

Influence of Parental Expectations on Achievement Motivation and Academic Success of Primary School Pupils in Owerri education zone II of Imo state, Nigeria

NDUKWU, ERIC CHIMA¹, EDITH NKEIRUKA NDUKWU²

¹*Department of Educational Foundations, (Psychology), University of Nigeria, Nsukka*
ORCID: 0000-0002-5540-9968

²*Department of Social Science Education, (Economics), University of Nigeria, Nsukka*
ORCID: 0000-0001-6533-4018

Abstract- This study investigated the influence of parental expectations for academic success on achievement motivation of primary school pupils in Owerri education zone II of Imo state, Nigeria. The study adopted ex-post-facto research design to determine the influence of parental expectations for academic success on achievement motivation of pupils in Owerri Education Zone II of Imo State. The sample for the study is 233 primary five pupils who were randomly sampled from 10 out of the 58 public primary schools in the area. Two research instruments were used for data collection. They are: Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ) and Parental Expectations Questionnaire (PEQ). The data collected for the study was analyzed using, mean, standard deviation and t-test. The result revealed that parental expectations have significant influence on pupils' achievement motivation. It also indicated that gender influences achievement motivation significantly. The findings depicted that high achievement motivation results to high academic success.

I. INTRODUCTION

Achievement Motivation

Achievement means success in a task or undertaking while motivation is the willingness to hit a target, or the internal state that energizes, arouses, directs, channels, maintains and sustains a behaviour till a set goal is achieved (Gage & Berliner, 1998). The study of motivation focuses on the reason why people initiate actions and direct them towards a specific goal. How long it takes pupils to get started, how involved and expectant they are depends on the type of motivation they have. Motivation is of two types; intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Intrinsic motivation is the natural tendency pupils have to seek out and conquer challenges as they pursue their

personal interests (Gage & Berliner, 1998). Intrinsic motivation is not affected by external forces, such as reinforcements and rewards (Woolfolk, 2007). Intrinsic motivation is all about doing something for the pleasure and joy of doing that. That is, doing a particular thing for its own sake (Santrock, 2009).

Extrinsic motivation is based on factors not related to the activity itself. It means doing something because of external forces, such as the rewards and reinforcement (Woolfolk, 2007). This is in-line with the view of Fishbein, the expectancy value theorists who said that "our motivation for success is the value of the goal to us". Those who are extrinsically motivated quantify success/achievement in terms of rewards/money and the fame it will attract to them. They do not embark on a task for the sake of achieving the task or the challenge posed by the task, but for the rewards they stand to gain when they conquer the task. Achievement motivation is the zeal to succeed in a particular undertaking, or the willingness to be good at doing something. Achievement motivation is of two kinds; autonomous achievement motivation and social achievement motivation (Gage & Berliner, 1998).

Autonomous Achievement Motivation: This is when an individual compares his/her performances with the initial ones; using "inner" standards. This individual will be motivated to achieve more if he/she believes that he/she is doing well or needs to do better.

Social Achievement Motivation: This is when people compare their performance with that of others. Achievement motivation is the need to achieve success. Psychologists have observed that people with a high level of achievement motivation exhibit unique

characteristics such as hard work and perseverance (Woolfolk, 2007).

Achievement motivation is the tendency to endeavour for success, and choose goal oriented/success activities. Achievement motivation forms the basis of a successful life. Pupils, who are oriented towards achievement, generally enjoy life and feel in control. Achievement motivated pupils are dynamic and they have self-respect. Achievement motivated people set moderately difficult but easily achievable targets, which help them to achieve their objectives (Dweck, 2000). They do not set extremely difficult or extremely easy targets. They ensure that they only undertake on the tasks they can achieve to attain both their parents' expectations and theirs. Achievement motivation is the willingness to hit a target or the internal drive to achieve success.

Academic Success

Academic Success means achieving a set academic target. Philip Zimbardo an American psychologist said that academic success depends on research and hard work. Zimbardo added that academic success is pertinent in education at all levels. Academic success is imperative because it is strongly linked to positive outcomes which parents value for children. Researches show that adults with high levels of education are more likely to be employed, and to earn higher salaries. Academically successful students will have more employment opportunities than those with less education. Research also shows that people who are academically successful are more stable in their employment, more likely to have health insurance, less dependent on public assistance, less likely to engage in criminal activities, are more active as citizens, charitable volunteers, and more healthy (Rentner & Kober, 2001).

