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SEX DIFFERENCES IN ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AMONG INDIAN AND NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to examine the sex differences among 500 Indian and Nigerian University students. The students were drawn from various colleges affiliated to Panjab University Chandigarh and the University of Calabar. Results reveal that the males had higher achievement scores than the females in both the cultures. The findings also show that Nigerian female students had higher achievement scores than their Indian female counterparts. Results were discussed in the light of cultural and socialisation differences.

Human motivation has always been a topic of keen interest to psychologists and behavioural social scientists. However, the lack of adequate methods of measuring it has hampered the growth of systematic knowledge in this field, especially in cross-cultural comparisons. Individual differences are to be found in a wide range of human endeavours; and human reactions, responses and motivation also differ in our day to day life. Some people are moderately motivated, while others are highly motivated even the situational factors are held constant, McClelland and Atkinson (1948).

The purpose of this paper is to examine sex differences in achievement motivation

among Indian and Nigerian University Students. Achievement is an accomplishment or attainment of a goal. Human behaviour is invariably directed toward certain ends or goals. Much of man's behaviour, like those of other animals, is directed toward goals closely related to the satisfaction of physiological needs. Psychologists have distinguished other classes of motives that are uniquely social; the motive to achieve for its own sake rather than for the benefits of the achievement, is one such example, (Dushkin 1970).

Although the achievement motive is a very complex construct, it will be defined in this study as a learned personality characteristic which is demonstrated when a person shows a standard of excellence in a competitive situation. It is also demonstrated in a long term involvement in goal attainment such as being a success in life or in improving upon ones outstanding record of achievement. Achievement motive may not be limited to a long term personality trait; it may be brought about in an individual by a situation that tends to elicit a need for achievement. Such situations are therefore need - achievement producing. The present study is interested in this second type of achievement oriented behaviour.

McClelland and Atkinson (1948) combined the clinical insight that human motivation is expressed in free associative thoughts with experimental method of manipulating the strength of motivation. They adopted a technique developed by Murray (1938) for eliciting imaginative stories from individual in response to pictures (TAT).

Sherriffs (1948) had described a projective test which he called "The Intuition Questionnaire" in which the subjects are required to describe the motivation behind isolated item of behaviour given as typical of a hypothetical person with whom the subject empathize. French (1958) combined the McClelland - Atkinson's (1948) method and that of Sherriffs (1948) to develop an instrument for the independent measure of complex motives or acquired drives (French test of insight). She felt the need for such a measure by observers did not seem to relate to subsequent behaviour in a meaningful way, and by theoretical consideration that this lack of relationship could be predicted.

Using Atkinson's (1964) framework Mehrabian (1968, 1969) developed questionnaire measures of achieving tendency designed to yield greater reliabilities than those obtained with fantasy - based measures of achievement. Some recent investigators in the area like Hermans (1970) Mehrabian and Bank (1978) favoured a return to self report behaviour inventories for the measurement of achievement motivation. In the present study the French Test of Insight which is such an inventory was used to overcome the problems that fantasy based measures pose. Levine (1966) found some significant ethnic differences in achievement motivation of boys in Nigeria. But he appears to overlook the importance of sex differences in achievement. Ogunlade (1979) studied sex differ-

ences in achievement motivation within one ethnic group, the Yorubas in Nigeria. His study, too, was only confined to one ethnic group in Nigeria. This study therefore, aims at examining sex differences in two developing countries, Indian and Nigeria. Few studies had tried to study N-Ach among developing countries of the Third World. This study aims at filling that gap too.

In many contemporary societies including India and Nigeria men are generally noted for their energy, achievement, striving and enterprise, more than women. Some cultures generally seem to prefer male children to female. As Ogunlade (1979) rightly observed among the Yorubas of Nigeria, "a lot of marriages have broken down because the wife was unable to produce a male child." There is also the feeling in these cultures that men are more adventurous than women, that men settle and resettle in new places more frequently and easily than women; and that men are usually the industrious farmers, craftsmen and professionals whereas women are regarded as having lower aspirations and lower goals than men. It has been suggested that one of reasons why there is male domination in most spheres of activity is that men probably having higher achievement motivation. It was thought reasonable to investigate these assertions.

METHOD

Sample

The sample selected for the study consisted of 500 undergraduate students (both males and females) from the University of Calabar (Nigeria) and various Colleges in Chandigarh (India) affiliated to Panjab University. The subjects from the University of Calabar consisted of 136 males and 120 females part II degree students. The Indian sample consisted of 122 males and 122 females from various Colleges affiliated to Panjab University, Chandigarh.

The Hindu, culture with his supernatural world and attitudes favouring unilateral dependence, tends to seek solutions to his life's problems by leaving himself in the hands of gods or persons who, compared with him, enjoy higher status or possess greater powers. But unilateral dependence upon the supernatural yields no concrete criteria for success or failure. It is likely to lead to more complex rituals to influence the gods and more distant pilgrimages to search for more efficacious gods (Hsu 1963).

Caste is important among the Hindu's much more than mere forms of human grouping; it represents the crucial and outstanding expression of a way of life in Indian society. Srinivas (1966) had put it succinctly "Another characteristic of Hinduism has been its extra-ordinary reliance on, if not inseparability from, the social structure. The three main elements of the social structure are caste, village community and family system."

