work, yet they want to be certificated. This negative attitude contributes to the fallen standards and poor performance by most university students, a situation which has so much attracted public lamentation. This situation has become worrisome especially if considered from the backdrop of the fact that the society today casts much doubt on the validity and credibility of the certificates of our university graduates. The apathy towards hard work and the consequent poor academic performance among the university students is not without attributions/causes. Literature is replete with attributions external to the students. One of such attributions extensively studied is motivation. Despite the value of extrinsic motivation in learning, current research evidence showed that not much has been done in the area of intrinsic motivation such as achievement motivation. Even where such studies have been conducted, especially those with empirical background, they were in foreign settings as evidenced in the reviewed literature. Inadequate indigenous literature on this variable mostly
concerning the population used for the study prompted this research work. Having assumed that achievement motivation is a significant factor that exerts influence on students’ academic performance, the questions to ask are:

i. Do university students with high academic achievement motivation perform academically better than those with moderate or low academic achievement motivation?

ii. To what extent does social achievement motivation influence university students’ academic performance?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of achievement motivation on undergraduate university student’s academic performance.

Specifically, this study is set to find out;

i. The influence of achievement motivation on academic performance of faculty of education students of Cross River University of Technology
ii. If the academic performance of faculty of education students of Cross River University of Technology is a function of levels of social achievement motivation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research was therefore guided by the following research questions

i. Is there any significant relationship between students’ level of academic achievement motivation and their academic performance?

ii. To what extent does students’ level of social achievement motivation influence their academic performance?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

i. There is no significant influence of academic achievement motivation level on the academic performance of Education Students in the University of Technology

ii. There is no significant influence of social achievement motivation level on the academic performance of Education Students in the Cross River University of Technology
METHODOLOGY

The study which sought to investigate the extent to which levels of achievement motivation influence the academic performance of education students in the Cross River University of Technology adopted the survey design (ex-post facto) which is non experimental. The population for the study comprised of all 100 level Faculty of Education students (male and female) in the 2010/2011 academic session, the statistics of which revealed a total of 1,352 students. Using a simple random sampling technique, a sample of seven hundred and fifty (750) students were selected from the population.

INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument used for data collection was tagged “Education Students’ Achievement Motivation Scale” (ESAMS) modified from Cofer and Appley (1964) Achievement Imagery, which is an inference from subjects response to items which suggests their unique accomplishments or when the subject explicitly states a desire to achieve something such as expressing a desire to become a lecturer or professor or to succeed in some activity or suggest long term goal achievement of sort, and Grandal and Grandal (1965).
Modified Intellectual Achievement Questionnaire (MIAQ) to measure some socially related achievement motivation correlates, in Ethothi (2002), was also used.

In all, the instrument consisted of two sections, A and B. Section A was made up of respondents' bio-data based items while section B consisted of 15 items which elicited responses on subjects' achievement motivation related issues. Scores of subjects in the 1st semester examinations of the session provided information on subject of academic performance. The face validity of the instrument A was 0.86, and 0.63 and 0.82 reliability coefficient for the study. See table below:

**Table 1**: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient
Test-retest Reliability of each dimension of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>Testing</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43.00</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Achievement</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>39.41</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39.17</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Testing of hypotheses
H0.1 There is no significant influence of education students’ academic achievement motivation level and their academic performance.

Table II. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of education students’ academic achievement motivation level on their academic performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups (levels)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>50.89</td>
<td>9.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>50.50</td>
<td>6.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>50.04</td>
<td>10.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>50.37</td>
<td>9.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Var.</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Sqr</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>82.82</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within grounds</td>
<td>70828.18</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>94.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70910</td>
<td>749</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

xx NS at 05 level (critical F with df = 2 and 747 = 3.00).

The result in Table II reveals that the calculated F-ratio of 0.43 is less than the critical F-ratio of 3.00 at 05 level with 2 and 747 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis is sustained. This means, there is no significant influence of academic achievement motivation level on the academic performance of education students in
Cross River University of Technology. This implies that the variations in the observed mean values were merely due to chance.

H0 2: There is no significant influence of education students’ social achievement motivation level on their academic performance.