To achieve academic success, some skills must be employed. Most pupils want to do well in school, yet many still fail to complete the level of work necessary to succeed academically. The reason is often motivation and self – efficacy beliefs. It takes a combination of skills – organization, time management, prioritization, concentration and motivation – to achieve academic success.

Many students think that being a good student means just showing up for classes, taking a few notes, reading the textbooks, and studying right before the tests. However, learning, like many other activities, involves a complex set of skills that require constant practice. For example, if a person wants to become a good football player, he/she would have to learn how to dribble, pass, shoot, rebound, be a team player, etc., and they would have to practice these individual skills over and over in order to improve them. Similarly, studying involves learning a complex set of skills, such as note taking, test taking, etc., that must be practiced in order for children to become good pupils. To achieve academic success many factors should be considered and employed. Location/Environment: Pupils who are serious about achieving academic success should find a good location. They can use the libraries, study rooms, or empty classroom. Such pupil should make reading a habit and work every day. Cramming is not conducive to understanding and retaining large amounts of information. Pupils should use the time between classes to read. They should seek help to improve their grades. Pupils should make use of day planner or wall calendar. They should plan ahead for assignments and examination periods.

Students should get energized by eating; exercising and sleeping well; fatigue and stress weaken memory and comprehension. Eat properly, exercise regularly, and get adequate sleep. Perform like a pro; go to class prepared and take thorough notes. Don't miss class. Someone else's notes aren't going to be as good as having gone to the lecture yourself. While taking notes, listen for emphases and examples. Lessons and textbooks are useful; for school learning requires understanding how pieces of information fit together to form a "big picture". Use tables of contents, headings and subheadings to organize information. Do something to remember key information; be active, generate examples, create mnemonics, make summary notes, identify key words, highlight textbooks, or add margin notes. Improve your memory by being creative and interested. Remember key points and prove them; no matter how well you understand something, without practice forgetting will occur. Before a test, recall information without looking at notes or textbooks and by practicing questions. Be test smart; don't lose marks because of test-writing errors. Use strategies to tackle different types of tests. Read

instructions, budget time to marks, and do less difficult questions first to build confidence. The above practices and factors if properly used are most likely to result to academic success which parents desire or expect from their children.

Parental Expectations

Parental expectations are parents' desires, set standards, and aspiration for their children. Parental expectations of early childhood education are the focus of social psychology, child development psychology, and family education (Li, 2002). Parental expectation is an important factor that influences children's physical and mental development. Suitable expectations contribute a lot in the shaping of children's good qualities. Parental behaviours and expectations influence not only how parents treat their children but also what the children in turn believe about their own abilities and performances (Woolfolk, 2007).

Parents who believe that hard work matters when it comes to abilities and how one achieves tend to have children who bear their parents' expectations. For example, if a boy's parents believe that the child should do well in sciences, he probably will. Likewise, if a girl's parents believe that she will do well in sciences, she probably will (Gage, & Berliner, 1998). The cultural significance of the subject areas and the expectations for a particular child plays a vital role in determining the attitudes the child goes to the classroom with. Stevenson and Lee (1990) in their study on "Family Based Expectations" found that parental expectations have positive influence on children. They added that children will be what their parents expect them to be while Sigelman and Shaffer (1995) in their research study found that high parental expectations cause anxiety, poor performance and failures in school. To Sigelman and Shaffer, high parental expectation is a vice and not a virtue. Li (2002) views the source of high parental expectations as the Confucian heritage. Li said that five thousand years of feudal era produced unique cultural beliefs; such as academic achievement leads to higher social status (Li, 2002). That is in line with Abraham Lincoln's assertion that "A sound education is a sure key to success. And John F. Kennedy's assumption that, it is only education that can bridge the gap between the rich and the poor (Iluebe, 2004). That could be the reason why Chinese children who come

from poor homes work hard to succeed and bring honour to their families. Li posited that in China, all parents want their children to achieve privileged positions through academic excellence (Li, 2002).

