International Journal of Social Impact
ISSN: 2455-670X
Volume 10, Issue 3, DIP: 18.02.099/20251003
DOI: 10.25215/2455/1003099
www.ijsi.in |July - September, 2025

Research Paper

The Correlational Study between Suicide Ideation, Achievement Motivation and Academic Procrastination Among Students Appearing for JEE and NEET

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore how suicide ideation, academic procrastination, and achievement motivation are related in students who are preparing for India's most competitive entrance exams—the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET). These exams are known for their high pressure, and students often spend years preparing for them. As a result, many of them experience stress, anxiety, and emotional challenges. The main goal of this research was to understand whether students who procrastinate more or have lower motivation also experience more suicidal thoughts. For this, 200 students from different coaching centres were selected, and they answered three different questionnaires: one to measure suicide ideation, one for academic procrastination, and one for achievement motivation. All of these were self-report tools, meaning the students filled them out based on their own understanding of themselves. The results showed that there were no strong or significant relationships between the variables. In other words, students who procrastinated or had lower motivation didn't necessarily have more suicidal thoughts, and vice versa. This was a little surprising because previous studies have often found some connection between these psychological traits. However, in our study, the connections were weak and not statistically significant. There could be many reasons for this. For example, students might have been influenced by their external environment, such as support from family, teachers, or friends. They might also have personal strengths or coping skills that helped them manage their emotions despite academic pressure. Even though the findings didn't support the original hypothesis, they still provide valuable insights. They show that mental health in competitive exam settings is a complex issue and cannot be explained by a few factors alone. There is a need to look at students more holistically, considering not just their procrastination or motivation levels, but also their background, support systems, personality, and stress levels. Future studies can explore these areas in more depth. This research highlights how important it is to support students not just academically, but emotionally and psychologically as well.

Keywords: *Suicide ideation, achievement motivation, academic procrastination, JEE, NEET, students*

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Received: May 6, 2025; Revision Received: September 26, 2025; Accepted: September 30, 2025

In today's world, academic success is seen as a major factor in shaping one's future. For students preparing for competitive exams like JEE and NEET in India, the pressure to perform well is extremely high. These students often face long study hours, limited social interaction, and constant fear of failure. This can lead to stress, anxiety, low motivation, and in some cases, even thoughts of self-harm or suicide. Academic procrastination is also common, where students delay important tasks due to fear, pressure, or lack of energy. At the same time, not every student shows the same level of drive or achievement motivation, which can affect how they cope with stress.

Understanding how suicide ideation, academic procrastination, and achievement motivation are related can help us support students better. This study is important because it sheds light on the mental health challenges faced by students in a highly competitive environment. The results can help teachers, parents, counsellors, and policymakers to create a healthier and more supportive space for academic growth and emotional well-being.

Suicide Ideation:
The study titled "Correlational Study of Academic Stress and Suicidal Ideation among Students" by Sheetal Yadav and S.K. Srivastava (2020) offers valuable insights into the mental health challenges faced by students preparing for competitive exams in India, particularly those enrolled in coaching institutes in Kota, Rajasthan.

A policy analysis published in the Economic and Political Weekly in 2024 examined the institutional responses to student suicides in coaching hubs like Kota. The analysis reviewed government reports and media articles from 2014 to 2020, documenting over 50 student suicides linked to academic pressure. The study found that while some coaching institutes implemented measures such as counseling services and stress management workshops, these efforts were often insufficient and lacked proper implementation. The analysis called for comprehensive reforms, including stricter regulations for coaching centers and enhanced mental health support systems.

Achievement Motivation:
A study by Sharma and Singh (2018) explored achievement motivation among competitive exam aspirants in India, revealing that higher motivation levels are linked to better academic performance but can also lead to increased stress and burnout in high-pressure environments.
Conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, this study assessed achievement motivation among health sciences (including NEET aspirants) and engineering students (including JEE aspirants). With a sample size of 440 students aged 17– 24, the research revealed that only 1.36% of engineering students and none of the health science students exhibited high motivation levels. Factors such as gender, internet connectivity, and urban or rural residence significantly influenced motivation levels**.**

Academic Procrastination:
Gupta and Kaur (2019) examined academic procrastination in students preparing for JEE and NEET, finding that procrastination is often driven by perfectionism and fear of failure, significantly impacting both academic outcomes and mental health.

A study conducted by Bommareddy et al. (2022) examined the relationship between academic procrastination and self-regulation among 430 undergraduate students pursuing engineering, medicine, and design/fine arts. The findings revealed a significant negative

correlation between academic procrastination and self-regulation, indicating that students with higher self-regulation tendencies were less likely to procrastinate. Notably, engineering and medical students, akin to JEE and NEET aspirants, exhibited higher levels of procrastination compared to their peers in design/fine arts.

