

# A STUDY OF LEVEL OF ASPIRATION IN PREDICTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

*The study investigated the role of level of aspiration in predicting the academic achievement among secondary school students. The sample size of 600 subjects were selected from the different public and private secondary schools. Level of Aspiration Scale by Sahi and Bhargava (1987) was used to assess the students level of aspiration. Correlation and Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis were employed to see the significant relationship and best predictor of academic achievement. Findings of the present study reported significant and positive relationship between level of aspiration and academic achievement.*

## I INTRODUCTION

Education is a human enterprise. It is a process and kind of activity in relation to human beings. It is a continuous effort to develop all capacities of the students to control their neighbouring environment and to fulfill their needs. Though education is a part of human life, yet it cannot help the pursuers unless they have the required amount of educational aspirations. The basic problem today in education is the problem of motivating the students to learn at all levels. A high level of aspiration for a good education would normally make the individual to not only put forth his sustained efforts in getting education but it would also make him achieve at a high level throughout the course of his education (Singh, 2011).

Present age is the age of competitions and achievements. Therefore, education has a tremendous role to play in motivating the students to achieve higher and to have realistic aspiration in all their doings, especially at secondary stage of education. The students must have self-introspection in various matters. It is therefore imperative that an individual at secondary level of education has developed a self-concept whereby he performs all his activities in accordance with the knowledge of self. At the secondary education level, an individual also develops realistic approaches or aspiration to achieve higher and to excel others. Self-concept determines not only the kind of goals as suitable for a student to strive for but also his level of aspiration (Ahmed et al., 2012).

At all stages of life, people have different kind of level of aspiration and they also try for self-enhancement. The aspirations during the students academic period influences their behaviour. An individual's aspiration level represents him not only at any particular moment, but also as he would like to be at same problem in future. The



aspiration level of an individual is an important motivating factor. It is a frame of reference involving self-esteem or alternatively experience that is the feeling of failure or success. Thus aspiration serves as an important educational measure because it captures an individual's sense of value of education. In particular, a student's aspirations reflect his/her own agency and ownership over his or her educational trajectory. Studies of academic engagement have shown that aspiration serves as a key indicator in the continuation of schooling (Davidson, 2006, and XU, 2002) and high level of aspiration has been linked to greater level of academic achievement.

Aspirations begin to be shaped early in child's life, but are modified by experiences and the environment. Aspirations tend to decline as children respond to their growing understanding of the world and constraints imposed by previous choices and achievements. This decline is particularly marked for those who face multiple barriers. Aspiration means a strong desire for something high or great which is also addressed as both present and future perspective (Kaur, 2012).

Like other psychological phenomena, motivational factors are important in directing individual's behaviour consciously and making him strive to perform certain types of activities in order to achieve a definite goal. Everyone aims at reaching a definite goal or excellence in performance and in doing so he sets a desire for distinction which has inner structure known as 'level of aspiration' (Dwivedi, 2012). Level of aspiration is an individual's expectation or ambition. It refers to the estimate of one's future in a given task. In today's world of competitiveness, there is not a single person who is devoid of ambition in some way or the other. Several researchers have attempted to define the concept of level of aspiration in their own way. Franks (1941) defined level of aspiration operationally as "the level of future performance in a familiar task, which an individual knowing his level of past performance in that task. According to Murphy (1951), aspiration level means the level which one strives to attain. Boyd (1952) considers level of aspiration as an individual's ambition in a dynamic situation or an individual's goal or expectation in regard to the goodness of his own future performance for a given task. Hoppe (1930) defined the 'level of aspiration (LOA), as a person's expectations, goals or claims on his future achievement in a given task. Every man is interested in making his life more successful in the present competitive society. One wants to achieve his goals for a happy living. Several psychological processes are involved in the phenomenon of achieving these goals. Some of the processes are interest, level of achievement, degree of motivation and certain emotional factor. Each of this factors are interrelated in some way. There are specific goals, the attainment of which will make an individual to assert himself/herself as a great achievers. According to Murphy (1951), there are four such goals of great importance. They are physical attributes, possessions, prestige or status and power. Every one of us is aspiring for such goals. Some of these goals must we met reasonably and some of these goals may be of immediate need while other goals may be of long range. Long-ranged goals are less sure to be attained. One has to build up the goals slowly in the feasibility of achieving them (Allport, G.W. 1937).

In choosing life goals many individuals do not take into account the factors influencing the feasibility of achieving them. Further individuals differ considerably among themselves in choosing their life goals and setting up their level of aspiration because they differ fundamentally in their interest, motives, intelligence,

physical abilities, socio-economic status and so on. Some may be aware of their limitations and some do not. Therefore, individual's expectations and their accomplishment always vary.

Psychological studies on level of aspiration have brought out the factors underlying the process of success or failure of the attainment of the goals. The individual's interest, attitude, motivation, physical abilities, personality, intelligence, self-esteem, ego-involvement and achievement are the influencing factors in the level of aspiration or goal aspiration of the individual.

