# Achievement Motivation, Study Habits and Inferiority among Children of high and low Educated Parents

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## Abstract

*Parental education provides a robust indicator of parental functioning that predicts child well being across diverse communities. The family in which the child grows up markedly influences the child's attitude and behaviour. The child imitates his parents as a model for adjustment in society. If the parents are well educated, this gives the child good modelling to adjust in school and society. Thus to study the effect of parental education on the achievement, study habits and inferiority of children, 100 children (50 children of high educated parents and 50 children of low educated parents) were taken. The data was subjected to t-test. Findings revealed that children of high educated parents were high in achievement motivation, good in study habits and low on inferiority complex as compared to children of low educated parents.*

***Keywords:*** *Achievement motivation, Study Habits, Inferiority Complex.*

## Introduction :

Parents play pivotal role in shaping child's achievement, aspirations, education, motivation, study habits and overall personality (Hossler and Stage, 1992; Eccles and Harold, 1993; Beyer, 1995; Paulson, 1996). Their educational level and unconditional love provide necessary educational environment to children which results in better performance. By providing them various skills like problem solving and decision making they enhance their academic achievement and this supportive behaviour helps the child to set goals in life and to achieve them. Habel (1986) believed that the psychological makeup of parents have a great influence on the behaviour, attentiveness and performance of a child. Lankard (1995) indicated that motivation, norms, beliefs, values, habits and attitudes of individuals with the environment and expectations, the parents have for their children influence educational performances of their children. Children are affected by who parents *are* (e.g., with respect to gender, age, race/ethnicity, intelligence, education levels, temperament), what parents know (e.g., about child development and normative child behaviour), what parents believe (e.g., attitudes toward childrearing), what parents value (e.g., education, achievement, obedience, interpersonal relationships), what parents expect of their children (e.g., age or developmentally appropriate expectations for behaviour, achievement expectations), and what parents ultimately do (i.e., their parenting practices and overall parenting styles). Thus the kind of mental challenges to which a child is exposed at various periods, is likely to determine the kind of mental abilities which he/she displays. Parents can take many positive steps to help their children, they can encourage them to pursue advanced course work, to invest significant amount of time in their homework and to devote more time to reading (Mullis, 2002). Bamidele (1987) asserts that parents' aspiration for the child could affect his/her

achievement in school. Morish (1995), believes that well educated parents will wish their own children to benefit as they have done from their good education and will provide them necessary things to accomplish their goals. Lankard (1995) points out that where parental encouragement is low, relatively few children, regardless of their intelligence or socio-economic status levels, they plan to go to study. On the other hand, where parental encouragement is high even when socio-economic status and intelligence are relatively low; more students plan to go to study. They concluded that the way and manner in which the family is organised and the direction in which the family system is changing is important as this reflects on the child's performance in school.

Onocha (1985) concludes that a child from a well educated family with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a child from an illiterate family. This is because the child from an educated family has a lot of support such as a decent and good environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, and good academic materials. They are likely to be sent to good schools where well qualified and trained teachers will handle them.

According to Grissmer (2003), parents' level of education is the most important factor affecting child's academic achievement. Taiwo (1993) suggests that parents' educational background influence the academic achievement of children because the parents will guide and counsel the child on the best way to perform well in education and provide the necessary materials needed by child. Musgrave (2000) supported that a child that comes from an educated home would like to follow the steps of his/her family and by this, work actively in his/her studies. The parents who have more than a minimum level of education are expected to have a favoured attitude to the child's education and to encourage and help him/her with school work. They provide library facilities to encourage the child for as reading of newspapers, magazines and journals. They are likely to have wider vocabulary by which the children can benefit and develop language fluency.

