



Need for Achievement and Adjustment among Adolescents in Context of Social Support and Inhabitation

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted on an incidental-cum-purposeful sample of 100 adolescents of Patna equal in respect of sex-difference and inhabitation. The purpose of the study was to examine the association of social support, sex-difference and urban-rural inhabitation with achievement motivation and adjustment. It was hypothesized that i) social support (ii) sex-difference and (iii) inhabitation would be found significantly associated with need achievement motivation and adjustment. For the purpose, Social Support Scale by Asthana and Verma, Mukherjee's Sentence Completion Test and Mohsin's Shamshad's Bell's Adjustment Inventory (Hindi Adaptation) were used to measure social support, need for achievement and adjustment of the respondents respectively. Besides, a PDS was used to get the other necessary information relating to the respondents. The data were analysed using chi-square. The obtained results confirmed the hypotheses. It was concluded that: (i) High social support is conducive to high need for achievement and sound adjustment. (ii) Girls excel over boys in terms of adjustment whereas boys excel over girls in terms of need for achievement. (iii) Urban respondents excel over rural adolescents in terms of need for achievement and adjustment.

KEY WORDS

Achievement, Adjustment, Adolescents, Social Support, Inhabitation.

INTRODUCTION

The interplay between psychological needs, social environments, and personal adjustments is a key area of research in psychology. Within this broader

domain, the concepts of Need for Achievement and Adjustment provide critical insights into individual behavior, coping mechanisms, and life satisfaction. When viewed in the context of Social Support and Inhabitation, these concepts offer a comprehensive understanding of how individuals navigate their social and physical environments to meet personal goals and maintain psychological well-being.

The Need for Achievement (nAch) refers to an individual's desire to set and accomplish challenging goals, excel in their chosen pursuits, and gain recognition for their success. This concept was first explored by psychologist David McClelland in the 1950s, who emphasized its importance in motivating individuals to engage in tasks that demand effort, persistence, and self-regulation. Those with a high need for achievement often set realistic yet challenging goals and work tirelessly to achieve them. They are typically drawn to environments where their efforts can be measured and rewarded, such as competitive settings in academia, sports, or business.

However, the need for achievement is not a universal trait. It can vary significantly across individuals and cultures. Some people are motivated by external rewards, while others derive satisfaction from intrinsic factors, such as personal growth or self-improvement. The balance between these motivations plays a crucial role in determining how individuals approach challenges, especially when their goals require perseverance over time.

Adjustment refers to the process by which individuals respond to and cope with the challenges and demands of life. It is a dynamic process that involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes aimed at achieving personal balance and well-being. This concept is often explored in the context of stress and coping theories, which examine how people handle difficult situations such as life transitions, setbacks, or personal conflicts.

Psychological adjustment involves managing emotions, attitudes, and expectations to maintain a stable sense of self. Social adjustment, on the other hand, refers to the ability to adapt to social norms, interpersonal relationships, and community dynamics. A person's success in adjustment often hinges on their ability to utilize resources, both internal (e.g., resilience) and external (e.g., social support).

Adjustment is closely linked to the ability to navigate one's environment, whether social or physical. For individuals with a high need for achievement, the capacity to adjust to challenges be they internal (e.g., self-doubt) or external (e.g., societal pressure) is a key factor in realizing their potential.

Social support plays a critical role in fostering both achievement and adjustment. It refers to the assistance, comfort, and encouragement individuals receive from others in their social network. This support can take various forms, including emotional, informational, or instrumental support. Research consistently shows that social support is a key factor in helping individuals manage stress, improve psychological well-being, and enhance personal achievements.

In the context of the need for achievement, social support can serve as a motivator, a source of reassurance, or a practical resource. High levels of social support can enhance self-esteem, which, in turn, boosts an individual's motivation to pursue challenging goals. Moreover, when individuals face setbacks or failures, social support can act as a buffer, helping them recover more quickly and sustain their motivation.

From the perspective of psychological and social adjustment, social support is equally critical. It helps individuals navigate stressors, build coping strategies, and maintain a sense of belonging. For those undergoing significant life transitions, such as moving to a new place or adjusting to new social roles, social support networks can offer the emotional safety net needed for successful adaptation.

The concept of inhabitation refers to the physical and social environments in which individuals live and interact. It includes the home, workplace, community, and broader societal contexts that shape personal experiences, opportunities, and challenges. Inhabitation is a multi-faceted concept, encompassing both physical space (e.g., housing, neighborhood conditions) and social space (e.g., social norms, cultural values).

‘The quality of one’s inhabitation whether in terms of physical comfort or social interaction—has significant implications for achievement and adjustment. For instance, individuals who live in supportive, resource-rich environments are more likely to achieve their personal and professional goals. Conversely, those who are situated in hostile, unsupportive environments may struggle with both goal attainment and psychological adjustment.

