

ACADEMIC ASPIRATION AND ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Achievement is the measurement or proficiency of performance in a given skill or body of knowledge. It is the status of person's learning and his ability to apply what he has learnt. It means the extent to which teaching and study has resulted in mastery. It is the outcome of general and specific learning experiences. Academic achievement of pupils refers to the knowledge attained and skills developed during academic career of subjects which are assessed by the school authorities with the help of achievement tests which may be either standardized or teacher made. In other words, academic achievement means the achievement of pupils in academic subjects as reading, writing, arithmetic, history etc. as contrasted with skills developed in such areas as industrial arts and physical education. Academic achievement has been considered as an important factor in life. It encourages the students to work hard and learn more. Also it helps the teachers to know whether teaching methods are effective or not and helps them in bringing improvement accordingly.

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Introduction

Academic achievement is very much related with academic aspirations. Academic aspiration reflects directly or indirectly the personality of the students. Whatever a man has aspired, if gained brings a lot of satisfaction and confidence in him. Setting up of too high a goal beyond potential, individual will, however, have disturbing effect, producing a sense of frustration. Such experiences bring negative reaction life feelings of inferiority complex. Arts students generally have high life goals and aspirations that lead to frustration. A satisfied person is one who things, imagines and sets target according to his/her abilities and capacities.

Aspirations

The measurement of person's aspiration is a complex psychological problem which has troubled psychologists for a long time. An individual's aspiration level represents the person not only as he/she is at that particular moment but also as he/she would like to be. It is a measure of his intentional disposition. By knowing a person's aspirations we learn a great deal about him/her. It is a conspicuous index of the person as an individual and as a member of society which is determined by the amount of self esteem one needs to maintain.

According to John R. Hills (1955) "the difference between one's past performance and one's estimate of one's next performance is called his/her goal discrepancy score and is considered to be the measure of one's level of aspiration."

In the words of James Drever, "the term level of aspiration is best explained as a frame of reference involving self esteem, or alternatively, as a standard with the reference to which an individual experiences, i.e., has the feeling of success or failure."

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Another definition of level of aspiration is provided by Frank (1935) now generally accepted as "level of future performance in a familiar task which an individual, knowing his/her level of past performance in that task, explicitly undertake to research."

In the view of Hurlock (1967) aspiration means a longing for what is above one's achieved level, with advancement on it as its end. In other words aspiration means the goal an individual sets intense personal significance for him or in which he is ego involved.

According to Peel, when a person is actually involved in a task he sets himself a new standard to conquer it, that may be called level of aspiration.

According to William Greddie (165) "the word aspiration means an eager desire or lofty hopes or aims." Aspirations include what a person would like to be in future. According to Good's Dictionary, Aspirations mean "the goals that a person desires or hopes to reach in a specified activity."

The concept of level of Aspiration was first of all introduced by Hoppe (1930) and Debo (1931) within reference to the degree of difficulty of goal towards which a person is striving. The first experimental study and analysis of aspirational phenomena was performed by Hoppe (1930) who investigated the various factors which influence goal setting behaviour. According to Hoppe, individuals are not alike with regard to their level of aspiration. For example, some individuals always have high level of aspiration whereas other persons are realist in this respect who determine their level of aspiration on the basis of past experience. Many other issues are also involved in the study of level of aspiration. These are the subjective nature of individual's goal, the discharge of tension when that goal is attained, the problem of conflict, decision and choice, the problem of frustration, anxiety and motivation, and the influence of immediate past experience on the subsequent life space.

Sears (1940) found out that wide individual differences appear in the statements of different persons with respect to goals and aspiration.

Jucknat (1937) concludes that the good students were found to show high initial level of aspiration, the average students set an initial level which is either at the upper or lower end of scale. If we assume that the good students are expected to do well in this task, their high level of aspiration would represent only a moderate discrepancy.

Academic Aspiration

Academic aspiration is the degree to which an individual sets his educational goals realistically in relation to his physical and mental attributes and in accordance with environment. But the educational goals which an individual sets for one's own self differ from one individual to another due to certain factors which play a significant role in shaping the level of educational aspirations of the students.

