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Educational Aspiration of Higher Secondary School Students: A Comparative Study Based on Certain Demographic Variables

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Abstract:

Educational aspiration is one of the crucial determinants of a person's success in life. It is influenced by a number of factors - intrinsic as well as extrinsic. The present study was an attempt to explore the level of educational aspiration among higher secondary school students in Kerala State. An Educational Aspiration Scale prepared and standardized by Josen and Afrin (2011) was administered to a sample of 300 students from various higher secondary schools. It was revealed that the higher secondary school students possess a moderate level of educational aspiration. It was also found that gender and domicile influence the level of educational aspiration. Female students possess a higher level of educational aspiration than that of their male counterparts. Similarly, urban students excel rural students with respect to educational aspiration. However, it was revealed that parental educational status does not influence educational aspiration of students. The findings of the study indicate the need of providing special attention to enhance the educational aspiration of male students and students from rural areas.

Key words: Educational aspiration, higher secondary school students, and demographic variables

1. Introduction

Education is a major aspect which aims at human resource development. A person can increase knowledge and expand his/her vision only through education. The real aim of education is the unfolding of hidden potentialities of an individual. For John Dewey "education is the process of living through a continuous reconstruction of experiences. It is the development of all these capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfill his possibilities" (cited in Dash, 2005). Therefore, today, civilized societies consider the process of formal education with prime importance and all attempts are made to educate the masses. In India, the constitution has an elaborate provision for giving the right type of quality education for all. According to the article 21A 'constitution guarantees opportunities for education to all children and needy and directs the government to take the necessary steps to the national goal of education for all.' Recently education has become a fundamental right in the 86th amendment of Indian constitution. The lifestyle of human beings changes rapidly owing to the scientific inventions and consequent advances in technology. Our educational system should be able to equip the child with a potential to adapt him/her to the changing conditions. It should enable individuals to play their effective role in society with the objective of making it richer, better and more attractive. Educational aspiration is a significant factor for the enhancement of the education of any person. It is a craving for high achievement in education. It is a crucial aspect of individual's intrinsic motivation, since it determines individual efforts towards attaining goals. High level of educational aspiration is an indicator of high level of achievement and success. Scholastic success of learners is significantly influenced by educational aspiration (Singh & Varma, 1995). In order to develop educational aspiration present in one, he/she should possess a strong desire and willingness to work hard. A person with higher educational aspiration would rather widen his knowledge than sticking to a job. The students with educational aspiration overcome any obstacle which they face in the path of their education. Even after attaining a job the individual with higher educational aspiration continues his/her studies. A person with higher educational aspiration tries to gather new knowledge from whichever the field he enters. Development of educational aspiration is influenced by a number of factors. The significant influence of cultural factors on educational aspiration was reported in Flaxman (1992). Family environment and socio-economic status strongly influence educational aspiration of children (Teachman & Kathleen, 1998; Seginer & Vermulst, 2002; Goel, 2004; Kevin, 2005; Tanya, Beth, Carolyn, & Deborah, 2009; Sino, 2010; Madarasova, Tavel, & Abel, 2010; Boxer, Delorenzo, Savoy, & Mercado, 2011; Gil, Padilla, Teresa, & Suarez, 2011). Influence of locality of residence on educational aspiration is reported in Shouping (2003), Caitlin (2006) and Katherine (2010). Talawar and Pradeep (2010) reported a significant positive correlation between teaching commitment and educational aspiration of students.

2. Rationale of the Study

The chances of higher education are mostly associated with family environment. If the socio-economic condition of the family is weak, the dream of higher education of the child is in vain. For students studying in higher secondary schools it is a turning point in their life as it is the time for diversification of their studies on the basis of interests and aspirations. They plan for their future at

this period. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the influence of demographic factors on educational aspiration of higher secondary school students.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To assess the level of educational aspiration of higher secondary school students
- To compare the level of educational aspiration of higher secondary school students with respect to gender, domicile and parental educational status

4. Hypotheses of the Study

- There is a significant difference between the educational aspiration of male higher secondary school students and that of female higher secondary school students.
- There is a significant difference between the educational aspiration of rural higher secondary school students and that of urban higher secondary school students.
- There is a significant difference among the educational aspiration of higher secondary school students belonging to high, medium and low parental educational status group.

5. Methodology in Brief

The method adopted for carrying out the present study was normative surveyed. A representative sample of 300 higher secondary school students was randomly selected from various higher secondary schools of Ernakulam district in Kerala, considering factors such as gender, domicile and parental educational status. The data for the present study were collected using an Educational Aspiration Scale prepared and standardized by Josen and Afrin (2011), and (2) Parental Educational Status Scale. Various descriptive and inferential statistical techniques such as arithmetic mean, median, mode, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness, critical ratio, and ANOVA were utilized for the processing of data in the present study.

6. Analysis and Discussion

The scores were analysed on the basis of the objectives of the study.

6.1. Educational aspiration of higher secondary school students

Scores of the selected sample of 300 higher secondary school students were collected and subjected to descriptive data analysis. The educational aspiration scale consisted of 32 items and the maximum score that can be obtained by a respondent is 32 (32x1). The statistical constants calculated for the distribution of educational aspiration scores is given in table 1.

