CHAPTER 5

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Today, we are living in an age of turbulence, anxiety and stress, when man’s ability to cope with his environment is being taxed in new and unprecedented ways. There is a continuous and incessant race going on to achieve over and above of what man is capable of. This is absolutely typical of the present day society wherein parents have very high expectations from their children, who are under acute pressure to strive, aspire and achieve more and more. Good academic results are a very important recommendation whether for admission, entrance or recruitment purposes. The significance of good academic achievement assumes greater proportion for the adolescents who have to start giving due consideration to it as they are yet to carve out their niche in life. Adolescence is a pivotal developmental period in which adolescents start forming an endearing sense of personal identity. Adolescence represents an inner emotional upheaval, a struggle between the eternal wish to cling to the past and the equally powerful wish to get on with the future. There are four universal concomitants of changes that occur during this stage. The first is heightened emotionality, the intensity of which depends on the rate at which the physical and psychological changes are taking place. Second, the rapid changes accompanying sexual maturing which makes the young adolescent unsure of himself. Third, changes in his body, his interests and the role the social group now expects him to play, create new problems for him. Fourth, as the adolescent’s interests and behaviour patterns change, so do his values. An adolescent’s mind falls prey to a lot of intriguing issues-academic, personal, psychological and intellectual.

In the present educational system, the life of an adolescent is so clearly defined with built-in pressures that there is very little room for escape and recovery. Today’s world is characterized by the never ending mad race for achievement, wherein the bottom line is only success. Education is assuming an increasingly important role in society and every body desires to climb the ladder of successful performance as high as possible. However, it has been merely reduced to storing of information, facts and
figures, bits of knowledge and possession of qualifications on paper through passing various examinations. It is a mechanical process leaving very little scope for character development. As the result of this, parents of adolescent children especially remain under acute stress as these adolescents have yet to prove their mettle.

Achievement of the child is the main focus of attention of parents, teachers, heads of institutions and society. Right from the first day when the child enters school and throughout his school, college and university life, parents, teachers and others are more concerned about his academic achievement. Need for achievement is very strong in every child. This need can only be satisfied when the scholastic goals set for him are within his reach. In our achievement oriented society, success is highly instrumental in gathering esteem and respect, while failure leads to loss of esteem. Sound development in academic side can well be matched with pillars on which the entire future structure of the person stands. Achievement signifies accomplishment or gain or performance carried out successfully by an individual or group on the completion of a task. It denotes the degree of mastery acquired in an activity and refers to all the behavioural changes which take place in the individual as a result of learning experiences of various kinds. Academic achievement is a very vital factor which affects all-round personality of the students.

Academic achievement is the unique responsibility of educational institutions established by the society to promote wholesome scholastic development of the child. Trow (1960) defines academic achievement as the attained ability or degree of competence in school tasks usually measured by standardized tests and expressed in age or grade units based on norms defined from a wide sampling on pupil’s performance. Academic achievement is one part of the wider term, educational growth. It includes knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects that are usually evaluated by test scores or marks assigned by teachers or both. (Good, 1959)

Ebel (1969) says “Educational investigators have devoted the largest amount of attention, next only to intelligence, to the exploration of academic achievement.” Academic achievement is a dependent variable resulting from the dynamic interaction of at least three major groups of variables i.e. socio-economic variables, educational
variables and pupil variables. Biological and health variables also have strong influence on academic achievement of a child (Ameerjan, 1981). It has been increasingly felt that an insight into the possible factors or determinants of academic achievement would go a long way in solving many of the problems that the youth of today is facing. It may also help the teachers, parents and guidance workers for devising ways and means of improving academic achievement of the adolescents. Keeping in mind the determinant and predictor variables of academic achievement, the present study attempts to study it in relation to the variables of self-concept, mental health and home environment.

Self-concept refers to the experience of one’s being. It is an organized cognitive structure comprised of a set of attitudes, beliefs and values that cut across all the facets of experience and action, organizing and tying together the variety of specific habits, abilities, outlets, ideas and feelings that a person displays. Purkey (1998) says that self-concept is the totality of a complex, organized and dynamic system of learnt beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence. A person’s self-concept may be viewed as a store of self-perceptions.

