



Educational Aspirations of Higher Secondary Students

 Dr. R. Kandhavel^{1*}

¹Perunthalaivar Kamarajar College of Education, Karaikal, Government of Puducherry, India.

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*Corresponding Author: kandedu@gmail.com

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Abstract

The present study aimed to assess the educational aspirations of higher secondary students with a focus on gender and school type differences. Normative survey research method is adopted. The investigator randomly selected a sample of 350 XI standard students studying in various higher secondary schools located Karaikal region. Random Sampling technique has been adopted for the selection of the sample. Educational Aspirations Scale constructed and validated by the investigator was used. The findings revealed that the overall level of educational aspirations among higher secondary students was satisfactory. A comparative analysis indicated that girl students exhibited significantly higher educational aspirations than their male counterparts. Furthermore, students studying in private schools outperformed those in government schools in terms of aspiration levels. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference in educational aspirations between boys and girls, as well as between students from private and government schools. These results underscore the influence of gender and school environment on the educational aspirations of adolescents and highlight the need for targeted interventions to support underperforming groups.

Keywords: *Educational Aspirations, Gender, Type of Management.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful instrument for personal and societal advancement. At the higher secondary level, students face critical decisions that influence their future educational and career pathways. Educational aspirations refer to the level of education an individual hopes to attain, and they are shaped by various personal, familial, social, and institutional factors. These aspirations not only reflect a student's ambition but also affect their motivation, academic performance, and

career choices. In India, there exists a diverse student population, ranging from urban to rural, economically advantaged to underprivileged, and from various cultural backgrounds. Understanding the educational aspirations of higher secondary students in this region is essential for planning educational interventions, guiding students effectively, and addressing inequalities in access to opportunities.

This study aims to explore the nature and determinants of educational aspirations among

higher secondary students in Karaikal region district. It seeks to examine how factors such as gender, and school environment influence students' future goals. The findings of this research will offer insights that can inform educators, counselors, and policymakers in supporting students to realize their academic and professional dreams.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Amini, N., Sefri, Y., Aassoul, A., & Mahiri, F. (2023) had examined high school students' aspirations and the related contextual variables. Although published in 2023, this study examined how academic performance, personal interests, and local/international labour-market context shape educational aspirations. It provides a useful review of contextual influences up to the higher secondary stage.

Senthilkumar, A., & Subramanian, P. (2022) had conducted a study on educational aspirations of higher secondary students with special reference to demographic variables. This study surveyed nearly 1,000 11th-grade students in Salem district (India), investigating differences in aspirations across gender, locality, school type, family type, and medium of instruction. Results highlighted demographic differences in personal and environmental dimensions of educational aspiration.

Roy, S., & Kumar, S. (2018) had studied about Educational aspirations and expectations among Scheduled Caste students: A study of Uttar Pradesh, India. Focusing on marginalized Scheduled Caste students in UP (10th and 12th grades), the study explored how social and environmental factors influenced educational aspirations and expectations, emphasizing the internal-external motivation dynamics within disadvantaged groups.

Bashir, L., & Gupta, S. (2017) had studied about Educational aspiration of secondary school students: Influence of school environment and parental encouragement. This descriptive survey explored how school environment and parental encouragement predicted students' educational aspirations in secondary schools in Kashmir, India. It found significant positive relationships: parental encouragement and school environment explained about 15% of variance in aspiration levels.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the level of educational aspirations of higher secondary students.
- To find out if there is any significant differences between
 - the boys and girls students;
 - the students studying in government and private schools.

4. HYPOTHESES

- The level of the educational aspirations of higher secondary students is high.
- There is a significant difference between
 - the boys and girls students;
 - the students studying in government and private schools.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Understanding the educational aspirations of higher secondary students is crucial for shaping effective educational policies and practices. This study holds significance in several ways. Firstly, it provides insights into the overall aspiration levels of adolescents at a critical stage in their academic journey, which can influence their future career paths and life goals. Secondly, by highlighting gender-based differences, the study emphasizes the need for gender-sensitive approaches in guidance and counseling services. The finding that girl students demonstrate higher educational aspirations than boys calls for targeted strategies to motivate and support male students. Thirdly, the study draws attention to the disparities between private and government school students. The higher aspiration levels observed among private school students suggest potential gaps in resources, encouragement, or academic culture in government schools. This highlights the need for policymakers and educators to address inequalities in the educational system, ensuring that all students, regardless of school type, are given equal opportunities to dream and succeed. Overall, the study contributes valuable data to the field of educational psychology and serves as a foundation for developing intervention programs that foster ambition and academic motivation among diverse student populations.

6. METHOD OF THE STUDY

In the present study, normative survey research method is adopted. It involves describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting the data

which are all directed towards a better understanding of the educational problem and finding solutions to them.

