

# Investigating the Relationship between Philosophical Mindedness with Achievement Motivation and Academic Performance in Students

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 24 Jun 2014

Received in revised form 25 Jul 2014

Accepted 19 Aug 2014

### Keywords:

*Philosophical Mindedness*

*Achievement Motivation*

*Academic Performance*

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The study aimed to determine the relationship between philosophical mindedness with achievement motivation and academic performance of postgraduate students of Birjand University.

**Methodology:** The population of this descriptive correlational study includes 461 postgraduate students of Birjand University in the academic year 2012-13 in which 210 students were finally selected as sample using stratified sampling and Krejcie and Morgan's table. Data collection tools included philosophical mindedness and Hermans's Achievement Motivation questionnaire. In order to measure the students' academic performance their GPA were used. **Results:** Results of the data analysis showed that the philosophical mindedness (including penetration, comprehensiveness, and flexibility components) has a significant positive relationship with achievement motivation, but there was no significant relationship between philosophical mindedness (including penetration, comprehensiveness, and flexibility components) with academic performance. **Conclusion:** Additionally, individuals with achievement motivation tend to rely more on their own judgment. This leads them to focus on "self-activity" and don't think to the quality and quantity they want to receive and therefore gain higher success.

## 1. Introduction

Academic life is one of the most important aspects of one's life, which plays a determining role in the entire period of one's life. Decline in school performance of students and pupils is one of the fundamental problems of individual's academic life and educational system particularly in higher education level of every country. (Zahrakar, 2007). In addition to huge economic losses, this phenomenon also distorts the mental health of students. By decline in school performance we refer to reduction in academic performance of the learner from a satisfactory level to an undesirable level. There are various factors that affect the academic performance of the people. The pedagogists classify them into four categories: individual factors, school factors, family factors and social factors. Among individual factors, one of the factors influencing academic performance is motivation.

"Motivation is a process that is involved in provocation, direction and reliability of behavior. For instance, motivation is used to demonstrate why an organism is sleeping rather than being awake and active, or why it focuses on a task but ignores the other. Psychologists have noted the need to focus on motivation in education because of its influencing relationship with learning new skills, strategies and behaviors (Yousefi et al., 2009). Achievement motivation is one of the characteristics that psychologists have.

Research used to explain and describe people's performance, which consists a model of devising, implementing and feelings that is consistent to relevant, internal, and superior standards in an attempt to achieve to a type of superiority (Biabangardi, 2005). In a study done by Bernard, Zhank and Kalong (2002) it was found that thinking styles are positively related to achievement motivation (Kadivar & Sajdyan, 2010).

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24200/jsshr.vol2iss03pp70-73>

Achievement and academic performance of students at the university is not only dependent on their ability but also to their mindset and achievement motivation (Wender, 1995).

Among the individual factors, mindset and mentality are variables that can affect academic performance. Most pedagogists and psychologists believe that the thought of people plays an important role in their progress and performance (Safania, 2011).

Based on the attribution theory believes that the thought (percetion and interpretation) of students about the causes of success and failure is considered the main determinant of achievement motivation and academic performance (Estaki et al., 2005). The relationship between thinking and achievement motivation has drawn much attention to itself in recent years. Research has shown that certain thinking styles can be employed as a significant predictor of student achievement motivation and performance and the philosophical mindedness which is one of the thinking styles is not an exception (Kadivar & Sajdyan, 2010). Philosophical mindedness refers to the capabilities and features of mind that helps people to think and judge correctly. In addition to being a branch of studies, philosophy can provide a framework and methodology for thinking. Hence, philosophy is able to expand thinking ability and create unity between thought and action. Philosophical mindedness is responsible for regular reviews of the common sense assumptions which these are all in return the basis of thought and practice, and in this case, a philosophy can be considered a type of practical theory for individuals (Javidi & Abu torabi, 2010). Abdolmaleki et al. (2008) view the philosophical mindedness as a kind of mental activity which missions to help people think deeper about the results of their daily actions, and act wisely. A person with a philosophical mind demonstrates characteristics which can be grouped in three related dimensions i.e. comprehensiveness, penetration and flexibility (Behrangi, 2003). This person will always try to extend "comprehensiveness" to his ideas, and view issues in relation to a vast field and long-term goals. This characteristic seeks to foster human so that they could resist against immediate pressure and specific cases and look at issues based on long-term objective. In this line it is necessary for individuals to gain and use their creative extension power. To achieve this purpose, they should be patient in theoretical deep thoughts.