Objectives

- To study the Prevalence of Suicide Ideation in Students appearing for JEE and NEET.
- To study Achievement Motivation Levels in Students appearing for JEE and NEET.
- To study Academic Procrastination in Students appearing for JEE and NEET.
- To study the correlation between suicide ideation and achievement motivation.
- To study the correlation between suicide ideation and academic procrastination.
- To study the correlation between achievement motivation and academic procrastination.

Hypothesis

- There is a negative correlation between suicide ideation and achievement motivation among students preparing for JEE and NEET.
- There is a positive correlation between suicide ideation and academic procrastination among students preparing for JEE and NEET.
- There is a negative correlation between achievement motivation and academic procrastination among students preparing for JEE and NEET.

Methodology Operational Definitions

- **Suicide Ideation**- Refers to thoughts, considerations, or planning about ending one's life, measured by-Suicidal Ideation Attributes Scale, Modified (SIDAS-M), developed by Van Spijker et al., 2014
- **Achievement Motivation**- Refers to the drive or desire to achieve success and excel in academic tasks, measured by- Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation Scale developed by Deo and Mohan (1985)
- **Academic Procrastination**-Refers to the tendency to delay or postpone academic tasks, measured by The Academic Procrastination Scale, developed by A. K. Kalia and R. Yadav (2018)

Sample-

The study sample consisted of 200 students aged between 16–18 years, currently preparing for JEE or NEET in various coaching institutes. A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants from both urban and semi-urban regions.

Inclusion criteria-

- Students Preparing for JEE or NEET
- Age Range- 15 to 18 years
- Willingness to Participate
- Language Proficiency.

Exclusion criteria-

- Students with any Clinical diagnoses
- Students who have attempted for JEE and NEET previously

Tools

1. **Suicidal Ideation Attributes Scale – Modified (SIDAS-M):** Suicidal Ideation Attributes Scale, Modified (SIDAS-M), developed by Van Spijker et al., 2014 is a short self-report scale used to measure the severity of suicidal thoughts. It includes 5 items that ask about the frequency of suicidal thoughts, how much control the person feels they have over them, how close they've come to attempting, the distress it causes, and how much it affects daily life. Each item is rated from 0 to 10, and the total score can go up to 50. A higher score means more intense suicidal ideation. The modified version is especially suitable for adolescents and student populations. It has shown strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.85) and is often used in non-clinical settings like schools and research.
2. **Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation Scale:** Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation Scale developed by Deo and Mohan (1985) measures how motivated a student is to achieve goals. It includes 50 questions based on 10 areas such as ambition, planning, responsibility, and persistence. Students respond using a 5-point Likert scale. It has good reliability (alpha > 0.80) and is often used to understand what drives students to succeed, especially in academic environments. It's useful in competitive settings like JEE and NEET prep.
3. **Academic Procrastination Scale (APS):** The Academic Procrastination Scale, developed by A. K. Kalia and R. Yadav (2018) helps identify how much a student delays or avoids academic tasks. The 25 items assess time management, avoidance, and the ability to start and complete tasks. Rated on a 5-point scale, it shows high reliability (alpha ≈ 0.87). It is specifically made for student groups and is ideal for identifying procrastination in high-pressure academic settings like entrance exam preparation.

Statistics Techniques-

- Descriptive statistics
- Shapiro-Wilk Test
- Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation

Procedure-

The study uses self-report surveys to collect data from students preparing for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET). Before starting the data collection, ethical approval was obtained, and necessary permissions were taken from relevant academic and institutional bodies. Participants were recruited through coaching centres. Each participant was provided with a brief explanation of the research purpose and objectives, and written informed consent was obtained. The students were assured that their responses would remain confidential, anonymous, and used solely for research purposes.

The three standardized tools used were the Suicidal Ideation Attributes Scale – Modified (SIDAS-M), the Academic Procrastination Scale (APS), and the Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation Scale. These tools were compiled into a single questionnaire and administered in offline format. Participants were instructed to answer all items honestly and without discussing the questions with peers. On average, the questionnaire took 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Data was checked for completeness and accuracy before being entered into SPSS software for statistical analysis. Throughout the process, the dignity and autonomy of all participants were fully respected.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Statistics

		SuicideIdeation	AchievementMotivation	AcademicProcrastination
N	Valid	200	200	200
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		15.20	75.19	57.60
Std. Error of Mean		.656	1.034	1.531
Median		14.00	77.00	55.50
Mode		27	82	77
Std. Deviation		9.273	14.626	21.652
Variance		85.987	213.934	468.814
Skewness		-.011	-.131	.023
Std. Error of Skewness		.172	.172	.172
Kurtosis		-1.307	-1.082	-1.191
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.342	.342	.342

The presence of moderate suicidal thoughts are seen here (mean=15.20) which is on moderate level. This descriptive data shows that while students in the sample are generally motivated (mean = 75.19) which is high, they also tend to procrastinate significantly (mean = 57.60) again on a higher side. The despite high motivation levels might indicate underlying stress, pressure, or emotional challenges that are not being effectively managed. The data call for a closer look at how achievement pressure, procrastination, and mental health interact, and underscore the need for psychological support systems in academic environments.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
SuicideIdeation	.095	200	.000	.939	200	.000
AchievementMotivation	.084	200	.001	.955	200	.000
AcademicProcrastination	.090	200	.000	.958	200	.000

The Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to assess the normality of the data. The results indicated that all three variables—suicide ideation, achievement motivation, and academic procrastination—deviated significantly from a normal distribution ($p < .05$). Therefore, non-parametric methods were used for further analysis.