Academic achievement is also influenced by the level of aspiration which is an important variable to predict it. Aspiration is a natural phenomenon of human life. The level of aspiration plays a significant role in the scholastic achievement of the students. There is a close and one to one relationship between academic achievement and level of aspiration. Higher level of aspiration leads to higher academic achievement. The level of aspiration is generally raised when performance is equal to level of aspiration and lowered when performance falls below the level of aspiration.

Several researches and studies have been conducted on the topic of relationship between level of aspiration and academic achievement.(Chung & Gonzo, 1996; Armstrong & Crombie, 2000; Davey & Stoppard, 1993; Kim, 2005; Rojewski, 2005 and Peter et al.,2007 and Chauhan 2014). The important role of aspirations and expectations in identifying the future educational and career options remains an important area of the present study. The basic problem in education today is the problem of motivating the students to learn at all levels. A high level of aspiration for good education would normally make the individual not only put forth his sustained efforts in getting education but it would also make him/her achieve at high level throughout the course of education.

Thus, on the basis of above research findings, it can be concluded that level of aspiration is an important determinant of academic achievement

## **II AIMS**

1. To find out the relationship between academic achievement and level of aspiration among public and private schools in both the genders.
2. To study the significant differences on level of aspiration among public and private schools students.
3. To see the significant differences on level of aspiration between males and females.

## **III HYPOTHESIS**

On the basis of major goals of the present study and review of related research, following hypotheses have been formulated.

1. Level of aspiration will have a significant and positive correlation with academic achievement
2. Level of aspiration will be significantly higher among private school students as compared to public school students.
3. Male participants would be significantly higher on level of aspiration than their female counterparts.

## **IV METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Research Design**

The endeavour of the study undertaken was to examine the relationship between level of aspiration and academic achievement, hence first of all, a Correlation Design (Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation) was used.

A series of multiple regression analysis was also conducted mainly to reflect the variance that could be explained by each independent variables in predicting dependent variable

### **4.2 Sample**

As the study could not be carried out on the whole population, a representative sample consisting of 600 subjects was taken into consideration which included both male and female subjects from public and private schools.

### **4.3 Tools Used**

1. Level of Aspiration Scale by Sahi and Bhargava (1987)
2. Academic Achievement was assessed by the total marks of the students in their Matriculation Examination.

## **V PROPOSED STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

1. Correlation analysis: it has been used to see the relationship between different variables.
2. Stepwise regression analysis: it has been used to reflect the variance that could be explained by each independent variable in predicting the dependent variables.

## **VI RESULTS**

**Table (A)**

**Stepwise Regression Analysis: Predictors of Academic Achievement in Private Schools' Sample (N=300)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Order of entry</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Beta - weight</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>change</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Level of Aspiration</b>	1.	.91**	.908	.91	37.3	.82	.82	1391.5**

Table (B)

**Stepwise Regression Analysis: Predictors of Academic Achievement in Public Schools' Sample (N=300)**

Variables	Order of entry	r	R	Beta - weight	t	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> change	F
Level of Aspiration	1.	.80**	.80	.80	23.1	.64	.64	533.61**

Table (C)

**Stepwise Regression Analysis: Predictors of Academic Achievement in Boys' Sample (n=300)**

Variables	Order of Entry	r	R	Beta - Weight	t	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	F
Level of Aspiration	1.	.95	.952	.95	53.4	.90	.90	2851.56**

Table (D)

**Stepwise Regression Analysis: Predictors of Academic Achievement in Girls' Sample (N=300)**

Variables	Order of entry	r	R	Beta - weight	t	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> change	F
Level of Aspiration	1.	.92	.925	.92	41.9	.85	.85	1755.61**

## VII DISCUSSION

From these results, we may infer that level of aspiration is positively and significantly correlated with academic achievement. The rationale could be offered in terms of the fact that students with higher level of aspiration tend to perform better in their academic achievement and it can also be said that students who hold realistic level of aspiration are more aspiring to achieve higher grades in their academic career as compared to those students who have an realistic aspiration and such students tend to have poor grades in their academic performance.

Getaun (2000) also reported that academic status and personal future are also correlated. Adolescents who rated themselves as "good" in their academic status have higher level of aspiration than those who rated themselves as "poor" or "average." Some other studies (Albert et al., 2004; Mohpatra, 2004; Caplin, 2006; Salami, 2008; Chauhan, 2008; Singh;1995 and Chauhan;2014) also reported significant and positive relationship between level of aspiration and academic achievement. Success generally leads to raising the level of aspiration, whereas failure has just the opposite effect. Results of the present study have demonstrated that irrespective of the sample, level of aspiration contributes significantly in academic success of the students.

Thus on the basis of above discussion, it can be suggested that our educationists and psychologists in education setting should plan suitable curriculum methods and effective teaching learning process in order to enhance students aspiration which is considered crucial in determining their future success.

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