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Relationship Between Social Anxiety and Achievement Motivation: A Study on Youth

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Abstract
The present study investigates the relationship between social anxiety and achievement motivation among youth, a developmental stage marked by increasing social responsibilities and performance demands. A sample of 140 young adults (69 males and 71 females) aged 18–30 years was selected using a simple random sampling technique. Social anxiety was assessed using the Social Anxiety Disorder Scale (Nagpal & Singh, 2020), and achievement motivation was measured using the Achievement Motivation Scale (Deo & Mohan, 1985). Statistical analyses included correlation, one-way ANOVA, and t-tests. The findings revealed a significant negative correlation between social anxiety and achievement motivation, indicating that higher levels of social anxiety are associated with lower achievement motivation. However, no significant differences were found in achievement motivation across different levels of anxiety. Gender comparisons showed no significant difference in social anxiety between males and females, whereas females demonstrated significantly higher achievement motivation than males. The study highlights the role of social anxiety in influencing motivational processes among youth.

Keywords: Social anxiety, Achievement motivation

Youth face numerous challenges during their lives, particularly because they are in a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood. During childhood, parents take care of most responsibilities, and children are largely protected from direct social interactions, as their needs are fulfilled by their caregivers. However, as individuals enter youth, they are required to engage with society independently and express their needs on their own. This transition often leads to feelings of anxiety among young people. Many youths experience social anxiety, which is characterized by a fear of social situations where they believe they may be closely observed, judged, or evaluated by others. Social anxiety disorder, is marked by intense and debilitating fear of one or more specific social situations, such as speaking in public, using a public restroom, or eating or writing in front of others. In these situations, individuals fear being closely observed, negatively judged, or behaving in a way that may be embarrassing or humiliating. As a result of these fears, people with social phobia either avoid such situations altogether or endure them with significant distress(Butcher, Hooley and Mineka ,2014).
During this stage, young people often have high aspirations and set multiple goals for themselves. They strive to accomplish various goals and generally exhibit strong achievement motivation. Achievement motivation refers to the drive to meet and excel according to established standards of excellence**.** The need for achievement refers to an individual's desire to meet internal standards of excellence (McClelland, 1961). Individuals with a high need for achievement consistently strive to perform well

whenever their abilities or performance are subject to evaluation. Achievement motivation refers to the drive to pursue success and engage in goal-oriented activities that involve the possibility of either success or failure. It is also an active state of arousal that guides behavior in activities perceived as potentially rewarding, based on a cognitive appraisal of their achievement-oriented nature (Firose,2020). Individuals with a high need for achievement consistently aim to perform well whenever they are assessed. They often thrive on challenges and eagerly embrace opportunities to demonstrate their abilities (Puca & Schmalt, 1999).

When young people attempt to meet social demands, they may experience social anxiety, which can interfere with their achievement motivation. Vanisa (2008) suggests that students with high anxiety are more likely to experience distracting and off-task thoughts compared to their less anxious peers.

The present study aims to examine the relationship between social anxiety and achievement motivation.

Objectives

- To examine the relationship between social anxiety and achievement motivation.
- To determine whether levels of social anxiety significantly influence achievement motivation.
- To assess whether a significant gender difference exists in achievement motivation.
- To investigate whether males and females differ significantly in levels of social anxiety.

Hypotheses

- There will be a significant relationship between social anxiety and achievement motivation
- There will be a significant difference in achievement motivation based on different levels of social anxiety
- There will be significant gender difference in social anxiety disorder
- There will be a significant difference between males and females in achievement motivation

Method

Participants

The investigator randomly selected a sample of 140 participants for the study. Of these, 69 were males and 71 were females, whose ages ranged from 18 to 30 years.

Measures

To assess social anxiety, the Social Anxiety Disorder Scale (2020) developed by Dr. Ekta Nagpal and Dr. Gurmit Singh was used. This scale has a reliability coefficient of 0.76 and a validity index of 0.59. Higher scores on this scale indicate higher levels of social anxiety.

Achievement motivation was measured using the Achievement Motivation Scale developed by Deo and Mohan (1985). The scale has **a** test–retest reliability coefficient of 0.69 and a validity index of 0.54. Higher scores on this scale reflect higher levels of achievement motivation among the participants.

Procedure

The sample for the present study consisted of 140 young adults aged 18–30 years. The sample included 69 males and 71 females. Participants were selected using a simple random sampling technique, which ensured that each individual had an equal probability of selection. Prior to the commencement of data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants after they were adequately informed

about the purpose and nature of the study. The confidentiality of participants' responses was strictly maintained, and the administration of the scales was conducted in a manner that ensured participants' privacy and comfort.