Franken (1994) states that “there is a great deal of research which shows that the self-concept, is perhaps, the basis for all motivated behaviour. It is the self-concept that gives rise to possible selves, and it is possible selves that create the motivation for behaviour.” We develop and maintain our self-concept through the process of taking action and then reflecting on what others tell us about what we have done. We reflect on what we have done and can do in comparison to our expectations of others and to the characteristics and accomplishments of others. (Brigham, 1986). Teenagers have low self-concept in comparison with children or adults as they are more insecure and self-critical. But this is multi-dimensional. They have high self-concept when it comes to their academic abilities and low self-concept when it comes to their physical appearances. As a result, they display increased self-consciousness and introspection. For most of adolescents, establishing their own independent identity is of vital importance otherwise resulting into catastrophic results. Having healthy relationships is an excellent way of improving their self-concept which help them live fuller lives. Mental health has a very major determining role in our self-concept.
Mental health is basically a state of mind which is characterized by emotional well-being wherein the mind is relatively free from anxiety disabling symptoms. It is a continuous and dynamic process where a living being is striving to achieve a balance between internal demands and the requirements of a changing environment. Encyclopaedia of Britannica (1968) says, “Mental health in the broader sense, suggests degree of happiness and satisfaction under conditions that warrant such a state of mind and a capacity for making satisfactory personal and social relationships.”

World Health Organisation (1984) has defined mental health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases and infirmity.” It is a state of continuous well-being, an attribute of a mature human personality and a social value to be guarded and maintained through purposeful living (Whitehead, 1929)

It has been seen that a mentally healthy person is one who has a “wholesome” balanced personality free from inconsistencies, emotional and nervous discords and conflicts. (Waltin, 1935) The neglect of mental health results in serious consequences and the students passing the high school stage face various demands of future career and are required to be high academic achievers. But they find utmost difficulty in coping with all this. It is extremely essential to provide them with congenial home environment and make planned efforts to promote their positive mental health because good mental health has a lot to do with good home environment.

Home is a cradle in which the child is nursed and brought up. It is the combination of all values and is the first social environment where all physical, mental, cultural, social and emotional development of an individual takes place. Even great philosophers like Locke, Rousseau and Pestalozzi attached great value to home in fulfilling the needs of the child-economic, social, religious or educational. Things learnt at home become a part and parcel of child’s life and remain effective and permanent throughout his life. Children are affected from the beginning by what they see and hear within the walls of their home. That environment creates, enhances and supports their tastes and behaviour.
Mishra (2003) writes “Home environment or parent-child rearing practices consist of characteristics of permissiveness, willingness to devote time to the child, parental guidance, parental aspiration for achievement, provision for child’s intellectual needs, effective rewards, instrumental companionship, physical punishment, neglect, deprivation of privileges, protectiveness, demands, indulgence, conformity, independence–dependence, emotional and verbal responsibility, involvement with the child, physical and temporal environment, avoidance of restrictions and punishment, provision of appropriate play materials etc."

Home Environment refers to the climate prevailing at home and varies from family to family, culture to culture and society to society. It can be defined as the aggregate of all the physical and psychological conditions that determine the growth and development of child. It includes the infra-structural facilities and characteristics available at home as family size, attitude of parents, discipline patterns, relations with parents, provision of separate room etc. It is very important on the part of parents to provide them with healthy, free and communicative environment to help their children pick up good habits and be full of positivity.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In today’s world the students and parents are under a lot of stress and pressure because good academic grades are the only mantra of success. This is especially affecting the secondary school students who are the adolescents right at the threshold of adulthood. They have to venture out in the world of work for which they have to be high academic achievers. This is a very crucial stage in students’ life as they are standing on the crossroads - from where their decisions will decide their future. Today, with increase in educational demands and the complexities of the academic system, the task of academic achievement has become even more difficult, thus putting loops and hurdles in the way of the average students. This situation leads to a deep sense of hopelessness and students are groping around to form an adequate self-concept. Self-concept is in fact a way to know what an individual thinks about himself. The more adequate his self-concept, the greater is the possibility of his success in life. It is also
important that the students have healthy mental life so that they have a harmonious personality and are able to adjust well both with their inner urges and the outer world. A healthy, congenial climate at home makes them relaxed, happy and disciplined. Parental encouragement at home is related to positive self-concept, academic achievement and psychological well-being of the adolescents. If an individual has a comfortable and congenial home environment, he is likely to have a positive self-concept leading to good mental health contributing to high academic achievement.

