

Influence of Hardiness on Achievement Motivation of Adolescents

Dr. Mohammad Akram^{1*}, Prof. Mohd. Ilyas Khan²

ABSTRACT

The present study examined the influence of hardiness and achievement motivation of adolescents. The sample comprised 400 adolescents of senior secondary schools (Boys and Girls section) of Aligarh Muslim University and Aligarh Public School, Aligarh (U.P.). There were 200 adolescents from science stream (100 boys and 100 girls) and 200 adolescents from social science stream (100 boys and 100 girls). Sample was further divided on the basis of scores obtained on hardiness scale as low hardy and high hardy. Low hardy subjects score ranges from 84 to 98 and the high hardy subjects score ranges from 111 to 134. The short version of Hardiness Scale (HS) developed by Kobasa and Maddi (1982) and achievement motivation scale (AMS) was constructed and standardized by Shah Beena (1986) used in the present study. Results revealed that main effect of hardiness was found statistically significant on achievement motivation of adolescent's i.e., achievement motivation level of high hardy adolescents were found much better than low hardy adolescents. Further, gender also has significant effect on achievement motivation, i.e., boys scored higher than girls which imply that they have different levels of competence. Adolescents of both streams (Science and Social sciences) did not differ on their achievement motivation.

Keywords: *Hardiness, Achievement Motivation and Adolescents*

The meaning of Adolescence is 'to grow up' which is transitional stage of psychological and physical development that generally occurs during the period from childhood and adulthood. Adolescence marks the transition between childhood and adulthood. By its very nature, it involves many physiological, psychological, social, and cognitive changes. These changes include the formation of a personal identity, the establishment of new peer networks, and the development of abstract thinking skills (Dacey & Kenny, 1997; Geldard & Geldard, 1999; Heaven, 1994). To manage these challenges, adolescents rely on their coping repertoire, which includes their problem solving competencies and skills. If adolescents are not able to deal with stress or have poor problem solving abilities, there are a number of mental health problems that might develop, including depression and anxiety (Nezu & Ronan, 1988). Research has shown that adolescent mental health problems are associated with academic

¹ Student's Counsellor, Department of Psychology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India

² Department of Psychology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India

*Responding Author

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Influence of Hardiness on Achievement Motivation of Adolescents

underachievement, social skill deficits, and increased levels of suicidal ideation and behaviors (Kovacs, 1989). Clearly, an inability to cope with stress has many negative outcomes.

Hoffman, Levy, and Malinsky (1996) indicated that the problem arises due to the transitional aspect during the adolescent period and as a bridge between childhood and adulthood. From the beginning of adolescence, the average youth is preoccupied with problems related to vocation, parental encouragement adjustment in the major areas of adult life. The present study is aimed at to examine the effects of hardiness, stream and gender on problem solving ability.

Hardiness

Hardiness refers to a combination of personality traits that allows a person to survive psychological and physical stress without developing physical illness. Conceptually, hardiness is a personality variable that develops early in life and is reasonably stable over time, though amenable to change under certain conditions (Kobasa, 1979; Maddi & Kobasa, 1984). Hardy persons have a high sense of life and work commitment, a greater feeling of control, and are more open to change and challenges in life. They tend to interpret stressful experiences as a normal aspect of existence, part of life that is overall interesting and worthwhile. The concept of hardiness was first introduced by Kobasa (1979) to refer to the personality style which keeps the person healthy even after prolonged exposure to stress. She describes hardiness in terms of three general interrelated factors that function as a resistance resource in the encounter of stressful life events.

These are ***commitment, control and challenge***.

Commitment

The commitment is considered to be opposite of alienation. Hardy people show deeper involvement in whatever they do and have a tendency to perceive these activities as worth doing. Optimistic cognitive appraisals made by hardy people provide them with a sense of purpose which does not allow them to withdraw from social environment in times of greater pressure. Rather they find the objects and situation of their environment meaningful.

Control

The control disposition suggests that hardy individuals have a tendency to feel and act in an effective manner rather than showing helplessness in the face of varied contingencies of life.

Challenge

Hardy people tend to perceive change as challenge; for them anticipation of change is an interesting opportunity to grow rather than occasion of threat of security. Optimistic cognitive appraisals of the situation make it possible to perceive change as normal enough, meaningful, and even interesting despite its stressfulness.

