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**Imaginary Companions, Creativity and Academic Achievement
Among Girl Students in University**

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Imaginary Companions

Imaginary friends or imaginary companions are a psychological and social phenomenon where a friendship or other interpersonal relationship takes place in the imagination rather than external physical reality. Imaginary friends are made often in childhood, sometimes in adolescence and rarely in adulthood. They often function as tutelaries when played with by a child.

Almost every child has, at one time in his or her life, made the acquaintance of an imaginary friend, an entity that can help develop the child's imagination and can also be a solace during times of great stress or loneliness. Despite an imaginary friend being unreal, the child will act as if the imaginary being is physically present by talking to it, playing with it, or even attempting to feed it. Of course, to another person it will seem as though the child is talking into thin air. If told that there is nothing there, the child will often retaliate in a defensive manner by stating that the so-called imaginary friend is invisible. Parents who eavesdrop on pretend play can open a window into their child's world, says Barbara Willer of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. "It gives you insight into their fears and challenges."

Kutner (n.d.) 2009 reported that 65% of seven-year old children report they have had an imaginary companion at some point in their lives. He further reported:

Imaginary companions are an integral part of many children's lives. They provide comfort in times of stress, companionship when they're lonely, someone to boss around when they feel powerless, and someone to blame for the broken lamp in the living room. Most important, an imaginary companion is a tool young children use to help them make sense of the adult world.

Marjorie Taylor (2004) identified middle school children with imaginary friends and followed up six years later as they were completing high school. At follow-up, those who had imaginary friends in middle school displayed better coping strategies but a "low social preference for peers." She suggested that imaginary friends may directly benefit children's resiliency and positive adjustment.

Creativity

Creativity is a phenomenon whereby something new is created (such as an idea, a joke, an artistic or literary work, a painting or musical composition, a solution, an invention etc.). The ideas and concepts so conceived can then manifest themselves in any number of ways, but most often, they become something we can see, hear, smell, touch, or taste.

- Franken (1993): Creativity is defined as the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others. (Page 396)

- Weisberg (1992) ..."creative" refers to novel products of value, as in "The airplane was a creative invention." "Creative" also refers to the person who produces the work, as in? Picasso was creative." "Creativity," then refers both to the capacity to produce such works, as in "How can we foster our employees' creativity?" and to the activity of generating such products, as in "Creativity requires hard work." (Page 4)

Academic Achievement

Achievement has been considered as an important factor in the educational life of students. The learning outcomes of a system of education can be assured in the terms of student's achievement. Achievement means the extent to which learning and study has resulting in mastering. It is the outcome of general specific learning. It is what somebody has done successfully using his or her own efforts or skills. It therefore refers to degree or level of success or that of proficiency attained in some specific area concerning scholastic or academic work. High achievement creates self confidence, which leads to better society. It may in the sphere of cognitive, affective or psychomotor domain.

- According to Good (1959) "Achievement is an accomplishment, skill or body of knowledge"
- According to Megargee (2000) "Achievement is how well the students have mastered the subject matter in course of instruction"
- Encyclopedia Dictionary of Education(1997) "Achievement means successful accomplishment or performance in particular subject area or course usually but reasons of skill, hard work and interest, typically summarized in various types of grades, marks, sources or descriptive commentary"

Rationale Of The Study

Imaginary companions constitute both invisible companions and personified objects. These are very common among girls. These days proportion of girls with imaginary companions has increased significantly due to influence of media and loneliness also. During my hostel days I found out that girls who have imaginary companions are into many co-curricular activities which require creative ideas .The investigator will conduct research to determine relation between imaginary companions and creativity, between imaginary companions and academic achievement and between creativity and academic achievement.

Objectives

- To study relation between phenomenon of imaginary companions and creativity.
- To study relation between phenomenon of imaginary companions and academic achievement.
- To study relation between creativity and academic achievement.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant co-relation between
 - a. phenomenon of imaginary companions and creativity
 - b. phenomenon of imaginary companions and academic achievement
 - c. phenomenon of creativity and academic achievement in university.
2. There will be no significant difference in academic achievement of girls having imaginary companions and those not having imaginary companions.
3. There will be no significant difference in creativity of girls having imaginary companions and those not having imaginary

Method: Descriptive method of research was used.