Other factors that influenced parental expectations in the world include parents' childhood experiences, position and culture. How parents were motivated to achieve by their own parents influences the expectations they have for their children (Family Study, 2009). Most parents today want their children to obtain a quality education and reap its benefits (Sue & Abe, 1995). Li reflected that the high expectations parents experienced in their childhood by their own parents not only contributed to their own success, but also followed the next generation, leading parents to have high expectations for their children (Chen & Uttal, 1988). Chinese parents see high educational expectations as a cultural essence of Confucian philosophy (Okazuki, 1990). Children's striving for excellence in China is not an individual's affair but a collective responsibility of both the family and community at large (Epstein, 2001).

Chinese cultural expectations held that both the authority of tradition, and societies were judged by the educational background of a city. High achievers are valued and celebrated for their excellence while poor performers are discriminated as well, Epstein concluded.

Parents are the children's first and most powerful teachers. They have enormous power to influence the lives of their children in many ways. Most parents acknowledge that students' learning does not occur only in the classroom.

No parents want their children to do poorly in school, though many parents do not understand what it takes to guide a child to a successful life. A clear vision and understanding of the pupils' school activities by their parents can help children to do well in school (Gage & Berliner, 1998). Parents' involvement in a child's school improves the pupils' achievements. It helps a child to accomplish many social goals as well. Parents' involvement in their children's education is influenced by the expectations they have for their children.

There is evidence about the benefits of parents' expectation and involvement in their children's education, and literacy activities in particular (Van-Steensel, 2006). Research shows that parental involvement in children's learning positively affects the child's performance at school, both in primary and secondary schools (Jeynes, 2007). The impact is the same regardless of ethnicity, family background, parents' level of education and the child's gender. There are also numerous studies that have shown that children who grow up in an education stimulating home environment do very well academically regardless of their socio-economic background (Jeynes, 2005).

Parental expectation and involvement have a significant effect on children's achievement and adjustment. Parental expectation and involvement lead children to a greater problem-solving skill, school enjoyment, better school attendance, fewer behavioural problems at school, great social and emotional development (Van-Steensel, 2006). Parents get involved in their children's school achievements to realize the expectations they have for their wards and make a difference in their children's achievements. Parents who promote reading as a valuable and worthwhile activity tend to have children who are motivated to read for pleasure.

Parental expectations and involvement have the greatest effect in the child's early years of education. Many researchers have found that parental interest and expectation in their children's education are the greatest predictors of academic achievements. Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins and Weiss (2006) postulated that family expectation and involvement in school matters most for children.

Parents are fundamentally motivated to become involved in their children's education to help them succeed in life. This is due to the expectations they hold for their children. These perceptions and beliefs contribute to parents' involvement in their children's education (Family Study, 2009). Parental expectations are parents' desires, aspirations and set standard for their children to do well both in school and other areas of human endeavours irrespective of their gender.

Gender

Gender is a concept used to distinguish between masculine and feminine, that is, male and female. Every culture has gender-based expectations for students, in most cultures it is assumed that males and females are supposed to act differently; learn some things differently and achieve differently (Gage & Berliner, 1998). Some cultures expect that males or females cannot excel at certain things because of their gender. Parents have higher academic expectations for girls than they do for boys. Researchers like Lent, Lopez and Beischke (1991) in their study on gender and academic achievement found that boys achieve more than girls in calculation subjects while the study of Fennema and Sherman (1977) revealed that there is no difference in students' academic achievements based on gender. Gender schema develops from the child's innate tendency to classify and simplify information based on gender. Gage and Berliner (1998) were of the view that gender schema develops in pupils and influences their zeal; what they believe, how they do, learn, remember and achieve success in life. One wonders if the types of expectations parents have for their children based on gender influences the self-efficacy beliefs and achievement motivation in school.

Pupils' and achievement motivation seem to be affected by gender. In this study, gender serves as a moderating variable in determining pupils' and achievement motivation. The researcher seeks to know whether gender and parental expectation influence pupils' achievement motivation in Owerri education zone II of Imo State.