Penetration is the second dimension of philosophical mindedness, which makes individuals to deeply study the ideas and phenomena. A person who possess the second dimension of the philosophical mindedness questions what the others take for granted or do not ask about. And in this way they enhance the chance to move beyond the limitations of ignorant fanatism, personal bias and stereotypical imagination. Being released of the coercion of apparent affairs, the basic ideas and thoughts appear as the key to solve problems in a wide range (Behrangi, 2003).

The third dimension of philosophical mindedness which is flexibility deals with innovation, and creativity and just like creativity it may always face a barrier. Most people are affected by environmental, emotional and psychological stress and undergo mental ossification hence may not respond appropriately to a situation. Numerous studies have been conducted in relation to the philosophical mindedness.

When scholars, experts and pedagogists are in pursuit of the best goal for education (high academic performance and achievement motivation), thinking becomes mainly one of the priorities. For example, Kadivar & Sajdyan (2010) in a study titled as "the relationship between thinking style and selfregulation with achievement motivation" founded that thinking style has a positive and significant relationship with achievement motivation. Estaki et al., (2005) in another study titled as "the relationship between thinking styles and achievement motivation with academic achievement" showed that there is significant relationship between thinking styles (executive, legislative and internal) with achievement motivation (Kadivar & Sajdyan, 2010)

Cross believes that thinking styles can be the reason for the different performance of individuals. People who have a high philosophical mindedness learn to work in difficult conditions, don't get disappointed, and show high performance in all fields, also those who have a high philosophical mindedness indicate an intense "interest" to the subject of their study, and their major (Behrangi, 2003).

Wellington & Wellington, (1960) believes that individuals have flexibility in offering and using philosophical mindedness. The main common ground of existing approaches in education is that the result of a good idea and a philosophical mindedness seems be able to be a high academic performance and motivation for progress. Therefore, the main problem of the research is the question that what is the relationship between the philosophical mindedness of students, achievement motivation, and academic performance?

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study is a descriptive correlational study. The statistical population of the present study consists of Birjand University postgraduate students who were admitted in September of the year 2011, which included 461 subjects (223 females and 238 males) who were studying in the Academic year 2012-13. Due to the size of the population which was 461 people, to measure the research sample, using the Krejcie and Morgan's table the optimal rate was equal to 210, who were selected according to the stratified sampling method and the number of population of each faculty. Given that in the present study the philosophical mindedness, achievement motivation and academic performance is examined in different fields and Birjand University has 6 faculties, therefore the postgraduate students were selected from each faculty according to the proportion of its population. The students' GPA is used to estimate and measure their academic performance. In this study, to measure students' philosophical mindedness the philosophical mindedness questionnaire is used which is developed and implemented by Soltani, (1996) and re-implemented by Zaki (1998). It measures three components of (comprehensiveness, flexibility and penetration). The cronbach's alpha coefficients used for reliability measurement of the philosophical mindedness was obtained 0.78 by Bahari (2006). Zaki (1998) used the test-retest and obtained correlation coefficients 0.68 to evaluate the reliability of this questionnaire. Also Hermans's achievement motivation questionnaire was used to measure achievement motivation. After the pilot implementation and analysis of the questions of this questionnaire, 29 items which had a significant correlation with the total test score were selected out of 92 items.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

Descriptive data shows that the sample of the participants consisted of both male and female subjects. To investigate the first hypothesis of the study, entitled as "there is a relationship between the philosophical mindedness (including the components of penetration, comprehensiveness and flexibility) and achievement motivation."

The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between the philosophical mindedness and achievement motivation of postgraduate students ( $r = 0.34$  and  $P < 0.01$ ), and there is a relationship between all aspects of philosophical mindedness and achievement motivation.

