



THE CONCEPT OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

Academic achievement refers to the measurable totality of students learning outcomes. Sometimes it is reflected as a grade and sometimes as a score. The main elements of academic achievement include skill development, mastery over subject, effort, time management, discipline, support system etc. All these elements of academic achievement lead one towards success. Therefore, for getting success in life good academic achievement is pre-requirement. In the present study, we made an attempt to explore the concept of academic achievement as a mean to get success. The researcher will further try to explain the relation of academic achievement with the health, and then the key pathways to academic success will be explored.

Keywords: *Academic, Achievement, Pathways, Success*

Introduction

Academic achievement acts as one of the most important factors in determining educational outcomes. In general, academic achievement refers to the ability of the student or the extent of his gained knowledge and skills. It is the level of educational accomplishment of a student in various subjects taught in educational institution. Academic achievement of student is ascertained by the percentage of marks which students score in the academic discipline, or in the test or exam students appear at the end of a particular course. Different thinkers have defined the term academic achievement in different ways. Some of the definitions are stated below.

Duman said, “academic achievement is a measure of knowledge acquired in formal education usually indicated by test scores, grade, grade points, average and degrees”. Good and Merkel stated, academic achievement is the acquirement of knowledge and the improvement of skills in the subjects taught in school. It is typically measured by test scores, teacher-assigned homework, or both. According to Lent, “academic achievement is a key mechanism through which students tend to learn about their hidden talents, abilities and competencies which are essential part for developing career aspirations”. Academic achievement is also regarded as the developmental step towards the aim of achieving educational skills, ability, knowledge etc. It denotes the achieving something in academic system rather than achieving something in non-academic system. Nicholas Bolt defines it as, “Academic achievement is the progress made towards the goal of acquiring educational skills, materials, and knowledge, usually spanning a variety of disciplines. It refers to achievement in academic settings rather than general acquisition of knowledge in non-academic settings.” Generally parents, teachers, heads of institutions and society want to see the child’s academic achievement. Since academic achievement is regarded as the benchmark of future achievement of children, determine job opportunities, hence, after enrolling into the school parents, teachers and other members are always concerned about child’s academic achievement.

Academic achievement is sometimes regarded as a very complex process involving diverse factors of a person. It involves the person’s intellectual as well as non-intellectual parts, action and interaction of the person etc. Person’s educational aspiration, self concept and interest have great influence on his academic achievement. B.K. Singh remarks that, “Academic achievement is a very complex variable, a resultant of diverse factors of different kinds, both intellectual and non-intellectual, acting and interacting in a variety of ways. Educational aspiration, self concept and interest are some of these factors which are considered to be having an influence on academic achievement.” Academic achievement refers to the performance outcomes which a student

has accomplished through his activities under an instructional environment in any educational intuition. Ricarda Steinmayr, Anja MeiBner, Anne F. Weidinger, Linda Wirthwein point out that, “Academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college and university.”

Academic achievement is a very wide ranging and it coves a variety of educational outcomes. There are different criterions which indicate the academic achievement of a student. One of the most important criterions of academic achievement is procedural and declarative knowledge attained in a system of education. Other criterions are like – in a more curricular based education system grade achieved by the student in an education achievement test may be regarded as a criterion. Academic achievements are also measured through the educational degrees and certificates.

There are many subjective and objective factors which influence a child’s academic performance and draw the attention of parents, teachers, institutional head, society and researchers. Subjective or personality factors includes individual’s cognition, logical thinking and reasoning ability, capabilities, learning speed and comprehending the concepts, aptitude, perception about himself (self-image), learning styles, ability of problem solving and attitude, aspiration level etc. The effect of family’s socio-economic status, home environment, social interactions, surroundings, school environment, educational scenario, various techniques of assessment of student’s performance, interactions and behaviours of peer group, school’s management and its various types, socio emotional climate of school, infrastructure facilities, etc. are considered to be external or objective factors. They are the important factors which directly or indirectly influence the students’ academic achievement.

By critically analysing the various definitions of academic achievement, it can be drawn that, academic achievement refers to the level of efficiency acquired by a student in the educational institution by his efforts. This academic achievement is often regarded as the marks attained by students in the examination. This indicates that, a student’s academic achievement is measured through the level of educational performance performed by the student in different subjects taught in the educational institution. Academic achievement is not only the criteria of promotion into the next class; rather it is the sign of future success in life. It is the determinant factor of the patterns of one’s living.

Academic achievement in its ordinary standpoint does not need any definitive periphery. Ordinarily the concept of academic achievement is understood as the spectrum by which a person can achieve any type of skill or knowledge which take the person into the depth or breadth of the study or any particular field Nicholas Bolt points out that, “Academic achievement is the progress made towards the goal of acquiring educational skills, materials, and knowledge, usually spanning a variety of disciplines. It refers to achievement in academic settings rather than general acquisition of knowledge in non-academic settings.”