The purpose of this study is to make a thorough analysis of academic achievement in relation to self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students. The efforts of the present investigation can go a long way towards solving the practical problems which the educationists, teachers, parents, guidance workers and psychologists are facing all the time. This will also raise the adolescents from stumbling blocks and put them on the path of stepping stones.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

STUDY OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN RELATION TO SELF-CONCEPT, MENTAL HEALTH AND HOME ENVIRONMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Academic Achievement

Academic Achievement is the degree and level of success and proficiency attained in the academic field. In the present study, it refers to the scores obtained in the annual examination of Std. X.

Self-Concept

Self-Concept is the attitude towards self. It is an organized configuration of perceptions, beliefs, feelings, attitudes and values which the individual views as a part of various characteristics of himself. It is the individual’s way of looking at himself and signifies his ways of thinking, feeling and behaving.
Mental Health

Mental Health refers to the perceptions, feelings and behaviour that determine a person’s overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness and excellence of functioning as a person. A mentally healthy person is firm in his intentions and is least disturbed by strains and stresses of day to day life.

Home Environment

Home Environment is the aggregate of all those psychological conditions that determine the growth and development of the child. It is the protected relationship between parents and children in an accepted social setting and includes components which constitute the home like permissiveness, parental achievements, companionship etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted keeping in mind the following objectives.

1. To study the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students.

2. To study the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept and components of self-concept of secondary school students.

3. To study the correlation of academic achievement with mental health and components of mental health of secondary school students.

4. To study the correlation of academic achievement with the components of home environment of secondary school students.

5. To study the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and home environment in male and female secondary school students.

6. To study the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students studying in urban and rural areas.

7. To study the effect of self-concept on academic achievement of secondary school students.
8. To study the effect of mental health on academic achievement of secondary school students.

9. To study the effect of gender on academic achievement of secondary school students.

10. To study the effect of location of school (urban or rural) on academic achievement of secondary school students.

11. To predict the academic achievement from components of self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

These objectives were achieved under the framework of the following hypotheses:

1. There is no correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students.

2. There is no correlation of academic achievement with self-concept and components of self-concept of secondary school students.

3. There is no correlation of academic achievement with mental health and components of mental health of secondary school students.

4. There is no correlation of academic achievement with components of home environment of secondary school students.

5. There is no difference in the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and home environment in male and female secondary school students.

6. There is no difference in the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students studying in urban and rural areas.

7. There is no effect of self-concept on academic achievement of secondary school students.

8. There is no effect of mental health on academic achievement of secondary school students.
9. There is no effect of gender on academic achievement of secondary school students.
10. There is no effect of location of school (urban or rural) on academic achievement of secondary school students.
11. There is no significant predictor of academic achievement among the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
1. The study was delimited to students studying in +1 class only.
2. The study was further delimited to 600 students (males and females) studying in urban and rural areas of Amritsar district only.

TOOLS USED
For the collection of data, following tools were used:
1. Self-Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) (Saraswat 1999)
2. Hindi Version of Mental Health Battery (MHB) (Singh and Gupta 2000)
3. Home Environment Inventory (HEI) (Mishra 2003)
4. Tenth Class Final Examination Scores of students.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY
The present study was designed to study academic achievement in relation to self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students. The research design is broadly classified into Experimental and Ex-Post Facto with clear-cut distinctions on the basis of control of variables and finding causal relationships between them. The main aim of any research is basically to find causal relations which is possible only in experimental designs. Unfortunately in Social Sciences, it is not possible to conduct experiments and the research designs used are mostly Ex-Post Facto which are mainly correlational in nature. In between these two extreme cases, we have Quasi-Experimental designs where some type of control and identification of variables (dependent variables and independent variables) is possible.
Our design of study can be called quasi experimental design where advantages of both experimental and ex-post facto designs are there but the results regarding the causal relationships are not as precise as in experimental designs.

Quasi-experimental designs provide as much control as possible under existing conditions. In such a design, it is important to know which variables the design may fail to control. The investigator must also know the sources that represent threats to both internal and external validity and consider them while interpreting the result of the experiment. Their causal inferential powers are greater than those of the pre-experimental designs. These quasi-experimental designs are recent, significant developments.

The present study was quasi-experimental in nature. In this, the variables under study have not been manipulated. But the effect of different independent variables of self-concept and mental health have been studied on academic achievement which is the dependent variable.

