

**RELATIONSHIP OF PERSONALITY FACTORS WITH  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT  
IN PAKISTAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

**In the present study the relationship between different personality factors of Pakistani students and their academic achievement in the graduation examination was studied. In order to study the students' personality factors, Gordon Personal Profile and Gordon Personal Inventory were administered to 500 postgraduate students and they were asked to mention their grades at B.A./B.Sc. level according to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd divisions. Five hundred participants were divided into two groups which comprised of 250 male students and 250 female students. These groups were further divided according to the medium of instructions followed in their respective colleges. 125 male students who studied in English medium colleges and 125 male students who studied in Urdu medium colleges, 125 female students who studied in English medium colleges and 125 female students who studied in Urdu medium colleges of Karachi, were selected.**

This article focused on two traits only.

Chi-square test was calculated for the statistical analysis of the data.

Both the hypotheses were highly significant at  $P < .001$  level.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of personality remained quite controversial among various theorists. Human beings are basically altogether different from each other and every individual always behaves in a unique manner. Personality theorists differ in their approaches because they themselves have a variety of experience in their life span on the basis of which they view the personality with their own angle. It is however important to keep in mind the assumptions about the natures, the past, present and the future of human beings while defining personality.

Psychologists define the term personality in different ways. For example according to Derlega (1991) "Personality refers to the enduring, inner characteristics of individuals that organize their behaviors".

Traits theorists define a personality trait as "any distinguishable, a relatively enduring way in which an individual differs from others", Guilford (1957).

Freud, (1933) focused on childhood experiences. Analysis of his patients' histories convinced Freud that personality is formed during the first few years of life. He observed that his patients' symptoms seemed rooted in unresolved conflicts from early childhood. For Freud human personality, its emotions, strivings and

ideas arise from a conflict between the Id and Superego. He mentioned that the Ego becomes the executive and helps the Personality to gain mental balance. Freud theorized and gave importance to the tripartite structure of personality. He believed that all conflicts center on the interaction of Id, Ego and Superego.

A strong and weak personality is mostly based upon the childhood experiences. In our culture the childhood period is generally viewed as naturally happy time, free from responsibilities and worries. But the implication that children are somehow protected from the emotional effects of stressful events is tragically false. All of us face the possibility of stressors at any moment and the children are in fact as susceptible to the stress as adults.

It has been found that parents and guardians cannot handle and even guide their children properly because of the lack of awareness, so the individuals with different personality problems face the difficulty in the adjustment of their personal, social, occupation and educational areas. Therefore any stressful situation may become a sufficient cause of their academic failures. Studies further support the notion that the childhood experiences become a part of an individual's personality.

The personality factors of the child are very important in the success in academic achievement as any defect in personality can hamper the performance of the individual.

In developing countries like Pakistan where the literacy rate is very low and people are of different socio-economic backgrounds,

It is important to study the factors that influence a person's performance in his educational achievement. It is also important to know why a person gets good grades in a class while others cannot.

Individuals who are free from stress or suffer with a low level of frustration can handle their routine affairs easily as compared to the individuals who are suffering from emotional distress. It has been observed that as the degree of the individuals' frustration becomes high, the level of their achievement becomes low.

According to Kaplan and Sadock, (1994) students with emotional problems cannot perform well in school. They said that the academic problems may result in a variety of contributing factors and these problems may arise at any time during the school period. School is a major source of physical, educational, cognitive, social and emotional development for the students. Students' coping mechanisms are usually reflected in their social and academic success in school. Children normally cope with the process of separation from parents, adjustment to new environment, adaptation to the social contacts and exposure to unfamiliar attitudes. A corresponding relation often exists between school performance, the adaptation behavior and strategies of the child.

Comparative studies on emotional problems indicate that females are more vulnerable to depression and other emotional problems as compared to males. Wilhelm & Parker, (1994) reported that the differences in rates of depression may also stem, at least to a degree from the fact that females are more willing to admit such feelings than males or from the fact that women are more likely than men to remember depressive episodes.

A number of factors can interfere within a classroom i.e. situation e.g., parents attitude, peer group, classroom environment, teacher's attitude, gender differences, personal interest and students' own personality. These factors play a significant role in the makeup of personality pattern of the individual and his later success in life.

