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Impact Of Educational Aspiration on the Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

Since educational aspiration can be viewed as an internal motivator that keeps students achieving higher goals, it is the most significant factor influencing academic success. Therefore, the current study aims to examine the relationship between secondary school students' academic success and their educational aspirations, as well as the impact of these aspirations on academic performance while taking into account certain demographic variables that may act as moderators of the relationship. The study's objectives are to determine the degree of achievement in the various aspiration groups, assess the influence of demographic factors, and assess the degree of correlation between academic achievement and educational aspiration. Using a sample of 250 secondary school students chosen by stratified random sampling and intermediaries to gauge academic achievement and educational aspirations, the study employs a descriptive correlational design. Additionally, the results have shown a very strong positive correlation between academic achievement and educational aspirations; students with high aspirations may perform better than average or low aspirators. Furthermore, the study found that parental education and socioeconomic status were the most significant demographic factors, with gender and school type playing a minor role.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Education is still the most important tool for social mobility and economic development since it is the primary driver of both individual and national development. According to the current educational system, one of the most significant factors influencing students' success is their willingness to study, in addition to their intellectual abilities. According to Khattab (2015) and Schoon & Parsons (2002), a student's educational aspirations, or the highest level of education they hope to achieve, can be regarded as a very potent psychological force that not only directs their behavior but also determines how much effort and perseverance they put into their studies.

Standardized tests, exams, and GPA are the most reliable and widely used methods of assessing academic success that take into account the interplay of multiple factors such as intelligence, learning accessibility, quality of instruction, and, finally, student power—motivation. Educational and psychological researchers, as well as policymakers who are concentrating on enhancing educational outcomes and closing the gap, have focused on the relationship between students' academic goals and their actual performance (Marjoribanks, 2003; Sewell et al., 2003).

Secondary education is one of the most significant times in the academic life cycle of a student, where he/she takes the first steps to making decisions about education and career and future opportunities. The students in this developmental stage have various aspirations, which depending on their experiences, skills, family backgrounds, and the opportunities they perceive. The translating of these aspirations into academic success is a very effective way of informing the actions of educators, counsellors, and policymakers in such a way that student potential is at the highest.

The research topic that emerged from this reasoning is the educational aspiration versus academic achievement of secondary school students. The study looks at the direct relationship between the two and the differences in the demographic and contextual factors that either mediate or moderate the association. In carrying out the research this way, not only does the research deepen the understanding of achievement motivation but it also gives the education sector practitioners a research-driven source of recommendations to improve student outcomes, so it is relevant to them.

2. Rationale of The Study:

Educational aspiration serves as a major psychological factor that guides the student's power and devotion to their academic goals. Various studies have established that students with high educational aspiration are more likely to engage in academic activities, use better learning methods, and be less pessimistic about their academic success—if they encounter difficulties (Ali & McWhirter, 2006; Messersmith & Schulenberg, 2008). However, the exact nature and the size of this relationship are still undergoing investigation, particularly with regard to different cultural and socio-economic conditions.

High students have to deal with many issues, such as peer pressure, no help given to them, and other things that take priority, which can make it hard for them to see their future and come up with a plan for their education, which in turn decides their academic level. To come up with the right interventions that will make the students reach their academic potential, it is very important to understand the relationship between aspiration and achievement. Also, by recognizing the demographic factors that play a role in this relationship, the teachers will be able to implement the appropriate methods that will help the different groups with their unique problems.

Primarily, the significance of this research is related to its potential to inform educational practice and also to influence policy. The educational instillation of aspirations will become a priority within the lesson plans and counseling practices of the schools once they have identified the extent to which educational aspiration is a predictor of academic success. Teachers who have a good demographic understanding will be

able to create groups of students with common needs that are particularly relevant to the disadvantaged students thus, allowing them to support the cause of educational equity and social justice by providing targeted interventions.

