

# **Impact of Parental Encouragement on Level of Aspiration and Academic Performance: A Comparative Study on Adolescents of Uttarakhand**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The present study entitled 'Impact of Parental Encouragement on Level of Aspiration and Academic Performance: A Comparative Study on Adolescents of Uttarakhand', was carried out in secondary and higher secondary schools of Uttarakhand. It was an attempt to determine the effect of Parental Encouragement on Level of Aspiration and Academic Performance of adolescents. A total of 800 respondents were sampled based on random sampling technique. The data was collected by using Parental Encouragement Scale and Aspiration Scale. Academic Performance was measured on the basis of the marks obtained in Class X and data was analysed using suitable statistical methods. Results indicated that majority of students received average amount of parental encouragement. When groups differentiated on the basis of parental encouragement was analysed on level of aspiration, it was found that they differed on Number of Times the Goal Reach Score (NTRS) but no significant differences were found on other two scores i.e. Goal Discrepancy Score (GDS) and Attainment Discrepancy Score (ADS). Hence, the null hypotheses stating that 'students differentiated on the basis of parental encouragement (high, average, low) would not differ significantly on all dimensions of level of aspiration was partially accepted. Further, no significant difference was found between the groups on academic performance. The present study has a lot of significance for parents and adolescents as it deals with the important aspects of adolescent's developmental variables like aspiration and academic performance which is determined by the parental encouragement provided to them.*

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Parental encouragement refers to the treatment originating from parents toward the child with a view to enhance the possibilities

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of future occurrences of good behaviour by care, concern, approval and guidance. It is an attitude characterised by keen interest and unconditional love for the child that primarily focuses on improvement rather than outcome. Broadly, there are three kinds of parenting style: authoritarian (imposing their wishes on the child), indulgent (providing rules and guidance without being overbearing), and negligent (not being bothered about the child).

Adler in his theory of 'Individual Psychology' mentioned that when children are encouraged, they feel capable and appreciated. Parent who is encouraging regard the child as a person with feelings and respects the child's right and need to express these feelings. They encourage freedom of emotional expression. They guide the child so that the child may not feel disheartened at a particular point of difficulties. They accept their child for the individual he/she is. Hence, Parental Encouragement is all about authority properly exercised.

Studies in the area of parental encouragement have reported that there is a significant relationship between parental encouragement and educational development of children (Agarwal, 1986; Joshi, 1992). Indulgent parents show concern about their child's performance. They help them to develop creative thinking and encourage healthy discussions in family matters. As a result, the children receiving constant encouragement and support from their parents are more intelligent, can easily adjust themselves in critical situations and have a better self-concept (Agarwal, 1986; Rawat, 1994; Rai, 2010).

American psychologist Murray (1893-1988) in his study on personality revealed that human behaviour is goal oriented and the most important thing to know about a person is to find out the direction and intensity of his/her aspirations. 'Level of aspiration' plays an important role in influencing the adolescents' self-concept. In describing a person's level of aspiration, we are in fact describing the person. It is an expression of the self, of the subject's future, of past orientation, confidence in oneself, fear of failure, optimism or pessimism, his/her ambition and courage to face reality. For these and other reasons investigation of an individual's level of aspiration is an effective way of learning to understand his personality.

Family climate plays an important role in the successful attainment of educational aspirations in the case of adolescents (Anshu, 1988; Marjoribanks, 2003; Kirk et al., 2010; Ibtisam, 2010;

and Nicholas et al., 2010). Hence, it was inferred that educational aspirations are enhanced by bringing change in environmental and personal factors (Garg et al., 2002; Grieve, 2009; Salami, 2009; Nicholas et al., 2010 and Kaur, 2011). Contrary to these findings, Roberts et al. (2007) found negative correlation between the two factors while the study of Leigh et al. (2004) and Singh (2011) found no significant relationship with home environment and educational aspirations.

