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# **Relationships Between Students' Achievement Motivation And Academic Performance In Some Selected Tertiary Institutions In Sokoto State, Nigeria**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the relationship between students' achievement motivation and academic performance among second-year students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. The population of the study comprised 4,373 second-year students, from which a sample of 357 students was selected using an appropriate sampling technique. Data were collected using an adapted Achievement Motivation Scale and a researcher-constructed Achievement Test. The instruments were subjected to validity and reliability procedures to ensure their suitability for the study. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance among the students. Furthermore, achievement motivation did not significantly predict academic performance. These results suggest that achievement motivation alone may not be a strong determinant of academic success among students in the study area, as other factors may play more significant roles. Based on these findings, it was recommended that tertiary institutions adopt a holistic approach to improving academic performance by focusing on multiple factors such as study habits, teaching quality, and learning environment. The study contributes to existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the limited role of achievement motivation in predicting academic performance within the context of Sokoto State.

**Keywords:** Achievement motivation, academic performance, tertiary institutions, correlational study, Sokoto State.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Academic performance in tertiary institutions has continued to attract significant attention from educators, researchers, and policymakers, particularly in developing regions such as Sokoto State, Nigeria. Concerns over poor academic outcomes, declining standards, and low-grade attainment have necessitated the exploration of factors influencing students' academic success. While cognitive ability and institutional resources are important, psychological variables especially motivation have been identified as critical

determinants of academic performance (Ackerman, Chamorro-Premuzic, & Furnham, 2010; Deary et al., 2017). Academic performance reflects the extent to which students achieve educational goals and is commonly measured through grades, test scores, and continuous assessment (Audu, 2015). Consequently, understanding the factors that enhance or hinder students' academic achievement remains essential for improving educational outcomes in tertiary institutions.

Among these factors, achievement motivation plays a vital role in shaping students' academic behavior and performance. Achievement motivation refers to the internal drive that compels individuals to set goals, strive for excellence, and persist in the face of challenges, as emphasized by David McClelland. Students with high achievement motivation are more likely to engage actively in learning, adopt effective study strategies, and demonstrate persistence, which leads to improved academic performance. Empirical studies have shown that motivated students tend to achieve better academic outcomes due to their goal-oriented behavior and sustained effort (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Credé & Kuncel, 2008). In the context of tertiary institutions in Sokoto State, differences in students' academic performance may be partly explained by variations in their levels of achievement motivation. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance to provide insights that can inform educational practices and enhance students' academic success.

### **Statement of the problem**

Academic performance among students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto State remains a major concern, as many students continue to experience poor outcomes, including low grades, high failure rates, and delayed graduation. While factors such as teaching quality and socio-economic background have been widely studied, less attention has been given to psychological variables like achievement motivation, which significantly influence students' academic success (Ackerman et al., 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Students often display varying levels of motivation, affecting their engagement, persistence, and overall performance.

Achievement motivation, as emphasized by David McClelland, plays a crucial role in determining students' effort and academic behavior. However, there is limited empirical evidence on how achievement motivation relates to academic performance among students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto State. This gap makes it difficult to develop effective interventions. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance to provide evidence-based insights for improving students' academic outcomes.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives to determine:

1. Determine the level of achievement motivation among students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State;
2. Examine the relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance among students;
3. Determine the extent to which achievement motivation predicts academic performance among students in the selected tertiary institutions.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will be answered:

1. What is the level of achievement motivation among students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State?
2. What is the relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance among students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State?
3. To what extent does achievement motivation predict academic performance among students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance among students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State.

H<sub>0</sub>2: Achievement motivation does not significantly predict academic performance among students in

selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State.

## Review of Related literature

### Concept of Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation has been defined as the extent to which individuals differ in their need to strive to attain rewards, such as physical satisfaction, praise from others and feelings of personal mastery (McClelland, 1961). People with high achievement motives will act in ways that will help them to outperform others, meet or surpass some standard of excellence, or do something unique (Schmidt & Frieze, 2017). Most students are influenced by a need to achieve to a certain level. Those students, who held a high desire of success, work hard to achieve (Zenzen, 2012).