- Sample: The investigator randomly selected a sample of 350 XI standard students studying in various higher secondary schools located in Karaikal region.
- Sampling Technique: Random Sampling technique has been adopted to select the sample from Karaikal region.
- Tools Used: Educational Aspirations Scale constructed and validated by the investigator was used.

7. ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS SCORES

The mean and standard deviation of the group are 119.70 and 34.02 respectively. It may be remembered that the test has been conducted for a maximum of 200 marks. Hence the educational aspiration of higher secondary students is satisfactory. A more detailed study of educational aspirations of higher secondary students in higher secondary has been made by calculating the mean and standard deviation of the scores of the higher secondary students belonging to different sub-samples (vide table-2).

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation for educational aspirations scores of higher secondary students

	Sub-samples	Number 'N'	Mean 'M'	SD
	Total sample	350	119.70	14.02
Gender	Boys	150	117.66	15.18
	Girls	200	121.23	13.13
Types of School	Government	224	105.80	19.15
	Private	126	145.34	16.10

It is evident from the table that there is a wide variation in the means and standard deviation of the scores in different sub-sample. They also show striking differences in the educational aspirations of the different sub-samples.

To sum up the following conclusion is reached in respect of the hypothesis formulated under objective (1) at the beginning of the study. The students' educational aspirations is satisfactory, though there is a wide disparity in the mean and standard deviation of the different sub-samples.

7.1. Summary for the descriptive Analysis for Educational aspirations scores in:

- The student's educational aspirations is satisfactory.
- Girls students perform better than the boys' students
- Private school students perform better than the government school Students.

7.2. Differential analysis of students' educational aspirations scores of higher secondary students Gender and Educational aspirations

The 't' test has been applied to find out whether the difference between the educational aspirations scores of boys and girls higher secondary students is significant or not. The 't' value is found to be 2.97 and it is not significant at 0.05 level. It is concluded that the difference in educational aspirations between boys and girls students is significant at 0.05 level (vide table-2). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is a significant difference in educational aspirations of higher secondary students based on Gender.

Table 2: Comparison of Mean Educational aspirations Scores of Boys and Girls

Gender	Number N	Mean M	Standard Deviation	't' value	Level of Significance at 0.05 level
Boys	150	117.66	15.18	2.97	significant
Girls	200	121.23	13.13		

7.3. Comparison of mean educational aspirations scores of students studying in Government and Private schools

The 't' test has been applied to find out whether the difference between the educational aspirations scores of higher secondary students studying in government school and private school is significant or not. The 't' value is found to be 12.80 and it is significant at 0.01 level. Hence, it is concluded that the difference in educational aspirations scores between the higher secondary students studying in government school and private schools is significant (vide table 3). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is a significant difference in educational aspirations of higher secondary students based on type of management.

Table 3: Comparison of mean educational aspirations scores of higher secondary students studying in government and private school

Type of management	Number N	Mean M	Standard Deviation SD	't' value	Level of Significance at 0.05 level
Government	224	105.28	29.15	12.8	Significant
Private	126	145.34	26.10	0	

- There is a significant difference between Boys and Girls higher secondary students in their educational aspirations scores.
- There is a significant difference between higher secondary students studying in government school and private school in their educational aspirations scores in students.

8. MAJOR FINDINGS

The data collected through the administration of the research tools have been analysed employing statistical techniques. The findings relating to factors affecting the educational aspirations of students studying in higher secondary level are furnished as below:

- The student's educational aspiration of higher secondary students is satisfactory.
- Girls students perform better than the boys' students
- Private school students perform better than the government school Students.
- There is a significant difference between Boys and Girls higher secondary students in their educational aspirations scores.
- There is a significant difference between higher secondary students studying in government school and private school in their educational aspirations scores in students.

their goals are often shaped by multiple factors The study reveals that students from supportive family and school environments tend to aspire to higher levels of education. However, certain barriers such as financial constraints, lack of role models, limited exposure to career options, and inadequate guidance can restrict the educational ambitions of some students, particularly those from rural or economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Overall, the study highlights the need for schools, parents, and policymakers to work collaboratively in fostering an environment that encourages and supports higher educational aspirations. Career counselling programs, motivational sessions, and scholarships for deserving students can serve as effective tools to bridge the gap between aspiration and attainment. In conclusion, understanding and nurturing the educational aspirations of students is essential to ensure that every learner is empowered to realize their full academic and professional potential.

9. CONCLUSION

The present study explored the educational aspirations of higher secondary students in Karaikal region, focusing on the levels of aspiration and the factors that influence students' academic goals and future educational plans. The findings indicate that while many students exhibit moderate to high aspirations for higher education,

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