Good & Brophy, (1986) described that the general personality of a student is a major consideration in assessing whether or not a learning environment is successful for him or her. They said that dependent students will seek teacher's instructions and support; independent students will want little of either. Some students want to be with peers, others are more introverted and prefer more solitude. A student's personality also influences the degree, frequency and type of feedback that is needed or preferred. They also noted that the preference for work mode depends to some extent on students' personality (dependent students prefer to be with the teacher), but some work styles are independent of personality and cognitive aptitude or style. For example, some students enjoy writing reports and stories but dislike answering questions other students have the opposite preference. Some students prefer a variety of working assignments other students really like only one mode (whole class, individual, and so forth).

They further said that work habits are also important considerations. Some students are very careless and poorly organized, other students are enthusiastic book keepers but somehow cannot put together all the associated facts and other data they collect. If teachers want to alter such work habits their choice of learning activities will have to be designed with this in mind.

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Durkin, (1995) said that females on the average have higher school achievement while males have higher long-term aspirations for themselves. Such aspirations may be due to the fact that males interpret their successes and failures in ways that yield greater optimism about what they are ultimately capable of accomplishing. According to King, (1989) females are making more headway in this area; for example, she said that girls growing up now are more likely to have career plans than girls who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s.

McMillan & Reed, (1997) conducted a research on at-risk students. They noted that the increasingly high number of at-risk students, those in danger of dropping out of school because of academic failure or other problems; are major concern in education today. They found that at-risk students show persistent patterns of under achievement and of social maladjustment in school leading to their failure. Sklarz (1989) & Lontos, (1991) found that the national dropout rate averages about 25 percent and for minorities, that rate is higher with an average of 30 percent leaving school before they graduate.

Huston, (1983) and Stipek, (1984) stated that boys and girls interpret their successes and failures somewhat differently. Boys tend to attribute their successes to an enduring ability and their failures to a lack of effort. In contrast, girls attribute their successes to effort and their failures to a lack of ability, Boys' beliefs in greater natural ability make them more optimistic about their chances for further success.

In a comparative study, Gordon Personal Profile was administered to the college students and high school and it was found

that the college students both male and female, score significantly higher (.01 level) than the high school students on the Ascendancy, Responsibility and Emotional stability Scales. For males this relation exists for the Sociability scales also (0.5 level); but for females, the average high school and college Sociability scores were significantly different. In a similar study on Gordon Personal Inventory results indicate a significant difference between two groups and the results were similar to the Profile scores (Gordon, 1963).

Another study was conducted in 27 high schools with references to Gordon Personal Profile and it was found that there was no difference in Ascendancy, but significant difference on the other three traits. Boys score higher in Responsibility and Emotional stability and Girls in Sociability (Gordon, 1963).

A comparison at college level was made in co educational institutions. Results indicate that there was no sex difference in Ascendancy and Responsibility but a significant difference on other traits. Men score higher in Emotional Stability and Women in Sociability (Gordon, 1963).

Another validation attempt (Ahmad and Zeenat, 1972) was done with Gordon Personal Inventory and Profile. The results indicated that this test can be given to the Pakistani students at the graduate level with a fair amount of predictability. Results also indicated that there was a high correlation of .90 for Original Thinking, followed by Vigor (.72), Emotional stability (.65), Cautiousness (.65), and Personal Relations (.62). The correlation on Sociability and Ascendancy was low but positive.

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The purpose of the present study is to find out the relationship of personality factors with the achievement level of different post graduate students. For this purpose the Gordon Personal Profile and Inventory was selected to assess the effect of the eight personality variables on the achievement level.

### HYPOTHESES

In the light of the above theoretical and research background the following hypotheses were formulated.

1. Students with high scores on Ascendancy will obtain high Academic Achievement.
2. Students with high scores on Responsibility will obtain high Academic Achievement.

### METHOD

#### Participants:-

500 participants were selected for this study. 125 male students from Urdu medium colleges, 125 male students from English medium colleges, 125 female students from Urdu medium colleges and 125 female students from English medium colleges were selected from the various post Graduate Classes of the University of Karachi and its affiliated and private Colleges.

In order to find out the Performance level they were asked to mention their Grades / Divisions at Graduate level.

#### Measures:-

In order to obtain the various personality traits of the candidates Gordon Personal Profile and Gordon Personal Inventory were administered to the participants and they were



asked to mention their divisions on B.A / B. Sc level to obtain their academic achievement.