Achievement typically stresses the importance of accomplishments and attainments with effort involved (Mandel & Marcus, 1988). Achievement can also be described as energy that is used to overcome challenges and persevere to conquer a goal. Motivation relates to an individual's reason for engaging in an activity, the degree to which an individual pursues the activity, and the persistence of the individual (Graham & Weiner, 1996). Achievement motivation can be defined as making good business or the orientation to the actions which is important to compel with the perfect standards (H.Can, 1992). It helps a child to set realistic but challenging goals, they need feedback and respond well to constructive criticism. They do not fear failure which makes them persistent towards their goals. Achievement motivation has been associated with task difficulty preferences. Atkinson (1957) proposed that positively motivated subjects (i.e., subjects with motive to achieve success stronger than motive to avoid failure) would prefer tasks of moderate difficulty, whereas negatively motivated subjects (i.e., subjects with motive to achieve success weaker than

motive to avoid failure) would prefer either very easy or very difficult tasks. Dykman (1998) suggested that there are two main motivations behind achievement, which he calls growth-seeking vs. validation-seeking. Growth seekers enjoy challenges and their ability to learn and mature through challenges/mistakes. Validation seekers, feel under constant pressure to prove themselves as likable and acceptable to others. It's a defensive coping strategy that develops in the context of critical and perfectionist parenting. Academic achievement motivation can be defined as child's need or drive towards the achievement of success in academic work (Amalaha, 1975; Moen and Doyle, 1978).

Atkinson and Feather (1966) observed that the achievement motivation of children whose fathers have attained high educational level and are in high income occupations tend to be high. The development of high level achievement motivation is attributed to early independence training and achievement training (Atkinson, Feather and Majoribanks, 1979). Atkinson and Feather argue that successful parents tend to provide early independence training which is necessary in the development of achievement motivation.

Gesinde (2000) suggests that achievement motivation is learnt through the socialization process. He argues that the urge to achieve varies from one individual to the other. For some, the need for achievement is very high while, for others it is very low. A high need for achievement would develop among those who have high achievers as their role models in their early life experience, while those who have low achievers as their role models will hardly develop the need for achievement. The family is a major socializing agent and therefore important in determining the child's motivation to achieve success in various areas.

Study habits are strongly linked and related with academic performance (Reed & Hagen, 1996; Elliot, McGregor & Gable, 1999; Meter, 2001; Kagu, 2003 and Ossai, 2004). Researchers have found that good study habits contribute to high academic performance while poor study habits lead to poor academic performance. According to Mace (2002), “study is a systematic acquisition of knowledge and an understanding of facts and principles that calls for retention and application”. Kelly (1998) stated that study is the application of one's mental capacity to the acquisition, understanding and organization of knowledge. It often involves some form of formal learning. Crow and Crow (2000) explained that study is a programme of subject matter mastery which involves hard work. However, study involves the individual's thinking, feeling, personality, social interaction, physical activities and health. Narramore (1974) defined habit as “a pattern of activity which, through repetition, has been learned to the point that it has become automatic and can be carried on with a minimum of conscious effect”. Study habit, therefore, refers to learning which leads to the achievement of a learner's goal, through a prescribed pattern of steady behaviour. Crede and Kuncel (2008) defines study habit as study routines, including, but not restricted to, frequency of studying sessions, review of material, self-testing, rehearsal of learned material, and studying in a conducive environment.

Study habits is a well planned and deliberate pattern of study which has attained a

form of consistency on the part of the student towards understanding academic subjects and passing at examination (Deese, 1959; Pauk, 1962; Akinboye, 1974). Students' study habits seem to show differences in how they learn and how serious they are about their learning (Young, 1998).

Nonis & Hudson (2010) found that study habits have a significant direct relationship with the academic performance of college students. Although not every learning strategy or study habit produces useful results in terms of academic achievement, it would be expected that students who possess good study habits in general are better performers than those students with poor study habits.

Study habits have been associated with academic achievement, independently of scholastic aptitudes. Given a similar scholastic aptitude, students with better strategies and better study habits tend to show higher academic achievement. Even students with low scholastic aptitudes, but with good study habits, may obtain better results than those with higher aptitudes (Weigel & Wei-gel, 1967; Wikoff & Kafka, 1981; Matt, Pechersky, & Cervantes, 1991; On & Watkins, 1994). Both research and educational experience have demonstrated that students with good study habits usually show more socialized behaviours, higher responsibility and peer-group interaction, and less impulsiveness.