Statement of the Problem

In a culturally bounded society like Nigeria, pupils' academic achievement seems to be influenced by the stereotype placed on their gender. Evidence has shown that the prevailing problem in Owerri education zone II of Imo State, Nigeria is that, the achievements of pupils in the state and national common entrance examinations are declining steadily. Parents, teachers, and the government are worried, especially, now that pupils' poor achievement is attributed to low achievement motivation. There is fear that if pupils' achievements in the state and national examinations continue to fall like this, it may make pupils to drop out of school, become deviants, or indulge in

examination malpractices. This may also affect the future economic and technological growth of Nigeria. Studies in Europe and America show that when parental expectation for a child is made known to the child, it appears to energize the child's achievement motivation. One wonders if the above statement is true of the Nigerian children. How parental expectations influence achievement motivation and academic success of Nigerian pupils who operate in different socio-cultural environments, is yet to be determined.

This study aimed at investigating the influence of parental expectations and gender on achievement motivation of pupils in primary schools in Owerri education zone II of Imo state, Nigeria.

Relationship among Gender, Parental Expectations, Achievement Motivation and Academic Success

Gender and the type of expectations parents have for their children tend to determine the levels of achievement motivation their children exhibit at all times. Achievement motivation determines students' resilience and spontaneity. Achievement motivation is the zeal to actualize a set goal. Researchers believe that achievement motivation at all levels of education. Pupils' achievement motivation could be assumed to be determined by their gender and parental expectations.

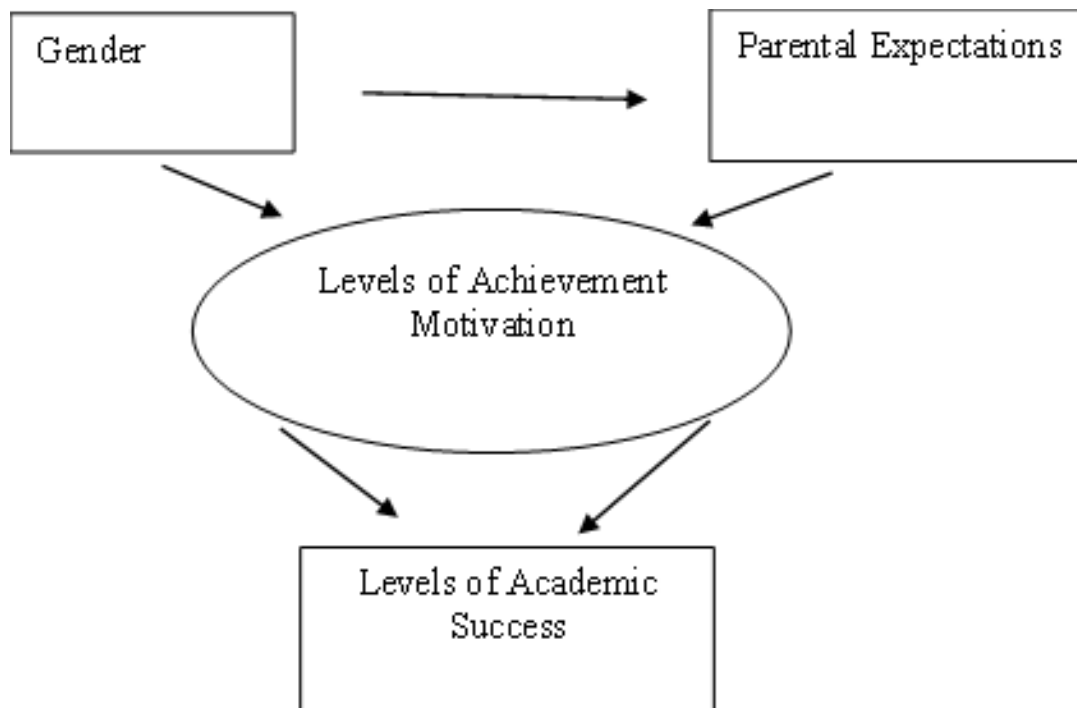


Fig.1 Relationship among Gender, Parental Expectations, and Achievement Motivation

The diagram above shows the relationship between gender, parental expectations, achievement motivation, and levels of academic success. The diagram also depicts that gender could influence the type of expectations some parents have for their children. Gender and parental expectations are assumed to have the potential of influencing both pupils' and their achievement motivation in school. The diagram also illustrates that achievement

motivation tends to influence the level of academic success pupils achieve in school.

