

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS ATTITUDE AND ACHIEVEMENT  
MOTIVATION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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**Abstract**

Religion is as old as human civilization. History shows that man's religion has played an important role in the development of human being. In India, religion has played a significant part in shaping the history and mindsets of its populace. Generally, women display a greater level of religiosity, and this has been observed by scholars for decades. Research suggests that women perceive organized religion more positively than men. Furthermore, self enhancement motives may drive expressions of religiosity. Achievement motivation is a vital determinant of desire, commitment, self enhancement and dedication when a person assumes that the performance of the individual will be judged with respect to some level of excellence that the performance of the individual will be judged with respect to some level of excellence. This is also called the need of achievement. Research on gender issues in achievement motivation has often yielded conflicting results. Gender patterns also vary from culture to culture and in different grade levels.

The main objective of the research paper is to understand the Relationship between Religious Attitude & Achievement Motivation among College Students.

**Introduction**

**Religion**

Religion is as old as human civilization. History shows that man's religion has played important role in the development of human being. Religion has contributed more to the improvement of society. Man's inner state is needed for religious belief. In religion man finds solace & comfort. God is the center of all religious beliefs who plays an important role. God is considered to be omnipresent & omnipotent. Religion, when it is considered as knowledge and consciousness of dependence upon one or more transcendental personal powers, it is referred to as an objective one. The outward actions may be prayer, sacrifice, sacraments, aesthetic practices, even services etc. The whole man has been consumed by these religious practices.

Religion is the outcome of man's inner urge for freedom; it is the outer manifestation of his great hunger for the infinite. People who go on eternally dissatisfied, always unhappy, ceaselessly struggling for what he does not know. This is the great characteristics of human existence.

The term achievement has been used in the behavioral researches to mean different things. McClelland (1953) employs the term with reference to any content area which comprises everything that

represents a completion of excellence. The standard of excellence may be task – related or self-related or other related. Thus, evaluation of a performance constitutes to the important features of achievement.

### **Achievement Motivation**

Achievement motivation is the motive to achieve something worthwhile. It means essentially the urge to solve difficult and challenging problems. Motivation to achieve is instigated when individual knows that he is responsible to the outcome of some venture, when he anticipates explicit knowledge of results that will define his success or failure, and when there is some degree of risk. Individuals differ in their strength of motive to achieve, and various activities differ in the challenge they pose and the opportunity they offer for expression of this motive. Thus, both personality and environmental factors must be considered in accounting for the strength of motivation to achieve in a particular person facing a particular challenge in a particular situation.

Achievement motivation has been assumed to develop under conditions that provide opportunities for successful mastery (McClelland, 1958, Moss and Kogan 1961)

Mukherjee (1968) states that achievement is characterized by the desire to attain a high standard of excellence and objective accomplishment, to increase self – regard by successful exercise of talent and to reflect tasks which are very difficult and complicated.

Korman (1975) has stated that the efforts in working hard signifies the presence of “achievement motivation” but according to Hull – Murray and McClelland a person can work hard for a variety of reasons, based on the personality type and individual needs.

### **Gender difference in Religious Attitude**

**Pollock, Okdie & Guadagno (2011)** studies research suggests that women perceive organized religion more positively than men. Furthermore, self enhancement motives may drive expressions of religiosity. This study sought to examine the extent to which men and women would include religious statements in a fictitious blog entry, depending on the extent to which they were identifiable to a potential audience and the size of that audience. To examine this, the author employed a 2 (anonymity: anonymous or identifiable)  $\times$  2 (participant gender: male vs. Female)  $\times$  3 (perceived audience: no audience, limited, or public) between-subjects factorial design. Participants wrote a fictitious blog entry about the typical day of a student and were randomly assigned to believe that their entry would be anonymous or identifiable and that the potential readership of their entry was non-existent, limited to other participants in the study, or the entirety of the internet. Results indicated that identifiable men, relative to men in all other conditions, engaged in more religious disclosure only when their blog entries would not be viewed by anyone. These results suggest self-enhancement pressure may play a role in gender differences in the expression of religiosity.

**Loewenthal, Macleod and Cinnirella (2002)** studies are women more religious than men? Gender differences in religious activity among different religious groups in the UK examined, using a short measure of religious activity developed to enable measurement comparable between different religious groups. Gender differences were. Examined among volunteers who were self-defined as Christian (n=230), Hindu (n=56), Jewish (n=157) and Muslim (n=87). Women (n=302) described themselves as significantly less religiously active as did men (n=226), but this effect was confined to the non-christian groups. It is suggested that the general conclusion that women are more religious than men is culture-specific, and contingent on the measurement.

