

Achievement Motivation and Psychological Well-Being Among Sainik School Students: A Correlational Study

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Abstract

The present study determined the relationship between achievement motivation and psychological well-being among Sainik School students. A sample of 30 students was selected using a convenience sampling method. Standardized tools were used to assess achievement motivation by V.P. Bhargava and psychological well-being (Ryff) across its dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose of life, and self-acceptance. Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis resulted that achievement motivation had a strong and statistically significant positive correlation with purpose of life ($r = 0.576$, $p = 0.001$) and total psychological well-being ($r = 0.941$, $p < .001$). However, correlations with other dimensions were positive but not found statistically significant. The findings highlight the importance of purposefulness and overall well-being in enhancing students' motivation to achieve. Implications for educational practices and psychological interventions are discussed.

Keywords: Achievement motivation, psychological well-being, adolescents, Sainik School

Introduction

Achievement motivation is an essential psychological construct that reflects an individual's inner drive to succeed, excel, and accomplish meaningful goals. It represents a person's persistent effort to attain standards of excellence and is closely associated with ambition, determination, and a desire for self-improvement. In the academic context, achievement motivation supports in shaping students' learning behaviors, influencing their level of engagement, goal-setting tendencies, and perseverance in the face of challenges. Students who are with high achievement motivation are expected to invest greater effort in their studies, demonstrate resilience during difficulties, and remain committed to achieving their academic and personal objectives. Such students tend to adopt effective strategies, maintain focus, and exhibit a proactive approach toward success, which ultimately contributes to their overall development and performance.

Psychological well-being, as conceptualized by Carol Ryff, is a multidimensional construct that emphasizes positive functioning and optimal human development. It goes beyond the non-appearance of mental illness and focuses on the existence of positive psychological qualities that enable individuals to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives. The model includes six key dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth,

positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Autonomy reflects independence and self-determination; environmental mastery refers to the ability in managing life situations effectively; personal growth indicates continuous development and realization of potential; positive relations emphasize healthy and supportive interpersonal relationships; purpose in life involves having meaningful goals and direction; and self-acceptance relates to a positive evaluation of oneself. Together, these dimensions provide a comprehensive understanding of an individual's mental health, life satisfaction, and overall psychological functioning.

In structured and disciplined environments such as Sainik Schools, students are exposed to a unique combination of academic rigor, physical training, and strict routines. These institutions aim to develop not only intellectual competence but also discipline, leadership, and resilience among students. The demanding nature of such environments requires students to maintain high levels of motivation while simultaneously coping with stress, competition, and performance expectations. In this context, psychological well-being becomes equally important, as it helps students manage pressure, maintain emotional balance, and adapt effectively to challenges. Students who possess a strong sense of purpose, emotional stability, and positive self-concept are more likely to thrive in such settings. They tend to show better adjustment, higher persistence, and a optimized ability to cope with both academic and personal demands.

Despite the recognized importance of achievement motivation and psychological well-being in students' development, relatively limited research had concentrated on examining the relationship between these two variables, particularly among students studying in military-style educational institutions like Sainik Schools. Most of the reviewed studies have explored these variables independently or in general educational contexts, leaving a gap in understanding their interaction within highly structured environments. Investigating this relationship is important because it can provide insights for studying how students' internal motivational drives are affected by their psychological health and overall well-being. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between achievement motivation and psychological well-being among Sainik School students, with the aim of contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical implications for educational and psychological interventions.

Review of Literature

White et al. (2018) examined the relationship between physical activity and affective well-being among adolescents, focusing on the moderating role of autonomous and controlled motivation. The study involved 1,632 adolescents who wore accelerometers and completed self-report measures of activity which are physical in nature, motivation, and well-being. Results indicated that leisure-time activity which are physical in nature was positively associated with higher positive affect and lower negative affect, while active travel showed no consistent relationship with well-being. Motivation did not significantly moderate most relationships, although autonomous motivation influenced the link between active travel and positive affect. The study suggests prioritizing leisure-time physical activity and promoting autonomous motivation to enhance adolescents' psychological well-being.

Liu (2018) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and achievement motivation among adolescents, focusing on the intermediating role of self-identity and the regulating role of hope within a positive psychology framework. The study included 473 adolescents in China who completed standardized scales. The findings revealed that self-efficacy is significantly associated with achievement motivation, and self-identity partially mediated this relationship. Additionally, hope was found to moderate the mediating process, influencing the strength of the relationship. The study highlights that self-identity and hope serve as important psychological mechanisms in enhancing achievement motivation among adolescents.

