

Research Paper

Fear of Success, Life Satisfaction, Self-Efficacy, Achievement Motivation among Emerging Adults

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ABSTRACT

Emerging adulthood is a crucial period characterized by exploration of self and the pursuit of personal and professional goals. During this time, factors such as fear of success, self-efficacy, achievement motivation, and life satisfaction pose great significance. Understanding how these elements interact is essential for explaining the psychological processes that influence young adults' motivation, confidence, and overall well-being. The purpose of the study was to examine Fear of Success, Life Satisfaction, Self-Efficacy, Achievement Motivation Among Emerging Adults. The research applied an explorative research design. The study consisted of 136 participants involving 63 male and 73 female who were college educated, across Kerala in the age group of 18-25. The Satisfaction with Life Scale, General Self-Efficacy Scale, Fear of Success Scale and a short measure of Ray-Lynn Achievement Motivation were administered for data collection. The data were analyzed using Spearman Correlation. The result showed that there is a significant relationship between Fear of Success and Self-Efficacy. A significant relationship is also found between Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction.

Keywords: *Fear of Success, Self-Efficacy, Life Satisfaction, Achievement Motivation, Emerging Adults*

Motivation is a process that positively influences the thoughts, beliefs & perceptions, thereby boosting the performance of human beings. Many factors would adversely affect the motivation level of a person or a group of persons. Overcoming such factors and having proper motivation is key to attaining satisfaction. It is very relevant in a period of life where one is distinct from adolescence and adulthood.

Need for the Study

The present study focuses on the motives of emerging adults to help them to become what they want. It is not a matter of creating or developing motives, it is a matter of building or motivating them that already exist in them. The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked considerable havoc worldwide for people of all ages. In particular, emerging adults in most countries have been confronted with substantial declines in work opportunities, strains on

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social relationships, and erosion of personal wellbeing. Maintaining a positive view on their trajectory into adulthood, and their future life ahead, has become more complex for emerging adults in the context of the pandemic. Emerging adulthood is a particularly important stage in the life course to understand each positive variables and effect of fear of success, because the important changes in functional capacity, educational achievement, and social roles are large and varied and have a significant influence on life course outcomes.

METHOD

Aim

To examine whether there is any relation between Self-Efficacy and Fear of Success with Achievement Motivation and Life Satisfaction among emerging adults.

Objectives

1. To study the relation between Self-Efficacy and Fear of Success.
2. To access the relation between Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction.
3. To study the relation between Self-Efficacy and Achievement Motivation.
4. To identify the relation between Fear of Success and Life Satisfaction.
5. To examine whether there is a relation between Fear of Success and Achievement Motivation.
6. To evaluate the relation between Life Satisfaction and Achievement Motivation.

Sample size, Sampling method, and research design

Sample size includes 136 emerging adults from Kerala under the age category 18-25 including 63 male and 73 females. Investigator used convenience sampling method. It is a correlational and descriptive study Design.

Inclusion Criteria

1. The participant must be in between the age limit of 18 and 25.
2. The participant must have the primary education to read and write.
3. Emerging adults from both genders, male and female were included
4. Emerging adults from all socio-economic status were included.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Participants other than from Kerala.
2. Participants who were not college educated.

Tools for assessment

- The Satisfaction with Life Scale was developed by Diener. E., Emmons. R. A.,Larsen. R. J. & Griffin. S. (1985) is a 5-item scale with reliability of 0.87 and validity of 0.85.
- General Self-Efficacy Scale is a self-report measure has 10 items developed by Schwarzer. R & Jerusalem. M. with a reliability between 0.76 and 0.90.
- Zuckerman and Allison (1976) developed a 27-item Fear of Success Scale (FOSS) to assess individual differences in the motive to avoid success having reliability of 0.90.
- A short measure of Ray-Lynn Achievement Motivation that contain 14 items developed by Ray.J. J (1979) in university of New South Wales was used, which has a reliability of over 0.70.