This investigation is undoubtedly an educational psychologist's dream as it corroborates the selected theories of motivation in an empirical way and perhaps even leads to the discovery of new areas of great concern by unveiling the cultural or contextual subtleties that invariably come into play when a theory of achievement is formulated. In addition, the findings of this study could significantly affect career development theories by providing direct evidence of the involvement of early educational aspirations in the establishment of subsequent patterns of achievement, and career paths.

3. Review of Literature

3.1 Educational Aspiration and Academic Achievement

The relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement has been one of the major themes in education literature over the years and the overwhelming majority of research indicated a positive link. Croll (2008) was able to demonstrate that students with high educational aspirations managed to achieve greater academic success not only in one subject but also in various subjects and during different assessment periods. Additionally, a long-term study conducted by Schoon and Polek (2011) revealed that educational aspirations measured during the early teenage years were a strong indicator of academic success in the years to come even after the adjustments made for prior achievement and intellectual ability.

The study carried out by Khattab (2015) focused on the relationship among various student groups and he concluded that educational aspiration functioned as a powerful motivator which resulted in increased student engagement, better study habits and academic persistence. Students who had clear educational goals exhibited better time management skills, showed more willingness to ask for help with academics, and applied more efficient self-regulated learning techniques. Such behaviour mediators were seen to partially account for the aspiration-achievement link.

Nevertheless, a few researchers noted that the correlation might not be uniformly robust across various surroundings. St-Hilaire (2002) remarked that the power of this relationship is a function of the realism of the aspirations, the availability of resources, and the quality of institutional support, even though educational aspirations usually predict achievement. Students whose aspirations were unrealistically high in comparison to their current performance, sometimes ended up achieving less because of frustration and disengagement.

3.2 Demographic Influences on Educational Aspiration

The issue of gender differences in educational aspiration has varied results from different studies. Some researchers have found that in developed countries, female students' educational aspirations tend to be higher than male students' (Mau & Bikos, 2000; Rojewski, 2005). On the other hand, there are some studies that claim gender differences are not significant and disappear when academic performance and socio-economic status are taken into account (Marjoribanks, 2003).

Parental educational level and socio-economic status have been considered as the primary and most powerful factors in establishing educational aspiration as well as academic success. The phenomenon is that children whose parents are more educated tend to have higher educational aspirations and also good performance in school generally (Davis-Kean, 2005; Sewell & Shah, 1968). The connection operates through several means; the parents' education level provides access to educational resources, academic role models, parental involvement in schooling, and the transmission of educational values.

The school type and quality contribute to the connection between aspiration and achievement. It is generally noticed that students coming from affluent schools or schools with good academic cultures are more likely to have high educational aspirations and, therefore, be performing well academically (Akos et al., 2007). Besides peer interaction, teacher expectations, and the curriculum rigor, and availability of guidance services, the school environment gradually shapes the students' aspirations.

3.3 Theoretical Frameworks

The relationship between aspirations and achievements is analyzed via various theoretical viewpoints. Expectancy-value theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), which is one of the most acknowledged models in educational psychology, proposes that not only do the expectations of people's success determine their performance and choice of activities related to achievement, but the value they place on the available options also plays a major role. Hence, educational aspiration involves both expectancy (considers one's ability as high enough for admission to the university) and value (recognizes the importance of educational achievement).

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) looks at the self-efficacy belief system as the center of aspiration and achievement. Those students who think they can do well academically are likely to propose higher educational goals and to engage more with the challenges that come their way. Thus, educational aspiration is a self-efficacy belief formation, both a product and a predictor.

Status attainment models (Sewell et al., 2003) give social structural factors a prominent role in determining educational aspirations and subsequent attainment. According to these models, aspirations are interlaced with the specific social settings, which are marked by uneven distribution of opportunities, resources, and support systems.

