AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

# ASSOCIATION OF ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE-NIGERIA: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GENDER

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## ABSTRACT

*This study sought to establish the association between achievement motivation and academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra State using correlational research design. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study consisted of all the 12, 172 Senior Secondary School (SS2) students in the 263 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample for the study consisted of 750 SS2 students drawn from the population of the study using multi-stage random sampling technique. Two sets of questionnaires 'Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ) and 'Academic Engagement Questionnaire (AEQ)' were used for data collection. The instruments for data collection were validated by 3 specialists in Education (2 from Educational Psychology and 1 from Measurement and Evaluation). The reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach Alpha Method and the alpha co-efficient got were 0.80 for AMQ and 0.82 for AEQ. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Coefficient of Determination for answering the research question while regression statistical analysis was used for testing the hypothesis. The findings of the study revealed that irrespective of gender, there is a high positive relationship between achievement motivation and academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that teachers' welfare ought to be a priority for the Government. If the teachers are made to work with passion especially through the support of a favourable welfare, they could ignite the needed motivation in the students, thus positively impacting their academic engagement.*

**Keywords**: Achievement motivation, in-school adolescents and academic engagement.

## Introduction

Motivation is of essence given that it affects our daily lives. It is not out of place to say that motivation is the innate drive surrounding the execution of all human activities given that all of man's behaviours, actions, hope, and beliefs are altered by this inner drive to flourish. Our motives for achievement could focus on our living needs or towards satisfying our creative needs or even on the actualization of success in various life competitions. These basic physiological

motivational drives necessarily modify our natural behaviour in different environments. Motivation accounts for the dynamics of our daily routine which involves our needs, desires, and ambitions in life and could be regarded as the driving force trailing all the actions of an individual. Motivation is generally regarded as the drive to achieve targets and the process to maintain the drive over the years.

Behavioural scientists have observed that while some people have intense desire to achieve something, others do not really feel concerned about their achievements. This phenomenon has attracted a lot of discussions and debates leading to the development of the concept of achievement motivation. Thus, Mustamiah and Widanti (2018) classified motivation into: external, intrinsic, physiological, and achievement motivation. Achievement motivation deals with that drive to work with diligence and vitality, to constantly steer toward targets, to obtain dominance in challenging and difficult tasks and create sense of achievement as a result. According to Kumari (2019), the two major variables around the concept of achievement motivation is the tendency to approach success and to avoid failure. Academic achievement motivation could thus be said to refer to that self-propelling drive and determination that student's exhibit in their quest to attain academic success. Adegboyega (2018) referred to it as the totality of one's determination to succeed in academic activities. In the thoughts of Wigfield, Tonks and Klauda (2016), achievement motivation connotes propels behaviour towards achievement. This assertion was affirmed by Sivapakiam and Nalinilatha (2017) who averred that, students with high achievement motivation tend to be less involved in examination malpractice and are disposed for the realization of educational goals. This gives to understanding why Gang, Han, Fah and Bansa (2018) asserted that students who exhibit high achievement motivation display more determination in tackling difficult homework and completing their schoolwork successfully. By implication, one could assert that achievement motivation is paramount for success. Given the foregoing, when students have the desire to achieve maximally, they will likely be disposed to activate their desire and quest for active engagement in the academic activities. Bearing this in mind, teachers therefore, mostly deploy motivation strategies towards arousing the students' desire for academic engagement which precedes success. In that case, the lack of achievement motivation could account for lack of desired engagement with a negative ripple effect such as the obvious procrastination and delay in carrying out academic tasks by students (Anierobi and Unachukwu, 2020).

This presents achievement motivation as that viable mentality to compete and compare with others; a subjective, internal, and psychological drive, enabling individuals to pursue work they perceive to be valuable and eventually achieve their goals. Scientists have observed that people with a high level of achievement motivation exhibit certain characteristics. For instance, as Singh (2011) presented it, people who are oriented towards

achievement, in general, enjoy life and feel in control. They set moderately difficult but easily achievable targets, which help them achieve their objectives, prefer to work on a problem rather than leaving the outcome to chance, seem to be more concerned with their personal achievement rather than the rewards of success.