Procedure

A sample of 136 emerging adults was taken from a population in Kerala. The test was administered through Google Forms, and participants were provided with necessary instructions and assured of confidentiality. An initial demographic survey collected age, gender, and other essentials. The assessment questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section used the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) with 5 items, rated on a 1-7 scale. The second section used the General Self-Efficacy scale (10 items) with ratings from 1-4. The third section used the Fear of Success scale (Zuckerman & Allison, 1976) with 27 items, rated on a 1-7 scale. The final section used the Ray-Lynn Achievement Motivation Scale (Ray, 1979) with 14 items, answered with Yes, No, or Maybe. The questionnaires were collected, separated, and scored accordingly.

Analysis of Data

For the analysis, IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 21) was utilized. Non-parametric methods were adopted considering the nature of the data. Spearman's rank-order correlation was applied to examine the strength and direction of associations among the key psychological variables in the study, while the Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess gender differences. The correlation analysis revealed significant relationships among certain constructs, indicating meaningful links between individuals' motivational patterns, self-perceptions, and overall well-being during emerging adulthood.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented and discussed in relation to relevant theoretical perspectives and previous empirical findings. The primary objective was to examine the relationships among Self-Efficacy, Fear of Success, Achievement Motivation, and Life Satisfaction among emerging adults.

1. Self-Efficacy and Fear of Success

Table 4.1 Spearman's Rank Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Fear of Success among Emerging Adults

Variables	N	R	p
Self-Efficacy	136	.292**	.001
Fear of Success			

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.1 shows a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and fear of success ($r = .292, p = .001$), indicating that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with greater fear of success among emerging adults. This pattern suggests that individuals who perceive themselves as capable may simultaneously experience anxiety about the possible consequences of achievement, such as social isolation, increased expectations, or loss of balance.

This finding contrasts with previous research by Ayazi et al. (2013), who found an inverse relationship between self-efficacy and fear of success in athletes, and diverges from Bandura's (1977, 1997) view that self-efficacy facilitates success by enhancing confidence and persistence. However, it resonates with Piedmont (1998), who proposed that fear of success can coexist with high self-efficacy when individuals are driven by internal standards of performance yet remain apprehensive about external reactions. Thus, while self-efficacy may empower individuals, it may also heighten awareness of the social and psychological costs of achievement.

2. Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction

Table 4.2 Spearman's Rank Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction among Emerging Adults

Variables	N	R	ρ
Self-Efficacy	136	.400**	.000

Life Satisfaction

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A significant positive correlation ($r = .400, p < .001$) was found between self-efficacy and life satisfaction. This indicates that individuals with greater confidence in their abilities report higher levels of satisfaction with life. The finding aligns with Çakar (2012), who demonstrated that self-efficacy contributes positively to well-being by fostering resilience and adaptive coping. It also supports Bandura's (1997) social-cognitive framework, which emphasizes self-efficacy as a core determinant of psychological functioning.

Emerging adults who believe in their ability to manage life demands may perceive challenges as opportunities rather than threats, leading to higher satisfaction. This relationship underscores the importance of cultivating self-efficacy through supportive social environments and mastery experiences to enhance subjective well-being.

3. Self-Efficacy and Achievement Motivation

Table 4.3 Spearman's Rank Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Achievement Motivation among Emerging Adults

Variables	N	R	P
Self-Efficacy	136	.137	.128

Achievement Motivation

Note. Correlation is not significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.3 shows no significant relationship between self-efficacy and achievement motivation ($r = .137, p = .128$). This suggests that a person's confidence in their abilities does not necessarily correspond to their drive to achieve or excel. The result contrasts with findings by Yusuf (2011) and Lama & Sushma (2020), who reported weak but positive relationships between these variables in student populations.

A possible explanation may lie in the developmental context of emerging adulthood, where goals and motivations are often fluid and exploratory rather than performance-oriented (Arnett, 2000). Self-efficacy might therefore operate more as a general coping belief rather than a direct motivator toward achievement during this life stage.

4. Fear of Success and Life Satisfaction

Table 4.4 Spearman's Rank Correlation between Fear of Success and Life Satisfaction among Emerging Adults

Variables	N	R	ρ
Fear of Success	136	.154	.073

Life Satisfaction

Note. Correlation is not significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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The results in Table 4.4 reveal no significant correlation between fear of success and life satisfaction ($r = .154$, $p = .073$). This indicates that apprehension about success does not necessarily reduce or enhance one's overall satisfaction with life among emerging adults.