### **Gender difference in Achievement Motivation**

**Clark (2010)** examined differences in domains of achievement motivation based on gender and developmental group. Participants included 129 males and females.

The developmental groups in this study consisted of preadolescents (9-12 years) and adolescents (18-19 years). Participants were administered a demographics form and the achievement motivation profile. Results revealed a statistically significant difference between males and females on achiever, goal orientation and motivation. There were no interaction effects (between gender and developmental group) or main effects for developmental group observed.

**Steinmayr, Spinath(2008)** studied the sex differences in school achievement and some of the most important personality and motivational constructs in a sample of 204 females and 138 adolescent males Grades in Math and Science.

German as well as grade point average (GPA) served as achievement criteria. Intelligence, the Big Five of personality and motivational variables (achievement motives, goal orientation, task values and ability self-concepts) served as predictors. After controlling for intelligence, girls' grades were significantly better than boys'. Mean sex differences were found for most variables. There were no gender-specific associations between predictors and grades. Agreeableness, work avoidance, ability self-concepts and values ascribed to German mediated the association between sex and grades in German. Controlling for ability self-concepts and values ascribed to Math enhanced the association between sex and math grades. It was concluded that personality and motivation play important roles in explaining sex differences in school attainment. Results are discussed against the background of practical and methodological implications.

### **Relationship between Religious attitude and Achievement motivation of College students**

In India almost 40% of the total population comprises the Youth, on whom the consumer and marketing industry is maximum targeted. It is because; the Youth can easily incline to new trends and can even initiate trends. It is during this phase of life, generally, exposure is enhanced as they meet, communicate and experience different people in college as well as at work. It would not be false to state, that a person's personality crystallizes when he passes adolescence, obtaining evidences from various schools of psychological thought. Henceforth, youth, who would then step into adulthood, nurtures his or her child, thereby consciously or unconsciously imparting those values, ethics and other conducts learned by him or her in their earlier life period. So, the youth would sow the seeds of his experience, concepts and ideologies and transports the constituent factors from one to another generation.

In India, religion has played a significant role in shaping the mindset of the individual. When eminent scientists have prestigiously privileged their nation with modern inventions and scientific advancements in world forum, India undoubtedly produced philosophers who are less scientific and more theoretical having deep rooted influence in religiosity pertaining to spirituality even in the late eighteenth century. Aware of this fact, many European messengers have been sent to this large nation, with a motive to spread the foreign religion. Importantly, they tried flourishing their religion by establishing enormous number of schools, colleges, hospitals, service units etc. Christian missionaries have chief duties to promote educational institutions in order to inspire youth. Adding to this, the modern system of education introduced by the West in eighteenth century itself was initiated through religion and adopted English as the new medium of instruction. As on date, there has been many religion-based institutions in India like Jamia Milia Islamia, Aligarh Muslim University, Hindu college

Banaras, colleges under Ramakrishna mission, Jain college, Men's and Women's Christian college etc. The constitution has also legalized the setting up of minority-based institutions which in turn kindled the rise of missionary colleges also. In higher institutions and Universities, the individual departments allow cross major students to enroll themselves in elective subjects having made compulsory as the part of their curriculum, is also an opportunity to know various religious teachings and their principles. Under the tent of meditation and Yoga camps, religious teachings are also made popular.

Weiss, Benjamin, Zev (1988) have studied on achievement motivation & religiosity in Jewish and Catholic college students. Subjects were 278 male & female college students from the Newyork Metropolitan area. They were given 2 achievement motivation measures: The Mehrabian scale of achieving tendency (Mehrabian and Bank 1978) & generalized expectancy for success scale (Fibell & Hale, 1978). The subjects were asked to complete the religiosity scale (Rohrbaugh & Jessor, 1975) and a general information questionnaire that surveyed the subjects' religious affiliation, religious education, parental occupation, grade point average, their achievement goals & past achievement. The results showed that there is no significant relationship between religiosity and achievement motivation.

Based on the above illustrations, it can be understood that religion and religion based working units aim bulk of their attention on the youth population and on the other hand, Youth population under college also intend to learn the religious thoughts.

### **Significance of the study**

Religious behavior has differenced the entire mankind both negatively and positively. Religion has also made a significant impact on social, economical and political development as well. Presently, religion has become one of the primary factors to possess a positive mental health. It assists individuals and groups to change their attitudes towards self & society. In this dimension, the study aims to find out the association between religious attitudes and achievement motivation among young people. Religious thinking takes place within an individual's mind. Forces that take place within the soul is concerned with the psychology of religion. Religion is the way of dealing with interests and principles recognized by human culture. Pratt (1934) said religion is the serious and social attitude of the individuals or communities towards the powers of which they conceive as having ultimate control over their interest & destinies.