To determine the contribution of the philosophical mindedness and its components in predicting achievement motivation stepwise linear regression test was used (Tables 1 and 2).

**Table 1. Summary of the significance test of achievement motivation prediction model by philosophical mindedness**

Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	P
Philosophical mindedness	0/346	0/12	0/115	29/28	0/000

**Table 2: Summary of the significance test of achievement motivation prediction model by components of philosophical mindedness**

Components of Philosophical mindedness		R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	P
Flexibility	Ste p 1	0/25	0/06	0/05	14/01	0/000
Flexibility+ Penetration	Ste p 2	0/27	0/07	0/06	16/57	0/000
Flexibility + Penetration + Comprehensiveness	Ste p 3	0/29	0/08	0/08	19/65	0/000

The results showed that philosophical mindedness is generally able to predict 11.5% of the variance of achievement motivation. Also for the model in which the components of philosophical mindedness were predictor variable, at the first step flexibility variable was entered into the equation and explained 0.05 of the changes in achievement motivation. In the second step the penetration variable enters into the prediction equation resulting in an increase in the coefficient of determination to 0.069, finally, the comprehensiveness variable was added to the prediction equation and coefficient of determination reached 0.082. In other words, every element of philosophical mindedness could predict achievement motivation. To investigate the hypothesis that there is a relationship between the philosophical mindedness (including the components of penetration, comprehensiveness and flexibility) and academic performance the Pearson correlation coefficient was used.

### 4. Conclusion

The research results suggest that there is a relationship between philosophical mindedness and its dimensions with achievement motivation. Talebpour et al., (2002) and Ching & Chowan (2004) found in their research that thinking styles increase the students' achievement motivation. Their findings are to somewhat consistent with this hypothesis (given that the philosophical mindedness is one of the thinking styles). Also Nazem et al., (2010), found in his study that those teachers who work with managers with high philosophical mindedness have a higher spirit and motivation to work and progress. This finding is somewhat consistent with the findings of this hypothesis.

Ommidvar (2012) in a study that examined the relationship between achievement motivation and critical thinking found that achievement motivation has a positive and significant relationship with critical thinking. Moreover, the findings of Kadivar & Sajdyan (2010) and Nazem et al., (2010) are consistent with this hypothesis. These people concluded in their studies that thinking style significantly contributes to the prediction of achievement motivation, in interpreting this finding, it can be stated that, in fact, what seems to be important in philosophical mindedness is the students' thinking rules and format towards their life problems, aims and motivations, and this issue covers a huge part of their attitude and performance of activities. Concerning the result that the dimensions of the philosophical mindedness (penetration, comprehensiveness and flexibility) don't have a significant positive relationship with academic performance of students of Master's program, Pirmohammadi et al (2010) in a study that examined the relationship between thinking styles and learning approaches with academic achievement of male and female students and showed that there's no significant relationship between thinking styles with academic achievement and that the results are consistent with this hypothesis. Moreover, the results of this hypothesis are consistent with the research of Pirmohammadi et al., (2010) and Khaledan & Abkar (2009). In interpreting these findings, Zaki (1998), argues that thinking styles are not related to talent, ability and academic performance but they are related to how people prefer to use their ability, thus learners with similar abilities may have

different styles. The result that shows there is a significant positive relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance of the postgraduate students is consistent with the results of the research done by Tamannayifar & Gandomi (2011). Their results indicated that the students with high achievement motivation compared to those with low achievement motivation, have more perseverance in carrying out their assignments and have a better performance in tests.

In interpreting this finding, it must be said that when learners choose their actions based on their intrinsic interest, they will naturally focus more on it and spend more power to do those activities, compared to when they are forced to choose an activity or do that by external reasons. Additionally, individuals with achievement motivation tend to rely more on their own judgment.

This leads them to focus on "self-activity" and don't think to the quality and quantity they want to receive and therefore gain higher success.

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## How to Cite this Article:

Besharat S., Saedi S., Hosseini S M., Hematfard H., Investigating the Relationship between Philosophical Mindedness with Achievement Motivation and Academic Performance in Students, *Uct Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research* 03 (2014) 70–73.