Typically young adolescents set goals beyond their reach, partly because they are unable to assess their capacities accurately and partly because they are subject to parental pressures to get ahead. When they fall below the goals they set for themselves, they are unhappy and dissatisfied. They feel inadequate and this makes them strive to live up to the goals by exerting pressure to do more; this, in turn, leads to anxiety or to the assumption of a defensive stand in which others are blamed for the adolescents' failure.

The present study was conducted on the state of Uttarakhand, constituting of two demographic regions: Kumaun and Garhwal. Uttarakhand is noted for a number of prestigious schools and institutions imparting higher education. District-wise achievement in level of education is found to be quite encouraging except the female literacy which is found to be relatively low in hill areas of Tehri Garhwal, Champawat, Bageshwar and Uttarkashi. Thus, while the plains have developed steadily, the hilly areas have relatively remained educationally backward, poverty being the main cause. Therefore, a need was felt to investigate the reason for this lopsided development, especially in the field of education, resulting in high incidence of academic underachievement. The study further aims to help parents to understand and thereby encourage their adolescent children to explore their capacities, to set up realistic goals such that they can optimise their achievement and gain confidence in themselves, which in turn, may enhance their personality.

### **Statement of the Problem**

'To study the effect of Parental encouragement on Level of Aspiration and Academic Performance of the Adolescents of Uttarakhand.'

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the level of parental encouragement among adolescents of Uttarakhand State.

2. To study the influence of parental encouragement on the level of aspiration and academic performance of the students.

### **Hypotheses 1**

Students differentiated on the basis of parental encouragement (high, average and low) would not differ significantly on all scores of level of aspiration i.e. Goal Discrepancy Score, Attainment Discrepancy and Number of Times the Goal Reach Score.

Vs

Students differentiated on the basis of parental encouragement (high, average and low) would differ on all scores of level of aspiration i.e. Goal Discrepancy Score, Attainment Discrepancy and Number of Times the Goal Reach Score.

### **Hypotheses 2**

Students differentiated on the basis of parental encouragement (high, average, low) would not differ significantly on academic performance.

Vs

Students differentiated on the basis of parental encouragement (high, average, low) would differ on academic performance.

### **Methodology**

The normative survey method was employed in the present investigation for the purpose of surveying the population under study. A multistage random sampling procedure was followed in the selection of the sample. The sample comprised of 800 students of secondary and higher secondary schools of Uttarakhand.

### **Tools**

In order to collect the data of the present study the tools used were:

1. Parental Encouragement Scale
2. Aspiration Scale
3. Academic Performance

### **Parental Encouragement Scale**

Parental Encouragement Scale (PES) developed and standardised by R. R. Sharma was used. The scale contains 40 items with three response alternatives where the marks allotted were A-0, B-1 and C-2. As given in the manual, scores of higher parental encouragement

group ranged between 79.25 and 71.90; average parental encouragement group ranged between scores 70.80 and 61.30 while low parental encouragement group ranged between scores 60.90 and 42.34. Thus, higher scores on parental encouragement scale reveal higher degree of parental encouragement, whereas, lower scores reveal the lower degree of encouragement.

### **Aspiration Scale**

The Aspiration Scale developed and standardised by Bhargava and Shah (1996) was used. It is a paper-pencil test comprising of eleven parts, one on each page. The procedure of scoring is simple. It provides three types of scores: (i) Goal Discrepancy Score (GDS), (ii) Attainment Discrepancy Score (ADS) and (iii) The Number of Times the Goal Reach Score (NTRS).

The extent and direction of the difference between actual score on the previous trial and goal set up of the next trial is known as Goal Discrepancy Score (GDS). Attainment Discrepancy Score (ADS) is the difference between aspiration (expected score) and the achievement (actual score) on the same trial. Thus in order to obtain ADS expected performance is subtracted from the actual performance. The size of the discrepancy shows the extent to which one surpasses or fails to reach his goal. Number of times the goal reach score (NTRS) is obtained by the number of times where one's actual score is equal or more than the expected score.