Result and Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between personality traits and social anxiety disorder. Sample constituted 140 participants, among which 69 are males and 71 are females. Social anxiety disorder scale developed by Dr Ekta Nagpal and Dr Gurmit Singh(2020) is administered to assess the social anxiety of participants, whereas achievement Motivation Scale developed by Deo and Mohan (1985) is used to measure achievement motivation.

Table 1: Correlation between social anxiety disorder and achievement motivation

Dimension	Social anxiety disorder
Achievement motivation	-.183*

* significant at .05 level

Table 1 presents the correlation between social anxiety disorder and achievement motivation. The correlation coefficient obtained is –0.183, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates a significant negative relationship between social anxiety disorder and achievement motivation. In other words, as the level of social anxiety increases, achievement motivation tends to decrease among the participants. Although the magnitude of the correlation is low, the result suggests that social anxiety disorder has a meaningful influence on achievement motivation. The present finding is in align with studies conducted by Firose(2020) who reported that increase in anxiety leads to decrease in achievement motivation. Ralph (1988) also agree with the present finding that anxiety had negative impact on achievement motivation. A similar result was reported by Lynn McEwan and Dolly Goldenberg (1999), who conducted a study on achievement motivation, anxiety, and academic success among forty-one first-year Master of Nursing students from three Canadian universities. This descriptive correlational study examined the influence of achievement motivation and anxiety on academic performance and found that anxiety was negatively correlated with achievement motivation.

Table 2: One way ANOVA of Achievement motivation on the basis of levels of anxiety

Dimension	Between groups		Within groups		F value
Achievement motivation	Sum of squares	Mean squares	Sum of squares	Mean squares	2.503
	1536.320	768.160	42048.102	306.920	

Table 2 shows the results of a one-way ANOVA conducted to examine whether levels of anxiety significantly affect achievement motivation. Since the calculated F value (2.503) is relatively small and it indicates that the difference in achievement motivation among different levels of anxiety is not statistically significant. It can be said that there is no significant difference in achievement motivation among individuals with different levels of anxiety. Thus, levels of anxiety do not have a significant effect on achievement motivation in the present study.

Table 3: t values, mean and Standard Deviation of social anxiety disorder based on gender

Dimension	Males N=69		Females N=71		't' value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Social anxiety	108.99	21.634	111.87	27.910	.683

Table 3 presents the results of a *t-test* comparing male (N = 69) and female (N = 71) participants on social anxiety. The mean social anxiety score for males is 108.99 with a standard deviation of 21.634.The mean social anxiety score for females is 111.87 with a standard deviation of 27.910.The obtained t value is 0.683.Since the calculated t value (0.683) is lower than the critical t value at the 0.05 level of significance, the difference between males and females is not statistically significant. There is no significant difference in social anxiety disorder between male and female participants. Thus**,** gender does not have a significant influence on social anxiety in the present study. This finding is in consistent with the findings of Ali Reza Ghaderi, (2009) who studied the relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety among Indian and Iranian students. The result revealed male and female students did not differ significantly in their mean anxiety scores.

Table 4: t values, mean and Standard Deviation of achievement motivation based on gender

Dimension	Males N=75		Females N=73		't' value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Achievement motivation	113.97	17.847	122.18	16.72	2.8111**

** significant at .01 level

Table 4 shows the results of a *t-test* conducted to examine gender differences in achievement motivation. The mean achievement motivation score for males (N = 75) is 113.97 with a standard deviation of 17.847.The mean achievement motivation score for females (N = 73) is 122.18 with a standard deviation of 16.72.The obtained t value is 2.8111, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The results indicate a statistically significant difference in achievement motivation between males and females. Female participants demonstrate significantly higher achievement motivation compared to male participants. This suggests that gender has a significant influence on achievement motivation in the present study. This study is in contrast with the findings of Firose(2020) who found that males have higher achievement motivation than females. Pandey & Faiz Ahamed, (2007) carried out a study aimed to measure the achievement motivation with reference to sex-differences. The result showed that the achievement motivation of boys and girls in all the factors is the same with girls not being inferior to boys in any factor.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study suggest that social anxiety is an important psychological factor that negatively influences achievement motivation among young adults. Although the relationship between social anxiety and achievement motivation was found to be low in magnitude, it was statistically significant, indicating that increased social anxiety may hinder youths' drive to achieve and perform

effectively. The absence of significant differences in achievement motivation across varying levels of anxiety suggests that anxiety alone may not be a determining factor in motivational outcomes. Gender-wise analysis revealed no significant difference in social anxiety, implying that both males and females experience similar levels of social apprehension; however, females exhibited significantly higher achievement motivation than males. Overall, the study underscores the need for psychological interventions and supportive environments that help youth manage social anxiety, thereby fostering healthier achievement motivation and facilitating personal and academic growth.

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