The results reveal weak and non-significant correlations among the variables studied. Specifically, the correlation between suicide ideation and achievement motivation was negative but not statistically significant ($\rho = -0.054$, $p = .444$). This suggests that while a theoretical trend exists where higher achievement motivation could relate to lower suicide ideation, this relationship was not strong enough to be established conclusively in the current sample. This partial alignment with the existing literature (e.g., Wong, 2015) suggests that

although intrinsic motivation can act as a protective factor against mental health struggles, other mediating variables may be at play, such as social support or coping strategies.

			Achievement_ Motivation
Spearman's rho	Suicide_Ideation	Correlation Coefficient	-.054
	Achievement_Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	Academic_Procrastinati	Correlation Coefficient	.029

			Academic_Pr ocrastination
Spearman's rho	Suicide_Ideation	Correlation Coefficient	-.010
	Achievement_Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	.029
	Academic_Procrastinati	Correlation Coefficient	1.000

			Suicide_Ide ation
Spearman's rho	Suicide_Ideation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	Achievement_Motivati on	Correlation Coefficient	-.054
	Academic_Procrastin ation	Correlation Coefficient	-.010

Similarly, the anticipated positive relationship between suicide ideation and academic procrastination was found to be negative and extremely weak ($\rho = -0.010$, $p = .891$), again not statistically significant. This finding runs contrary to prior studies that associate higher procrastination levels with increased psychological distress (Steel, 2007). One possible explanation could be that for these students, procrastination may not directly translate into despair or hopelessness but might instead be rationalized as temporary setbacks amidst longer-term goal pursuits.

Regarding the relationship between achievement motivation and academic procrastination, a weak and positive, though non-significant, correlation was found (ρ result is counterintuitive, as prior frameworks (such as the Temporal Motivation Theory by Steel & König, 2006) predict a strong inverse relationship between high achievement drive and procrastination tendencies. The lack of significant findings across all relationships may reflect a highly competitive and unique sample where external pressures (e.g., family expectations, societal

standards) and structured preparation routines override internal motivational and behavioral tendencies.

CONCLUSION

- The study found no statistically significant correlation between suicide ideation and achievement motivation among students preparing for JEE and NEET.
- The correlation between suicide ideation and academic procrastination was also non-significant and weakly negative, contrary to expectations.
- A weak positive but non-significant correlation was observed between achievement motivation and academic procrastination, which goes against the predicted inverse relationship.

Implications

Here are some implications to help students preparing for JEE and NEET exams manage their mental health better:

1. **Mental Health Awareness**: Schools, coaching centres, and parents should work together to raise awareness about mental health. Students should learn that it's okay to talk about stress, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts, and seeking help is a sign of strength.
2. **Counselling Services**: Every coaching centre and school should have trained counsellors or psychologists available. Regular group or one-on-one counselling sessions can help students express their feelings, handle exam pressure, and reduce harmful thoughts.
3. **Time Management Workshops**: Since procrastination was a major issue in the study, students can benefit from learning time management skills. Workshops on setting goals, using planners, and avoiding distractions can help students stay productive and reduce stress.
4. **Parental Support**: Parents should understand the pressure their children face. Instead of focusing only on marks or ranks, they should provide emotional support and encourage a healthy balance between studying and relaxing.
5. **Future Research**: More studies should be conducted on larger, more diverse student groups to better understand these issues. Researchers could also look into the role of peer pressure, social media, sleep patterns, and coaching environments.

Suggestions for further studies-

Future research should aim to include a more diverse sample of JEE and NEET aspirants, including students from rural backgrounds, to enhance the generalizability of findings. Additionally, the current study relied on self-report measures, which may have been influenced by social desirability or the underreporting of sensitive issues; future studies could incorporate mixed method approaches or third-party assessments to reduce such biases. Moreover, this study included only first-time test takers, which may have excluded important perspectives—future research should consider including repeat aspirants to capture a broader range of experiences.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Shah, D.B. & Vaidya, S. (2025). The Correlational Study between Suicide Ideation, Achievement Motivation and Academic Procrastination Among Students Appearing for JEE and NEET. *International Journal of Social Impact*, *10*(3), 896-903. DIP: 18.02.099/20251003, DOI: 10.25215/2455/1003099