Every individual has something in mind concerning the educational attainments. The students who aspire more but achieve less may experience maladjustment. According to Barow (1956) level of aspiration depends on several factors life intelligence, socio-economic status, parental relations and expectation from children.

Studies by Worrell, Walter, Clark etc. have shown an effort by attempting to analyse the function of level of aspiration. Worrell found that the students who set a reasonable level of aspiration for himself/herself in line with his/her previous performance had a sound with reality and hence was successful in grade achievement. It was also observed by Worrell that the students whose levels of aspiration were considerably above their previous records were having relatively low scholastic standing.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is the core of educational growth. Perhaps none would deny the importance of academic achievement in one's life which acts as an emotional tonic. Accordingly, achievement is the accomplishment or proficiency in performance in a given skill or knowledge. Pressey and Horrock (1944) defined, "An achievement is a status or level of person's learning and his ability to apply what he has learned." According to this definition achievement at first thought can be assumed to include any knowledge and skill. There is, however, a much broader approach which includes attitude, interests, and values as aspects of achievement and achievement on the other hand is the product of learning attitudes and interests, because they are learned, retained and forgotten just as knowledge and skills are.

According to Crow and Crow (1963), "Achievement means the extent to which learner is profiting from instructions in a given area of learning."

Traw (1970) defines academic or scholastic achievement as "the attained ability or degree of competence in school tasks usually as measured by standardized tests and expressed in age or grade units based on norms derived from a wide sampling of pupils' performance."

Importance of Academic Achievement in Life

The way that pupils apply themselves is an important factor is learning and development. Academic achievement is the unique prime and prenniel responsibility of a school or any other educational institution established by the society to promote a wholesome scholastic growth and development of a child.

In this rapidly changing world with the growing advancement in sciences and technology the place of education has become so vital that every parent today sets high goals to educate his child. Education, they say, shapes the personality which includes development of intellect and mind. Good academic record and its proper development to certain extent, predicts future of the child. Ours is an age of competition, at every step the academic record speaks for an individual. At the time of admission for entrance in job, for scholarship, for future studies, good academic results are the only recommendations.

In recent years, academic achievement has become the centre of life. Sound development in academic side can well be matched with pillars on which entire future structure of personality stands.

In technically advanced countries like Russia and America more than that, there is a wide spread awakening to educate each and every citizen of the nation. In developing countries like India, though such an insight is developing among the masses, but it is still on superficial level. We have not touched the heart of the problem. We do not understand the importance of education in life and its development. This problem can only be solved, if we understand what an individual actually aspires and how he can achieve those aspiration which he has developed for himself.

Factors Responsible for Academic Achievement

Academic achievement depends upon number of factors which may be responsible for high and low achievement of the students in school. These factors are related to the individual himself and objective factors confirm to the world of the individuals.

- **Subjective Factors**
 - Intelligence
 - Learning Ability
 - Aptitude
 - Attitude towards self and others
 - Perception of school
 - Study Methods
 - Interests – Curricular and extra curricular
 - Level of aspiration
 - Motivation
 - Attitude towards Education
- **Objective Factors**
 - Socio economic status
 - Family traits and company i.e. value system.
 - Educational system
 - System of Evaluation
 - Teacher's efficiency, training, attitude and method
 - School's situation and environment.

All these variables account for academic success or failure.

Relationship between Academic Achievement and Academic Aspiration

When a person is guided many things have to be kept in view. In the field of academic achievement, academic aspiration is quite important. It happens often that a goal for which a person strives, is one of a series of possible goals which are all more or less suited to the general needs that is prompting him but which differ in their desirability. The evidence indicates that the development of education of particular child depends on:

- The value system
- The need of achieve

Both the factors determine the goals of education and level of aspiration without either of these, educational growth may be hampered and obstructed. As academic achievement and academic aspiration are inter-related, it is the duty of the teacher that he should keep striving and give a promise of goal attainment. Classroom goals should be attainable and the students should feel that they are able to achieve them. It would appear that a person who consistently sets his goals higher or lower than his performance (or those who expect more and do less and who do more and expect less) could objectively be unimaginative or unrealistic and has a different personality structure than does a person where aspiration scores keep pace with his performance or reality.