### **Academic Performance**

Academic Performance was measured on the basis of the marks obtained in Class X.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Groups were formed on the basis of level of parental encouragement as indicated in the Parental Encouragement Scale described earlier. The three groups categorised on this basis are:

- A<sub>1</sub>- Students receiving low parental encouragement
- A<sub>2</sub>- Students receiving average parental encouragement
- A<sub>3</sub>- Students receiving high parental encouragement

Majority of students received average amount of parental encouragement (Figure 1). Out of 800 samples selected for the study, the number of students receiving high, average and low parental encouragement is 175 (21.87%), 414 (51.75%) and 211

(26.37%) respectively. Thus, we may say that the trait of parental encouragement is normally distributed among the students constituting the sample under study.

### Parental Encouragement and Level of Aspiration (LOA)

The three groups formed on the basis of Parental Encouragement were tested on three scores of aspirations i.e. Goal Discrepancy Score (GDS), Attainment Discrepancy Score (ADS), Number of Times the Goal Reach Score (NTRS).

**Table 1**  
**ANOVA on Level of Aspiration (LOA) of High, Average and Low Parental Encouragement Groups**

Level of Aspiration	Source of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean of Squares	F value	Result
GDS	Among group	2	6.16	3.08	0.52	NS
	Within group	797	4727.38	5.93		
ADS	Among group	2	30.89	15.44	2.28	NS
	Within group	797	5404.73	6.78		
NTRS	Among group	2	79.04	39.52	5.89	S
	Within group	797	5347.8	6.71		

GDS: Goal Discrepancy Score

ADS: Attainment Discrepancy Score

NTRS: Number of Times the Goal Reach Score

S - Significant at 0.05 level

NS- Not Significant

The 'F' value obtained on Goal Discrepancy Score (GDS) and Attainment Discrepancy Score (ADS) is 0.52 and 2.28 respectively which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. Hence, null hypothesis 1 is accepted on GDS and ADS scores of Level of Aspiration. However, the obtained 'F' value on Number of Times the Goal Reach Score (NTRS) is 5.89 which is significant at 0.05 level of confidence. Hence, the three groups differ on NTRS score of Level of Aspiration. Alternate Hypothesis 1 stating that "Students differentiated on the basis of parental encouragement (high, average and low) would differ on Number of Times the Goal Reach Score" is accepted.

**Table 2**  
**Comparison of Means of High, Average and Low Parental Encouragement Groups on Level of Aspiration (NTRS)**

Group Comparison	Mean	Difference	Critical Difference
Low Vs Average	4.63* 5.33	0.70	0.41
Low Vs High	4.63* 5.39	0.76	0.51
Average Vs High	5.33 5.39	0.06	0.46

NTRS- Number of Times the Goal Reach Score

\*Significant at 0.05 level

A perusal of Table 2 indicates the critical difference and means among high, average and low levels of parental encouragement, when Number of Times the Goal Reach Score was compared. The Low Vs Average parental encouragement group differed significantly as critical difference is less than the mean difference ( $0.41 < 0.70$ ). Similarly, the Low Vs High parental encouragement group also differed significantly as mean difference is greater than the critical difference ( $0.76 > 0.51$ ). When Average and High parental encouragement group was compared the critical difference obtained is 0.46 which is greater than its mean difference 0.06. Hence, these two groups did not differ at 0.05 level of confidence.

### Parental Encouragement and Academic Performance

The three groups formed on the basis of parental encouragement were tested by employing ANOVA on the scholastic achievement of the students.

