UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF ACHIVEMENT MOTIVATION AND PUPIL'S PERFOMANCE IN THE STANDARD FIVE ASSESSMENT EXAMINATION FROM SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SELANGOR

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THE STANDARD FIVE ASSESSMENT EXAMINATION
FROM   SELECTED SCHOOLS   IN   SELANGOR

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine whether there was any significant correlation between pupils performance in the Standard Five Assessment Examination in relation to a number of variables namely, achievement motivation, socio-economic status, intelligence, area of residence, school milieu and parental encouragement. The main null hypothesis tested was :

> "That there was no significant correlation between performance in the Standard Five Assessment Examination in relation to the following variables namely, the TAT, the questionnaire on motivation, the Children Achievement Scale, socio-economic status, intelligence, area of residence, school milieu and parental encouragement."

Ninety pupils from forty English medium primary schools in Selangor, were selected from the 1973 Standard Five Assessment Examination Results through stratified random sampling and were divided into the successful group and the unsuccessful group which represented the three ethnic groups namely, the Chinese, Malays and Indians. Data were collected by means of individual interview. An intelligence test (Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices) was administered and three measures of achievement motivation were used namely, the Thematic Apperception Test, the Children Achievement Scale and a questionnaire prepared by the

researcher. In addition, a questionnaire was also prepared for the principals of schools, to get information regarding the school milieu. The data were analysed by means of Pearson's product moment correlation and analysis of varian

In the correlation analysis, it was found that with the exception of the Children Achievement Scale and area of residence, all the other variables namely the TAT, questionnaire on motivation, socio-economic status, intelligence, school milieu and parental encouragement showed significant correlations ($p < .01$) with performance in the above examination. The TAT was found to have a high correlative value ($p < .01$) with a number of variables under study with the exception of the CAS and area of residence. The CAS as a measure of achievement motive showed negative correlations with all the variables under study. Socio-economic status was found to have significant correlations ($p < .01$) with several variables including performance in the above examination, the TAT, questionnaire on motivation, intelligence and parental encouragement. Another interesting finding was the significant correlation ($p < .01$) between parental encouragement in relation to performance in the examination, TAT, questionnaire on motivation, socio-economic status and intelligence.

In the analysis of variance, it was found that there was a significant difference ($p < .01$) between the three ethnic groups

in terms of achievement motivation as measured by the TAT. However,
the three ethnic groups did not show any significant difference in
terms of the other variables namely socio-economic status,
intelligence, area of residence, school milieu and parental encourage-
ment.

The study has contributed in some measure in emphasizing
the importance of achievement motivation, intelligence, parental
encouragement and socio-economic status in academic performance.
The study also helps to correct certain misconceptions particularly
regarding race which has been thought to influence intelligence
and the area of residence which has been regarded as a factor
related to academic performance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Academic performance of pupils has always been a subject of
much concern to parents, teachers and the society in general. It is
usually used as the main yardstick to guage the standard of a school
and also for parents to select a particular school for their children.
Poor academic performance by children is still a widespread problem
in Malaysia. Parents tend to blame the teachers if their children
fail to perform satisfactorily. On the other hand, teachers tend
to react by shifting the blame on parents for not giving enough
attention and guidance to their children.

A number of studies especially in western countries have
brought to light some of the variables which are related to academic
performance. However, it is apparent that research on motivational
factors pertaining to achievement is lacking especially in Malaysia.
There is a tendency to centre more attention in terms of research
emphasis, on the more observable factors which are said to influence
achievement. For instance, considerable research has been done on the
socio-economic status, child-rearing practices, the school and
the area of residence in relation to the academic performance of
children. However, the academic attainment of a child could also be
influenced by some of the characteristics related to the child
himself. A child's successful performance is at times attributed to

his high level of intelligence. But intelligence cannot be regarded as the sole determinant of success. Two children may have almost the same level of intelligence but one may perform better than the other in a particular learning task. This seems to indicate that there are other factors besides intelligence, which account for the success of children in academic achievement. It is felt that the motivational aspect of the child constitutes an important factor which can promote or impede the scholastic attainment of the child. Atkinson (1974) highlights the importance of motivation when he says.

> "Motivation influences both efficiency in the
> execution of an activity (and therefore the
> level of performance) and persistence or more
> generally, the time spent in a particular
> endeavour".

It can be inferred that if children are not motivated adequately, they will not utilize their potential to the optimum. This may lead to an increase in the rate of failure as well as the number of school droupouts. Perhaps with the knowledge of the importance of motivation in academic performance, it may help parents and teachers to improve the performance of children. How parents and teachers can contribute in this task is a subject of another research.

It is therefore felt that there is an urgent need to examine the achievement motivation as a force that can influence the performance outcome of the child. The present study hopes to add

something of value to research by throwing some light on the importance of achievement motivation in relation to other factors which contribute to the academic attainment of the child.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many studies conducted in Malaysia seem to concentrate on the secondary schools and the primary schools are relatively neglected. In view of this, the present study tries to examine the relatively neglected area of investigation and focus its attention on the Standard Five Assessment Examination. This examination selects pupils for entry to certain secondary schools in the country for instance the fully residential schools. Furthermore, parents are normally concerned for their children to perform well in the examination especially at an early stage.