The present study was also correlational in approach as it aims at finding the correlation of academic achievement with the variables of self-concept, mental health and with the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students.

SAMPLE

For the present study, stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting the adolescents in secondary schools.

Upasini (1987) stated that stratification is used when it can produce more accurate estimate of population characteristics than simple random sampling designs. There are various factors on which the stratification is often done. Selection of these factors depends upon the nature of the study, the various dimensions included therein and the nature of the population to be used for the purpose.

In the present study, the sample was taken from the subgroups of urban and rural areas, so the sampling was stratified in nature. The sample consisted of 600 secondary school students (males and females) studying in different schools of urban and rural
areas of Amritsar district. The representativeness of the sample was ensured with respect to locality and gender of the students. The break-up of the total sample is given below:-

**Table 5.1**

**Distribution of Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urban (300)</th>
<th>Rural (300)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED**

To arrive at certain conclusions regarding the hypotheses advanced in the present investigation, the following techniques for statistical analysis of data were employed:

1. **Descriptive Analysis**
   
   Measures of Central tendency such as means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis were worked out to study the nature and distribution of variables.

2. **Correlational Analysis**
   
   The objective of Correlational Analysis was to find the correlation between academic achievement and the variables of self-concept, mental health and home environment. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Correlation were applied on the scores of academic achievement and self-concept, mental health and the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment.
3. **Analysis of Variance**

The objective of Analysis of Variance was to analyze the variance caused in the dependent variable. ANOVA was applied to determine the variance caused in academic achievement by the variables of self-concept, mental health, gender and locality.

4. **Multiple Regression**

Regression Analysis was applied to predict academic achievement from the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment.

All calculations were done using SPSS program (Statistical package for Social Sciences).

**Conclusions**

On the basis of analysis, interpretation and discussion of data collected from 600 students studying in different schools of urban and rural areas of Amritsar district, the following conclusions have been drawn:

**A Conclusions based on Descriptive Analysis**

The objective of descriptive analysis was to find the nature and distribution of the variables of academic achievement, self-concept, mental health and the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment. Accordingly, the results were analyzed and interpreted in the light of means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis. The data was analyzed for the entire sample.

Most of the secondary school students exhibited average level in academic achievement, self-concept and mental health. As far as the different components of self-concept, mental health and home environment are concerned, majority of the secondary school students showed average scores only. Most of the values of skewness and kurtosis were quite low with a few exceptions.

**B Conclusions based on Correlational Analysis**

The main purpose of this analysis was to find the correlation between academic achievement and the variables of self-concept, mental health and home environment.
1. **Conclusions based on correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment**

Academic achievement of secondary school students had positive and significant correlation with self-concept, mental health and the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students. This shows that an individual’s performance to a great extent is related to how he thinks about himself, how harmonious is his personality and how good is his environment at home.

2. **Conclusions based on correlation of academic achievement with self-concept and components of self-concept**

No significant correlation was observed between academic achievement and self-concept among secondary school students. The correlations of three components of self-concept i.e. physical, social and educational with academic achievement were not significant. Only two of it’s components i.e. temperamental and moral had significant positive correlations.

3. **Conclusions based on correlation of academic achievement with mental health and components of mental health**

Academic achievement of secondary school students had significant correlation with mental health and it’s components. The correlations of five out of six components of mental health i.e., emotional stability, adjustment, security-insecurity, self-concept and intelligence came out to be significant.

4. **Conclusions based on correlation of academic achievement with components of home environment**

Academic achievement of secondary school students had significant correlation with the components of home environment like control, punishment, social isolation, deprivation of privileges, rejection, reward and nurturance.

5. **Conclusions based on comparison between male and female secondary school students**

The correlations of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and components of self-concept, mental health and home environment in male and female
secondary school students were different. Taking up the variable of self-concept, the correlations in the physical, social, moral and intellectual components as well as overall self-concept in females came out to be higher. For the variable of mental health, again the correlations in females were higher than that of males. For the variable of home environment, the correlations in females were negative for the components of control, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, social isolation, deprivation of privileges and permissiveness. Males’ correlations in the components of control, protectiveness, social isolation and deprivation of privileges were also negative.