**Table 3**  
**ANOVA on Academic Performance of High, Average and Low Parental Encouragement Groups**

Source	df	Sum of square	Mean of square	F	Result
Among group	2	145.7	72.85	0.47	N.S
Within group	797	124468.06	156.17		
Total	799				

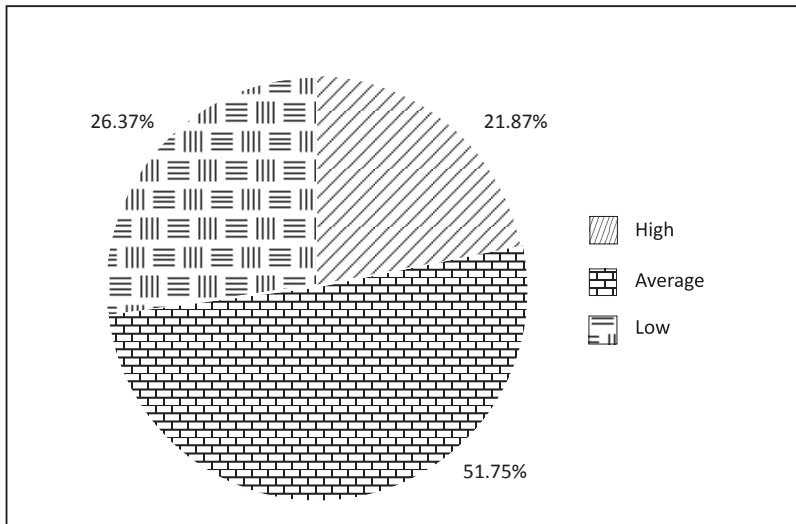
NS- Not Significant

It is evident from Table 3 that the three groups do not differ significantly on academic performance. This is because obtained 'F' value is 0.47 which is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore,

null hypothesis 2 which stated that “students having high, average and low Parental Encouragement would not differ significantly on academic performance” is accepted.

**Discussion**

Parents are an efficacious force in students’ development. They have the advantage over peers, educators, counselors and other professionals of serving as a continual and perhaps more stable resource for their children over the life span (Trusty, 1998). Encouraging parent value the unique make up of their children and help them to foster the uniqueness within the limits of healthy personality and social adjustment. Results indicate that parental encouragement is normally distributed among the students constituting the sample under study. Out of 800 sample, the number of students receiving average amount of parental encouragement constituted 414 (51.75%), while high and low parental encouragement group constituted of 175 (21.87%) and 211 (26.37%) respectively (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Pie chart showing levels of Parental Encouragement**

In analysing the results of the study, the researcher found that no significant difference exists between the three groups formed on the basis of parental encouragement on two scores of level of aspiration i.e. Goal Discrepancy Score ( $F = 0.52$ ) and Attainment



Discrepancy Score ( $F = 2.28$ ). Hence, null hypothesis 1 is accepted on GDS and ADS scores of Level of Aspiration.

When the mean scores of all the groups were compared on NTRS i.e. the goal reach score; it was found that the group receiving high parental encouragement ( $M=5.39$ ) scored more than average ( $M=5.33$ ) and low ( $M=4.63$ ) parental encouragement group. The obtained 'F' value on Number of Times the Goal Reach Score (NTRS) is 5.89 which is significant at 0.05 level of confidence. Hence, the three groups differ on NTRS score of Level of Aspiration Scale. Alternate Hypothesis 1 stating that 'Students differentiated on the basis of parental encouragement (high, average and low) would differ on Number of Times the Goal Reach Score is accepted.

The researcher feels that the low parental encouragement group scored minimum on number of times the goal reach score as they fear failure while the average and high parental encouragement group is observed to fix more than realistic target as they are willing to take risk. The findings are corroborative of the results of Bhargava and Shah (1996) and consistent with the previous research reporting which states that male and female undergraduate students did not differ in their level of aspiration (Rahman and Goswami, 2013). Contrary to this, Kruezer et. al. (1992) reported that female students have lower aspiration for their career and to become leaders than their male counterparts whereas Hmingthanzula (2001) and Cochran (2011) found that socio-economic status and ability are important variables that influence the formation of occupational aspirations of adolescents.