Social support within the context of inhabitation plays a vital role in facilitating personal growth and coping. For example, supportive relationships within one’s living environment (such as a family, close friends, or colleagues) can buffer the negative effects of stressors, thereby fostering better adjustment to life’s challenges. Additionally, a sense of belonging to a community can create opportunities for achievement, whether through collaborative efforts, mentorship, or shared resources.

Moreover, the interaction between physical space and social support can influence individual behavior. For example, research has shown that individuals living in urban environments with strong social networks tend to have better mental health outcomes and are more resilient to stress compared to those in isolated or underprivileged areas.

The Need for Achievement, Adjustment, Social Support, and Inhabitation are deeply interconnected. High achievement needs can drive individuals to seek and create supportive environments, both physically and socially, that facilitate their goals. These environments, in turn, contribute to the individual’s ability to adjust psychologically and socially to challenges. Likewise, the presence of social support in these environments enhances the likelihood of both achieving personal goals and making effective adjustments to life’s demands.

Inhabitation, whether in the form of physical space or social structures, directly affects how individuals pursue their goals, cope with stress, and interact with others. Whether an individual is living in a supportive family, a thriving community, or a solitary environment, the quality of their inhabitation will influence their achievement motivation and their ability to adjust successfully to life.

The intersection of the Need for Achievement, Adjustment, Social Support, and Inhabitation provides a rich framework for understanding human behavior and well-being. While each of these concepts can be studied in isolation, it is their integration that offers the most compelling insights into how individuals navigate life’s challenges and opportunities. For those with a high need for achievement, social support and favorable living conditions can significantly enhance their potential for success. Conversely, for individuals struggling with adjustment, a supportive social network and a conducive environment can serve as the foundation for overcoming adversity and achieving psychological balance.

Review of Literature

McClelland⁸ (1961) proposed that individuals possess varying levels of the need to accomplish challenging tasks, succeed, and seek recognition. This need is motivated by intrinsic factors such as personal growth and extrinsic rewards like praise or monetary incentives. His theory suggests that those high in nAch set specific, measurable goals and seek environments where their efforts can be clearly evaluated. McClelland’s theory laid the foundation for understanding motivation and achievement. It is widely applied in educational and organizational psychology to explain how individuals perform in competitive and goal-oriented settings. Cohen, S., & Wills, T. A.³ (1985) suggested that social support reduces the negative effects of stress and improves psychological adjustment. The authors argue that social support acts as a protective factor, buffering individuals from the adverse effects of stressors and enabling them to cope more effectively. The study is essential in understanding how social support influences adjustment to life challenges. It highlights the role of emotional and instrumental support in fostering resilience and well-being, particularly during times of transition or distress. House, J. S.⁶ (1981) explored the relationship between social support and psychological well-being, concluding that social support not only mitigates stress but also enhances the individual’s ability to achieve personal and social goals. The study examines how family, friends, and community networks can influence adjustment,

emotional health, and overall life satisfaction. This research underscores the importance of a supportive social environment for achieving both personal and collective success, thereby linking social support with improved emotional adjustment and resilience. Atkinson, J. W.¹ (1957) suggested that individuals with high nAch are more likely to succeed in environments that provide clear goals, constructive feedback, and a reward system. He emphasizes that environmental factors, including family upbringing and societal expectations, play a significant role in shaping an individual's achievement motivation. The study is important for understanding how both internal motivations (like nAch) and external conditions (like supportive environments) interact to affect goal-setting and achievement behaviors. Triandis, H. C.¹¹ (1995) explored how the need for achievement varies across different cultures. He argues that in collectivist societies, achievement is often viewed as a group-oriented goal, while in individualistic societies, personal success and recognition are more emphasized. The study discusses how these cultural orientations influence achievement motivation and adjustment. This research expands McClelland's theory by considering the influence of cultural context on achievement motivation. It highlights how cultural factors shape both the need for achievement and the way social support is experienced and utilized. Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S.⁷ (1984) suggested that adjustment to life stress is influenced by both the individual's coping strategies and the level of social support available. They propose that individuals who utilize problem-focused coping strategies and have strong social support networks are more likely to adjust successfully to life's challenges. This foundational work in stress theory links the concepts of adjustment and social support, suggesting that coping resources play a crucial role in how individuals manage stress and adapt to changing circumstances. Evans, G. W.⁴ (2003) investigated the relationship between environmental factors, such as housing quality and neighborhood characteristics, and psychological well-being. The study suggests that individuals living in deprived or stressful environments are more likely to experience difficulties in both psychological adjustment and achievement. The research underscores the importance of inhabitation in influencing psychological and social adjustment. It highlights how factors such as safety, access to resources, and community engagement can significantly impact an individual's ability to cope with stress and pursue personal goals. Festinger, L.⁵ (1954) argued that individuals evaluate their own abilities and achievements by comparing themselves to others. This theory has profound implications for understanding achievement motivation, as social comparisons can either enhance or diminish one's drive for success, depending on whether comparisons are upward or downward. This theory explains how social support and social environments affect motivation and achievement. Social networks and peers serve as reference points for individuals, influencing their goals and self-esteem, which in turn affects adjustment and success. Berry, J. W.² (1997) explored how social support impacts the psychological adjustment of immigrants. It examines how immigrants' ability to access and utilize social support from their communities can significantly affect their adjustment to a new environment, including coping with cultural stress and achieving a sense of belonging. The research highlights the importance of social networks and social support in enhancing adjustment, especially for individuals undergoing major life changes such as migration or relocation. Schaufeli, W. B., & Taris, T. W.¹⁰ (2014) discussed how environmental stressors such as work-related pressure, personal crises, or environmental instability affect an individual's ability to achieve their goals and adjust to new situations. They argue that chronic stress can hinder both achievement and adjustment, particularly in demanding work environments. This work provides insight into how environmental factors, such as workplace or social stressors, influence an individual's ability to pursue goals and maintain psychological stability. It emphasizes the importance of creating supportive environments that promote well-being and achievement. Sampson, R. J., & Wilson, W. J.⁹ (1995) explored the relationship between living conditions (neighborhoods, housing) and motivation to achieve. They argue that individuals living in impoverished or unstable environments may face additional barriers to achievement, including lack of access to resources, social support, and opportunities for personal growth. This study highlights the significant role of inhabitation in shaping achievement motivation and adjustment. The authors emphasize the need for policy changes that address environmental disparities to help individuals in disadvantaged situations reach their full potential.