In the Nigerian culture despite the existence of more than two hundred ethnic-linguistic units, the life of the nation is dominated to larger extent by the three largest ethnic groups, the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Igbo. These three ethnic groups differ culturally and each plays a unique role in contemporary Nigeria.

The Hausa are the 'backwoods' politicians conservative, religiously orthodox (Islam), with little formal education or urban sophistication, but with the largest bloc of votes in their control and a well developed sense of practical power politics. The Yoruba are the most urban group with the longest history of Westernization, christianity and education. The Igbo's on the other hand are the energetic parvenus who in a few decades altered the established order in the Nigerian society (Levine 1966).

The sample for this study was drawn from among the students with the above varied cultural backgrounds.

PROCEEDURE

The investigator utilised the French Test of Insight (FTI) questionnaire for the collection and

analysis of the achievement imagery of the subjects. The researcher utilised the good officer of the lecturers of the respective colleges in Chandigarh and in the University of Calabar, for approaching the subjects for collection of data.

Subjects were given the (FTI) questionnaire to be filled in the class and the completed questionnaires were returned at the end of the exercise to the investigator. The questionnaire was modified to carry names appropriate to each sex in the two cultures, e.g., they were printed as follows :

- 1) Vinod never hesitates to express on opinion.
- 2) Okon never hesitates to express on opinion.
- 3) Kaur never hesitates to express on opinion.
- 4) Rose never hesitates to express on opinion.

The instructions were printed on the top front page of the questionnaire and were read out to the subjects before the test began; they were to decide what this man or woman is like, what he or she wants to have or do and what the results of his/her are apt to be. The responses in these questionnaires provided the raw data for the measurement of the level of achievement motivation of the subjects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :

Scoring of the responses was done by the categorisation of themes. The original n-Ach scoring key proposed by French (1958) was used to score all the stories and the total score for each subject was calculated. The mean and SD values were used to compare the various groups of subjects in terms of the variables understudy.

Table 1 shows that the mean score for the males in Achievement Motivation was found to be greater than that of the females.

By the use of one tailed 't' test for uncorrelated sample, the difference between the mean of the score by the Nigerian males on

TABLE 1
MEAN N-ACH OF NIGERIAN MALES AND FEMALES

SEX	NO. OF STUDENTS	MEAN	SD	P
Males	136	5.47	3.69	
Females	120	4.15	4.66	<.01

Achievement imagery and those of Nigerian females reached statistical significance at the .01 level. These results tend to suggest that the Nigerian males in this study generally have a higher achievement motivation level than females. This result is in line with Ogunlade's (1979) findings in which he found that Nigerian males' level of aspirations and

expectations were higher than that of the females.

Table 2 shows the same values for the males and females for the Indian students on Achievement Motivation as that for the Nigerians in Table 1. By the use of one tailed 't' test for uncorrelated sample, the difference between the mean of the score by the

TABLE 2
MEAN N-ACH OF INDIAN MALES AND FEMALES

SEX	NO. OF STUDENTS	MEAN	SD	P
Males	122	4.35	4.76	
Females	122	3.69	4.89	<.05

Indian males on Achievement imagery and those of Indian females reached a statistical significance at the .05 level.

The results of the study indicate a mean score of 6.36 on N-Ach (Table 3) for Nigerian

Students and 4.79 for the Indian students. It is also significant at .05 level. The interesting feature is that it brings out vividly the differences among the sexes in the two cultures. Of the two countries in the study, the males

TABLE 3
COMPARATIVE MEAN AND SD SCORES ON N-ACH OF THE STUDENTS IN THE TWO COUNTRIES

	A Nigeria	B India
N	256	244
Mean	6.36	4.79
SD	4.18	3.24
		Countries P A & B <.05

consistently showed a higher mean n-Ach score, which shows the presence of a higher degree of expectations and aspiration among the male sample than the females. It is predicted that it is this quality of motivation that enables them to continually strive for success in their desired profession.

The finding of this study seems to be consistent with the cultural norms or societal expectations of the two cultures. In the Nigerian society, men are expected to have higher goals and higher achievement motivation than women. This is applicable to a great extent to the Indian culture. A majority of the women prefer to perform behind the scene.

The result of this study can also be explained in terms of socialisation in the two cultures. Whereas assertiveness, independence are associated with males as reported by Broverman et al. (1972). Generally females are trained to be seen and not to be heard and to play a subordinate role in the society.

The present findings are also supported by Singh and Basu (1981) who reported in their study that "poor educational background, unfavourable economic conditions, and other facilities among parents of low SES group might result in lack of encouragement and early independent training for achievement motivation." This may explain the cultural differences between Nigerian and Indian students in achievement motivation respectively. Even though, inequality between the sexes is expressed and accepted custom in both the cultures; the interesting differences between the Nigerian females and their Indian counterparts in achievement motivation scores could be explained culturally. For example, the Hindu Ancients said that "a woman protects (it subordinated to) her father before marriage, her husband

after marriage and her son after her husband's death;" and concluded that "a woman is never fit to depend upon herself." (Hsu; 1963). For lack of encouragement and early independent training which is an established ingredient of achievement motivation, may have been responsible for their lower scores. Whereas in the Nigerian Culture, because a majority of men marry more than one wife, there is usually that early encouragement and independent training irrespective of the sexes. There is also a tendency for the children from different mothers to compete among themselves, this may have been responsible for their higher achievement scores than their Indian counter-parts in this study.

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