A perusal of Table 3 indicates that when students differentiated on the basis of parental encouragement (high, average, low) were compared on academic performance, no significant difference was found ( $F = 0.47$ ) at 0.05 level. The mean difference between Low Vs Average (0.97) and Low Vs High (0.98) is observed to be nominal, whereas for Average Vs High (0.01), it was negligible. The finding is in conformity to the study of Goldenberg et. al. (2001) which stated that there is no significant relation between parental expectations and student achievement. On the contrary, studies of Agarwal (1986) and Haseen and Bhargava (1999) do not agree to our findings. Agarwal (1986) reported that there is significant relationship between parental encouragement and educational development of children. Bhatt and Rajput (1995) further concluded that academic achievement of students, in general was influenced in proportion of their parental encouragement. Sahay (1991) stated

that parental support was the most powerful correlate of academic achievement. Similarly, Fisher and Padmawidjaja (1999) found that parents' high expectations had a strong and lasting influence on students' educational and career development.

On the basis of the findings, the researcher is of the opinion that other factors such as past experience, goal setting and risk taking behaviour, gender differences, interests etc. also influence an adolescent. Further, the present study has shown that the student population is quite competitive amongst themselves; there is an urge for survival, career consciousness, feeling of independence and educational awareness among them which is why parental support does not wholly influence their achievement level. Also as generally seen in the trait of the adolescents, they do not want their parents to wean them or guide them consistently as it challenges their independence.

Thus, it is concluded that parental encouragement does not affect the aspiration level i.e. Goal Discrepancy Score and the difference between expected (aspiration) and actual score (achievement) i.e. Attainment Discrepancy Score for adolescents but significant difference was found on Number of Times the Goal Reach Score. Hence, the null hypothesis 1 stating that "students differentiated on the basis of parental encouragement (high, average, low) would not differ significantly on GDS and ADS scores of level of aspiration" is accepted while alternate hypothesis 1 is accepted on the NTRS score of Level of Aspiration. Further, null hypothesis 2 stating that "there is no significant difference between the three groups (high, average, low parental encouragement) on academic performance" is accepted.

### **Educational Implication and Conclusion**

Adolescence is often portrayed as a period of 'storm and stress'. It is the most important period of human life with its own peculiar characteristics. In order for the adolescent to grow up and become a responsible citizen, and excel in various fields of life, much depends on the proper guidance given by the parents to them.

Today, the society is witnessing degeneration in the values of family system due to replacement of communication with cash, especially so in urban areas. The parents feel that by providing materialistic comforts to the child, they are fulfilling their duty. In turn, their expectation is so high that they force their children to set up unrealistic goals. This often leads to stress and frustration

in them when they face failures. Either they lose confidence in themselves or they adopt unfair practices to achieve success in life. When they grow up as adults they become harmful to the society in which they live.

Therefore, parents are expected to bring up their children in a healthy way so that they can contribute to the upliftment of the society in general and the country in particular. Some parents fulfill these expectations; however, others fail to do so, especially when they want to live their dreams through their children. Thus, parenting is not just upbringing of children; it involves encouragement, involvement, facilitation and role modeling. Parents should realise that a successful child is happy but a happy child is always successful. Carter Hoddings (1907) has rightly quoted 'there are two gifts we can give our children: one is roots, the other is wings.'

Thus the present study has a lot of significance for parents and adolescents as it deals with the important aspects of adolescent's developmental variables like aspiration and academic performance which is determined by the parental encouragement provided to them. The findings of the study will give an insight to parents to develop a positive attitude in their children and provide them with emotional security. This will help them in transforming their attitudes and behaviour from traditional ones to more practical and workable ones. This has also been confirmed by Geckova et. al. (2010) who concluded that in order to stimulate educational aspiration family plays an important role. Besides parents and society, other stakeholders like schools, educationists, should likewise respond in a positive way in the growth and development of the child's personality.

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