Objective

The main objective of the study is to examine the association of social support sex-difference and inhabitation with the achievement motivation and adjustment.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that:

1. Social support will be found significantly associated with need for achievement and adjustment.
2. Sex-difference will be found significantly associated with need for achievement and adjustment.
3. Urban/rural inhabitation will be found significantly associated with need for achievement and adjustment.

Method of Study

Sample Used

The study was conducted on 100 adolescents of Patna equally distributed in terms of sex-difference (Boys : 50; Girls : 50) and inhabitation (Urban : 50; Rural = 50). They were selected using incidental-cum-purposive sample. Other than the conditions required they were matched so far as practicable.

Tools Used

- (i) Social Support Scale by Asthana and Verma was used to measure social support of the respondents.
- (ii) Mukherjee's Sentence Completion Test was used to measure the need for achievement of the respondents.
- (iii) Mohsin's Shamshad's Bell's Adjustment Inventory (Hindi Adaptation) was used to measure the adjustment of the respondents.
- (iv) A Personal Data Sheet was employed to get the necessary information about the respondents.

Procedure

The scales along with PDS were employed on the responded and data were obtained. Median was used as cut point. The respondents at and above median value were placed in high groups and respondents belonging to below median value were place in low groups. Both the groups were administered Mukherjee's SCT and Mohsin Shamshad Bell Adjustment Inventory. The obtained data were analysed using chi-square and interpreted aptly.

Results and Interpretation

Table 01: Chi-square showing the association of social-support with need for achievement and adjustment

Variables	Groups	Social Support		t ²	df	P
		High (N=50)	Low (N=50)			
Need for Achievement	High	68%	34%	26.18	1	<.01
	Low	32%	66%			
Adjustment	Sound	68%	30%	29.17	1	<.01
	Poor	32%	70%			

It is clear from the table that high social support has significant influence on need for achievement. More than 68% of high social support group were found having high need for achievement and only 32% of high social support group were found having low need for achievement. On the other hand more than 66% of low social support group of respondents were found having low need for achievement and only 34% of low social group showed high need for achievement. The chi-square was found significant. ($\chi^2 = 26.18, df=1; p<.01$). Adolescents with high social support excel in need for achievement because they benefit from emotional

encouragement, validation, and practical guidance from family, peers, and teachers. This supportive environment builds their confidence, reduces anxiety, and fosters resilience—key factors that enhance motivation to set and pursue ambitious goals. In contrast, those with low social support often lack reinforcement and struggle with self-doubt or discouragement, which can diminish their drive to achieve.

Further, it is clear from the table that sound support has significant influence on adjustment. More than 68% of high social support group were found having sound adjustment and only 32% of high social support group were found having poor adjustment. On the other hand more than 70% of low social support group of respondents were found having poor adjustment and only 30% of low social group showed sound adjustment. The chi-square was found significant. ($\chi^2 = 29.17, df=1; p<.01$). Adolescents with high social support excel in adjustment compared to those with low support because supportive networks—such as family, friends, and teachers provide emotional comfort, guidance, and problem-solving resources. This external backing helps adolescents manage stress, build self-confidence, and cope effectively with challenges. In contrast, low social support groups often feel isolated, overwhelmed, and less equipped to handle life transitions, leading to poorer emotional, social, and academic adjustment.

