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## **Fear of Success among Students – Range and Predictors**

### **Abstract**

The paper presents the results of research into fear of success in Polish students. The participants were 208 university students of psychology, education, political science, and physical education at the School of Physical Education. Horner's projective method (1972, 1978) was used. The analysed variables were sex, study major, average grades, locus of control, Machiavellianism, and masculinity and femininity.

Fear of success was observed in more than half of the investigated students – 62% of men and 48% of women. Multiple regression analyses showed that masculinity and Machiavellianism were the best predictors of fear of success. Fear of success occurred the least frequently in the students of physical education. The regression model explained 11% of the fear of success variables.

**Keywords:** *fear of success, gender, masculinity-femininity, Machiavellianism*

### **Introduction**

Fear of success consists of the expectation that being successful will cause negative results and much more unpleasantness than a lack of success did. However, it is not identical with anxiety about failure, lack of task activity in general, or with longing for "peace and quiet." It is rather connected with experiencing conflicting feelings of both the desire for success and a fear of it associated with anticipating and experiencing high psychological costs. As a consequence, people who are afraid of success do not frequently realize their potential possibilities because they retreat from their aspirations and behave in a defensive way (Horner, 1972, 1978).