Sl. No	Statistic	Value
1.	Arithmetic mean	23.44
2.	Median	23.98
3.	Mode	25.06
4.	Standard deviation	5.65
5.	Kurtosis	.275
6.	Skewness	-0.286

Table 1: Statistical Constants For The Distribution Of Educational Aspiration Scores In The Total Sample

From the table 1 it is seen that the arithmetic mean, median, mode, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness as 23.44, 23.98, 25.06, 5.65, .275, and -0.286 respectively. The mean (23.44) is less than the median (23.98) and the median is less than mode (25.06) and it can be said that the distribution of educational aspiration scores is negatively skewed. The negative value of skewness (-0.286) also indicates a non-symmetrical nature of the distribution. Since the skewness is negative, the scores tend to be massed at the high end of the scale and are spread out more gradually towards the low end or left. The kurtosis value (.275) is only slightly greater than .263, the kurtosis value characteristic of a normal distribution (Garrett, 1966, p. 102). Therefore the variation of the distribution from mesokurtic nature is negligible. Since the mean score obtained by the higher secondary school students (23.44) is greater than the middle score of the administered scale (16), it can be interpreted that the higher secondary school students possess a moderate level of educational aspiration.

6.2. Comparison Of Educational Aspirations Of Higher Secondary School Students Based On Gender

• Null hypothesis

“There is no significant difference between the educational aspirations of male higher secondary school students and that of female higher secondary school students.”

To study the influence of gender on the educational aspiration of higher secondary school students the investigator employed t-test. Table 2 shows the data and the results of the test of significance of the difference between mean educational aspiration scores of male and female higher secondary school students.

Sl. No.	Gender	Number of Students	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Critical Ratio
1.	Male	150	21.24	4.93	7.97**
2.	Female	150	25.64	4.62	

Table 2: Data And Result Of The Test Of Significance Of The Difference Between Mean Educational Aspiration Scores Of Male And Female Higher Secondary School Students

** $P < .01$

Table 2 shows that the critical ratio calculated (7.97) is much greater than (2.58) the table value corresponding to .01 level of significance. This implies that there exists a significant difference between the two mean values at .01 level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is interpreted that there is a significant difference between the educational aspiration of male higher secondary school students and that of female higher secondary school students. Since the mean score (25.64) of female students is higher than that of male students (21.24) and the difference is statistically significant at .01 level, it can be concluded that the female students possess greater educational aspiration than that of male students. The findings are similar to that reported in Mau and Bikos (2000) and Goel (2004).

6.3. Comparison Of Educational Aspirations Of Higher Secondary School Students Based On Domicile

- **Null hypothesis**

“There is no significant difference between the educational aspirations of rural higher secondary school students and that of urban higher secondary school students.”

To study the influence of locale on the educational aspiration of higher secondary school students the educational aspiration scores of the two categories were considered separately. Table 3 shows the data and the result of the test of significance of the difference between mean educational aspiration scores of rural higher secondary school students and that of urban higher secondary school students.

Sl. No.	Domicile	Number of Students	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Critical Ratio
1.	Rural	140	21.58	5.58	5.66**
2.	Urban	160	25.07	5.04	

Table 3: Data And Result Of The Test Of Significance Of The Difference Between Mean Educational Aspiration Scores Of Rural And Urban Higher Secondary School Students

** $p < .01$

Table 3 shows that the critical ratio calculated (5.66) is greater than (2.58) the table value corresponding to .01 level of significance. This implies that there is a significant difference between the two mean values at .01 level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is interpreted that there is a significant difference between the educational aspiration of rural and urban higher secondary school students. Since the mean score of urban students is higher than that of rural students and the difference is statistically significant, it can be concluded that the urban students possess greater educational aspiration than that of their rural counterparts. The findings are consistent with that reported in Shouping (2003) and Caitlin (2006). Similar conclusions were made in Katherine (2010).

6.4. Comparison of educational aspirations of higher secondary school students based on parental educational status

- **Null hypothesis**

“The educational aspirations of higher secondary school students do not differ significantly with respect to their parental educational status”

To study the influence of parental educational status on the educational aspiration of higher secondary school students, the data regarding the educational aspiration of different categories of higher secondary school students – students belonging to high, medium and low parental educational status groups – were subjected to one way analysis of variance. Sixty five students were categorized as belonging to high parental educational status group, 120 as medium, and 115 as belonging to low parental educational status group. The data and the results of the comparison of educational aspiration scores of higher secondary school students based on parental educational status are presented in table 4.

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Ratio
Between Groups	60.74	2	30.37	0.698
Within groups	12910.73	297	43.47	
Total		299		

Table 4: Summary Of Analysis Of Variance For The Educational Aspiration Of Higher Secondary School Students Based On Parental Educational Status

Table 4 shows that the F value obtained for the comparison of educational aspirations among various categories of higher secondary school students based on parental educational status is 0.698. The calculated value is less than 3.00, the table value for .05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Hence it is interpreted that the educational aspirations of higher secondary school students do not differ significantly with respect to their parental educational status. Previous studies show that family environment is a major determinant of educational aspiration. However, in the present study it was found that parental educational status has no influence on educational aspiration. This may be due to the fact that in Kerala everyone, whether highly educated or not pay attention to their children's education. Therefore the level of educational aspiration remains similar in students irrespective of their parental educational status.

7. Conclusion

Present study was an attempt to assess the level of educational aspiration among higher secondary schools of Kerala. The level of educational aspiration can be considered as an indicator of success of students. The findings of the study reveal that the higher secondary school students possess a moderate level of educational aspiration. This indicates the need of providing support and motivation enhancing techniques for the students. From the study it is noted that male students and students from rural areas possess low levels of educational aspiration. Therefore, special attention should be given for such students.

8. References

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