When a child is unable to achieve a goal, perform poor in exams, is low on academic achievement, weak in study skills and habits and is not supported by his/her parents to achieve something then the feelings of inferiority arises. Whatever is their source, when a child fear the consequences of being inferior or subordinate to others (e.g. when they fear that they will be rejected or vulnerable to criticism, rather than helped or accepted) they can become 'driven' to compete to avoid both self and others making evaluations of self 'as inferior' (Gilbert, 1992, 2003). Inferiority complex creates a sense of insecurity that can reach a great extent and can make the sufferer take a drastic step.

From Adler's perspective, an inferiority complex is “the presentation of the person to himself and others that he is not strong enough to solve a given problem in a socially useful way” (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). An inferiority complex is a pervasive feeling that one's abilities and characteristics are inferior to those of other people. Early criticism from parents, peer and sensitivity to the competitive dynamics of social life through peer group competition or media exposure, could sensitise a child to fears of inferiority (Gilbert, 1992; Dykman, 199

## Objectives

To study:

1. The effect of parental education in achievement motivation, study habits and inferiority complex in their children.
2. The academic achievement of children of high and low educated parents.
3. The study habits of children of high and low educated parents.
4. The inferiority complex among children of high and low educated parents.

## Hypotheses

1. Children of high educated parents would be higher on achievement motivation as compared to children of low educated parents.

2. Study habits of children of low educated parents would be poor as compared to high educated parents.
3. Children of high educated parents would be low on inferiority complex as compared to children of low educated parents.

## Method

**Sample:** To study achievement motivation, study habits and inferiority among children of high and low educated parents, a sample of 100 children (50 children of high educated parents and 50 children of low educated parents) from various areas of Patiala were taken. Their age ranges from 14 to 17 years. All the high educated parents were above graduation and low educated parents were senior secondary pass. On the basis of the education of parents, children were divided into two groups (50 children of high educated parents and 50 children of low educated parents) and were considered for the present study. Prior consent of parents and their wards were taken, only those participants were taken who were willing to participate in the study. The subjects were provided with **Academic Achievement Motivation Test** by T.R. Sharma (2011), **Study Habit Inventory** by Mukhopadhyay and Sansanwal (1983) and **Social Comparison Scale** by Allan and Gilbert (1995).

**Measures** used in the study.

**Academic Achievement Motivation Test** by **T.R. Sharma** (2011)

Academic Achievement Motivation Test comprises of 38 items with two alternatives. The test provides a direct numerical score indicating how much an individual is motivated in the field of academic achievement. The score range from 0 to 38, indicating high, average and low academic motivation. This test can be administered to a group of not more than 40 children at a time. One score is awarded for each correct answer. Reliability: the reliability of the test is based on three methods, split half N=100, reliability is 0.697, rational equivalence N=100, $r_{11}$ = 0.75 and test retest reliability boys N=298, r = 0.795, girls N=301, r = 0.807. Validity: content, criterion and construct validity on the bases of pooled judgements of 40 judges. The analysis of variance and Scheffe method results differ siginificantly.

**Study Habit Inventory** by Mukhopadhyay and Sansanwal (1983)

Study Habit Inventory consists of 52 items and 5 point likert scale from always to never. This inventory has been constituted of nine different kinds of study habits or behaviours. These are comprehension, concentration, task orientation, sets, interaction, drilling, supports, recording and language. Some items are positive and some items in the inventory are negative. Positive items have reversed scoring (4 to 0) and negative items have straight scoring (0 to 4). Reliability: the reliability of the inventory was worked out by using split half method. The reliability coefficient is 0.90. Validity: internal consistency is evident, all the coefficients are significant at 0.01 level and they range between a minimum of 0.49 to a maximum of 0.8%.

