
Academic Aspirations among Adolescents for Higher Education: Family Correlates

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Abstract

Educational aspirations are pre-requisite for higher education and family is one of the significant factors that fundamentally affect the educational development of an individual. The study was conducted at University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad to know the influence of familial factors i.e., family type, socioeconomic-status and home environment on academic aspirations of 180 adolescents equally drawn from urban and rural areas of Dharwad and Hajo taluks of Dharwad district of Karnataka and Kamrup district of Assam. Tools used for the study were- Mazumdar's Academic Aspiration Inventory (2004), Agarwal's Socio-Economic Status Scale (2005) and Akhtar and Saxena's Home Environment Scale (2013). Results revealed that there were significant positive correlations of SES and home environment with academic aspirations in both the regions. Regression analysis showed significant combined effect of the familial factors. Adolescence has its own set of developmental milestones like more concern towards future education and career plan that must be reached in a timely manner for which they should be provided with a good family environment.

Keywords:

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Adolescents
Family type
Socio-economic status
Home environment

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1. Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in all of our lives and paves the way for all of us to reach our highest potential. Education is the medium that gives us the skills, techniques, information and knowledge to know, understand and respect the duties we have towards our society, families and the nation. For a student to pursue his/her education, having aspirations is a basic requirement. Educational aspiration according to Kumar and Praveena (2022) is how realistically an individual sets

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educational goals in respect to his or her physical and mental characteristics, as well as the environment.

The aspiration to go to university is a critical prerequisite to higher education participation. Unless an individual has some interest in university study, they are unlikely to apply for or accept a place in higher education. Where higher educational aspirations are strong, and their families may be willing to make significant sacrifices to make dreams of attending university a reality; while for students with weaker aspirations, barriers to higher education participation are likely to have a more decisive influence. Higher the level of education one achieves, higher is the opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing individuals. In this context, the government of India under the National Educational Policy, 2020 aimed to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio in higher education to 50 per cent by 2035.

Family members are regarded as the child's first teachers and the family as the child's first school. The fundamental concepts and ideals are first introduced in the family. The youngster also forms a variety of perspectives toward himself, and his relationships with family members influence his later life changes. Adolescents' aspirations for their education are one such area where family matters a lot. Familial factors such as family type-nuclear, joint or extended, socio-economic status and home environment as a whole affect the adolescent's goals and attitudes towards life. Home environment comprises of the nature of the family, the head of the family's authority, the educational level of the parents, the attitude of the parents toward their children, and the family's financial situation (Codjoe, 2007 and Muola, 2010). Therefore, the study aimed to assess the educational aspirations of adolescents with respect to their familial factors- family type, socio-economic status and home environment.

2. Research Method

Descriptive survey design and correlational design were used to study the influence of familial factors on educational aspirations of adolescents.

In the present study, stratified random sampling was used to gather data from the population of secondary school students aged between 15-18 years studying in Class 10th, 11th and 12th in private-aided schools with attached junior colleges of Dharwad taluk (urban and rural areas) under Dharwad district of Karnataka and Hajo taluk (urban and rural areas) under Kamrup district of Assam in 2021. Total study sample included 180 students (90 from each taluk). Of the total study sample, 42 were from urban Dharwad and 48 were from rural Dharwad and 48 were from urban Hajo and 42 from rural Hajo.

Academic aspirations of students were assessed using Mazumdar Educational Aspiration Inventory (MEAI) developed by Mazumder (2004). It is a self report rating scale developed for individuals between 12-17 years. It contains 55 items and corresponding to each statement, there are five alternative choices with 5 point score: strongly agree (4), agree (3), undecided (2), disagree (1) and strongly disagree (0). The total scores obtained are categorized into three groups of aspirations:

Category	Score range
High aspirations	131-196
Average aspirations	66-130
Low aspirations	0-65

Assessment of home environment of adolescents was done using Home Environment Scale (HES) developed by Akhtar and Saxena (2013). It consists of 50 statements with 40 positive and 10 negative statements was used to assess the home environment of adolescents. The total score ranges

from 0-200. Based on the obtained total scores, respondents are classified into 5 categories as indicated below:

Category	Score range
Extremely favourable	161-200
Favourable	121-160
Moderately favourable	81-120
Unfavourable	41-80
Extremely unfavourable	0-40

Socio Economic Status Scale developed by Aggarwal *et al.*, (2005) was used to assess the socio-economic status of adolescents. It consists of 23 statements which assess parent's education, occupation, location, and type of family, number of children, possessions of agricultural land, domestic animals, and social status of the family. Socio economic status of family was classified into six categories.