Frank (1935) has found that 'level of aspiration from the preceding performance in both directions, the aspiration may be higher or lower than the performance when age involvement is present but not equal to it.' The level of aspiration set by the children is obviously not always the 'true' goals of achievement which they might set in a hypothetical, cultural situation. These levels of aspiration do, however, represent 'true' reaction involving deep lying motivational forces to a situation in which the individual because of his own experience and the effect of that experience within his personality either finds it relatively simple to maintain his self esteem or must fight to maintain it, using what weapons he can muster and what have proved useful to him in the past.

Academic Achievement and Educational Plan

In this world of equality of opportunity, there is no equality of performance or achievement and there is a wide range of difference in academic achievement. School children are manifested in several ways by variations in level and quality of performance in the achievement tests, in curriculum activities, in self initiated projects and other such activities and skills.

As there are wide disparities in individual performance, it is essential to make their future educational plan according to their achievement. Planning is essential in order to achieve certain targets. So, in the field of education, individual must be excited to make education plan for future life. These educational plans are not based upon the grades they receive in previous examination but individual should consider other factors also such as educational aspiration of individual, socio-economic status of parents, educational level of friends, parent's sentiments regarding student's educational goals. The educational plan should be realistic and not idealistic in nature. Unrealistic and idealistic plans may lead an individual to frustration and failure in life. Educational plans are prepared on the basis of academic achievement; no doubt other factors are quite important.

Academic Achievement and Attitude towards Education

Academic achievement is somewhat education. It is not easy to construct a definition sufficiently broad to cover the many kinds of attitudinal determination which psychologists today recognize and at the same time narrow enough to exclude those types of determination which are not ordinarily referred to as attitudes. The chief weakness of most of the definitions seems to be their failure to distinguish between attitudes which are often very general and habits which are always limited in their scope. An attitude is a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations which it is related.

Crow and Crow say, "Attitudes are developed out of feeling tone that forms an effective side of every experience.

According to Good, "Attitude is a reaction to react towards or against some situation, person or thing in a particular manner e.g. with love or hate, fear or resentment to a particular degree of intensity.

According to Thomas and Znaniecki, attitudes are individual mental processes which determine both the actual and potential responses of each person in the social world. The present study undertakes to study the attitude of undergraduate students towards education. In order to know the academic achievement, we must understand individual's attitude towards education. Attitude towards education also helps to understand individual's future plan about education.

Academic Achievement and Acceptance of Self and Other

An individual's personality is generally described in terms of psycho-analytic concepts or of traits, or even of both, without referring to the way he perceives himself and such a description would be one sided, because it is only from other people's view point. There is also a subjective view of personality which is egoistically upheld by each individual and which is difficult to know because individual himself may not like to state own impressions or estimations of him. Each individual may be said to be two individuals – the one as known to others and the other as known to one's own self.

The former may be the second copy of the latter but yet the two may be completely different from one another. It would be apt here to distinguish between self and ego, since there is a good deal of confusion about these two terms. In the ordinary language one is likely to consider these to be synonymous and interchangeable terms. Even personality literature contains many contradictions about meaning and use of the terms self and ego. Moreover, like the self, ego is sometimes conceived of as subject and other time as object.

Symond expresses his views on ego and self in this book entitled, "The ego and the self". Quite in line with the psychoanalytic school he views the ego in terms of processes like perceiving, thinking and remembering which are responsible for formulating and executing plan of action and affording satisfaction in response to the Id. The self on the other hand, is the manner in which the individual reacts to himself. The self has four different aspects :

- How a person perceives himself.
- What he thinks of himself.
- How he values himself.
- How he attempts through various actions to enhance or defend himself.

Each one of us passes through the stage of being an object observed by others, and this leads to the formation of subject wise self. But, since each one of us is capable of cognition, we construct a picture of our own self. This self portrait may also seek inspiration from the ideal self, i.e., the 'self' which 'I' aspire to be.

Each person himself can have true picture of his self and how he thinks about others. It will help individual to make himself satisfied. Attitude towards self and others, acceptance of self and others may help us to understand whether a person is satisfied or not. A person is satisfied if he knows about self.

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