**Social Comparison Scale** by Allan and Gilbert (1995)

Social Comparison Scale measures the self-perceptions of social rank and relative social standing. This scale uses a semantic differential methodology and consists of 11 bipolar constructs. Participants are required to make a global comparison of themselves in relation to other people and to rate themselves along a 10

point scale. The 11 items cover judgements concerned with rank, attractiveness and how well the person thinks they 'fit in' with others in society. Low scores indicate feelings of inferiority and general low rank self-perceptions. The scale has been found to have good reliability, with Cronbach alphas of 0.88 and 0.96 with clinical population and 0.91 and 0.90 with student population.

**Procedure:** Data collection was divided into 2 sessions. In the first session, Academic Achievement Motivation test and Social Comparison Scale were given. After the gap of 15 minutes, in the second session, Study Habit Inventory was given to the subjects. The subjects were also assured that their responses would be kept confidential so that they can reply honestly.

**Statistical Analysis:** t-test

## Results:

**Table no.1 - Showing the means, S.D's and t-ratio of high and low educated parents for academic achievement motivation**

| academic achievement motivation | means | | s.d.'s | | df | t-ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | high educated parents | low educated parents | high educated parents | low educated parents | | |
| | 32.06 | 27.02 | 3.11 | 2.92 | 98 | 8.34** |

** Significant at 0.01 level of significance.

**Table no.2 - Showing the means, S.D's and t-ratio of high and low educated parents for study habit**

| study habit | means | | s.d.'s | | df | t-ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | high educated parents | low educated parents | high educated parents | low educated parents | | |
| | 163.4 | 91.98 | 11.05 | 7.17 | 98 | 38.34** |

** Significant at 0.01 level of significance.

**Table no.3 - Showing the means, S.D's and t-ratio of high and low educated parents for inferiority**

| inferiority | means | | s.d.'s | | df | t-ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | high educated parents | low educated parents | high educated parents | low educated parents | | |
| Total | 96.34 | 63.74 | 6.18 | 5.99 | 98 | 26.81** |

** Significant at 0.01 level of significance.

**Discussion:** Based on the data analysis (t-test) it's concluded that children from high educated parents were high on achievement motivation and study habits and low on inferiority as compared to children from low educated parents whose children were low on achievement motivation and study habits and high on inferiority. The analysis of Table no.1 revealed that children of high educated parents (M=32.06) were high on achievement motivation and children of low educated parents (M=27.02) were low on achievement motivation (t=8.34, p<.01). The reason can be linked to parental education, parents involve themselves with their children in studies and guide them achieve their goal. If the parents are educated, they can inculcate good values to their children. This will further lead towards establishing good study habits, more confidence and sense of achievement. Baker and Stevenson (1986) found well educated mothers have higher knowledge of their children's schooling, more contact with the school, aware of their children's achievement and lead them to pursue higher education. Reay (2004) suggested most middle class mothers have a good educational background and it is invested in their children's educational success in the form of self-confidence and participation. Sewell and Hauser (1980) and Tudge, et al (2006) found that a high level of education also allows the children to have more opportunity to develop motivation and educational aspirations to involve in various educational activities. Similarly in line with this thought, Poston and Falbo's (1990) findings supports the idea that educated parents tend to communicate and interact with their children to enhance the children to a positive learning and educational achievement. Achievement motivation has been shown to be higher in middle class than in the working class (Atkinson and Feather, 1966). The development of high level achievement motivation is attributed to early independence training and achievement training giving by parents (Atkinson, Feather and Majoribanks, 1979). According to Majoribanks (1979), in independence training parents insist on the child's self-reliance and autonomy in decision making situations. While, in achievement training they insist on high achievement through imposing high standards of excellence

in tasks, setting high goals for the child and expecting the child to show competence in doing tasks well. Thus, achievement motivation is among other factors dependent on child parent interactions.

