



INFLUENCE OF FAMILY STRUCTURE ON THE ACADEMIC AMBITIONS OF ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

The adolescent stage is important for education aspirations and is likely impacted both by personal competence and socio-familial context. The family composition of adolescents, intact family, single mother/father family, semi-broken family, or broken family, is one of the most important influences on the education aspirations of adolescents. This article will address how family composition relates to adolescents' educational aspirations, using empirical evidence and applicable frameworks from developmental psychology and sociology. A possible goal is to ascertain if the education aspirations of adolescent students with broken, semi-broken, and/or single parent families are different from students with non-broken families. The results show that students who were stable, supporting and intact families reported qualitatively greater education aspirations than students from broken or partially comprised social family structures. Ultimately, these education essays are for educators, policy agents, and/or parents.

Keywords: Family Structure, Adolescents, Academic Ambitions, Educational Aspiration, Socio-Economic Context

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic aspirations are a strong indicator of future educational success and career readiness. Students' aspirations are shaped by a range of ecological contexts, with family structure being one of the leading variables (Marjoribanks, 2002). While families contribute economic resources, they also provide emotional support, guidance, and modeling. Without a doubt, the increasing diversity in family structures—including nuclear families, single-parent families, segregated families, broken families, and joint families—demands a closer look at how families influence adolescents' aspirations.

Adolescence is also the period of increased social relationships and contacts, whereas a child-cares very little for the society, an adolescent develops a good amount of social sense. In adolescence the child enters a quite new field

of social responsibilities (Maheux, A. J. (2025)). The society and parents place upon him new demands which sometimes confuse him and he fails to adjust successfully in the new role. Teenagers require assistance in forming positive social relationships, and schools are the best setting for this, as they may host a range of social development programs. Adolescence is also a period of maximum growth and development with regard to mental functioning. Intelligence reaches climax during this period. With the development of social and civic sense, the children during this period learn to behave according to the norms of society and culture. The impact of religion and religious practices is also felt for the first time at this age in one's life (Wilbrecht, L., & Davidow, J. Y. (2024)).

Learning is a result of peers, families, and communities in addition to formal education. Learning and, consequently, academic success are influenced by social, economic, and cultural factors. The relative impacts of elements associated to the family and the school have been the focus of a lot of study on the determinants of school accomplishment (Israel et al., 2001). According to the majority of research, school features have little bearing on academic performance, but family history plays a significant role. The most significant primary group in society is the family. It is the most basic and straightforward type of civilization, and it is the earliest and most direct social setting to which a kid is exposed.

In the education of the child the family plays the most important role. The child is born in a family and this is the first agency through which he gets education in sociability. His social and moral development takes place first of all during his early life in the family. He becomes conversant with traditions customs etc. From his family members he learns to love the members of his family. Living with them he gets the primary knowledge of desirable and undesirable behavior patterns. He learns to seek and integration in the society and the feeling of love and hate develop in him. Whatever social experience the child gets in a family, it lays the foundation of his personality. From the psychological point of view the family influences upon the child are of tremendous significance. The latent tendencies of the child first of all find expression in the family and if in the family he gets proper encouragement he is able to achieve adjustment in his adult life.

Fundamentally, therefore the parent child relationship is dependent upon parental attitudes. Children who become socially advanced as they grow older almost always come from homes where parental attitudes toward them were favourable and where a cordial relationship existed between parent and child. Such a relationship will produce a happy friendly child who is relatively free from anxieties and who is a constructive, social and interdependent member of the group (Kerr, 1988). On the other hand, they are usually the products of unfavourable parent-child relationships. Proper social organization depends upon proper organization of families. A child's personality is likely to be severely damaged by an inadequate home environment, affecting both their talents and behavior. The nature of the environment provides the necessary sensory inputs, stimulation and experimental basis for the development of perceptual skills and cognitive skills. The measures of specific aspects of the child's home environment such as parental responsiveness and availability of stimulating playmate were more strongly related to child's development status than global measures of environment quality.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The current study seeks to study the influence of family structure on adolescents' academic ambitions by investigating how disparate family backgrounds mold students' motivation, goal setting, and educational aspirations. Family structure is relevant in developing the emotional and social context in which a child develops, therefore influencing the child's perception toward education and achievement in the future. The perspective of an adolescent from a stable family situation may receive a constant provision of emotional support and encouragement, whereas an adolescent from a broken, semi-broken, or single-parent family may not have access to the same level of encouragement or reinforcement relevant to academic goals, which may limit their academic goals.