In the academic career of a student academic achievement is the central goal. It is the goal of students, because by this a student can improve the educational knowledge and various educational skills. Even though this is regarded as the goal of students for their future endeavour, still students do focus on it only for their success in the academic career. While achieving this goal of academic achievement students always do not keep in their mind that this goal is also related to their all-round development. As because students academic achievement is mostly associated with their present class content, hence academic achievement is often criticized as that which particularly focuses on students’ academic career only and not on their other productive activities. Nicholas Bolt remarks that, “Academic achievement revolves around the central goal or improving the educational knowledge of the students. Because of this goal, the measurement of achievement is often criticized for maintaining a focus on content knowledge rather than problem-solving or product-fashioning skills across.”

Academic achievement is negatively linked with the unsupportive learning climate, post-traumatic stress disorder, inefficacy, depression etc. for getting adequate level of academic achievement, a student needs autonomy and supportive learning environment, lesser academic problems, self-efficacy, free from stress and depression etc. therefore, these are the factors which are positively linked with academic achievement. Phillip J. Moore remarks that according to one study, “Learning climate support, post-traumatic stress, depression, self-efficacy and academic problems are linked to achievement showing, among other findings, that self-efficacy, less academic problems and autonomy supporting learning environments are positively related to achievement. Moreover, these factors persisted irrespective of depression or post-traumatic stress levels.”

Relation of Academic Achievement with Health

Healthy physical environment and mental environment is very significant in order to ensure achievement of students in their school. Healthy physical environment does not refer only to the absence of illness. It refers to having good physical, mental and social supportive environment. Blandina Bernal Morales et. Al., stated that, “The concept of health makes us to think about the physiological state in equilibrium within family relationships and socio cultural environment which leads to adaptation and success.” There is a close relation between health and academic achievement in both basic and higher education.

Chronic illness of students affects badly on their academic achievement and as a result, it affects on job opportunity too. Some of the chronic diseases whose negative relationship with academic achievement is more are obesity, diabetics, epilepsy, asthma etc.

Overweight, physical inactivity and poor eating habit also badly affects on students’ academic achievement. Therefore, having a healthy lifestyle is utmost important for the academic achievement of any student.

Key Pathways to Academic Success

1. **Motivation:** Motivation is a crucial part of academic achievement. Intrinsic or extrinsic motivation impel students in deep learning and higher understanding which in turn offers better academic achievement. It engages students with high involvement in subject.
2. **Goal Setting:** Thinking of success without specific goal is quite impossible. Hence, for achieving academic success setting a clear and achievable goal is very essential. Specific goal always guides students towards their success and it makes the students focus on the pathways to success.
3. **Study Habits and Time Management:** Sound study habits and time management are two very significant pre-condition of academic achievement. Study habit includes regular review, understanding material by insightful thinking, retention of learned items for long time etc. Time management skill includes creating adequate study schedule, keeping balance in school work and extracurricular activities etc.
4. **Family:** Family is the source of all basic values for children. Family is also regarded as primary training ground of values. It is from the family that one learns the essential behaviours and values which influence his or her academic career. It is the first unit with which children have immediate and continuous contact. From contact with other people of the family children lay the foundations for attitudes toward other people, things and life in general. Rightness or wrongness of children's behaviours are highly influenced by the interpersonal relationship within the family. The kind of care and affection children receive from family affects their handling of important issues and problems of life. A child learns the values of love, sharing, respect, sacrificing and nurturing relationships from his or her family. Democratic attitude of child also gets developed from family. The values received from family influence the academic career as well as entire life of children.
5. **Teachers' Support:** Teachers are the role model for students' academic success as well as inculcation of values. In school, teachers should act as role model for inculcating values among students. Students learn values much from what the teachers are. Teachers' actions convey more than their words. A student does not like to believe the words of a teacher who does not model those words. Therefore, along with imparting values to the students, teachers need to practice a valuable life so that the students can construct their own insight by observing their teachers. Teachers support and motivation directly impact on the academic outcomes of students, because the students specifically follow the teacher as their ideal.
6. **Classroom Environment and Peer Influence:** Academic achievement gets promoted if the students find good classroom environment and favourable peer influence. Peer influence works as the motivating factor. Discussing the subject matter with peer, sharing information or knowledge, studying with friends encourages students towards learning.
7. **Access to Resources:** Academic achievement is also related with the availability of educational resources. Educational resources include textbooks, secondary books, technology etc. Schools which provide with the necessary tools, remedial classes and enrichment program can produce the high-quality students.
8. **Technological Integration:** Introduction of technology in education has increased the level of students' academic achievement. Virtual mode of education, online learning, different educational apps are allowing students attending valuable classes and using different study material in an innovative way. They are providing facilities for individualized learning.

Conclusion

In the concluding remarks we can say that student who gets adequate support, strong motivation, good educational environment is more likely to succeed. Academic achievement without sound health is difficult to achieve. Hence, parents should take care of their children's health. For the good achievement students should be provided with good physical, mental and social supportive environment. Key pathways mentioned in this work are also very significant for the adequate grow of the students. They strengthen the root level of the student. Therefore, they must be kept in view while guiding the children or students.

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