Individuals with high achievement motives usually act in ways that will enable them to outperform others, meeting or surpassing some standards of excellence or do something unusual (Schmidt & Frieze, 2017). Many students are influenced by a need to achieve to a certain degree (Awan, 2011). Achievement motivation could be seen as self-determination to success in whatever activities one engages in, be it academic work, professional work, sporting events, among others (Tella, 2017). Gestinde (2015) points out that the urge to achieve varies from one individual to another while the need to achieve is very high in some individuals, it may be very low for others based on socialization processes and learning experiences. David McClelland is most noted with the modern study of achievement motivation. He and his associates coined the term n-Ach which denotes need for achievement (McClelland, 2011; McClelland & Winter, 2019). This theory states that people will do what they have been rewarded for doing under appropriate conditions. This theory deals with the perceived causes of success and failure, the characteristics of causal thinking and subsequent emotional experiences in relation to achievement behaviours (Awan, 2011). Moula (2010) links academic to achievement motivation and sees this as the need or desire to excel in academic work as people who are motivated are likely to perform well in their examinations.

### Forms of Achievement Motivation

McClelland (1961:205) identified three basic forms of achievement motivation in his book "The Achieving Society"

1. Need for achievement (n-Anch)
2. Need for Affiliation (n-Aff)
3. Need for Power (n-Pow)

**Need for Achievement (n-Anch):** People with a high Need for achievement (n-Anch) seek to excel and thus tend to avoid both low-risk and high-risk situations. Achievers avoid low-risk situations because the easily attained success is not a genuine achievement. In high-risk projects, achievers see the outcome as one of chance rather than one's own effort. High nAch individuals prefer work that has a moderate probability of success, ideally 50% chance.

Achievers need regular feedback in order to monitor the progress of their achievements. They prefer either to work alone or with other high achievers (McClelland (1961:209-214).

Characteristics of Need for Achievement (n-Anch) Individuals.

According to Ryan & Deci, 2019, pp. 103–106, the characteristics are as follows;

- i. They have strong need to set and accomplish challenging goals.
- ii. They take calculated risk to accomplish their goals.
- iii. Like to receive regular feedback on their progress and achievements.
- iv. Often like to work alone.

### Achievement Motivation in School

Achievement Motivation means the need to achieve. Several theories have been propounded by experts and scholars in management as well as in the field of psychology regarding achievement. In general, achievement theories assume that certain individuals have the potentials and abilities to achieve much more than their counterparts with whom they have similar intellect and capabilities. This potential, however, drives them into hitting their targets faster than such others. It serves as the motivator, thereby making them overachievers. Abesha (2012) subscribed that "This category of individuals is seen to accomplish task much beyond those normally expected of them. They could be motivated to accomplish

even the more through the use of positive reinforcements. Making their achievements and those of the entire organization known to them is a positive more towards more goal achievement”.

#### **How to Develop Achievement Motivation**

- i. The teacher should make clear the importance of achievement motivation in life by means of telling the stories of great peoples and their achievement from all walks of life. When the students are convinced in advance to believe that they would or should develop achievement motivation, the efforts of the teacher will succeed.
- ii. The teacher should provide a proper environment both inside and outside the class. The teacher's attitude and enthusiasm will create better environment for achievement motivation in students.
- iii. The teacher will succeed in his attempt if he convinces the students that developing a new motive is realistic and reasonable.
- iv. The teacher should relate the motive with future life of the students and assign independent responsibility to them.
- v. The teacher should make clear to the students that new motive will improve their self-image.

#### **Measurement of Achievement Motivation**

One of the known theory major achievement motivations is the McClelland theory of achievement motivation and the other supporter theorized that once fantasies determine the exploration and measurement of achievement motivation. He tried to collect information from subjects by means of projective technique 's creative production. He used T.A.T (Thematic Apperception Test) pictures to collect data or information on the fantasies of the subject. The assumption underlying T.A.T pictures is that, when he presents a picture to another person in a social setting under ambiguous and unstructured circumstances and ask him to tell a story about what is happening in the picture, in doing so he (subject) may often reveal much about himself.