Classification	Score range
Upper higher	>76
High	61-75
Upper middle	45-60
Lower middle	31-45
Poor middle	16-30
Very poor	<15

Frequency and percentage were used to interpret the demographic variables like family type, SES and home environment of adolescents. Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis was used to study the degree of relationship between academic aspirations with familial variables- family type, SES and home environment of urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad and Hajo. Multiple regression was used to know the effect of independent variables on dependent variable.

3. Results and Analysis

Distribution pertaining to socio-economic status in Dharwad, revealed that half of the percentage of the urban adolescent's belonged to upper middle class, followed by lower middle class (31.00%) and high class (19.00%). Majority of the rural adolescents belonged to upper middle class (77.10%), followed by lower middle class (22.90%). In Hajo, majority of the urban adolescents belonged to upper middle class (64.60%), followed by high class (25.00%) and lower middle class (10.40%). Majority of the rural adolescents were belonged to upper middle class (83.30%), followed by lower middle class (14.30%).

Table 1: Percentage distribution of urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad and Hajo according to their familial characteristics

Region	Independent factors	Academic aspiration	
		Urban	Rural
Dharwad (n=90)	Family type	0.11	0.09
	SES	0.30*	0.29*
	Home environment	0.34*	0.24*
Hajo (n=90)	Family type	0.03	0.13
	SES	0.53**	0.32*
	Home environment	0.21*	0.30*

N=180

In terms of home environment, findings show that majority of the urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad had high level of home environment (73.38% and 89.58% respectively), followed by medium level (26.19% and 10.42% respectively). Similar trend was seen in Hajo, where highest percentage of the urban and rural adolescents had high level of home environment (75.00% and 69.05% respectively), followed by medium level (25.00% and 30.95% respectively).

Majority of the urban and rural adolescents of both Dharwad and Hajo had high levels of home environment, followed by medium levels. As the data were collected during the Covid-19 pandemic, it can be justified that due to lockdown and deaths all around during the Covid-19 period, families grew closer, parental involvement increased, family members spent quality time together, and provided required facilities which were lesser earlier because of the busy schedules of parents as well their children.

Table 2: Correlation between independent variables and dependent variable of urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad and Hajo

Variable	Category	Dharwad (n=90)		Hajo (n=90)	
		Urban (n=42)	Rural (n=48)	Urban (n=48)	Rural (n=42)
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Family type	Nuclear family	35 (83.33)	39 (81.25)	45 (93.75)	26 (61.90)
	Joint family	7 (16.67)	9 (18.75)	3 (6.25)	16 (38.10)
Socio- economic status	Very poor	-	-	-	-
	Poor	-	-	-	-
	Lower middle	13 (31.00)	10 (20.83)	5 (10.40)	7 (16.67)
	Upper middle	21 (50.00)	38 (79.17)	31 (64.60)	35 (83.33)
	High	8 (19.00)	-	12 (25.00)	-
	Upper High	-	-	-	-
Home environment	Low	-	-	-	-
	Medium	11 (26.19)	5 (10.42)	12 (25.00)	13 (30.95)
	High	31 (73.81)	43 (89.58)	36 (75.00)	29 (69.05)

* Significant at 0.05 level

**Significant at 0.01 level

Findings of table 2 reveal that among the urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad, there were significant positive correlations between independent variables- SES ($r=0.30$, $p=0.04$ and $r=0.29$, $p=0.01$) and home environment ($r=0.34$, $p=0.01$ and $r=0.24$, $p=0.03$) with academic aspirations. Similar results were observed for urban and rural adolescents of Hajo, where SES ($r=0.53$, $p<0.001$ and $r=0.32$, $p=0.02$) and home environment ($r=0.21$, $p=0.01$ and $r=0.30$, $p=0.02$) were found to be significantly correlated with academic aspirations. Lotta (2012), Alam (2018) and Rani (2018) also reported that secondary school students' aspirations for further education are strongly and favorably related to their socio-economic position which implies that higher SES families are able to provide their children with resources such as additional coachings, books, internet accessibilities, nutrition etc which in turn results in higher aspiration for further education among the adolescents.