### Meanings Of The Scale Scores

Gordon (1963) has introduced eight factors in his personal profile and inventory. Here in this article focus is on two traits only. According to Gordon (1963) high and low scores on each of the Gordon Personal Profile and Inventory scales are interpreted as follows:

#### Ascendancy (A)

Those individuals who are verbally ascendant, who adopt an active role in the group, who are self-assured and assertive in relationships with others and who tend to make independent decisions, score high on this Scale. Those who play a passive role in the group, who listen rather than talk, who lack self-confidence, who let others take the lead and who tend to be overly dependent on others for advice, normally make low scores.

#### Responsibility (R)

Individuals who are able to stick to any job assigned them, who are persevering and determined and who can be relied on, score high on this Scale. Individuals, who are unable to stick to tasks that do not interest them and who tend to be flighty or irresponsible, usually make low scores.

**DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS**

**Academic Achievement**

**It means the level of marks achieved in terms of first, second and third divisions in the B.A and B.Sc final examinations.**

**Personality**

**Personality means the traits obtained by the Gordon Personal Profile and Gordon Personal Inventory.**

**Statistical Analysis:-**

**Chi-square test was conducted in order to find out the statistical significance of the data.**

RESULTS

TABLE NO. 1

ASCENDANCY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT  
Percentile Rank Scores on Ascendancy

Academic Achievement	Div	1-25	26-75	76-99	Total
	I		42	108	57
II		65	97	36	198
III		43	43	09	95
Total		150	248	102	500

$$X^2 = \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$X^2 = 26.26$$

$$df : 4$$

Highly Significant at P < .001 Level

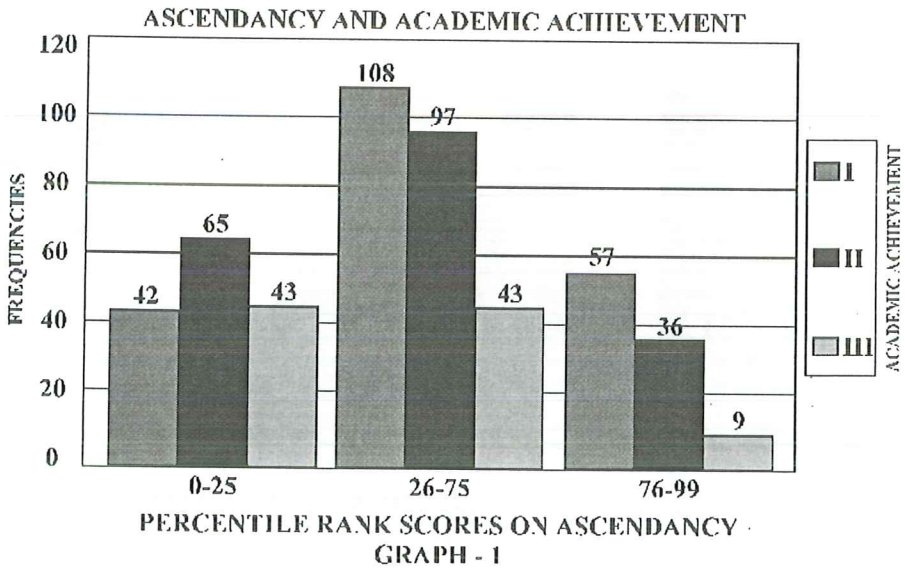


TABLE NO. 2

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT  
Percentile Rank Scores on Responsibility

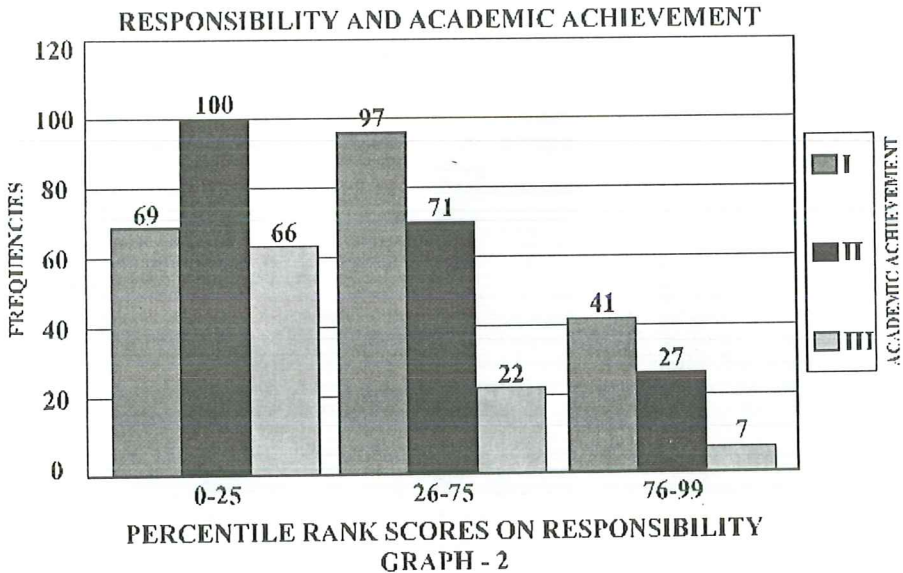
Academic Achievement	Div	1-25	26-75	76-99	Total
	I		69	97	41
II		100	71	27	198
III		66	22	07	95
Total		235	190	75	500

