

Effect of occupational aspiration level on academic achievement of adolescents

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Abstract

The present study entitled “Effect of Occupational Aspiration Level on Academic Achievement of adolescents” aimed to assess the relationship between occupational aspirations levels and academic performance of adolescents with the following objectives 1) To assess the level of occupational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls across three socio economic groups. 2) To determine the level of academic achievement of adolescent girls and boys across three socio economic groups. 3) To find the gender disparities in the levels of aspirations and academic achievement of adolescent girls and boys across three socio economic groups. 4) To find out the effect of occupational aspirations on academic achievement of adolescents across three socio economic groups. Adolescence is a critical time for forming aspirations for future, especially with regard to career aspirations. School performance is a key mechanism through which adolescents learn about their talents, abilities and competencies, which are an important part of developing career aspiration in fact, school performance and career aspirations in adolescence, are often correlated. Although research have been conducted in the related area but still a lot of scope in the area for the research is as level of aspiration can influences academic achievement during adolescence. Allahabad was purposely selected for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select 150 adolescents aged between 15-18 years, out of which 75 boys and 75 girls were selected. The boys and girls were further be divided into three groups based on their socio economic groups. 25 adolescents each from the upper, middle and lower socio economic groups from both the genders were selected from various schools of the Allahabad city viz- Arya kanya Inter College, Jagat Taran Inter College, Government Inter College, Allahabad Agriculture Inter College. Socio Economic Status Scale – by Kuppaswami (1962) and Occupational Aspiration Level Scale – by Grewal (1975) are used in a present study. The results revealed that occupational aspiration of adolescents is mostly of higher level across three socio economic groups. The academic performances of adolescents range from good to fair across three socio economic groups. There were no gender disparities in occupational levels and academic performance of adolescents across three socio economic groups. There is a significant ($P \leq 0.05$) relationship between occupational aspiration levels and academic performances of adolescents across three socio economic groups.

Keywords: adolescents, aspiration, academic achievement, gender, socio economic group

Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and human that generally occurs from puberty to legal adulthood. The period of adolescence is most closely associated with the teenage years, though its physical, psychological and cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later.

Aspirations have been defined as the educational and vocational dreams that students have for the future. Aspiration means ‘to wish or ‘to desire’. The word aspiration refers to ambition or desire which has yet not been full filled. Aspiration is the driving force in the personalities. The aspirations are more important than the abilities with which one is born or acquires through environment and education. During adolescence, individuals begin to plan for their future career by considering a number of occupational choices. Counselors, parents, and educators may be better able to assist adolescents in their exploration of occupational options, help them seek career-related information, and obtain support for their career plans by developing a greater understanding of adolescent’s occupational aspirations.

Occupational aspirations are “expressed career-related goals or choices” that provide important motivational momentum for career-related behaviors and future educational and career success. Aspirations can have lifelong consequences as they

are associated with significant later outcomes, such as where one works and lives, and the standard of living one attains.

Gender also has been identified as a key factor in occupational aspiration-expectation discrepancy. Female adolescents evidence less gender traditional occupations in their aspirations than in their expectations. The discrepancy between occupational aspirations and expectations is also evident in the status level of the occupations. Differences between occupational aspirations and expectations have not been limited to females with both male and female adolescents expecting lower status occupations than the managerial and professional occupations. However some research indicates a lack of gender differences, with male and female Canadian and American adolescents equally likely to have discrepant aspirations and expectations.

Family socioeconomic status may also affect parent’s perceived efficacy and academic aspirations, which then may affect their children’s engagement in occupational activities. Adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may not have access to career resources and may not efficiently utilize available resources as those from a higher socioeconomic background. As a result, students may have the ability to achieve their career aspirations, but may not aspire to high expectations because they may not have the perceived efficacy

nor may they have the adequate resources to achieve them.

Objectives

The study has been planned with the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of occupational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls across three socio economic groups.
2. To determine the level of academic achievement of adolescent girls and boys across three socio economic groups.
3. To find the gender disparities in the levels of aspirations and academic achievement of adolescent girls and boys across three socio economic groups.
4. To find out the effect of occupational aspirations on academic achievement of adolescents across three socio economic groups.