This chapter presents the procedure for carrying out this study. Specifically, it describes the research design, area of the study, population, sample and sampling technique, instruments for data collection, validation of the instruments, reliability of the instruments, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

Research Design

This study adopted ex-post-facto research design to determine the influence of parental expectations for academic success on achievement motivation of pupils in primary schools in Owerri education zone II of Imo state, Nigeria. Ex-post-facto study is that in which the independent variable is not manipulated. The design is appropriate for the study because no variable was manipulated in this study. Ex-post-facto or causal-comparative design helps us to establish a relationship between two or more variables (Ali, 2006). Ex-post -facto research design can only be used to examine the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variables. The Area of this Study is Owerri Education Zone II of Imo State.

The sample for the study is 233 primary five pupils who were randomly sampled from 10 out of the 58 public primary schools in the area. The ten schools were composed using a simple random sampling technique. The names of all the public primary schools in the zone were written on pieces of paper. They were folded and put into a small container and shoveled, and then ten schools were balloted without replacement, for this study. Then, 23 pupils were composed in each of the ten primary schools that were used for the study.

Instruments for Data Collection

The researcher used two instruments for the study.

They are:

- Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ) and
- Parental Expectations Questionnaire (PEQ).

AMQ was developed by the researchers to assess pupils' achievement motivation.

The items are 10 and were generated from the literature reviewed. It is a four-rating scale with response options ranging from Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

Parental expectation questionnaire (PEQ) was developed to assess parents' expectations on their children. It was responded by pupils because they know the type of expectations their parents have for them. The parental expectation questionnaire was used to elicit information on the influence of parental expectations on pupils' achievement motivation.

The items are 10 and were summed up based on relevant information gotten from literature reviewed. It is a four-point rating scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

The achievement motivation questionnaire (AMQ) and parental expectation questionnaire (PEQ) developed by the researcher was validated by three experts in educational psychology and measurement and evaluation of the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN). The comments of the experts were used to structure the instrument for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The instruments were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of ten research assistants (Teachers) to facilitate the study. The researcher instructed the research assistants to read out and explain the items to the pupils in their vernacular and collect the instruments back from the respondents the same day, when they must have filled in their opinions in the questionnaires, to avoid losses.

The data collected by administering the various research instruments were organized in tables and analyzed using mean and standard deviations in answering the two research questions posed by the researcher to guide the study. A mean of 2.5 was used as the yardstick for low or high score. Any item scoring a mean below 2.5 was seen to be low while any item scoring 2.5 and above was seen to be high. The two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test.

Research Question 1: What is the influence of parental expectations on pupils' achievement motivations?

Table 1: Mean ratings, Standard Deviation and Mean Difference on Achievement Motivation based on Parental expectations

Parental Expectations	N	Mean	S.D	Std error mean
High Parental Expectation	151	3.46	.333	.0271
Low Parental Expectation	82	2.90	.54251	.599

Table 1 shows mean ratings, standard deviation and mean difference on achievement motivation based on parental expectation. The data in the table indicate a mean score of 3.46 with a standard deviation of 0.333 of 151 pupils whose parents have high expectations for their academic success. The table also shows mean score of 2.90 with a standard deviation of .599 of 82 pupils whose parents have low expectations for their academic success. A corresponding hypothesis raised to further address the research question is:

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement motivation scores of pupils whose parents have high expectations for their children's academic success and those pupils whose parents have low expectation in their academics.

Table 2: A t-test on the Influence of Parental Expectations on Achievement Motivation

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Achievement Motivation	114	3.3	.423	.03960
Male	119	3.2	.539	.04941
Female				

Table 2 shows a t-test on the influence of parental expectation on achievement motivation. Data in Table 2 indicate that parental expectations have significant influence on pupils' achievement motivation. This is indicated by the calculated t-value of 9.702 which is significant at 0.00 level and therefore significant at .05 levels of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean achievement motivation scores of pupils whose parents have high expectations for their children's academic success and those pupils whose parents have low expectation in their academics is rejected.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of gender on pupils' achievement motivation?