Table 02: Chi-square showing the association of sex-difference with need for achievement and adjustment

Variables	Groups	Sex-difference		t ²	df	P
		Boys (N=50)	Girl (N=50)			
Need for Achievement	High	64%	36%	23.46	1	<.01
	Low	28%	64%			
Adjustment	High	62%	30%	20.48	1	<.01
	Low	38%	70%			

Presents the results of chi-square analysis examining the association between sex difference (boys and girls) and two psychological variables, namely need for achievement and adjustment. The sample comprised 50 boys and 50 girls.

With regard to need for achievement, the results indicate a marked difference between boys and girls. A higher proportion of boys (64%) were found to have high need for achievement, whereas only 36% of girls fell in the high category. In contrast, 64% of girls were placed in the low need for achievement group compared to 28% of boys. The obtained chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 23.46, df = 1$) is significant at the 0.01 level, clearly indicating a highly significant association between sex difference and need for achievement. This suggests that boys tend to exhibit a stronger achievement motivation than girls.

Similarly, for adjustment, the findings reveal significant sex-wise differences. A greater percentage of boys (62%) demonstrated high adjustment, while only 30% of girls showed high adjustment. Conversely, 70% of girls were categorized under low adjustment, compared to 38% of boys. The chi-square value for adjustment ($\chi^2 = 20.48, df = 1$) is also significant at the 0.01 level, confirming a significant association between sex difference and adjustment. The significant sex differences observed in need for achievement and adjustment can be attributed mainly to socio-cultural socialization patterns and gender role expectations. Boys are generally encouraged to be independent, competitive, confident, and achievement-oriented, which strengthens their motivation to succeed and equips them with better coping and problem-solving skills, leading to higher adjustment. They also receive greater autonomy, exposure to challenges, and reinforcement for assertive behavior from parents, teachers, and society. In contrast, girls are often socialized to be more compliant, emotionally sensitive, and relationship-oriented, with comparatively restricted opportunities for independent decision-making and achievement-focused activities. Additionally, higher emotional sensitivity and societal

pressures may increase stress among girls, adversely affecting their adjustment. Thus, the observed differences are largely the outcome of social and environmental influences rather than innate ability differences.

Table 03: Chi-square showing association of urban-rural inhabitation with need for achievement and adjustment

Variables	Groups	Inhabitation		t ²	df	P
		Urban (N=50)	Rural (N=50)			
Need for Achievement	High	72%	40%	20.48	1	<.01
	Low	28%	60%			
Adjustment	High	68%	34%	23.12	1	<.01
	Low	32%	66%			

Depicts the results of chi-square analysis examining the association between urban–rural inhabitation and two psychological variables, namely need for achievement and adjustment, among a sample of 50 urban and 50 rural respondents.

With respect to need for achievement, the findings reveal a clear difference between urban and rural respondents. A substantially higher percentage of urban respondents (72%) were found to have a high need for achievement, whereas only 40% of rural respondents fell in the high category. Conversely, 60% of rural respondents showed low need for achievement compared to 28% of urban respondents. The obtained chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 20.48$, $df = 1$) is significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a highly significant association between inhabitation and need for achievement.

Similarly, in the case of adjustment, 68% of urban respondents demonstrated high adjustment, while only 34% of rural respondents were categorized under high adjustment. In contrast, a greater proportion of rural respondents (66%) exhibited low adjustment as compared to 32% of urban respondents. The chi-square value for adjustment ($\chi^2 = 23.12$, $df = 1$) is also significant at the 0.01 level, confirming a significant association between urban–rural inhabitation and adjustment. The significant differences between urban and rural respondents in need for achievement and adjustment can be explained by variations in socio-educational environment, availability of resources, and exposure to opportunities. Urban individuals generally have greater access to quality education, competitive academic settings, career guidance, and achievement-oriented role models, which foster higher motivation to achieve. Urban living also provides wider social exposure, better communication facilities, and more opportunities to develop problem-solving and coping skills, leading to better adjustment. In contrast, rural individuals often face limited educational and occupational opportunities, fewer achievement-related incentives, and comparatively traditional social structures, which may restrict aspiration levels and achievement motivation. Additionally, limited access to psychological support, infrastructural facilities, and adaptive social experiences in rural settings may contribute to lower adjustment. Thus, environmental and contextual factors largely account for the higher need for achievement and better adjustment observed among urban respondents.

CONCLUSIONS

1. High social support is conducive to high need for achievement and sound adjustment.
2. Girls excel over boys in terms of adjustment whereas boys excel over girls in terms of need for achievement.
3. Urban respondents excel over rural adolescents in terms of need for achievement and adjustment.

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