Influence of Hardiness on Achievement Motivation of Adolescents

In contrast, persons low in hardiness tends to find themselves and the environment boring, and threatening. They have a belief that life is best without any change and feel powerless when confronted with overwhelming forces. Development is not a much important aspect for them. They are, therefore, passive observers of their environment. They allow external forces to impinge upon them and do not try to transform the events by taking decisive actions. Because their personalities provide little or no buffer, the stressful events are allowed to have a debiting effect on health.

Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation is a very extensively research topic in the fields of psychology and education. Achievement motivation can best be understood by examining the meanings of “achievement” and “motivation” separately. Achievement typically stresses the importance of accomplishment and attainment with effort involved (Mandel & Marcus, 1988). Motivation relates to an individual’s reason for engaging in an activity, the degree to which an individual pursues the activity, and the persistence of the individual (Graham & Weiner, 1996). Achievement motivation is an important issue for psychologists and individuals in the field of education because it has been correlated with academic self-concept (Marsh & Ayotte, 2003), academic self-efficacy (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003), personality traits (Mandel & Marcus, 1988), developmental level (Guay, Marsh, & Boivin, 2003), and gender differences (Mandel & Marcus, 1988).

Achievement motivation is considered a prerequisite for success, not only in academic, but also in sports- and job related situations. In academic settings, the interest in motivation is partly inspired by the notion that students' motivation, operationalized, e.g., as their competency beliefs and value beliefs, could be more malleable than their cognitive ability, and as such could prove to be a potential lead for the educational system for improving learning and achievement processes in students (e.g., Spinath, Spinath, Harlaar, & Plomin, 2006)

Achievement motivation refers to the tendency to strive for success or the attainment of desired end, (Sunital Sharma 1998). It directs a person’s activity and makes it more (or less) dynamic. Without the desire to succeed other psychological features and abilities do not provide nearly so much influence o performance. This property, “deriving power of activity”, should be understood as the joint function of the motive power (which is a permanent property of personality) and the consequences of what a given individual expects of his own actions (Atkinson and Feather, 1966).

Research Objectives

The following objectives has been laid down for the present study

1. To examine the main effect of hardiness (low and high) on achievement motivation of adolescents.
2. To examine the main effect of gender (boys and girls) on achievement motivation of adolescents.
3. To examine the interaction effect of hardiness and gender

Research Questions

1. Do the low hardy and high hardy adolescents differ on achievement motivation?
2. Do boys and girls differ on achievement motivation?

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample consisted of 400 adolescent from Senior Secondary Schools. Sample was divided on the basis of gender. There were 200 boys and 200 girls from Senior Secondary School (Boys and girls sections) of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Subjects were further classified on the basis of scores obtained on the hardiness scale. Subjects who have obtained scores below 99 were categorized as low hardy (**there were 91 subjects out of 400 subjects, who identified as low hardy**) and subjects who scored more than 110 were categorized as high hardy (**there were 85 subjects out of 400 subjects, who identified as high hardy**). Low hardy subjects score ranges from 84 to 98 and the high hardy subjects score ranges from 111 to 134. The age range of the subjects was from 15 to 17 years.

Table-1 Showing number of Subjects representing the independent variables

Variables	Categories	N
Hardiness	High	91
	Low	85
Gender	Boys	87
	Girls	89

Tools

1. **Hardiness Scale (HS):** The short version of Hardiness Scale (HS) developed by Kobasa and Maddi (1982) was used to measure the level of hardiness of students. The scale comprised 36 items and it measure three components (i.e. Commitment, Control and Challenge). The responses of the subjects on hardiness scale were obtained on four-point scale ranging from ‘Not at all’ to ‘Completely true.’ The response categories were assigned scores of 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The reliability of short version of hardiness scale was 0.86.
2. **Achievement Motivation Scale (AMS):** Achievement Motivation Scale (AMS) was constructed and standardized by Dr. Shah Beena (1986). Here, an effort has been made to construct the ‘Achievement Motivation Scale’, based on forced-choice contains 40 items. Weightage 1, 2 and 3 are respectively awarded for alternatives (a), (b) & (c) respectively on any statement. The reliability of achievement motivation scale was 0.725