Table 3: Mean Standard Deviation and Mean Achievement Motivation Ratings based on Gender

Parental expectation	t	d/f	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Achievement Motivation	9.702	231	.000	.55716	.05743

Table 3 shows mean standard deviation and mean achievement motivation ratings based on gender. The data indicate a mean achievement motivation of 3.3 with a standard deviation of .423 for boys and a mean score of 3.12 with standard deviation of .539 for girls. The table also revealed a mean achievement motivation difference of .20 between boys and girls is in favour of boys. A corresponding hypothesis raised to further address the research question is:

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female pupils' achievement motivation.

Table 4: A t-test on the influence of Gender on Pupils' Achievement Motivation

	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	d	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Achievement Motivation	Male	3.36	.423					
	Female	3.16	.539					
				3.2	231	.001	.20	.06365

The data in Table 4 show that gender influences achievement motivation and there is a significant mean difference in achievement motivation between the boys and girls. This is indicated by the calculated t-value of 3.254 which is significant at .001, and therefore significant at 0.05 probability level. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the scores of male and female pupils' achievement motivation is rejected.

Summary of the Major Findings

The results presented in this chapter highlighted the following major findings:

1. Parental expectations have significant influence on pupils' achievement motivation.
2. The findings of this study indicate that gender influences achievement motivation significantly.
3. High achievement motivation results to high academic success.

Discussion

Parental Expectation and Achievement Motivation

The result of this study reveals that parental expectations have significant influence on pupils' achievement motivation. This is indicated by both mean rating scores and the tested null hypotheses. That means that high parental expectation leads to high academic achievement and vice versa. This supports the studies of Stevenson and Lee (1990) who found that parents' expectation for their children's post-secondary outcome is associated with high academic achievement. They also found that parents' verbal expectation and urging are related to high academic achievement.

The result of a Meta analysis indicated that high parental expectation is associated with high students' achievement outcomes (William, 2011). A study by Ramirez and Cruz (2002) found that high parental expectation leads children to achieve highly in school. Yamamoto and Holloway (2010) in their study found that parental expectations play a vital role in students' academic achievement. The study revealed that students whose parents have high expectations in their education tend to score higher in achievement tests and persist longer in school than those whose parents have low expectations in their academics. The study conducted by Tina and Andrieam (2010) which

suggested that, achievement is not only influenced by parental expectations, but also by the educational expectations children have of themselves has a varied opinion.

Gender and Achievement Motivation

The findings of this study indicate that gender influences achievement motivation significantly. This was shown by both the mean score of the data analyzed and the tested null hypothesis which show that gender. The findings of this study are in line with the study conducted by Tor Busch (1995) which found that there was no significant gender difference in academic achievement of male and female students generally but, are at variance with the study undertaken by the following researchers: Fennaman and Sherman (1977) which found that there was no significant differences with gender and learning mathematics nor gender and motivation for learning. Po Yin, Kwok, Kit and Angel (2001) in their study revealed that there was gender difference regarding intrinsic motivation. Gisela Chavez (2011) found that male students tend to be more motivated to achieve in mathematics class than females. Gisela concluded that gender influences students' achievement motivation.

Achievement Motivation and Academic Success

This study reveals that high achievement motivation leads to high academic success. This implies that the moment a learner develops high achievement motivation academic success is sure. This result is supported by the study carried out by John and Mtari (nd.). In their study, they found that students with high achievement motivation do well academically. Heidi and Karen (2005) found that achievement, motivation, retention predict academic success.

Conclusion

The researcher made some conclusions in this study based on the findings of the study. The conclusions are as follows:

1. Parental expectations have significant influence on pupils' achievement motivation.
2. It is only high but attainable parental expectations that have positive influences on pupils' achievement motivation.
3. High but reasonable parental expectations also influence pupils' achievement motivation positively.

4. Gender influences achievement motivation significantly.
5. High achievement motivation leads to high academic success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the researcher made the following recommendations:

- Parents should have high but realistic and attainable expectations for their children at all times. Parents should encourage their children to have high achievement motivation. Parents should make their expectations known to their children. To ensure that, parents should share quality time with their children and praise them when they perform well in school.
- As models, parents should demonstrate achievement motivation behaviour before their children, so that their children will emulate and practice them in their academic activities.
- Parents should have high but achievable expectation for the children.

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