$$X^2 = \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$X^2 = 36.09$$

$$df : 4$$

Significant at P < .001 Level



## DISCUSSION

The hypotheses are supported by the results and are highly significant at  $P < .001$  level. The results are shown in Table No. 1 and Graph "1". It is quite clear by Table No. 1 and Graph "1" that the post graduate students who scored high on ascendancy trait on the Gordon Personal Profile, graduated in the first division hence obtained high academic achievement.

Ascendancy is defined by Gordon, (1963) as a trait of those individuals who are verbally ascendant, who adopt an active role in the group, who are self assured and assertive in relationship with others and who tend to make independent decisions. According to the results such individuals are successful and have achieved high academic grades. These results are similar to another study conducted by Good & Power (1976). They found that students, who are task oriented, participate in lessons, turn in assignments on time and like to discuss difficult questions, are academically successful and are known as successful students.

These results also indicate that there is a high correlation between ascendancy trait and high academic achievement. Furthermore it has been seen that the students who have positive goals in their lives and have developed healthy patterns of adjustment, those who have high academic aspirations, who do not feel shy but are confident about the abilities and like to take the lead in their group activities perform well in academic tasks.

It has been observed that the family environment and school setup play an important role in the enhancement of these qualities in students. Children from a family where the family members facilitate the environment to make their children independent decision makers, help to increase their self-esteem and help to make

them leaders, are successful individuals in their academic lives. On the other hand teacher's attitude and healthy class environment are also responsible for the inculcation of success in academic life. Encouragement from the teachers on positive roles of students and stimulating class environment also help to make the students self-confident and to express their ideas freely. It is well known that students who are less expressive, not assertive and do not make independent decisions, they do not prove to be high achievers.

Literature review also supports the results obtained on the relationship of ascendancy and academic achievement as it has been observed that children from authoritative families are happier, successful and socially competent. They are more ascendant and this factor helps them to succeed in their future lives. Baumrind, (1971 & 1991) concluded that the study assessing parenting style in relation to academic achievement report that children with authoritative parents have higher grades and have more positive attitudes towards school as compared to the children with permissive parents.

In Pakistani culture literacy rate is still very low and most of the population is rural based, they are not aware of the fact that their interpersonal relations and their attitudes towards their children can affect their lives. It is therefore imperative that they should be guided and counseled, so that they can help their children to make them mentally healthy and successful citizens.

Hence it is essential that the parents should realize the importance of child rearing practices and through them inculcate above-mentioned qualities in their children. In this way the entire system of Pakistan will undergo a positive change. The professionals in mental health will get guidance for modifying the behavior of the Pakistani children and planning the counseling of the parents. This process will help the children in particular and Pakistani nation in general.

Responsibility is defined by Gordon, (1963) as those individuals who are able to stick to any job assigned to them, who are persevering and determined and who can be relied on. According to the results such individuals are successful and have achieved high academic grades. On the other hand those students who are unreliable and irresponsible, who do not take interest in their class work and do not turn in their assignments on time are not successful. These results also show that there is a strong relationship between responsibility trait and academic achievement. Generally it has been seen that the individuals who take responsibility for their behaviors are more confident and successful in their lives.

In Pakistan, people are still facing economical and educational crisis. Due to the poor economical conditions, students are unable to acquire higher education. They are generally forced to support their families economically, which further hampers their performance to pursue their studies. They often do not take interest in their studies, which results in failures in their educational and occupational fields. It becomes the responsibility of a clinical and professional psychologist to motivate the families to understand the significance of higher education for the students so that they become successful in academics and can help their families and country economically.

It can be concluded that the individuals who are committed, persistent and thorough are normally serious about their studies, hence prove to be successful in their lives and academic careers. These results highlight the positive relationship between Responsibility and Academic Achievement. This acumen will prove beneficial for Pakistan.

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