**Table III:** Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of education students social achievement motivation level on their education performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups (levels)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>50.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>49.79</td>
<td>9.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>50.62</td>
<td>9.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>50.37</td>
<td>9.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Var</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean Sqr</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>161.18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>80.90</td>
<td>0.86(\times)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>70788.19</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>94.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70950.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>749</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**xxx NS** at 05 level (critical F with df = 2 and 747 = 3.00)

The result in Table III indicates that the calculated F-ratio of 0.86 is less than the critical f-ratio of 3.00 at 05 level with 2 and 747 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis as stated in upheld. This means there is no significant influence of social achievement...
motivation level on education students' academic performance in Cross River University of Technology.

**DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The result in Table II shows that the difference in the mean scores of education students with low, moderate and high levels of academic achievement motivation is not significant, thereby upholding the researcher's view that there is no significant influence of education students' academic achievement motivation level on their academic performance. The finding contradicts many other research findings in this area, for example studies by McClelland (1985), Morgan (1986) Lovell (1982). The finding however, confirms Rosen (1991) who observed that when intelligence was controlled through analysis of covariance, no significant relationship was observed between academic achievement motivation and the subjects' academic performance. Some reasons can be advanced for this finding. Firstly, there is a popular adage which says "if wishes were horses every beggars would ride them". The students may have merely expressed their desire to such level of achievement without taking into cognizance their academic ability based on their previous performances. In this circumstance, their perceived academic achievement
motivation has no relationship with their actual academic performance. Those with low or moderate achievement motivation levels may have considered their earlier academic performance and responded appropriately to the items. On the other hand, those with high academic achievement motivation level may have wanted to cover up their academic insufficiency. Apart from chance factor mentioned earlier, the influence of academic achievement motivation on academic performance may need further investigation especially in the Nigerian setting.

The result in Table III indicates also that the difference in the mean scores of education students with low, moderate and high levels of social achievement motivation in relations to their academic performance is not significant. The researchers' view that there is no significant influence of education students' social achievement motivation level on their academic performance once again is sustained. The researchers have the feeling that students' social achievement motivation levels are mere desires which cannot be rightly associated with their academic performance which has to do with another trait entirely. The finding disagrees with Crow and Crow (1993), Elkins (1958), Ezewu (1978) all of who observed that social achievement motivation level of a student has positive
correlation with the level of academic performance of that student. This finding however, supports the earlier findings of McClelland (1953).

Brown (1961) in Ethothi (2002) noted that it was not in all cases that higher level of social achievement motivation would lead to higher academic performance as inconsistencies may arise in some cases. Some plausible reasons could be suggested for these finding. In the first instance, there is a difference between social achievement motivation level as an attribute in human personality and academic performance. In the daily categorization of behavioural influences, “social” is not the same as “academics”, meaning that those who are said to be low in social achievement motivation level may be high in academic achievement motivation level and as such, may perform academically higher than those high in social achievement motivation. There is also the general notion that people interested in social achievements do not in most cases excel in academics. No wander the warning from most parents to their wards “I am sending you to school for academics, therefore, avoid clubs, disco, football and other social engagements”. This piece of advice presupposes that social attainment has no direct or positive bearing with academic achievement which is supported by the result of this study.
CONCLUSION

Education students’ achievement motivation level does not significantly influence their academic performance based on the result of the study, implying that there was absolute lack of self attribution for performance. Achievement motivation level of the students could have resulted from parental or peer pressure. In any case, a certain level of achievement motivation is still required for effective learning and positive academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to ensure effective counseling for the development of the right level of achievement motivation towards academic success among students:

1. Counseling as a programme in the faculty should be made more practical in orientation rather than the present situation where all the guidance counselors function principally as lecturers. This can be achieved through the establishment of a separate and functional diagnostic and counseling unit in which the counselors are seen as representatives of the Ministry of Education.
who are in the school to see to the welfare, growth and development of the students in areas of educational and personal social problems.

2. Counseling programmes in the faculty should be very sensitive to psychological interests and values of the students since they are enduring traits on which their academic performance rests.

3. Significant improvement of achievement motivation of education students should be actualized through formalized guidance and counseling services in the faculty. Such counseling should emphasize the importance of self attribution in achieving success.

4. Lecturers should interact with students at close range to identify maladaptive behaviours that tend to hinder the development of proper level of achievement motivation in the students.

5. Parents/guardians should facilitate their wards development of the right type of achievement motivation through persistent encouragement and timely provision of their educational needs.
REFERENCES