6. Conclusions based on comparison between secondary school students studying in urban and rural areas

Secondary School Students studying in urban and rural areas differed in their correlations of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and components of self-concept, mental health and home environment. Taking up the variable of self-concept first, it was seen that the correlations of students studying in urban areas were negative. These correlations were low but positive for students studying in rural areas. For the variable of mental health, it was seen that the correlations were negative for the components of emotional stability, adjustment, autonomy, security-insecurity and self-concept in students studying in urban areas. These correlations were much higher in students studying in rural areas. As far as the variable of home environment is concerned, it was again seen that the correlations with different components of control, protectiveness, punishment, social isolation, rewards, deprivation of privileges and permissiveness were negative in students studying in urban areas.

C Conclusions based on Analysis of Variance

The main purpose of this analysis was to analyze the variance caused in the dependent variable of academic achievement by the variables of self-concept, mental health, gender and locality.

1. The effect of self-concept on academic achievement was found out to be insignificant thereby implying that variables other than self-concept have a strong effect on academic achievement.
2. The effect of mental health on academic achievement came out to be significant thereby implying that the state of mind—whether harmonious or not has a strong effect on academic achievement.

3. Male and female secondary school students differed in their academic achievement. Females showed higher level of academic achievement as compared to males which could be attributed to the fact that the females generally have longer sitting hours, high level of concentration, are more studious and are more concerned about their results in comparison with males.

4. Students studying in urban and rural areas differed in their academic achievement. Students studying in urban areas showed higher level of academic achievement as compared to those studying in rural areas. This could be attributed to the fact that the former have better facilities of education like computer-aided instructional programmes, highly educated teachers, conducive environment for learning etc.

D Conclusions based on Multiple Regression
The contribution of components of self-concept, mental health and home environment in predicting academic achievement was significant. The values of regression coefficients revealed that the contribution of self-concept, mental health and home environment towards academic achievement was significant i.e. 46%.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS
On the basis of findings of the study, relevant literature studied and observations made by the investigator during the study, a few educational implications may be offered:

1. From the findings of the study it was revealed that academic achievement has a significant correlation with mental health. The effect of mental health on academic achievement also was significant. It implies that students who are mentally healthy and composed are able to handle stress and perform well academically. It becomes
important for teachers and parents to provide an atmosphere promoting good mental health.

2. In the present study almost all the components of home environment have significant correlation with academic achievement. This clearly suggests that a healthy, conducive environment at home is a major determining factor for high academic achievement. So, there is an urgent need for parents to realize that they provide home environment which has adequate control, reward, protectiveness and nurturance.

3. In the present study the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept came out to be insignificant. However, some of the components of self-concept as temperamental, intellectual and moral showed significant correlation with academic achievement. This indicates that parents, teachers, guidance workers should understand the different aspects of self-concept and how they have to develop high self-concept among the students for better academic achievement.

4. It was seen in the present study that the overall contribution of components of self-concept, mental health and home environment in predicting academic achievement is significant. Also the correlation of academic achievement with the components of all these three variables came out to be significant. This definitely suggests the important role these three variables play in the overall academic achievement thereby implying that parents, educationists, policy makers and guidance workers need to be aware of this and provide conducive environment at home which will help in developing high self concept and good mental health among the students.

5. It has been observed in the present study that secondary school students of urban areas performed better academically than those in rural areas. This points out the differences in facilities available in urban and rural areas. It therefore becomes important to provide better educational facilities like books, audio-visual aids, computer-assisted instructions etc to students studying in rural areas in order to improve their academic achievement.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. The present study was confined to Amritsar district. Similar study may be conducted in other districts of Punjab and other cities of the country also.

2. The present investigation was confined to the students of +1 class of Amritsar district. Similar study may be conducted on college students and even students of other classes.

3. In the present investigation, comparison was drawn between male and female secondary school students and also between secondary school students studying in urban and rural areas. Comparisons may also be drawn between students of Arts and Science streams as well as students studying in schools affiliated to CBSE and PSEB.

4. Similar studies may be conducted by including additional variables as intelligence, anxiety, motivation, study habits, aptitudes, interest, socio-economic status etc.

5. Experimental studies on academic achievement may be taken up, which involves the process of guidance and counseling.

6. The variable of self-concept may be divided into its components for better understanding and not be taken as a whole in future studies.

7. The different dimensions of variable of home environment may be taken up individually for future research.