In a study by Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1998), home environment was found to have a statistically positive and significant effect on academic intrinsic motivation. Children whose homes had greater emphasis on learning opportunities and activities were more academically intrinsically motivated. These findings imply that, a more favourable home environment motivates a child to excel in school. The high level of education which most often goes with high occupational status means that the parents will be able to provide the necessary learning facilities and to assist the child with schoolwork. This parental involvement which could be lacking in parents whose education and occupation are low may have a motivating effect on the child.

A parent with a small family will not only find it easy to provide for the physical needs of the child, but will also be in a position to give him attention, encouragement, stimulation and support with his schoolwork. This could have a motivating effect on a child from the small family in comparison with a child from a large family where the parents are always busy trying to find ways of meeting the basic needs of the family.

The analysis of Table no.2 reveals that children of high educated parents (M=163.4) were high on study habits and children of low educated parents (M=91.98) were low on study habits (t=38.34, p<.01). Students' study habits seem to show differences in how they learn and how serious they are about their learning (Young, 1998). Onwuegbuzie et al (2001) conducted a series of studies to find out the relationship between academic success and study habit and reported positive relationship between the two variables. Given a similar scholastic aptitude, students with better strategies and better study habits tend to show higher academic achievement. Even students with low scholastic aptitudes, but with good study habits, may obtain better results than those with higher aptitudes (Weigel & Wei-gel, 1967; Wikoff & Kafka, 1981; Matt, Pechersky, & Cervantes, 1991; On & Watkins, 1994). Lockheed et al., (1989) studies that the more the standard of parent's education, the higher is the education aspirations held by the parents towards the academic achievement of their children. Students with poor study habits do not perform well academically, have low self-concept, and consequently see little benefit to academically perform at their true ability (Trawick, 1992). According to Elliot and Wendling (1996), 75% of students who are academic underachievers have poor study habits and examination techniques. Haynes (1993) reports that improving study habits can enhance academic achievement of the students who have poor study habits. It has been argued that study skills should be taught at the high school level because many high school students are deficient in reading, thinking, and study skills (Tonjes and Zintz, 1981).

The analysis of Table no.3 reveals that children of high educated parents (M=96.34) were low on inferiority and children of low educated parents (M=63.74) were high on inferiority (t=26.81, p<.01). According to Adler (1926) feelings of inferiority are as much more than a sense of inadequacy. These feelings

provide the motivating force behind all growth and development. Early criticism by parents and peer group can lower the self belief of a child and can thus sensitize a child towards the fear of inferiority (Gilbert, 1992; Dykman, 1998). When children fear the consequences of being inferior or subordinate to others (e.g. when they fear that they will be rejected or vulnerable to criticism, rather than helped or accepted) they can become 'driven' to compete to avoid both self and others making evaluations of self 'as inferior' (Gilbert, 1992, 2003) thus they perform poorer in every field. Self– other relationship can be construed as competitive rather than care-focused or cooperative, and an individual can be highly oriented to social comparison and shame sensitivities. This striving can be a source of stress and individuals may find it hard to feel content, socially accepted and safe in their social networks (Gilbert, 1989). Most students have low self concept and they are so passive and negative, that affects their academic achievements and their study habits in schools. Academic success or failure can generate the feelings of competence or incompetence in students. These feelings can affect students' performances by their willingness to continue to learn or give up. It is believed that students who have high achievement expectations attribute success to internal and external causes (Haynes, 1993). The results revealed that students who have proper study habits and attitudes are academically successful (Agnew et al., 1993; Arslantas, 2001; Carter, 1999; Elliot et al., 1990; Gordon, 1997; Jones et al., 1993; Kleijn et al., 1994; Lammers et al., 2001; Lawler-Prince et al., 1993; Schultz, 1989; Slate et al., 1990; Sunbul et al., 1998; Ulug, 1981).

Thus well educated parents can support their child to achieve goals in the best way they can, they help in influencing their child's behaviour, attentiveness and performance. Thus the findings of the study proves the hypotheses, that a well educated parent can make a child cognitively strong and in this way a child can communicate, interact and can make their position in the society with the help of skills which are provided by their parents. A well educated parent with good parenting style can make their child a brilliant one.

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