Procedure

The data was collected on students, who were studying in Senior Secondary Schools of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. And Aligarh Public School, Aligarh. The investigator met the subjects in groups of 10 to 15 students. They were asked volunteer themselves to participate as the subjects of the study. After getting their consent respondents were given a set of questionnaires, such as **Hardiness Scale (HS)** and **Achievement Motivation Scale**

Influence of Hardiness on Achievement Motivation of Adolescents

(AMS) The investigator ensured the respondents that their information would be kept confidential and it would be used only for research purpose. Scoring of the responses was done according to the procedures described for each questionnaire, and tabulation of the data was made carefully for its analysis. The reliability of short version of hardiness scale was 0.86.

Statistical Analysis

Obtained data was analyzed by SPSS (16 version) Analysis of Variance (Two Way ANOVA) in which 2x2 research design was used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Analysis of Variance using overall scores obtained on Achievement Motivation as the dependent variable.

Sources	Sum of Square	df	Mean Scores	F	Sig.
Hardiness	297.718	1	297.718	4.754	.031*
Gender	40.738	1	40.738	.651	.421
Hardiness * Gender	17.563	1	17.563	.280	.597
Error	10520.245	168	62.621		
Total	1547720.000	176			
Corrected	113270182	175			

*p < .05

It can be inferred from the Table 1, the main effect of hardiness (low and high) was found statistically significant ($F = 4.754$, $p < .05$) on achievement motivation of adolescents. Whereas, the interaction effect of hardiness and gender (boys & girls) ($F=.280$, $*p < .05$.) were not found statistically significant on achievement motivation of adolescents.

Table 2: Mean Standard Deviation and Sample size

Hardiness Levels	Gender	Mean	SD	N
Low	Boys	91.55	7.955	42
	Girls	93.18	7.482	49
	Total	92.43	7.704	91
High	Boys	94.27	9.687	45
	Girls	94.78	6.526	40
	Total	94.51	8.306	85
Total	Boys	92.95	8.947	87
	Girls	93.90	7.074	89
	Total	93.43	8.045	176

It is clear from the Table 2 that, mean scores of high hardy ($M = 94.51$, $SD = 7.704$) was comparatively higher than the mean scores of low hardy ($M = 92.43$, $SD = 7.704$). It means achievement motivation of high hardy adolescents was higher.

DISCUSSION

The present was conducted to influence of hardiness on achievement motivation in adolescents. In order answer of the research question, “do the low hardy and high hardy adolescents differ on achievement motivation?” As can be seen from the table 1 that the main effect of hardiness was found statistically significant on achievement motivation among adolescents. As the table shows mean values of high hardy was (M=94.51) and low hardy (M=92.43) and ($F = 4.754, p < .05$). Present result revealed that achievement motivation was found higher among high hardy as compare to low hardy. Many studies have found that people high in hardiness are more resistant to the ill-effects of extreme stress (e.g., Bartone, 1999). We can safely say that high hardy and low hardy were significantly differed on achievement motivation.

Next question asked that “do boys and girls differ on achievement motivation”? As can be seen from table 1, there was no statistically significant main effect of gender (i.e., boys and girls) on achievement motivation. Mean scores of boys (M=92.95) and girls (M=93.90) and ($F = .651, p > .05$). The present results revealed that gender did not have any effect on achievement motivation. The present findings can be corroborated with the findings of Joseph (1994) who observed that there were no significant gender differences between male and female students with regard to either academic motivation or language proficiency.

Achievement motivation includes the need for achievement and the fear of failure. These are the more predominant motives that direct adolescent’s (students) towards positive and negative outcomes. These motives and goals are viewed as working together to regulate achievement behavior of individual.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the findings of the present study suggest that students with high *hardiness* in particular, are likely to do better in terms of their academic achievement level. Hardiness represents a general orientation toward self and world expressive of commitment, control, and challenges. Specifically, hardy people are committed to what they are doing in various areas of their lives; they believe in having some measures of control over the causes and solutions of problems; and they view changes in life and demands for adjustment as challenges and opportunities. The present research paper investigated that the achievement motivation level of high hardy adolescents was much better than low hardy, because high hardy people have a strong defense against the negative effects of stress.

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