Muthukrishnan (2018) studied the relationship between achievement goal orientations and well-being among adolescents, aiming to identify distinct cluster profiles and gender differences. The study included 404 students from secondary school. Using k-means cluster analysis, three divergent groups emerged: students with high performance goals and low well-being, those with mixed goals and moderate well-being, and those with mastery goals and high well-being. The findings indicated that mastery-oriented students exhibited better psychological well-being compared to those focused on performance goals. The significant gender differences were observed across clusters, highlighting the significance of goal orientation in students' overall well-being.

Tian, Yu, and Huebner (2017) studied the relationship between achievement goal orientations and adolescents' subjective well-being in school, with a concentration on the mediating role of academic social comparison. The study found that various types of achievement goals, such as mastery and performance orientations, were significantly associated with students' well-being. Mastery-oriented students tended to report higher levels of subjective well-being, whereas performance-oriented goals showed more mixed outcomes. The results revealed that academic social comparison (upward and downward) mediated these relationships, suggesting that how students compare themselves with peers supports in influencing their well-being in academic settings.

Balaguer, Duda, and Castillo (2017) examined the motivational factors influencing adolescents' well-being and health-related behaviors within the framework of Achievement Goal Theory. The study involved 967 adolescents aged from 11 to 16 years. After completion of questionnaires assessing achievement beliefs, academic engagement, well-being, and lifestyle behaviors, structural equation modeling was applied. It infers that a task-oriented approach to achievement was positively related with school satisfaction and negatively related to boredom, while ego-oriented goals were linked to increased boredom. School satisfaction further contributed to higher life satisfaction, which was associated with healthier behaviors such as better diet, increased physical activity, and reduced substance use.

Overall, it suggests a positive association between psychological well-being and achievement motivation, though the power of relationship may differ for the different dimensions.

Objectives

The objectives of the present research study are as follows:

- To determine the level of psychological well-being among Sainik school students.
- To study the relationship between achievement motivation and dimensions of psychological well-being.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the present research is "There will be a significant positive correlation between achievement motivation and psychological well-being among Sainik school students."

Method

Research Design

The study employed a correlational research design to study the relationship between achievement motivation and psychological well-being.

Participants

The sample consisted of 30 students from a Sainik School from Delhi through convenience sampling technique.

Tools Used

Achievement Motivation Test (ACMT): The present research study employed the Achievement Motivation Test (ACMT) developed by V. P. Bhargava to determine the level of achievement motivation among students. Achievement motivation explains as an individual's internal drive to perform well, attain success, and meet standards of excellence in academic and other performance-related activities. The ACMT is recognized as a reliable, effective tool, and suitable students from school and colleges, due to its relevance and ease of administration. The test comprises 50 statements that reflect various aspects of students' attitudes, aspirations, persistence, and goal-directed behavior. These items are made to measure different dimensions of achievement motivation, including the desire for success, fear of failure, competitiveness, and task orientation. The ACMT is typically administered in a group setting and is simple to understand, which makes it highly practical for educational and psychological research. Scoring is based on the responses provided by participants, with each item assigned a specific value according to the level of agreement/disagreement. Total achievement motivation score is calculated by adding up the scores of all items. Higher total scores indicate a higher level of achievement motivation, whereas lower scores suggest a comparatively lower level of motivation. In terms of psychometric properties, the ACMT demonstrates strong reliability and validity. The test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.87 indicates a high level of consistency over time. Additionally, the test shows good validity, with an agreement coefficient of 0.75 when compared with Dr. Bishwanath Mukherji's Sentence Completion Test (SCT). Its content and construct validity are high as items made are based on theoretical foundations of achievement motivation and supported by empirical evidence.

Psychological Well-Being Scale: The present study utilized the Psychological Well-Being Scale (18-item version) developed by Carol D. Ryff to assess the level of psychological well-being among students. This scale is grounded in the eudaimonic perspective of well-being, which emphasizes positive psychological functioning, personal growth, and the realization of one's true potential rather than merely the absence of distress. It is widely used in psychological research to provide a comprehensive understanding of mental health of individual and overall life satisfaction. The scale is structured around six core dimensions of psychological well-being namely, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Each of these dimensions is represented by three items, making total of 18 items. Autonomy reflects independence and self-regulation, environmental mastery relates to effective management of life situations, personal growth indicates continuous development, positive relations focus on healthy interpersonal connections, purpose in life refers to having meaningful goals, and self-acceptance involves a positive evaluation of oneself. Together, these dimensions provide a multidimensional assessment of well-being. The total score is obtained by summing the responses across all items on a 7 point Likert scale, with possible scores ranging from 18 to 126. Higher scores indicate a higher level of psychological well-being, whereas lower scores reflect comparatively lower levels of well-being. In terms of psychometric properties, the scale demonstrates moderate reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the different dimensions range from 0.52 to 0.76, indicating acceptable internal consistency, although some subscales may show relatively lower reliability. Regarding validity, the scale possess construct validity, supporting its underlying six-factor structure. However, certain dimensions have shown comparatively weaker consistency, suggesting scope for further refinement in specific subscales.