4. Objectives of The Study

1. Determine how much educational aspiration is there among secondary school students.
2. Evaluate how well secondary school students perform academically.
3. Investigate if there exists a connection between educational aspiration and academic achievement.
4. Perform a comparison of academic achievement among the three levels of educational aspiration (high, average, low).
5. Carry out a study on the impact of demographic factors (gender, school type, parental education, socio-economic status) on the relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement.

5. Hypotheses

H_1: A strong positive correlation exists between educational aspiration and academic achievement of secondary school pupils.

H_2: The academic performance of high educational aspiration students is significantly higher than that of students with average or low educational aspiration.

H_3: The gender factor plays a major role in the interaction between educational aspiration and academic achievement.

H_4: Different school types (government vs. private) have a significant impact on the relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement.

H_5: The level of parental education is a variable that affects the extent of the relationship between educational aspirations and academic achievement.

H_6: The socio-economic status factor has a significant impact on the relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement.

6. Methodology

6.1 Research Design

The study that the present researcher involved himself in applied a quantitative data analysis descriptive correlational research design. This design was chosen because the relationships between the variables could be examined without manipulation and thus the study could cover educational aspiration and academic achievement as a naturally occurring phenomenon.

6.2 Population and Sample

The whole school student population (Classes IX and X) was formed by the secondary school students who were attending the schools and living in the defined geographical area. Through using the stratified random sampling method, 250 students were chosen in such a way that there was a proportionate representation of the selected sample in terms of gender, school type, and grade level. The sample was made up of 125 males and 125 females, with equal representation from government (n=125) and private (n=125) schools.

6.3 Tools for Data Collection

1. Level of Educational Aspiration Test: A standardized tool that was created and validated by Khan (2009) was the one employed to measure educational aspiration. The test is made up of multiple questions that evaluate students' educational plans, career expectations, and academic motivation. The scale has robust internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = 0.82) as well as content and construct validity.

2. Measure of Academic Achievement: The academic achievement was determined by the students' cumulative grade point average (CGPA) for the last academic year and was taken from official school records after obtaining the required permissions. The marks of the core subjects (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Languages) were added together to get the total achievement scores.

3. Demographic Information Questionnaire: Through a structured questionnaire, information such as gender, school type, parental education, parental occupation, family income, and other relevant demographic variables was collected.

6.4 Data Collection Procedure

After receiving ethical approval and obtaining the informed consent of the school authorities, parents, and students, the data collection was conducted in two phases. The first phase was the Educational Aspiration Test which was given to students according to standard conditions in the classrooms during regular school hours. The students were given very clear instructions and sufficient time for the test was provided. In the second phase, academic achievement data were obtained from the official records with the help of the school administration. The demographic information was collected at the same time using the structured questionnaire.

6.5 Statistical Analysis

The descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution) were used in data analysis to define the sample and study variables. The Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to analyze the relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement. After the extraction of data, considering the elements of demographic groups like the perception of wearing eyeglasses and obstructed vision by squinting, clearly, gender disparity does pose a greater significant effect on academic superiority. The multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the joint effect of the aspiration and demographic variables on academic achievement. The significance level of 0.05 was set for all analyses.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Distribution of Educational Aspiration Levels

Level of Aspiration	Frequency	Percentage
High (Above 75th percentile)	68	27.2%
Average (25th-75th percentile)	162	64.8%
Low (Below 25th percentile)	20	8.0%
Total	**250**	**100%**

As shown in Table 1, the majority of students in secondary education (64.8%) have an educational aspiration that can be classified as average, which reflects their educational goals as being realistic and moderate. High educational aspiration, which indicates ambitious academic and career goals, is the case for about 27.2% of the population. Those who have low educational aspiration, thus suggesting very limited educational goals and future planning, account for only 8%. The distribution implies that most students have reasonable expectations for education, yet substantial minorities either need help in raising modest aspirations or in the process of setting realistic goals.

Table 2: the academic achievement of the students aspiring at various levels.