Sample: In the present study, a sample of 50 girls studying in university was taken chosen by random selection.

Collection Of Data

The data for the present study was collected from Punjab University. In all there were 50 students. The students were told that the data collected would be kept confidential. This ensured their freedom of expression for expressing their opinions. The tool was administered on 50 students. Instructions were given clearly in the very beginning. The data was collected in one sitting.

Tools

Following tools were used for the present study:

- A new test of creativity by Dr. Roma Pal
- Self made tool on imaginary companions

Statistical Techniques Used

The data obtained was subjected to statistical analysis. To test the hypotheses based on the objectives of the study, the following techniques were used:

- Descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis was worked out to ascertain the nature of distribution of scores on the dimensions of creativity that are fluency, flexibility and originality and imaginary companions and academic achievement.
- Correlation was calculated to examine relationship of imaginary companions, creativity and academic achievement.
- t-test was used to test the hypotheses.

Analysis Of Data

A) Descriptive Analysis

This section contains the descriptive analyses of scores, in order to know the normality of scores obtained on tools for imaginary companions, creativity and academic achievement of girls of Punjab University. It includes Mean, Median, Mode SD, Skewness and Kurtosis, which are computed through computer, on different dimensions of total sample. Results are shown in Table 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3

Table 4.1

Measures of Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Skewness and Kurtosis on the score of creativity (N = 50):

Variables	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Total score of creativity	150.00	148.62	149.00	24.36	3.88	2.81

In present study out of sample of 50, 20 subjects had imaginary companions i.e. 40% of population had imaginary companions shown by fig 4.1

FIG 4.1 No. of girls with Imaginary Companions and without Imaginary Companions:

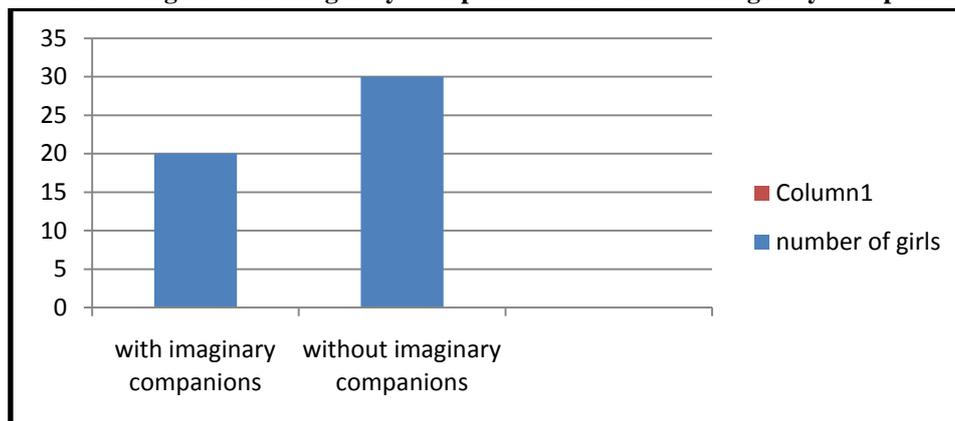


Table 4.2

Measures of Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Skewness and Kurtosis on the total score of imaginary companions of those who had imaginary companions based on tool :

Variables	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Imaginary companion	15.2	15.00	17.00	2.84	0.33	1.38

Table 4.3 Measures of Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Skewness and Kurtosis on the total score of academic achievement (n=50)

Variables	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Academic achievement	70.82	71.00	69.00	4.331611379	0.147983744	-0.687040424

4.2 Inferential Analysis

This section deals with hypotheses testing through correlation and t-test.

Correlation is a statistical measure that indicates the extent to which two or more variables fluctuate together. A positive correlation indicates the extent to which those variables increase or decrease in parallel; a negative correlation indicates the extent to which one variable increases as the other decreases.

The t-test assesses whether the means of two groups are statistically significant or not.