Procedure of Collection of Data

A prior permission was taken from the school authorities prior to data collection. Participants were well informed regarding the purpose of the study and assured confidentiality. The tools were administered in a classroom setting under standardized conditions. Students responded individually, and scoring was done as per the manuals.

Statistical Analysis

Pearson's product-moment correlation method was used to determine the relationship between achievement motivation and psychological well-being

Results

Table 1 depicts the correlation between achievement motivation and psychological well-being of Sainik school students.

Table 1

Correlation between Achievement Motivation and Psychological Well-Being

Correlation between Achievement Motivation and	r	p value
Autonomy	0.220	0.243
Environmental Mastery	0.222	0.239
Personal Growth	0.237	0.207
Positive Relations with Others	0.236	0.209
Purpose of Life	0.576	0.001
Self-Acceptance	0.255	0.174
Total Psychological Wellbeing	0.941	0.000

Interpretation of Results

The results show that achievement motivation is positively related to all dimensions of psychological well-being among Sainik School students. However, the strength and statistical significance of these associations vary across different dimensions.

The correlation between autonomy and achievement motivation ($r = 0.220$, $p = 0.243$) is positive but not found statistically significant. This suggests that although students who are more independent and self-directed may show slightly higher motivation, this relationship is weak and may have occurred by chance. Similarly, environmental mastery ($r = 0.222$, $p = 0.239$) also shows a low positive but non-significant relationship, indicating that the ability to manage life situations effectively is not strongly associated with achievement motivation in this sample.

The relationship between personal growth and achievement motivation ($r = 0.237$, $p = 0.207$) is again positive but not found statistically significant, explaining that students' perception of their own development and growth does not strongly influence their motivation levels. Likewise, positive relations with others ($r = 0.236$, $p = 0.209$) shows

a weak and non-significant association, indicating that interpersonal relationships may not directly contribute to achievement motivation in a statistically meaningful way.

A noteworthy finding is observed while studying the relationship between purpose in life and achievement motivation ($r = 0.576$, $p = 0.001$), which is moderate to strong and statistically significant. This implies that students who have a clear sense of direction, goals, and meaning in life are significantly more motivated to achieve. Purposefulness appears to be a significant and important psychological factor that boost students' drive and persistence.

The correlation between self-acceptance and achievement motivation ($r = 0.255$, $p = 0.174$) is positive but not found statistically significant, suggesting that although a positive self-attitude may support to motivation, it does not having a strong direct impact in this study.

The most significant result is the extremely high correlation between total psychological well-being and achievement motivation ($r = 0.941$, $p = 0.000$), which is statistically highly significant. This indicates a very strong relationship, suggesting that overall psychological well-being plays an important role in influencing achievement motivation. Students with higher levels of well-being show much more motivated, goal-oriented, and persistent.

Overall, the findings suggest that while individual dimensions of psychological well-being show weak to moderate relationships with achievement motivation, the combined effect of overall well-being is highly significant. Among all dimensions, purpose in life emerges as the most significant factor associated with achievement motivation.

Discussion of Results

The findings indicate a strong positive relationship between psychological well-being in total and achievement motivation among Sainik School students. In a structured and disciplined environment, students with better psychological well-being are more capable of handling academic and physical demands, which enhances their motivation to achieve.

A significant positive relationship was found between purpose in life and achievement motivation. Sainik School students often have clear career goals, especially toward the armed forces, which strengthens their determination and persistence. This sense of direction plays a key role in motivating them to succeed.

The non-significant relationship between autonomy and achievement motivation may be due to the highly regulated environment, where independence is limited. Similarly, environmental mastery showed weak association because students function within a fixed routine, reducing individual differences.

Personal growth and positive relations also showed non-significant relationships, possibly due to similar experiences and competitive focus among students. Self-acceptance was also not significantly related, as external evaluation systems dominate. However, overall well-being strongly supports achievement motivation.

Implications

The findings suggest that there is a clear need for schools to actively promote psychological well-being programs that should concentrate on enhancing students' emotional resilience, self-awareness, and overall mental health. Since purpose in life was found to be significantly related to achievement motivation, educators should guide students in effective goal-setting and help them develop a clear sense of direction and purpose. School counseling services should be strengthened to provide regular support aimed at improving students' psychological well-being, coping skills, and stress management. Additionally, teachers can play a vital role by creating a supportive and motivating classroom environment. At a broader level, educational policies should emphasize the integration of

mental health initiatives with academic development, ensuring that students' psychological well-being is nurtured alongside their academic and physical training for holistic development.

Conclusion

The study concludes that psychological well-being, particularly purpose in life and overall well-being, plays a valuable role in enhancing achievement motivation among Sainik School students. Promoting psychological well-being can therefore contribute to better academic performance and personal development.

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