Terry (2015), Singh *et al.*, (2015), Yadav and Pandey (2016) and Angelina (2020) reported that home environment positively influences the educational aspirations of adolescents as a home with favorable environment provides ample amount of parental warmth and stimulations which helps the adolescent to excel in their respective academic goals .

According to the result of urban adolescents of Dharwad, a significant regression equation was found ($F = 12.49$, $p<.001$) with an R^2 of 0.49. In the model, SES ($t=3.06$, $p=.004$) and home environment ($t= 3.94$, $p=.00$) were found to be the main predictors of educational aspirations and the combined effect of familial factors accounted for 49 per cent of variance in educational aspirations of adolescents. (Table 3)

Table 3: Multiple Regression analysis summary for family type, SES and home environment predicting academic aspirations of the urban adolescents of Dharwad

Familial variables	Beta	t- value	Sig.
Family type	.058	.483	.632
SES	.367	3.063	.004
Home environment	.493	3.941	.000

F-value = 12.490**, $p=.000$ $R = .70$ R^2 value= .490

The results pertaining to rural adolescents of Dharwad reveal non-significant regression. Familial variables- family type, SES and home environment did not significantly predicted educational aspiration in the model. (Table 4)

Table 4: Multiple Regression analysis summary for family type, SES and home environment predicting academic aspirations of the rural adolescents of Dharwad

Familial variables	Beta	t- value	Sig.
Family type	.108	.731	.469
SES	.166	1.111	.273
Home environment	.075	.506	.615

F-value = .601 $R = .198$ R^2 value= .039

According to the result of urban adolescents of Hajo, a significant regression equation was found ($F=5.941$, $p<0.002$) with an R^2 of .288. The results showed that only SES ($t=4.206$, $p=.000$) significantly predicted educational aspiration when all three familial factors were included. The combined effect of all the three variables accounted for 28 per cent variance in educational aspirations. (Table 5)

Table 5: Multiple Regression analysis summary for family type, SES and home environment predicting academic aspirations of the urban adolescents of Hajo

Familial variables	Beta	t- value	Sig.
Family type	.001	.004	.997
SES	.541	4.206	.000
Home environment	.045	.344	.733

F-value = 5.941, $p < 0.002$ R=.537 R^2 value= .288

According to the result of rural adolescents of Hajo, a significant regression equation was found ($F = 16.023$, $p < .000$) with an R^2 of .558. In the model, SES ($t=5.301$, $p=.000$) and home environment ($t=2.361$, $p=.023$) were found to be the main predictors of educational aspirations and the combined effect of familial factors accounted for 55 per cent of variance in educational aspirations of adolescents. (Table 6)

Table 6: Multiple Regression analysis summary for family type, SES and home environment predicting academic aspirations of the rural adolescents of Hajo

Familial variables	Beta	t- value	Sig.
Family type	.018	.149	.882
SES	.649	5.301	.000
Home environment	.264	2.361	.023

F-value = 16.023, $p < 0.000$ R=.747 R^2 value= .558

In the regression models of urban adolescents of Dharwad and among the urban and rural adolescents of Hajo, SES and home environment were found to be the main predictors of educational aspirations.

However, family type was not found to be significantly related with educational aspirations of urban and rural adolescents of both Dharwad and Hajo. Sawhney and Kumar (2019) and Rehati (2020) also reported in accordance with the present study which revealed that adolescents belonging to different type of family does not affect their educational aspirations which suggests that if parents show their children enough love, warmth, and support, regardless of whether they come from a nuclear family or a joint family; they can have high levels of academic aspirations.

4. Conclusion

Academic aspirations are pre-requisite for higher education and family is one of the most important factors which have definite impact on the educational development of the individual. The study result confirms positive relationship of familial factors such as SES and home environment with educational aspiration of adolescents. Like other stages before it, adolescence has its own set of developmental milestones like more concern towards future education and career plan that must be reached in a timely manner in order to promote healthy development for which they should be provided with a good family environment. Parents must be made aware of their tremendous role in their child's development along with promoting career counseling in schools which will aid the adolescents in having a clear vision of their higher education goals. Policy makers and government together should join hands and provide financial assistance to students belonging to especially lower SES to aid their educational aspirations.

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