Aspiration Level	N	Mean CGPA	SD
High	68	8.42	0.82
Average	162	7.15	1.15
Low	20	5.68	1.34

ANOVA Results: $F(2, 247) = 78.45$, $p < 0.001$

The information that is shown in Table 2 makes it very apparent that there is a wide gap in academic achievement according to the levels of aspiration. The students who had the highest educational aspiration were the ones that got the mean CGPA of 8.42, which was a lot higher than the ones with average aspiration ($M = 7.15$) and even lower aspirants ($M = 5.68$). The results of ANOVA support this conclusion as the estimated difference has a very high value ($F = 78.45$, $p < 0.001$), which indicates that the hypothesis of educational aspiration having a strong influence on academic achievement is true.

The implications of these findings are that educational aspiration is a very strong motivator and a path to success in academics through students' increased effort, persistence, and the use of correct learning strategies.

Table 3: Educational Aspiration and Durative Academic Growth

Variables	1	2
1. Educational Aspiration	-	
2. Academic Achievement	0.67**	-

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis between educational aspiration and academic achievement.

A Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.67 ($p < 0.01$) points out a very strong positive relationship between the two variables. This high correlation further implies that educational aspiration accounts for almost 45% of the variance in academic achievement, thereby supporting hypothesis H_1.

The very high correlation coefficient stresses the importance of educational aspiration as a factor in the academic success of students. Ambitious and aspirational students' educational goals involve raising their academic performance, probably through the facilitation of motivation, using the right study techniques, participating more in the academic activities, and behaving effectively towards reaching their goals.

Table 4: Comparison by Gender

Gender	N	Educational Aspiration		Academic Achievement	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Male	125	21.34	3.45	7.28	1.38
Female	125	21.82	3.28	7.45	1.29

t-test Results:

• Educational Aspiration: t (248) = 1.12, p = 0.26

• Academic Achievement: t (248) = 1.01, p = 0.31

Table 4 presents a comparison between male and female students in terms of educational aspirations and academic performance. The results of the analysis indicate that there are no significant differences in educational aspirations (t = 1.12, p = 0.26) and academic performance (t = 1.01, p = 0.31) between the two genders. Male and female students are found to have the same level of educational aspirations and to obtain the same academic results.

The results imply the status quo in the educational sector whereby the gender does not matter when it comes to educational aspirations or academic achievements. The equality could be attributed to ongoing educational reforms, gender-neutral access to learning resources and facilities, and the society's changing view on gender roles in education. Nevertheless, the correlation between aspiration and achievement (analyzed by gender) revealed the same-to-similar pattern for both (males: r = 0.65; females: r = 0.69), which means that aspiration is a predictor of achievement no matter the gender.

Table 5: Comparison of Different Schools Types

School Type	N	Educational Aspiration		Academic Achievement	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Government	125	20.85	3.52	6.94	1.42
Private	125	22.31	3.11	7.79	1.18

t-test Results:

• Educational Aspiration: t(248) = 3.45, p < 0.01

• Academic Achievement: t(248) = 5.12, p < 0.001

In Table 5, a just a position of the two student groups, namely government and private school students, was made. The students in private schools are reported to have much greater educational aspiration (M = 22.31) than those of the government group (M = 20.85), t(248) = 3.45, p < 0.01. The same pattern can be observed in the case of academic performance, with private school students recording significantly higher marks (M = 7.79) compared to their government school peers (M = 6.94), t(248) = 5.12, p < 0.001.

There may be several factors behind these differentials such as the availability of resources, quality of teaching, the influence of peers, teachers' expectations, and family background. The infrastructure at private schools is better, teachers are more experienced, they have smaller classes, and comprehensive support services are provided, which all contribute to the aspirations and achievements that are higher. Moreover, families who take their children to private schools usually have higher socio-economic status and educational backgrounds, thus providing home environments that are more conducive to academic success.