With achievement motivation, the ultimate goal is the development or demonstration of high ability to oneself or other, while avoiding the demonstration of low ability or characteristics. Thus, of all the various forms of motivation, achievement motivation stands out as the disposition that drives an individual to face challenges in the interest of gaining success and excellence. Hsu, Chen, Yu, and Lou, (2010) has postulated the theory behind achievement motivation, which signals that people who expect to achieve success are more highly motivated by the need to achieve and less motivated by fear of failure. McClelland as cited in Deshpandé, Grinstein, Kim, and Ofek (2013) averred that the achievement motivation compels an individual to set challenging goals, strive for performance, work out risks, face uncertainties and bear ambiguous situations, solve problems creatively and assume responsibility for the consequences of his or her behaviour.

The necessity of achievement motivation has been attested to even in business of buying and selling. McClelland had earlier opined that achievement motivation is highly linked to business success. It was on that foundation that Ogunleye and Osekita (2016) referred to achievement motivation behaviour as one that is based on attaining success, achieving aspiration in life and pursuing challenging goals. In the light of the foregoing, it is important to the researchers to see how achievement motivation correlates with students' academic engagement.

Operationally, achievement motivation refers to that drive to work with diligence and vitality, to constantly steer toward targets, to obtain dominance in challenging and difficult tasks in order to create sense of achievement as a result. Achievement motivation is defined as a self-propelling drive and determination that students exhibit in their quest for academic success (Akpan and Umobong (2013); Anokye, 2018). Achievement motivation is one's determination to succeed in academic activities, as such, achievement motivation propels behaviour towards achievement of success among students (Wigfield,Tonks and Klauda, 2016). Achievement motivation could be perceived as revolving around two major variables: the tendency to approach success and to avoid failure. Thus, when students have the desire to achieve maximally, they will likely be disposed to activate their desire and quest for active engagement in the academic activities (Gang, Han, Fah and Bansa, 2018). This implies that the lack of achievement motivation seems to account for lack of desired engagement with a negative ripple effect such as procrastination and delay in carrying out academic tasks by students. The researchers are worried about negative attitude to reading, late attendance to school, poor

reading habits, social withdrawal among others recorded in some of the public secondary schools in Anambra State over the past years (Mbanuzuru, Mbanuzuru, Udigwe and Adogu ,2021) These ugly manifestations of academic disengagement among in-school adolescents as the researchers observed could be gender specific.

While achievement motivation can be referred to as the drive to succeed and accomplish goals, academic engagement refers to the degree to which students are involved in their academic work and are motivated to learn. Student's achievement motivation has been an important issue for teachers. This is given that the extent a student is motivate and engaged could play a significant role on how students approach school in general, how much time and effort they devote to their studies, how much support they seek from teachers and their colleagues and how they perform in examination. According to Linnenbrink and Pintrich as cited in Adegboyega (2018), students are motivated when they feel excited and enthusiastic about a task or feel value of the task. This implies that students who believe that they have a high capacity to learn and achieve or feel that they can get success, becomes more energetic and motivated to do the task. In the light of this, understanding and developing the knowledge about the issues of achievement motivation as it correlates with academic engagement of students could go a long way in arousing students' interest in academic activities.

The relationship between achievement motivation and academic engagement research has shown that achievement motivation is positively related to academic engagement (Lorenz, Beer, Pütz and Heinitz, 2016). As such, Lorenz et al. continued, students who have higher levels of achievement motivation are more likely to be engaged in their academic work, have higher academic achievement, and are more likely to persist in their studies. According to Linnenbrink-Garcia, Patall and Pekrun (2016), the reason behind this is because achievement motivation provides individuals with the drive, energy, and focus needed to overcome academic challenges and achieve their goals.

Going by the foregoing, studies have explored gender differences in achievement motivation and academic engagement. According to Linnenbrink-Garcia, Patall and Pekrun (2016), males have higher levels of achievement motivation than females, probably because males are more likely to be motivated by competition and external rewards, while females are more likely to be motivated by intrinsic factors, such as a desire to learn and achieve. According to Wang and Eccles (2013), females tend to be more engaged in their academic work than males. However, Kaya, and Kocak (2019) found no significant gender differences in achievement motivation. In the light of the foregoing, it is of great interest to research literature for a study of this direction which is aimed at ascertaining how achievement motivation correlate with academic

engagement of in-school adolescents taking gender into perspective.

