

## A Review of Fear of Success among Woman

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### Abstract

The present study is a review that examines the fear of success and the causes and factors affecting this phenomenon, especially in women. Because women make up half of the world's population, addressing their role in society's development process is crucial. A look at the history of the status of women shows that men and women play different roles in society and social groups and occupy different positions in terms of power and status. Not only because of biological differences but also under the influence of ideology, historical, economic, and cultural past, in which they operate so strongly and harmoniously that can easily produce and reproduce the inferior position of women. Theory and research on the psychological construct of “fear of success” are reviewed in the context of Horner's original (1968) formulation of the motive. It is identified as an internal psychological representative of the dominant societal stereotype which views competence, independence, competition, and intellectual achievement as qualities inconsistent with femininity even though positively related to masculinity and mental health.

The fear of failure is intuitively understandable. In societies obsessed with success, failure is regarded as a catastrophe, and to some extent, we all fear it. Ironically, however, we're also driven by the fear of success, a much more mysterious force. Among the reasons for progress failure, fear of success plays a significant role that should not be ignored. Fear of success has been argued as a powerful phenomenon, especially among women. Matina Horner (1972) considered that fear of success is more specific to women, being originated in their' perceptions of negative consequences for their achievement in traditionally male domains. It means that the expectancy that success in achievement-related situations will be followed by negative consequences arouses fear of success in otherwise achievement-

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motivated women which then inhibits their performance and levels of aspiration. Females also predict lower grades for themselves and predict poorer performance on novel experimental tasks even when they have already outperformed males in that area. An explanation for this gender difference lies in the different attributions males and females make about failure. Moreover, women are conflicted when they have competencies and interests that could be against their stereotypical internalized gender role. Based on the collected findings of the studies assessing the “fear of success,” it is worth mentioning that the fear of success can comprise a fear of our greatness, evasion of our destiny, or a way of avoiding exercising our full talents. Thus the present study first examines the concept of fear of success and its causes and then deals with cultural, social, and gender issues affecting this phenomenon.

**Keywords:** fear of success, success, women

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**Acknowledgments:** The author thanks all dear colleagues and professors who have helped in this research. I feel it necessary to thank my respected to Professor Soodabeh Bassak Nejad for her support and scientific guidance.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares there is no conflict of interest in this article.

**Funding:** This article did not receive financial support

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