Motivation is the basic drive for all of our actions. Motivation refers to the dynamics of our behavior, which involves our needs, desires, and ambitions in life. Achievement motivation is based on reaching success and achieving all of our aspirations in life. Achievement goals can affect the way a person performs a task and represent a desire to show competence (Harackiewicz, Barron, Carter, Lehto, & Elliot, 1997). These basic physiological motivational drives affect our natural behavior in different environments. Most of our goals are incentive-based and can vary from basic hunger to the need for love and the establishment of mature sexual relationships. Our motives for achievement can range from biological needs to satisfying creative desires or realizing success in competitive ventures. Motivation is important because it affects our lives everyday. All of our behaviors, actions, thoughts, and beliefs are influenced by our inner drive to succeed.

So, the present research would indulge in identifying the religious attitude of the individual that influences achievement motivation on a sample of youth between 21-28 years with respect to male & female population.

### **Need for the study**

Various researchers from various periods of time have conducted the study in many population types in same or related topics. Anyway, it is not necessary for the results to be similar. It is because, researches were conducted on various population types where it may differ in ethnic, cultural, social, economical, constituent factors etc. Further, the scientific advancements would also influence the human evolution from time immemorial, which in turn would initiate change in a person's opinion, ideas, behavior, attitudes etc. Certain researchers have conducted the same study, where they have focused on Christian majority group. Other Indian researchers have also conducted their experiments mostly on any of the two variables among religious attitude, locus of control, achievement motivation. This study would focus on samples of youth educated population where majority of samples would be Hindu sect of people. This is done on majority Hindu groups because, Hinduism is preached by many priests and has a variety of traditions where there is no one particular testimonials like Bible or Quran. Moreover, Hinduism is not a theory to be adhered but also a way of life to be lived. People believe in the immense superiority of the spirit rather than believing in one single God or Messenger.

Further, the society is also influenced by rationalist propagations by Periyar and Ambedkar after independence, where they have openly criticized the religion as the birth of caste full society. Adding to this, the spirit of nationalism and regionalism kindled by political parties is also expected to affect the mindset of youth, who are in the transition of adolescence to adulthood. Therefore, this study would involve identifying the relationship between religious attitude and the manifestation of behavior through achievement motivation among the youth population ageing from 21-28 years with majority of Hindu people and to establish gender difference if persist.

### **Objectives of the study**

The following were the objectives of study.

1. To find out whether there is any relationship between religious attitude and achievement motivation among college students.
2. To find out whether there are any differences between boys and girls in terms of religious attitude and achievement motivation among college students.

### **Statement of hypothesis**

Reviewing the studies by Khan, Shamsur, Rahman and Hassan (1977), it can be seen that there was a positive relationship between religious attitude and externality. Based on the above statement the following hypotheses were formulated:

Reviewing the studies conducted by Weiss, Benjamin, Zev (1988), it was understood that religiosity had not significantly correlated with achievement motivation. Based on this statement the following hypotheses were generated:

1. There will be no relationship between religious attitude and achievement motivation.

From the studies done by Helode and Dable (1980) and another studies carried by Helode and Barlinge (1984), it was reviewed that girls have higher degree of religiosity than boys. On this assumption, the following hypothesis was framed:

2. There will be significant difference among girls and boys with respect to religious attitude scores.

Reviewing the study made by Sharma (1986), it can be understood that girls were better achievers when compared with boys. With reference to this, the below hypothesis was framed;

3. There will be significant difference among boys and girls in achievement motivation scale.

### **Research Design**

A cross sectional research design was used to collect the data. Analysis of the data was done using Pearson's Co-efficient of Correlation for the present study. The design was ex-post-facto in nature because the investigator did not experimentally manipulate any of the variables, namely, religious attitude and achievement motivation. Thus, the study became essentially univariate.

### **Sample**

The sample of the present study were selected from students studying in arts, science, and professional subjects of various colleges in Chennai city. The age of the students ranged from 21-28 years with mean age of 23 years. Convenient sampling technique was adopted in the study for selection of sample.

100 students were contacted, and the questionnaire was distributed to all. The sample was chosen in such a way that they belong to various religions of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Out of 100 students only 80 have completed and returned the questionnaire to the invigilator. The sample consisted of both male and female students equal in numbers. In the questionnaire, blank was given in order to fill their respective religion and there it was also instructed orally to write their system of belief rather than writing one's religion by certificate. After collection and evaluation of the questionnaire, individual interaction was made with the respondents based on the answers given by them, with a motive to analyze their self-opinion.