Pupils who do not perform so well in the above examination, are usually sent to the other secondary schools within the state, probably to schools nearest to their homes. This does not necessarily mean that the unsuccessful pupils do not work hard or they do not possess the necessary intelligence. A factor which can be said to be related to the performance of children is the achievement motive. According to the theory of Achievement Motivation as reviewed by Maehr and Sjogren (1971), achievement oriented subjects will be more motivated

toward moderately difficult tasks than failure threatened subjects; in educational terms, achievement oriented subjects will be more inclined towards challenge. The present study will examine whether there is any relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance.

The difference in performance may exist not only among pupils of the same race but also between the different races. For instance among the Malays, Chinese and Indians with different cultural backgrounds, it is observed that they show different levels of performance in examinations or in a particular task given. This study hopes to find out whether the different ethnic groups are significantly different in achievement motivation as well as in terms of the other variables under study.

Another interesting factor to probe is the relationship between the area of residence and academic performance of pupils. The Dropout Study by the Ministry of Education (1973) found that in the urban areas particularly, the English medium schools achieved higher percentage of passes in a number of school subjects, than their rural counterparts. This is illustrated in Table 1.1 and Table 1.2.

The school milieu is another factor which is often said to be associated with academic performance of pupils. The history of the school, the buildings, the number of qualified teachers,

State	Urban				Rural			
	English		Malay		English		Malay	
	No. Sat	% passed	No. Sat	% passed	No. Sat	% passed	No. Sat	% passed
Selangor	10,449	59.0	1,993	39.8	2.888	49.8	6,820	32.1
N. Sembilan	1,485	60.4	638	34.0	1,452	49.5	4,276	34.0
Malacca	1,735	65.4	149	43.0	879	54.7	4,840	35.9
Johor	4,567	61.3	2,304	35.3	767	55.0	12,151	32.5
Pahang	2,092	48.9	459	20.5	103	56.3	5,078	29.9
Trengganu	619	67.0	1,599	36.3	86	61.6	6,305	26.9
Kelan tan	925	60.3	1,131	29.1	902	44.2	9,876	27.6
Perlis	294	48.0	139	30.9	-	-	1,707	29.2
Kedah	2,002	50.0	765	33.3	474	45.1	12,791	29.1
Penang	5,882	60.8	1,032	35.3	580	46.5	3,837	65.7
Perak	6,904	57.1	908	36.7	3,081	48.5	12,195	53.5

TABLE 1.1

PERCENTAGE OF PASSES IN STANDARD V ARITHEMATIC ASSESSMENT TEST
IN 1969 BY URBANIZATION, SCHOOL MEDIUM AND STATE

State	Urban				Rural			
	English		Malay		English		Malay	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Selangor	10,454	56.8	1,995	49.7	2,887	48.6	6,759	42.9
N.Sembilan	1,485	57.5	637	38.9	1,453	49.5	4,273	42.4
Malacca	1,733	66.5	149	44.3	879	52.4	4,845	41.6
Johor	4,566	58.1	2,301	40.1	766	54.8	12,176	36.2
Pahang	2,091	49.2	455	39.6	103	60.1	5,129	33.6
Trengganu	619	64.3	1,597	36.1	86	69.8	6,304	30.6
Kelantan	921	61.0	1,124	30.8	902	45.9	9,822	29.2
Perlis	294	51.7	139	33.8	-	-	1,702	35.4
Kedah	2,002	52.6	763	32.8	473	38.9	12,831	30.2
Penang	5,814	55.9	1,033	34.6	577	42.5	3,723	49.9
Perak	6,891	56.1	908	39.5	3,076	47.3	12,107	48.0

TABLE 1.2

PERCENTAGE OF PASSES IN STANDARD V SCIENCE ASSESSMENT
TEST IN 1969 BY URBANIZATION, SCHOOL MEDIUM AND STATE

the library facilities and the extra-mural activities make up
the school milieu. The school which has established its name to
some extent can be a motivating factor for pupils to have the
pride and to strive for success in order to maintain the standard
already established.

Pupils' academic performance has also been associated with
their socio-economic status. Children in the lower socio-economic
status have different ways of life compared to their counterparts
in the middle and upper classes. They tend to have different
sets of values and attitudes which may hinder or promote their
progress in school.

In addition, the personal characteristics of the child may
also influence his attainment in school. It is a general opinion
that the bright or intelligent child is expected to perform better
or earn greater success than the dull child in any learning situation.
Hence intelligence is another important variable which is associated
with performance in an examination. It is true that in any learning
situation there is a need for some kind of systematic thinking.
The child who can think and act intelligently is the one who can be
successful in any learning process. The relationship between these
two variables is given considerable attention in this study.

Parental encouragement is another important factor which should be given some consideration in relation to academic performance of children. Many researchers agree that parental encouragement, aspirations and interest are related to the academic performance of their children. Attitudes, values and aspirations of children to a great extent are associated with the child-rearing practices followed by parents. In fact, parents are in a good position to stimulate all aspects of development in children.