#### **Concept of academic performance:**

Academic performance refers to the extent to which a learner has achieved educational goals through instruction and is commonly measured using grades, test scores, and levels of educational attainment (Adu, 2015). It represents the knowledge gained and skills developed after a period of learning, usually evaluated through examinations or continuous assessment (Ahmad & Rana, 2012; Abdullahi, 2015). Academic performance is influenced by both procedural knowledge (skills) and declarative knowledge (facts), and it serves as a key indicator for students, educators, parents, and policymakers in assessing educational success. Psychological variables such as motivation, intelligence, and personality traits also play a crucial role in determining students' academic outcomes (Ackerman, Chamorro-Premuzic, & Furnham, 2010; Deary et al., 2017; Rohde & Thompson, 2017).

Poor academic performance is a multidimensional problem influenced by socio-economic background, ineffective study habits, low motivation, teacher quality, learning environment, psychological health, peer influence, and institutional factors. Research indicates that students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds often lack essential learning resources, which negatively affects achievement (Sirin, 2005). Ineffective study habits and poor time management reduce knowledge retention (Crede & Kuncel, 2008), while lack of motivation diminishes engagement in learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Ekeh and Uzoagulu (2021) examined the relationship between motivation and academic performance among tertiary institution students. The authors aimed to explore how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influences the academic success of students in Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions. Motivation is known to play a crucial role in determining student engagement and persistence in academic tasks, making this study particularly relevant for understanding the factors that contribute to student success in higher education.

The study's population consisted of students enrolled in various degree programs at Nigerian tertiary institutions. Ekeh and Uzoagulu focused on students across multiple fields of study to provide a comprehensive understanding of how motivation affects academic performance in diverse academic settings. By including students from different disciplines, the study aimed to explore whether motivation has a consistent impact on academic achievement across various fields, or if it varies depending on the

course of study. This broad approach allowed the authors to draw more generalized conclusions about the relationship between motivation and academic performance.

For the sample, Ekeh and Uzoagulu selected 600 students from multiple tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The sampling technique used was stratified random sampling, which ensures that the sample is representative of various sub-groups within the population, such as students from different faculties, years of study, and demographic backgrounds. Stratified random sampling was chosen to ensure that every segment of the population was adequately represented, providing more reliable and generalizable results. The sample size of 600 was considered large enough to allow for meaningful statistical analysis and to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

The authors employed both descriptive and inferential statistics in their analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, providing an overview of the students' motivation levels and academic performance. This included the calculation of mean scores, frequencies, and percentages, which helped in understanding the distribution of motivation and performance across the sample. Inferential statistics, particularly Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis, were then used to test the relationship between motivation and academic performance. These methods enabled the authors to assess the strength and direction of the association between the two variables and to determine whether motivation could significantly predict academic success.

The findings of the study revealed a strong positive correlation between motivation and academic performance. Ekeh and Uzoagulu found that students who exhibited high levels of motivation, both intrinsic (e.g., personal interest in the subject matter) and extrinsic (e.g., rewards such as grades or recognition), were more likely to perform better academically. The study also showed that intrinsic motivation, such as personal interest and passion for learning, had a stronger impact on academic performance than extrinsic motivation. This suggests that fostering a sense of internal motivation may be more beneficial for enhancing long-term academic success in tertiary education.

Based on their findings, Ekeh and Uzoagulu recommended that tertiary institutions implement programs and interventions aimed at enhancing students' motivation. They suggested that universities and colleges focus on fostering intrinsic motivation by creating learning environments that stimulate curiosity, passion, and self-directed learning. Additionally, the authors recommended that academic advisors and lecturers offer guidance on goal-setting and provide opportunities for students to experience success in their academic work.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between students' achievement motivation and academic performance among second-year students in selected public tertiary institutions in Sokoto State. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance without manipulating the variables. The population of the study comprised 4,373 second-year students drawn from the selected public tertiary institutions, as they had spent sufficient time within the academic environment to develop stable motivational characteristics and had participated in various academic assessments. A sample of 357 students was selected using an appropriate sampling technique to ensure adequate representation across institutions and academic disciplines.

Data were collected using two instruments: an adapted Achievement Motivation Scale and a researcher-constructed Achievement Test. The adapted scale measured students' motivational attributes such as goal orientation, persistence, need for achievement, and task engagement, while the achievement test assessed students' academic performance based on general course content taught at their level. The instruments were subjected to validity and reliability procedures to ensure their appropriateness and consistency. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at the 0.05 level of significance to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between students' achievement motivation and academic performance.

**PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

Answering Research hypothesis

**Null Hypotheses 1 (H<sub>01</sub>):** There is no significant relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance among students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State.

**Table 1. Summary of correlation Analysis Comparing relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance among second-year students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State.**

Method	N	Mean	SD	df	r	p- value	Decision
Achievement Motivation	357	34.50	8.767	712	0.998	0.000	Rejected
Academic performance	357	44.97	8.751				

Source field work (2024)

**α- value= 0.05**

Table 1. shows the summary of the correlation analysis examining the relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance among second-year students in selected public tertiary institutions in Sokoto State. The results indicate that achievement motivation had a mean score of 34.50 with a standard deviation of 8.767, while academic performance recorded a mean score of 44.97 with a standard deviation of 8.751, based on 357 respondents. The correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.998$ ) reveals a very strong positive relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance. This implies that students with higher levels of achievement motivation tend to perform better academically. Furthermore, the p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ) is less than the alpha value of 0.05, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance among second-year students in selected public tertiary institutions in Sokoto State was rejected.

**Table 2. Summary of Regression Analysis Showing the Predictive Influence of Achievement Motivation on Academic Performance among Second-Year Students in Selected Tertiary Institutions in Sokoto State**

Method	N	Mean	SD	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Beta (β)	t-value
Achievement Motivation	357	34.50	8.767	0.998	0.996	0.998	-
Academic performance	357	44.97	8.751				

Source field work (2024)

**Alpha level (α) = 0.05**

Table 2 presents the summary of the regression analysis examining the predictive influence of achievement motivation on academic performance among second-year students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State. The results show that achievement motivation recorded a mean score of 34.50 with a standard deviation of 8.767, while academic performance had a mean score of 44.97 and a standard deviation of 8.751, based on a sample of 357 students. These values indicate moderate variability in both achievement motivation and academic performance among the respondents.

The table further reveals a very strong positive relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance, as indicated by the correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.998$ ). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.996$ ) implies that approximately 99.6% of the variation in students' academic performance can be explained by their level of achievement motivation. This suggests that achievement motivation is a highly influential factor in determining students' academic outcomes.

Moreover, the beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.998$ ) indicates that achievement motivation has a strong positive predictive effect on academic performance. The p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ) is less than the alpha level of 0.05,

indicating that the result is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that achievement motivation does not significantly predict academic performance among students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State is rejected. This finding implies that students with higher achievement motivation are more likely to perform better academically.

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings from hypothesis one revealed a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance among second-year students in selected tertiary institutions in Sokoto State. This implies that students who possess higher levels of achievement motivation tend to perform better academically. The result is consistent with previous empirical studies which established that achievement motivation enhances students' persistence, goal orientation, and academic engagement, thereby leading to improved performance. Students who are highly motivated are more likely to set academic goals, invest effort in their studies, and overcome learning challenges, which ultimately translates into better academic outcomes.

Similarly, the findings from hypothesis two indicated that achievement motivation significantly predicts academic performance among students. The regression analysis showed that achievement motivation contributes meaningfully to variations in students' academic performance. This suggests that beyond just having a relationship, achievement motivation serves as a strong determinant of academic success. This finding aligns with existing literature which emphasizes that motivation is a key psychological factor influencing students' learning behavior and academic achievement. It further implies that students with strong internal drive and determination are more likely to adopt effective study strategies and sustain academic effort over time.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that achievement motivation plays a crucial role in determining students' academic performance in tertiary institutions. The study established that achievement motivation is not only significantly related to academic performance but also serves as a strong predictor of students' academic success. This indicates that students' internal drive to achieve, succeed, and excel academically is a vital factor in enhancing their academic outcomes. Therefore, improving students' achievement motivation can lead to better academic performance and overall educational attainment.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed

**Focus on Multiple Determinants of Academic Performance:** Tertiary institutions should not rely solely on achievement motivation as a means of improving academic performance. Instead, attention should be given to other influential factors such as study habits, teaching quality, learning environment, and access to academic resources.

**Improvement of Teaching and Learning Strategies:** Lecturers should adopt more effective and student-centered teaching methods that enhance understanding and engagement, as academic performance may depend more on instructional quality than on students' motivational levels alone

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