Material and Methods

Exploratory research design with survey method was adopted to meet the objectives of the study. The study was conducted in Allahabad city. A stratified random technique was adopted for the selection of the sample. A total of 150 adolescents spanning between the age group of 15 to 18 years comprising of 75 boys and 75 girls (25 each from lower, middle and upper socio economic groups) were selected from the various schools of Allahabad city. The sample was taken from various schools of the Allahabad city viz- Arya Kanya Inter College, Jagat Taran Inter college, Government Inter College, Allahabad Agriculture Inter College. Adolescents between the age group of 15 to 18 years studying in classes 9th to 12th formed the sample for the present study. The below mentioned set of independent and dependent variables were selected for the present study. Independent variables are Gender (Boys and Girls) and Socio Economic Status (Lower Socio economic group, Middle Socio economic group, Upper Socio economic group) and occupational aspirations. Dependent variable is academic performance. The Socio Economic Status (SES) of the sample was ascertained using the revised version (2012) of Kuppuswamy (1962) [8]. The maximum possible score on the scale is 29, with the minimum of 3. On the basis of scores obtained the subjects were categorized in three subgroups i.e., Lower, Middle and Upper Socio Economic Status. Reliability was found that when all the three variables (occupation, education and income) are used the multiple bursarial is 0.885 while it is 0.733 when income is eliminated. 0.742 when education is eliminated and 0.667 when occupation is eliminated. The partial correlations substantiated and above conclusion ($r_{1,23}=0.534$, $r_{2,13}=4.78$ and $r_{3,21}=4.88$). Adopted by Grewal in 1975 [5] where Level of occupational aspiration (LOA) has been defined as orientation towards occupational goal (Haller and Miller, 1963). The level of occupational aspiration is considered as a concept which is logically a special instance of the concept level of aspiration. Its special nature consists only in the continuum of difficulty this continuum of difficulty is the occupational hierarchy. The maximum score is above 49 and minimum score is 24. On the

basis of scores obtained the subjects were categorized in three levels i.e. lower, middle, high. Co efficient of stability as determined by the test-retest method was found to be 0.84. The test was further divided into the following two parallel halves for assessing the internal consistency: the coefficient of internal consistency between the above two halves, A and B, were found to be 0.54. Academic Performance of the students was ascertained using the cumulative academic performance records of the past three years. The criteria for categorization of the academic performance followed in the present study were: -excellent (above 80%), good(60-79%), fair(41-59%), poor(below 40). The data collected was then analyzed to draw appropriate inferences by application of suitable statistical techniques. The statistical methods used were Arithmetic mean and standard deviation, t-test, co-efficient correlation.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage distribution of boys based on their level of occupational aspiration across three Socio economic groups.

Socio economic status	Occupational aspiration Levels					
	High		Moderate		Low	
	F	P	F	P	F	P
Lower socio –economic status n=25	19	76	6	24	0	0
Middle socio-economic status n=25	18	72	7	28	0	0
Upper socio – economic status n=25	14	56	11	44	0	0

Where, F = Frequency
P= percentage

The above table 1 indicates the frequency and percentage distribution of adolescent boys based on the levels of their occupational aspirations. It is clear from the table that majority respondents i.e. 76 percent, 72 percent and 56 percent (belonging to lower, middle and upper socio economic status respectively) had high level of occupational aspirations, followed by moderate level of occupational aspiration in 6, 7 and 11 percent boys respectively from the lower middle and upper socio economic group, Whereas no adolescent boys were found with low level of aspiration for occupation in them in any of the socio economic group.

Therefore the results reveal that majority boys have occupational aspiration ranging from higher to moderate level in them irrespective of their socio economic backgrounds. The findings could be attributed to the boy’s greater awareness of jobs and industry and they are quite interested in work tasks and work conditions. In the present times parents are also influencing their child’s occupational interest and help their children aspire higher occupations

These results are supported by the findings of Looker and Nutt (1989) [9]. Who reported that male adolescents have been found to aspire high positions.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage distribution of girls based on their level of occupational aspiration across three Socio economic groups

Socio Economic Status	Occupational aspiration levels					
	High		Moderate		Low	
	F	P	F	P	F	P
Lower Socio Economic Status (n=25)	21	84	4	16	0	0
Middle Socio Economic Status (n=25)	19	76	6	24	0	0
Upper Socio Economic Status (n=25)	17	68	8	32	0	0