Of all the independent variables mentioned, motivation seems to be a very much neglected area of study especially in Malaysia. Very often teachers are faced with pupils of the same ability but differ widely in their performance in a particular task. This may be explained by the different levels of motivation for each individual. The problem of motivation in learning has always been a major problem confronted by the classroom teacher. It is therefore useful to identify the motivation of children in order to stimulate their learning. Some children are not motivated not because they are of low intelligence but because of other factors which the present study tries to identify.

Once the levels of motivation in children are identified, the remedies required can be worked out. Achievement motivation can be stimulated and therefore pupils can be encouraged to strive for success in the learning process. If children are not motivated

adequately it is very unfortunate as their abilities and potentialities are not utilised to the maximum. This means that they are capable of a better performance. If a large number of children are found in this category, it will amount to a great loss to society as the human resources available are not utilised to the maximum. If the weaknesses are corrected early the children will have better opportunities to earn greater success in their academic tasks.

As a developing nation, Malaysia strives for economic development and a higher standard of living for the people. Other than the economic factors which account for rapid development, psychological factors also play a part. According to McClelland (1967), even economists for instance, Rostow, insisted that economic theory must be linked ultimately to sociological and psychological constructs if it is to be maximally useful. McClelland pointed out that the achievement motive is partly responsible for economic development. According to him, the more developed nations have more achievement motivated individuals. As far as Malaysia is concerned, she still lacks the managerial and technical personnel who can provide for the "take off" in economic development. It is interesting therefore, to make a study on achievement motivation among children because they are going to be the citizens of tomorrow with important roles to play in our society. If the curriculum can be planned so as to include educational programmes which help to raise the level of motivation among children, the effect will be tremendous on the economic development of the country.

The present study tries to find out how far it is true that children who are highly motivated will perform better in the examination compared to those who are not. It also tries to identify the correlation between performance in the Standard Five Assessment Examination in relation to socio-economic status, intelligence, area of residence, school milieu and parental encouragement. Apart from that, race is also examined as a variable in relation to the above variables.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Several terms are employed in this thesis and are defined as follows :-

1. "Achievement Motive" is the disposition to strive for satisfaction derived from success in competition with some standard of excellence.

2. "The Standard Five Assessment Examination" is an external examination conducted by the Ministry of Education at the end of the fifth year in primary school. The five subjects examined are English Language, Bahasa Malaysia, Mathematics, Science and History plus Geography. The main purpose of the examination is to assess the abilities of pupils in the five subjects so that the necessary adjustment in the curriculum can be made, from time to time.

3. "Successful Group" refers to pupils who are selected by
   stratified random sampling from a total of 192
   candidates who scored 5As in the Standard Five Assessment
   Examination held in 1973. The total number in this group
   is 45, with 15 Chinese, 15 Malays and 15 Indians.

4. "Unsuccessful Group" refers to pupils who are selected by
   stratified random sampling from a total of 520 candidates
   with 5Es in the same examination. The total number in
   this group is 45 and the three races are equally
   represented.

5. "School Milieu" refers to the setting or the environment
   of the school. This includes the history of the school,
   the number of qualified teachers, the library facilities,
   the enrolment, the buildings and the extra mural activities.

6. "TAT" refers to the Thematic Apperception Test by Henry A.
   Muray. It is a projective test using four pictures which
   are shown to subjects who are then asked to compose
   stories based on a number of questions. The pictures
   have been adapted to the local situation.

7. "CAS" refers to the Children Achievement Scale by Weiner
   and Kukla (1970). It is a questionnaire for children at
   the primary level, which aims at getting information on
   achievement motive.

THE HYPOTHESES

In view of the foregoing problem, the following hypotheses were examined in the study.

1. That there was no significant correlation between performance in the Standard Five Assessment Examination in relation to the following variables namely, the TAT, the questionnaire on motivation, the CAS, socio-economic status, intelligence, area of residence, school milieu and parental encouragement.

2. That there was no significant correlation between the TAT in relation to the following variables namely, the questionnaire on motivation, the CAS, socio-economic status, intelligence, area of residence, school milieu and parental encouragement.

3. That there was no significant correlation between the CAS in relation to the following variables namely, the questionnaire on motivation, socio-economic status, intelligence, area of residence, school milieu and parental encouragement.

4. That there was no significant correlation between the questionnaire on motivation in relation to the following variables namely, socio-economic status, intelligence, area of residence, school milieu and parental encouragement.

5. That there was no significant correlation between socio-economic status in relation to the following variables namely, intelligence, area of residence, school milieu, and parental encouragement.

6. That there was no significant correlation between intelligence in relation to the following variables namely, area of residence, school milieu and parental encouragement.

7. That there was no significant correlation between area of residence in relation to school milieu and parental encouragement.

8. That there was no significant correlation between the school milieu and parental encouragement.

9. That there was no significant difference between the three ethnic groups and between the two levels of performance in terms of the following variables namely,the TAT, the CAS, the questionnaire on motivation, socio-economic status, intelligence, area of residence, school milieu and parental encouragement.