Table 6: Influence of Parental Education

Parental Education	N	Educational Aspiration		Academic Achievement	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Below High School	72	19.42	3.65	6.38	1.52
High School	98	21.15	3.18	7.22	1.28
Graduate & above	80	23.54	2.74	8.26	0.95

ANOVA Results:

• Educational Aspiration: $F(2, 247) = 32.18$, $p < 0.001$

• Academic Achievement: $F(2, 247) = 45.67$, $p < 0.001$

The impact of parental education level on children's educational aspirations and academic performance is discussed in Table 6. The significance of the difference in both variables with respect to parental education categories is very pronounced ($p < 0.001$). The children of highly educated parents ($M = 23.54$) and the children of parents with lower educational level ($M = 8.26$) are much higher in educational aspiration and academic achievement respectively.

The post-hoc comparisons showed that all of the comparisons made between pairs were significant, hence the existence of a clear gradient effect where higher parental education leads to higher student aspiration and achievement. This pattern corresponds to the educational transfer process in which highly educated parents not only provide their kids with the necessary financial support but also with the cultural capital, educational values, academic help, and examples of good practice, which are necessary for the kids to succeed in their education.

Table 7: Socio-Economic Status Analysis

SES Category	N	Educational Aspiration		Academic Achievement	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Low	65	19.08	3.82	6.15	1.58
Middle	135	21.45	3.15	7.38	1.21
High	50	24.12	2.56	8.64	0.88

ANOVA Results

• Educational Aspiration: $F(2, 247) = 38.94$, $p < 0.001$

• Academic Achievement: $F(2, 247) = 52.31$, $p < 0.001$

Table 7 reveals that socio-economic status is a decisive factor in educational aspiration and academic achievement. The students of the high SES group show the maximum educational aspirations ($M = 24.12$) and the highest academic grades ($M = 8.64$), whereas the low SES group is at the bottom in both educational aspiration and academic achievement.

The findings highlight the grip of economic resources on educational outcomes. The families with high SES can offer proper nutrition, healthcare, educational materials, tutoring, and even stress-free learning environments that will not only be conducive to the development of aspirations but also to academic success. By comparison, the students from low SES backgrounds might have to endure the most severe consequences of the lack of resources, family obligations that are more pressing than school, little or no help from their parents, and mental pressure that might hold back both their dreams and real success.

Table 8: Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Educational Aspiration	0.241	0.028	0.512	8.607	< 0.001
Gender	0.086	0.142	0.033	0.606	0.545
School Type	0.462	0.156	0.178	2.962	0.003
Parental Education	0.318	0.089	0.219	3.573	< 0.001
Socio-Economic Status	0.395	0.102	0.245	3.873	< 0.001

Model Summary: $F(5, 244) = 80.63$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.623$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.615$

The results of a multiple regression analysis using educational aspiration and demographic variables as predictors of academic achievement are shown in Table 8. The model's strong ability to predict academic achievement is evident from its ability to account for 62.3% of the variance in academic achievement ($R^2 = 0.623$). Even when demographic factors are taken into account, educational aspiration is found to be the most significant individual predictor ($\beta = 0.512$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the idea that it is a significant factor in determining academic success. Other significant factors that reflect the impact of cultural capital and family resources are parental education ($\beta = 0.219$, $p < 0.001$) and socioeconomic status ($\beta = 0.245$, $p < 0.001$).

Type of school has a moderate impact ($\beta = 0.178$, $p = 0.003$); however, gender does not significantly contribute to the prediction of achievement in this context ($\beta = 0.033$, $p = 0.545$).

It appears from these results that the structural and demographic variables are still relevant, but educational aspiration turns out to be a psychological variable that is amenable to change and has a major impact on academic achievement alongside the traits of the students' backgrounds. This opens the door to the possibility of having interventions focused on the lifting of aspirations to result in better academic performance.