Where, F = Frequency
P = Percentage

The above table 2 indicates the frequency and percentage distribution of adolescent girls based on their occupational aspiration levels across three socio economic groups. It is clear from the table that majority of the respondents i.e. 84 percent, 76 percent, and 68 percent (belonging to lower, middle and upper socio economic groups, respectively) had high level of occupational aspiration, followed by adolescent girls with moderate aspiration levels in 16 percent, 24 percent and 32 percent girls respectively from lower, middle and upper socio economic groups. Like boys no girls were found with low level of occupational aspiration in them. Overall observation reveals that girls irrespective of their socio

economic background have either high or moderate aspirations for occupation.

Reason for such a findings related to their occupational aspiration could be same as boys that instilling occupational aspiration has become a part of socialization in today’s world. Adolescents now a day are quite aware of occupations and their associated social and economical outcomes also. Therefore, generally all adolescents irrespective of social and economical bearings they are aspiring high in occupations. Gottfredson (2002) [6] Presented a developmental theory of occupational aspiration by providing definitions of key constructs, by reviewing evidence, showing that all social groups share the same images of occupations and by formulating a hypothetical cognitive map of occupations that summarizes those images and the dimensions of people’s occupational preferences. He also described the progressive and usually permanent circumscription of occupational preferences according to one’s developing self- concept and people’s perception of their opportunities for implementing their choices.

The results are also supported by the findings of Fox and Zimmerman (1985) [4]. Reported that adolescent girls show a great interested in professional and scientific careers, which are regarded as prestigious, whereas average achieving girls demonstrate more gender stereotypical attitudes towards education and career achievement.

Table 3: Comparative analysis of the aspiration level of boys and girls across three Socio economic groups

Socio Economic Status	Boys (N =75)		Girls (N=75)		t cal	t tab at 0.05%
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.		
Lower Socio Economic Status(n=25)	49.32	6.53	49.32	6.53	0.00 NS	2.01
Middle Socio Economic Status (n=25)	50.80	7.64	51.72	5.02	0.50 NS	
Upper Socio Economic Status (n=25)	52.92	9.19	56.12	7.04	1.38NS	

P ≤ 0.05

Where M = Mean
S.D. = Standard Deviation
NS = Non – Significant

Table 3 shows the mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ values of occupational aspiration levels of boys and girls across three socio economic groups. Data in the table reveal that adolescent girls have slightly higher levels of occupational aspiration in them in comparison to the adolescent boys in all the three socio economic groups, but the difference in aspiration levels of boys and girls is non-significant.

Observation of the mean values reflect that in the upper socio economic group the mean values of aspiration levels of adolescent boys is 52.92 and adolescent girls is 56.12 and ‘t’ calculated is 1.38 which is lesser than the ‘t’ tabulated at 5 percent probability level therefore the difference found between the occupational aspiration levels of adolescents was non-significant.

In the middle socio economic group, aspiration levels of adolescents reveal that the occupational aspiration level mean value of adolescent boy was 50.8 and of adolescent girls was which is marginally higher than the boys but the ‘t’ calculated was only 0.507 which was lesser than the ‘t’ tabulated (2.01) at 5 percent probability therefore the difference in the aspiration

levels of adolescents of both genders was non-significant.

In the lower socio economic group the aspiration levels of adolescent girls and boys were found equal which is 49.32. So calculated value of ‘t’ here was 0.00 which was lesser than the value of ‘t’ tabulated (2.01) at 5 percent probability therefore the difference in the aspiration levels of both girls and boys was non-significant.

Results in the above table convey that irrespective of gender and socio economics status, today adolescents occupationally aspire high because youth nowadays have become aware of available career choices, the processes to attain them and also the benefits in adopting professions associated with high socio economic status.

The result is supported by the finding of Bregman and Killen, (1999) [3] who found that boys and girls share the process of coordinating their self-beliefs, values and career aspiration. Indeed, researchers have found that both boys and girls use thought about future occupation to refine their developing socio-economic status, thereby using the career domain as one important domain to test salient personal traits in same boys.