Achieving academic engagement of students has been the desire of educational stakeholders in secondary education. This has become of essence considering that the students in question are at the age of influence and transition. Previous researchers (Ahmadu, Don and Hamzat, 2016; Anierobi and Unachukwu, 2020) fingered external factors such as facilities, teachers' factors, poor teaching strategies etc. as factors that could negatively affect students' academic engagement. Achievement motivation is a psychological construct that interests the researchers. By adopting a psychological approach towards solving the problem of students' academic engagement, the researchers intend to ascertain the association of achievement motivation and academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra State.

**Statement of the Problem**

Adolescence is a period of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes; a period of self-discovery, where it is normal for teenagers to experiment with friendship, activities, substances, and sexuality. When in- school adolescents are academically engaged, the desired academic and positive behavioural changes will be realized. Achieving academic engagement of students has been the desire of educational stakeholders in secondary education. Personal experience and observation of the researchers showed that the academic engagement of in-school adolescents seems to be at its lowest ebb. A lot of in-school adolescents in public secondary schools in Anambra State, as the researchers observed get involved in cultism, cybercrimes, yahoo, gambling, and substance abuse or could be addicted to social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Tiktok and Facebook or become addicted to watching movies and playing games. Some others show negative attitude to reading and studying, find it hard to come to school early, and also show signs of social withdrawal. All these interferences could retard students from engaging in academic activities. When students spend ample time on social media, cybercrimes and playing games it may retard their academic engagement. Hence, achievement motivation is such psychological construct that could be vital in explaining academic engagement of students. The researchers adopted a psychological approach towards solving the problem of students' academic engagement. Thus, the problem the study investigated is the association of achievement motivation and academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra State.

**Research Questions**

The research question below was formulated to give direction to this study:

1. What is the relationship between achievement motivation and academic engagement of male and female in-school adolescents in Anambra state?

**Research Hypothesis**

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between achievement motivation and academic engagement of male and female in-school adolescents in Anambra state.

**Method**

Correlational research design was utilized for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), correlation research design is focused on establishing the existing relationship between two or more variables. The population of the study comprised 12, 172 Senior Secondary School (SS2) students in the 263 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The choice of SS2 students is based on the fact that they are not at immediate preparation for external exams and were readily available for the study. Using multi- stage random sampling technique, 750 students were selected for the study. Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. The two sets of questionnaires are titled Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ) and Academic Engagement Questionnaire (AEQ). Achievement Motivation was measured using Achievement Motivation instrument adapted from Elias, Noordin and Mahyuddin (2010) revised by Erhuvwu and Adeyemi (2019). AMQ is a 15-item questionnaire that measures students' endeavour for success and to choose goal-oriented success or failure activities especially as it concerns their academic journey. Achievement Motivation questionnaire is a four-point response of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The minimum score for the scale is 15 while the maximum score is 60. Thus, scores of 30 and above were considered high achievement motivation while scores below 30 were considered low achievement motivation. In adapting the instrument for the present study, the words used in the items were further simplified to suit the level and understanding of the respondents.

Academic Engagement Scale (AES) used in this study is a 13-item scale was adapted from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-Student Version by Schaufeli, and Bakker (2003) revised by Commissioning (2020). The scale measures academic engagement on three domains (vigor, dedication, absorption). Participants are to rate the extent to which each scale item for each variable applied to their experiences. It was originally developed on a seven-point Likert scale anchored by the response options from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). However, in adapting the instrument, the instrument was then placed on a four-point Likert scale response of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). An average of all the three subscales provides a score for general academic engagement. The range of score for positive statements were weighted as 4, 3, 2, and 1 for SA-SD respectively, while negative statements were weighted 1, 2, 3 and 4 for SA-SD respectively. Higher scores (26 and above) indicate active academic engagement while low scores (below 26) indicate passive academic engagement. The items were also slightly altered to reflect the studentship level of the respondents and what applies to their academic circumstances.