### **Variables of study**

The following variables were used in the present study:

- Religious Attitude
- Achievement Motivation

### **Tools used in the study**

In the present study, the following instruments were used.

1. Religious Attitude Scale (1989) by Rajamanickam.
2. Achievement Motivation scale (1976) by Ray and Lynn.

Table 1: shows the relationship between religious attitude and achievement motivation.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	R	Significance
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Religious Attitude (scores)		
Achievement Motivation	-.414	.000

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 1 describes the negative relationship between religious attitude scores and achievement motivation). According to the author of Religious attitude scale, it is instructed that higher the score indicates lower the religious attitude. (Scores and variables are inversely proportional). This can be further implied as there is a positive relationship between religious attitude and achievement motivation.

Table 2: shows the gender difference of males and females in religious attitude variable

Variable					
Religious attitude	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Significance(p)
Males	40	196.28	36.689	5.083	.000
Females	40	154.38	31.828		

\*\*Significant at .001 level.

Table 2 shows that there is highly significant gender difference existing among males and females in religious attitude where males have less religious attitude and females having higher religious attitude. (According to the author higher the score in religious attitude scale, lower the religious attitude and vice versa).

Table 3: shows the gender difference in achievement motivation among males and females.

Variable					
Achievement motivation	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Significance(p)
Males	40	29.92	6.091	-2.565	.014 (HS)
Females	40	33.25	5.532		

Table 3 shows a substantial difference between men and women in achievement motivation, where women are more achievement motivated than men.

## OVERALL DISCUSSION

The following discussion is made on the interpretation of the result in accordance to the hypotheses formed and also on the qualitative observation made based on the interaction with the respondents.

During the test conduction and the evaluation of the questionnaire, it was noted that few people volunteered themselves, registering their choice of religion as “Secularism”, “Rationalism” “Irreligionism”. However, the above choices were found among the people who were Hindu by certificate. This can be attributed to the fact that Hindu religion is more permissive and don’t insist any particular way of following religion. Consequently, Christians and Muslims, being minority community in India, they may exhibit more faith in religion in order to protect themselves from any crisis and to maintain their security under a threat. However, the present study did not provide any proportional representation of the religious group.

The hypothesis stating that there will be no relationship between religious attitude and achievement motivation was not accepted as the present study has showed positive relationship with the two variables. Owing to the data that religion and practices were all learned processes by human community together, similarly the concept of achievement motivation was also learned by them (both religious and non-religious people.) But it is the religious people who quickly adhere or adopt and motivate themselves to achieve any task and strive to be successful individuals, whereas the less/non-religious people challenge and criticize any introduced system of belief (i.e. achievement motivation). There is additionally nothing to deny that individuals with less/non-religious attitude are moderately lazy, comfortable, less competent and rarely show interest in getting ahead in one’s life. Hence, the study made by Weiss and Benjamin, Zev in 1988 was challenged with the present-day scenario.

On analyzing the factor of gender difference in religious attitude and achievement motivation, there is a clear and definite gender difference found in religious attitude and achievement motivation. Though the educational qualifications of the males and females were not as diverse, the outcome in religious attitude significantly differs. Compared to an illiterate woman or a woman with basic education, beliefs of the young educated women of this generation has changed significantly. Yet, in religious attitude, the mean of females was very high on comparison with males. This leads to the inference that educational system, though reformed, cannot influence women as much it can do with a man as women hold deep rooted traditional thoughts and these thoughts are prone to less renovations amidst this scientific era. Also, males seem to have lesser achievement motivation in contrast with females, where females are generally victimized to social oppressions and therefore, keep themselves determined and focused on any task they undertake.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the present-day study were as follows:

1. There was a significant positive relationship between religious attitude and achievement motivation.
2. There was a significant gender difference in religious attitude.
3. There was a significant gender difference in achievement motivation among college students.

## **Limitations**

1. The study is limited college going students who belong to the age group of 21 to 28.



2. The study was carried out only among students who can read and comprehend English language as the questionnaire was in that language.
3. As the study is in ex-post facto nature, cause and effect relationship could not be convincingly established.

### **Future Scope for research**

1. A similar study can be conducted on a larger sample.
2. The study can be extended to students belonging to high and low socio- economic status.
3. A study can be conducted with equal participation of Hindu, Muslim, Christian and other religions equal in sample size and thereby establish relationship between them.
4. A qualitative study exploring the positive and negative of religious attitudes and its impact on college students can be undertaken.
5. A study can be carried out by taking factors such as social media and technological advancements into consideration and their influence.

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