8. Major Findings

1. Strong Positive Relationship: The relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement is very strong and positive ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$), which means that the higher the aspirations the better the academic performance.
2. Aspiration Level Differences: High school students ($M = 8.42$) significantly outperform their peers with average ($M = 7.15$) and low aspirations ($M = 5.68$), and the all differences are very significant ($p < 0.001$).

3. Gender Equality: There marked no big differences between students of both genders concerning either academic aspiration or performance, which points to the provision of equal educational chances for both sexes in this study's context.
4. School Type Effects: Private school students exhibit a significantly higher level of educational aspiration and academic achievement than their counterparts in government schools, which is likely related to the disparities in resources and the quality of teaching.
5. Parental Education Gradient: A definite positive slope can be detected in the case where the parents' education levels are higher, the students' aspiration and achievement are also higher, thereby displaying the educational transfer between generations.
6. Socio-Economic Impact: Socio-economic status is a pivotal determinant in the maximum educational aspiration and academic achievement, with students from high SES considerably outperforming those from low SES.
7. Predictive Model: The strongest predictor of academic success is still educational aspiration ($\beta = 0.512$) even when demographic factors are taken into account, and it explains 62.3% of the variance in academic performance.
8. Modifiable Factor: Unlike demographic traits, which cannot be changed, educational aspiration is a psychological factor that can be altered and consequently, academic performance can be raised through interventions.

9. Implications and Recommendations

For Educators

1. Aspiration-Building Programs: Education system should intervene with students in a systematic way and throughout the school years to make them aware of higher education, career paths, and the successful people that they are so that students' aspirations will be more than just their dreams.
2. Differentiated Support: Teachers should spot the students with the lowest educational aspirations at the start of the school year and provide them with the necessary individual counseling, mentoring, and support to uplift their hopes for education.
3. Inclusive Practices: Due to the high correlation between aspiration and achievement, the teachers must arrange their classrooms in such a way that the different aspiration levels of the students would be recognized and tolerated, while at the same time all would be encouraged to strive for the top of their potential.
4. Goal-Setting Instruction: The overt instruction in goal-setting, planning, and self-monitoring can then be followed by the students being provided with the concrete behaviors and strategies that symbolize the academic meanings of their aspirations.

For School Administrators

1. Aspiration-Building Programs: Education system should intervene with students in a systematic way and throughout the school years to make them aware of higher education, career paths, and the successful people that they are so that students' aspirations will be more than just their dreams.
2. Differentiated Support: Teachers should spot the students with the lowest educational aspirations at the start of the school year and provide them with the necessary individual counseling, mentoring, and support to uplift their hopes for education.
3. Inclusive Practices: Due to the high correlation between aspiration and achievement, the teachers must arrange their classrooms in such a way that the different aspiration levels of the students would be recognized and tolerated, while at the same time all would be encouraged to strive for the top of their potential.
4. Peer Mentoring: Implement peer mentoring framework in which students with high performance and great educational ambitions are the ones who help and motivate their colleagues who have low ambitions or are not doing well academically.

For Policymakers

1. Equity Focus: Provide solutions that target inequalities in income and education affecting the nurturing of aspirations, which can include scholarships, extra support programs and outreach to the community.
2. Teacher Professional Development: Pour money into teacher education for training on students' motivation, aspiration-building, and culturally-sensitive methods that acknowledge different backgrounds of the students while raising the expectations.
3. Early Intervention: Let the early intervention programs for primary and elementary school students be the means through which strong educational aspirations are created before secondary school.
4. Community Partnerships: Create collaborations between schools, higher education, businesses, and community organizations, which will provide experiences for the kids to build their aspirations, such as visiting campuses, doing internships, and exploring careers.