Table 4: Distribution of boys based on their academic performances across three Socio Economic Groups

Socio Economic Status	Academic Performance							
	Poor		Fair		Good		Excellent	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Lower Socio Economic Status (n =25)	0	0	8	32	17	68	0	0
Middle Socio Economic Status (n =25)	0	0	8	32	16	64	1	1
Upper Socio Economic Status (n =25)	0	0	9	36	16	64	0	0

Where, F = Frequency
P = Percentage

The above table 4 indicates the frequency and percentage distribution of adolescent boys based on their academic performances across three socio economic groups. It is clear from table that majority of the respondents i.e. 68 percent, from the lower socio economic status and 64 percent each from the middle and upper socio- economic status respectively had good academic performance, followed by 32 percent, each from the lower and middle and 36 percent from the upper socio- economic groups as fair academic performers. The table also indicate only 1 percent respondents middle socio economic group had excellent academic performance whereas none of the respondents fall in the category of poor academic performance.

Results in the above table could be attributed to the awareness among youth that high academic achievements lead to higher professional openings that is why youth is paying a lot of

attention to their academic achievements except the lower socio economic group probably because they lack across to the resources required for high academic attainments.

The result is also supported by the finding of Bandura *et al.* (2001) [2] family socioeconomic status may also affect parent’s perceived efficacy and academic aspiration, which then may affect their children’s engagement in academic activities. Adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may not have access to educational resources and may not efficiently utilize available resources as those from a higher socioeconomic background. As a result, students may have the ability to achieve their educational aspirations, but may not aspire to high expectations because they may not have the perceived efficacy nor may they have the adequate resources to achieve them.

Table 5: Distribution of girls based on their academic performance across three Socio Economic Groups

Socio Economic Status	Academic Performance							
	Poor		Fair		Good		Excellent	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Lower Socio Economic Status (n=25)	0	0	9	36	16	64	0	0
Middle Socio Economic Status (n =25)	0	0	5	20	19	76	1	1
Upper Socio Economic Status (n =25)	0	0	7	28	18	72	0	0

Where, F = Frequency
P = Percentage

The above table 5 indicates the frequency and percentage distribution of adolescent girls based on their academic performance across three socio economic groups. It is clear from the table that majority of the respondent i.e. 76 percent, 72 percent and 64 percent belongings to the lower, middle and upper socio- economic status respectively had good academic performance, 36 percent, 28 percent and 20 percent of the respondent’s belongings to lower, middle and upper socio- economic groups respectively had fair academic performance. Only one percent respondents belonging to the middle socio economic groups were found with excellent academic performance records. Whereas no respondents were found in the category of poor performance across groups. Distribution in the table makes it clear that irrespective of the socio economic background girls are also very concienctions about their academics that is why the majority were found

performing either average or good.

Results in the above table could be attributed to the awareness among girls that high academic achievements lead to higher professional openings that is why girls is paying a lot of attention to their academic achievements except the lower socio economic group probably because they lack access to the resources required for high academic attainments.

The results in the table is also supported by the finding of Suneetha (2001) [15] who found the impact of age and gender differences as factors affecting academic achievement and revealed that gender was not as important variable as the intelligence quotient in deciding high academic performance, though girls were among top ranking students; girls were better in interaction and concentration while boys were better than girls in language, reasoning and drilling dimensions.

Table 6: Comparative analysis of academic achievement among boys and girls across three Socio Economic Groups

Socio Economic Status	Boys (N=75)		Girls (N=75)		t cal	t tab at 0.05%
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Lower Socio Economic Status (n=25)	65.17	7.99	64.84	7.87	0.14	2.011
Middle Socio Economic Status (n=25)	64.71	10.81	67.7	8.03	1.11	
Upper Socio Economic Status (n =25)	65.54	9.86	61.6	7.17	1.61	

S.D. = Standard Deviation
P<0.05

Table 6 indicates the comparative mean, standard deviation and 't' values of academic performances of boys and girls belonging to three socio economic groups. The table reveals that the academic performance of boys belonging to lower socio economic group is higher i.e. 65.17 as compared to girls i.e. 64.84. The table further shows the t – value of academic performance between boys and girls of lower socio economic status. The calculated value of 't' is found to be 0.14 which is less than the tabulated value of 't' i.e. 2.011 of 5 percent probability level indicating a non-significant difference in the academic performance of boys and girls.