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VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ) and Academic Engagement Questionnaire (AEQ) were validated for face and content worthiness by 3 experts in Education. The reliability of the instruments was ascertained through pilot testing by administering the AMQ and AEQ to a similar group of 30 Senior Secondary School (SS2) randomly selected from public secondary schools in Enugu State. The Cronbach alpha statistics was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The alpha coefficients got were 0.80 for AMQ and 0.82 for AEQ.

The instruments were administered by the researchers with the assistance of 5 trained research assistants. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Coefficient of Determination for answering the research questions while regression statistical analysis was used for testing the hypotheses.

**Result Findings**

**Research Question One:** What is the Association between Achievement Motivation and Academic Engagement of Male and Female In-School Adolescents in Anambra State?

**Table 1:** Pearson r on the Association between Achievement Motivation and Academic Engagement of Male and Female In-School Adolescents in Anambra State

| Gender | Source of Variation | N | R | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | Achievement Motivation<br>Academic Engagement | 266 | 0.72 | High Positive Relationship |
| Female | Achievement Motivation<br>Academic Engagement | 470 | 0.84 | Very High Positive Relationship |

Table 1 shows that there is a high positive relationship of 0.72 existing between achievement motivation and academic engagement of male in-school adolescents in Anambra state. On the other hand, a very high positive the relationship of 0.84 exist between achievement motivation and academic achievement of female in-school adolescents in Anambra State.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant association between achievement motivation and academic engagement of male and female in-school adolescents in Anambra state.

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**Table 2:** Pearson r on the Association Between Achievement Motivation and Academic Engagement of Male and Female In-School Adolescents in Anambra State

| Gender | Source of Variation | N | r | p-value | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | Achievement Motivation<br>Academic Engagement | 266 | 0.32 | .02 | Significant |
| Female | Achievement Motivation<br>Academic Engagement | 470 | 0.52 | .00 | Significant |

Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship existing between achievement motivation and academic engagement of both male and female in-school adolescents in Anambra state. The calculated r (0.32 for male and 0.52 for female) had *P*.values <0.05. The 5th null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study revealed that there is a high positive relationship existing between achievement motivation and academic engagement of male in-school adolescents in Anambra state. On the other hand, the study revealed that a very high positive relationship also exists between achievement motivation and academic engagement of female in-school adolescents in Anambra State. The test of significance of Pearson correlation between achievement motivation and academic engagement revealed that there is a significant relationship existing between achievement motivation and academic engagement of both male and female in-school adolescents in Anambra state. The findings of the study agree with Akpan et al (2013) that the gender of the respondents notwithstanding, motivation has a significant impact on academic engagement with highly motivated students being more academically engaged than the moderately and lowly motivated students. The findings of the study further agree with Anierobi et al (2020) that achievement motivation has a moderate and positive relationship with the academic engagement of students. This proves that motivation is very vital in academic engagement of students in tertiary institutions. This implies that students participate actively in academic activities and do better in class work when they have the zeal to achieve maximally in their academic pursuit. Consequentially, any increase in achievement motivation, will reflect positively on academic engagement of the students. The findings of the study further agree with Mustamiah et al (2018) that learning motivation has an effect on student engagement, meaning that learning motivation can be used as predictor of student engagement. This implies that the higher the

motivation to learn, the higher the student engagement, and the lower the motivation to learn the students' engagement will be lower. This implies that students who are motivated to learn will direct their energies to learning activities, by showing a willingness to direct their learning activities to achieve learning goals. They will also have the desire to do learning activities at school and have the will to maintain learning activities on every lesson taught in school. When students exhibit motivational behaviours, their energy is directed to engage in learning.

## Conclusion

The following conclusion were drawn by the researchers' based on the result:

1. Irrespective of gender, achievement motivation has high positive association with academic engagement on in-school adolescents in Anambra state.
2. There is a high positive relationship between achievement motivation and academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state.

## Recommendations

1. Teachers' welfare ought to be a priority for the Government. If the teachers are made to work with passion especially through the support of a favourable welfare, they could ignite the needed motivation in the students, thus positively impacting their academic engagement.
2. There should be regular reward for students who distinguish themselves in their academics. Such a step will help to build students' achievement motivation as well as their academic engagement.
3. Secondary education authorities should from time to time create capacity enhancing programmes for teachers. Such a step will fortify the teachers with the needed arsenal to help the students' academic engagement.

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