This finding diverges from Yılmaz (2018), who reported a negative correlation between the two constructs, suggesting that greater fear of success lowers life satisfaction. It also contrasts with Chuang (2022), who associated fear of success with diminished hope, a key predictor of well-being. The non-significant relationship here may reflect cultural and contextual differences in how achievement is perceived in collectivistic societies like India, where success may be linked to social expectations rather than individual aspirations.

5. Fear of Success and Achievement Motivation

Table 4.5 Spearman's Rank Correlation between Fear of Success and Achievement Motivation among Emerging Adults

Variables	N	R	ρ
Fear of Success	136	.583	.058
Achievement Motivation			

Note. Correlation is not significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 4.5, fear of success and achievement motivation were not significantly related ($r = .583$, $p = .058$). Although the correlation coefficient suggests a moderate trend, the result did not reach statistical significance at the 0.01 level. This implies that fear of success does not systematically influence achievement motivation among emerging adults.

This finding contrasts with André (2011) (1991), who observed variations in this relationship depending on gender and situational factors. It supports Piedmont's (1988) argument that the relationship between achievement drives and fear of success is complex and mediated by contextual influences such as competition, perceived judgment, and social support.

6. Life Satisfaction and Achievement Motivation

Table 4.6 Spearman's Rank Correlation between Life Satisfaction and Achievement Motivation among Emerging Adults

Variables	N	R	ρ
Achievement Motivation	136	.367	.078
Life Satisfaction			

Note. Correlation is not significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.6 indicates no significant correlation between achievement motivation and life satisfaction ($r = .367$, $p = .078$). This suggests that striving for achievement may not directly translate into a sense of fulfillment or happiness during emerging adulthood.

This result contrasts with previous findings by Ramanathan (2018) and Çakar (2012), which reported positive relationships between achievement motivation and life satisfaction. The absence of significance in the present study may be attributed to the small sample size, the use of self-report measures, or the potential influence of extrinsic pressures that shape achievement goals among young adults in the Indian context.

The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of motivation and well-being during emerging adulthood. The positive association between self-efficacy and life satisfaction

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supports the view that confidence in one's abilities enhances the capacity to deal with life's demands and uncertainties (Bandura, 1997; Çakar, 2012). Interestingly, the positive correlation between self-efficacy and fear of success suggests that self-belief may sometimes coexist with apprehension about success, perhaps due to internalized performance pressures or fear of negative social evaluation.

In the Indian socio-cultural context, where achievement is often tied to familial and societal expectations, such duality may be especially pronounced. Building self-efficacy through supportive mentorship, mastery experiences, and constructive feedback can foster resilience and a healthier orientation toward success.

Overall, this study contributes to understanding how psychological constructs interact during emerging adulthood—a life stage marked by exploration, instability, and identity formation (Arnett, 2000). By identifying the centrality of self-efficacy in promoting well-being, the study highlights pathways for psychological interventions and life-skills programs to support young adults' adaptive functioning.

Limitations and Future Research

The study's limitations include its reliance on self-report measures, modest sample size, and geographically restricted population. Moreover, the exclusive use of quantitative methods may not fully capture the nuanced influences on self-efficacy and fear of success. Future research should adopt mixed-method designs, expand sample diversity, and explore moderating variables such as gender, academic discipline, and socio-economic background. Incorporating qualitative narratives could yield insights into how emerging adults interpret success and self-belief in the Indian context.

CONCLUSION

The study contributes to understanding the interplay between these variables among emerging adults, highlighting the importance of self-efficacy in achieving life satisfaction

1. There exists a significant positive relation between self-efficacy and fear of success.
2. There exists a significant positive relation between self-efficacy and life satisfaction.
3. There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and achievement motivation.
4. There is no relation between fear of success and life satisfaction.
5. fear of success and achievement motivation were not significantly related
6. There is no relation between achievement motivation and life satisfaction.

Implications

The study's findings provide a significant contribution by demonstrating the relation between Fear of Success, Self-Efficacy, Life Satisfaction, and Achievement Motivation among emerging adults. This study focuses on the motives of emerging adults to help them achieve their goals. It's not about creating or developing motives, but rather building on existing ones. Self-efficacy is found to be related to life satisfaction, suggesting that establishing self-efficacy can lead to a more satisfying life.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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