The table also reveals that the academic performance of the boys and girls belonging to upper socio economic status wherein the academic performance of the boys is more i.e. 65.54 as compared to that of girls which is found to be 61.6. The table further shows the t- value of academic performance between boys and girls of upper socio economic status. The table shows that the calculated value of 't' is to be 1.61 which is less than the tabulated value of 't' i.e. 2.011 of 5 percent probability level indicating a non –significant difference in the academic performance of boys and girls.

The table reveals that the academic performance of the boys and girls belonging to middle socio economic status wherein the academic performance of the girls is more i.e.67.7 as compared to that of boys which is found to be 64.71. The table further shows the t- value of academic performance between boys and girls of middle socio economic status. The table shows that the calculated value of 't' is to be 1.11 which is less than the tabulated value of 't' i.e. 2.011 of 5 percent probability level indicating a non –significant difference in the academic performance of boys and girls.

The above results reveal that both genders are equally proficient in their academic attainments because both genders are professionally oriented and are promoted by the families also for similar aspirations and achievements.

The results are supported by the finding of Jacobs *et al.* (2002) [7] who stated that self- concept of ability and task value is important for both genders between first and twelfth grades with no real difference between girls and boys trajectories over time in respect to academic achievement.

The result are supported by the finding of Pandey (2008) [10] studied significance of difference between male and female adolescents on academic performance, achievement motivation, intelligence and socio economic status and found that there was no significant difference between male and female adolescents on the measure of academic performance.

Table 7: Correlation matrix for occupational aspiration levels and academic achievement of boys

Variables	Occupational aspiration levels	Academic Achievement
Occupational aspiration Levels	1.00	0.48*
Academic Performance	0.48*	1.00

Table 7 shows the correlation matrix for occupational aspiration levels and academic achievement of boys. The table shows a significant positive correlation between occupational aspiration levels and academic performance as the correlation value is found to be 0.48 which indicates that as the occupational aspiration levels affect the academic performances of the adolescent boys.

The result is also supported by the findings of Uniyal (2007) [16] who reported in hisco relational study conducted on level of aspiration and scholastic achievement of adolescents and found that there exists a very high significant difference in between the high and low achiever students in overall aspiration scale; gender and achievement of students do have interactive effects on level of aspiration; level of aspiration was significantly influenced by scholastic achievement of students.

The result is also supported by the findings of Parsons *et al.* (2002) [11] found that adolescents occupational aspirations and expectations are significant determinants of both short-term educational and long-term career choices and as a reflection of adolescents' future social mobility and career self-concept.

Table 8: Correlation matrix for occupational aspiration level and academic achievement for girls

Variables	Occupational aspiration Levels	Academic achievement
Occupational aspiration levels	1.00	0.54*
Academic Achievement	0.54*	1.00

The table 8 shows the correlation matrix for occupational aspiration levels and academic achievement of girls. The table shows a significant positive correlation between occupational aspiration levels and academic performance as the correlation value is found to be 0.54 which indicates that as the occupational aspiration levels affect the academic performances of the adolescent girls.

The result is supported by the finding of Prashad (2007) [12] in his co relational study between level of aspiration and school achievement and found that gender and achievement of students did not have interactive effects on level of aspiration; the high achievers students had higher aspiration level in comparison to low achievers students.

The result is also supported by the findings of Uniyal (2007) [16] who reported in his co relational study conducted on level of aspiration and scholastic achievement of adolescents and found that there exists a very high significant difference in between the high and low achiever students in overall aspiration scale; gender and achievement of students do have interactive effects on level of aspiration; level of aspiration was significantly influenced by scholastic achievement of students.

Conclusion

It is concluded that, occupational aspirations of adolescents is mostly of higher level across three socio economic groups. The academic performances of adolescents range between good to fair across three socio economic groups. There are no gender disparities in occupational aspiration levels and academic performance of adolescent across three socio economic groups. There is a significant relationship between occupational aspirations levels of adolescents and their academic performances higher the occupational aspirations of an adolescent higher will be his/her academic achievements.

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