Results are shown in table 4.4,4.5,4.6 and 4.7

- a) In order to test hypothesis no. 1 (a) and (b) i.e. “there is a significant correlation between phenomenon of imaginary companions and creativity and phenomenon of imaginary companions and academic achievement “ the correlation was calculated between imaginary companions and creativity . the results are shown in table 4.4

Table 4.4

Correlations between imaginary companions and creativity and academic achievement

Variable	Imaginary companions
Academic achievement	0.16
Creativity	0.072

Table 4.4 shows the values of correlation between imaginary companion and academic achievement which is 0.16 which means a weak positive linear relationship and correlation between imaginary companion and creativity which is 0.072 which is almost equal to 0 which means no linear relationship. Hence our hypothesis that these should be correlated get rejected.

- b) In order to test hypothesis no. 1 (c) i.e. “there is a significant correlation between phenomenon of creativity and academic achievement “ the correlation was calculated between creativity and academic achievement. The results are shown in table 4.5

Table 4.5
Correlation between creativity and academic achievement

Variable	Creativity
Academic achievement	0.05

Table 4.5 shows the values of correlation between creativity and academic achievement which is 0.05 which is almost equal to 0 which means no linear relationship. Hence our hypothesis that these should be correlated get rejected.

- c) In order to test hypothesis no. 2 i.e. “there will be no significant difference in academic achievement of girls having imaginary companions and those not having imaginary companions“ the t- Ratio was calculated between imaginary companions and academic achievement. The results are shown in table 4.6

Table 4.6
t -Ratio between creativity of those who had imaginary companions and those who do not had are shown below

Mean _a -mean _b	T	df
26.7262	+4.48	48

Table 4.6 shows the probability is high so the sample is significant at 0.01 level. It means there is difference in creativity of those who had imaginary companions and those who don't have imaginary companions. So our null hypothesis will be rejected.

- d) In order to test hypothesis no. 3 i.e. “there will be no significant difference in creativity of girls having imaginary companions and those not having imaginary companions“ the t- Ratio was calculated between imaginary companions and creativity . The results are shown in table 4.7

Table 4.7
t ratio between academic achievement of those who had imaginary companions and those who did not

Mean a -mean b	T	df
-0.87	-0.69	48

Table 4.7 shows the probability is high so the sample is significant at 0.01 level. It means there is difference in academic achievement of those who had imaginary companions and those who don't have imaginary companions. So our null hypotheses is rejected at 0.01 level of significance

Discussion of Results

As per results of study, there is a significant difference in creativity of girls who had imaginary companions in their life. As we know imaginary companions formation is related to imagination factor

so these girls tend to be more creative than those who do not have imaginary companions in their life. The research conducted earlier { Singer (1961), Schaefer (1969) and Hoff (2005)} also showed the similar results.

The study revealed that there is a significant difference in academic achievement of girls who had imaginary companions in their life. Since to be imaginative, to think and then give a concrete shape to your thoughts requires intelligence to some extent, so girls with imaginary companions are a little above par than those who do not have. However, we cannot measure their academic achievement. The research conducted by Svendsen (1934) and Jersild et al. (1993) also showed similar results.

Further we found that these variables creativity, academic achievement and imaginary companions are not correlated to each other. The reason for this can be attributed to lesser intensity of imaginary companions. In present study, girls had more personified objects as their companions rather than imaginary companions. Also, as these are adults, due to social obligations, they do not disclose reality and give socially desirable answers more, which results in lower score on imaginary companions tool. And it is not necessary that those who are creative will also be academically sound and vice versa.

Conclusions

1. There exists a significant relationship between creativity of those who had imaginary companions and those who do not have.
2. There exists a significant relationship between academic achievement of those who had imaginary companions and those who do not have.
3. There exist no relationship between phenomenon of imaginary companions, creativity and academic achievement.

Significance Of The Study

The study revealed that there is a significant difference in creativity of girls who had imaginary companions in their life. As we know imaginary companions formation is related to imagination factor so these girls tend to be more creative than those who do not have imaginary companions in their life.

The study revealed that there is a significant difference in academic achievement of girls who had imaginary companions in their life. Since to be imaginative, to think and then give a concrete shape to your thoughts requires intelligence to some extent, so girls with imaginary companions are a little above par than those who do not have. However, we cannot measure their academic achievement.

Further we found that these variables creativity, academic achievement and imaginary companions are not correlated to each other. So these do not have a relationship between them.

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