10. Limitations and Future Research

Limitations

1. Cross-Sectional Design: The correlational design creates connections but cannot prove causality. It is possible that aspiration indeed affects achievement, but through the experience of success, high achievement might also promote aspiration.
2. Geographic Limitation: The research was carried out in one specific region which might lead to the conclusion that results cannot be applied to other areas with differing cultural, economic or educational conditions.
3. Single Achievement Measure: The evaluation of academic achievement through CGPA is a limited approach as it fails to consider other aspects of academic skills such as creativity, critical thinking, or practical skills.

4. Self-Report Bias: The Educational Aspiration Test is based on self-reported aspirations which could be influenced by the need to conform to a certain image or lack of insight into one's own self.
5. Mediating Mechanisms: On the one hand, the studies confirm the relationship between aspiration and attainment, while on the other hand, they remain silent on the mediators—study habits, self-efficacy or academic engagement— which definitely elucidate the connection.

Future Research Directions

1. Longitudinal Studies: It would be suggested that a series of longitudinal investigations spread over multiple years and concerning the same group of students should be carried out in order to establish and demonstrate the temporal relationship and the co-evolution of aspirations and achievement.
2. Mediating Variables: The aspiration's path to achievement should be recognized; therefore, the studies should identify and consider the psychological and behavioral mediators (motivation, self-efficacy, study strategies, persistence).
3. Intervention Research: Researchers should plan intervention programs that will aim at increasing educational aspirations and then evaluate their impact on academic achievement.
4. Qualitative Exploration: Qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups should be employed to get a deep understanding of how students create aspirations, the obstacles they meet, and the support systems that allow them to match aspiration with achievement.
5. Cross-Cultural Studies: The research should be repeated in different cultural and national contexts to examine the universality against the context-specificity of the aspiration-achievement relationships.
6. Broader Outcomes: The study should be extended to include non-academic outcomes such as persistence, graduation rates, higher education enrollment, and career attainment, to evaluate the long-term impact of educational aspiration.

11. Conclusion

The current study provides undeniable evidence about the important function of educational aspiration in the academic success of secondary school students. The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.67$) and the considerable variance accounted for (62.3%) demonstrate that educational aspiration is a very powerful psychological force that shapes academic results. The students with the highest educational aspirations can achieve the best academic results, even when all the demographic factors such as gender, school type, parental education, and socio-economic status are taken into consideration.

The findings of the research imply that even though demographic traits have an important effect on both the levels of academic aspiration and achievement, at the same time educational aspiration is the most powerful individual predictor of academic performance. This is especially encouraging from the intervention perspective since aspirations are flexible psychological constructs that can be changed through educational and counseling efforts, unlike relatively unchangeable demographic characteristics.

On the other hand, the study does not overlook the educational inequalities that are due to the school type, the level of parents' education, and the social and financial conditions. The children of rich families are

the ones who are more likely to have higher expectations and better academic results and this shows that the disadvantaged students' hopes and capabilities are restricted by the structural barriers and non-uniform distribution of resources. These inequalities should be tackled with a variety of policy measures that will consist of resource reallocation, establishing support programs for the needy, and education reforms that are ensuring all students by their background will be granted the right to set and work on high educational ambitions.

Theory comes into practice: educators, counsellors, administrators, and policymakers shall make aspiration-building the core aspect of educational practice. Schools should launch systematic programs that help students visualize their educational futures as ambitious yet realistic, understand the paths to achieving them, and gain the knowledge, skills, and perseverance necessary for success. Such efforts should primarily focus on the students from disadvantaged backgrounds as they are the ones who encounter the biggest obstacles in forming their aspirations.

Ultimately, this investigation backs up the assertion that education involves imparting knowledge but also winning over, inspiring, and trusting the student's ability. If the educational systems are to students' full potential and thus, through personal gratification, lead to social progress, they must combine the teaching of academic skills with the nurturing of educational aspirations. Future research should focus on aspiration-achievement link and it should be done through longitudinal designs, intervention studies and investigations of mediating mechanisms in order to refine our understanding and further optimize educational practices.

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