Moreover, the purpose of this study is to examine the difference in academic aspiration among students who participate in different family structures, that is to say, students from broken families, students from semi-broken families, and students from single-parent families, where academic aspiration serves as the dependent variable. By examining these differences, this current study seeks to reveal whether the type of family structure or family situation has an impact on students' academic ambition or future-oriented planning. The importance of these findings may yield a greater understanding of how family context may play a role in developing adolescents' academic motivation; ultimately directing educators, counselors, and policymakers in developing interventions to foster the growth and development of students from different family circumstances.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For a number of years, researchers have underscored the significance of family structure in determining academic achievement (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Coleman, 1988). The research reveals that intact two-parent family structures are a reliable source of parental involvement, meaning the degree of parental involvement and support is related to their adolescent's academic achievement aspirations (Dubow et al., 2009). In the case of adolescents from single-parent families or disrupted families, researchers have noted that access to parental involvement and economic resources are most likely diminished — this can reflect negatively on adolescents' academic aspirations (Amato, 2000). On the other hand, joint and/or extended families in collectivist contexts may mitigate some of these effects of family structure by facilitating access to adult responsibility and support (Chaudhary, 2015).

Thakur, T., (2001) studied “Academic achievement of High school boys”. The main objective of the study was to find out how far the school had been able to help the boys to keep up their level of achievement throughout their high school career and how far the school had been able to help the boys to develop their intellectual capacity as revealed by their ability and aptitude. Findings of the study revealed that academic achievement as a whole was not quite satisfactory and in language there had been satisfactory progress of all the groups, but mathematics presented and unsatisfactory picture.

Arunet. al. (2015) conducted a study on “Study of Self Concept In Relation To Family Environment among Adolescents”. The objectives of the study were to study the self concept of adolescents, the family environment of

adolescents, to study the relation between self concept and family environment. The findings of the study were that the male and female adolescents have no difference on self-concept and family environment. Self-concept and family environment for adolescents were positively correlated.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed a descriptive survey design with a comparative framework. A purposive random sample of 300 adolescents enrolled in Grade IX attending urban and semi-urban schools was selected. Respondents were categorized based on family structure: broken families (N = 90), semi-broken families (N = 100), and single-parent families (N = 110). Data were collected through visits to schools after obtaining prior permission and informed consent. The anonymity and confidentiality of all participants were guaranteed.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	155	51.7
	Female	145	48.3
Age Group	13 years	78	26
	14 years	142	47.3
	15 years	80	26.7
Family Structure	Broken Family	90	30
	Semi-Broken Family	100	33.3
	Single-Parent Family	110	36.7
Locality	Urban	160	53.3
	Semi-Urban	140	46.7

The demographic characteristics of the respondents indicate a fair distribution across gender and other background variables. Of the total sample, 155 students (51.7%) were male and 145 students (48.3%) were female, thus close to an equal gender ratio. The majority of the respondents' ages were 14 years (47.3%), followed by 15 years (26.7%) and 13 year-old students (26%) that followed typical adolescent age cohort in the selected grade level. In regard to family structure, the students reported their families as follows: 36.7% were single-parent families; 33.3% semi-broken families; and 30% broken families presented, resulting in representation of families across these backgrounds. Lastly, regarding locality, the geographical location of the respondents consisted of 53.3% from urban settings and 46.7% from semi-urban settings. Overall, the composition of the sample shows that it has a good and representative mix of characteristics, which will be appropriate for examining the relationship between family structure and academic aspiration in adolescents.

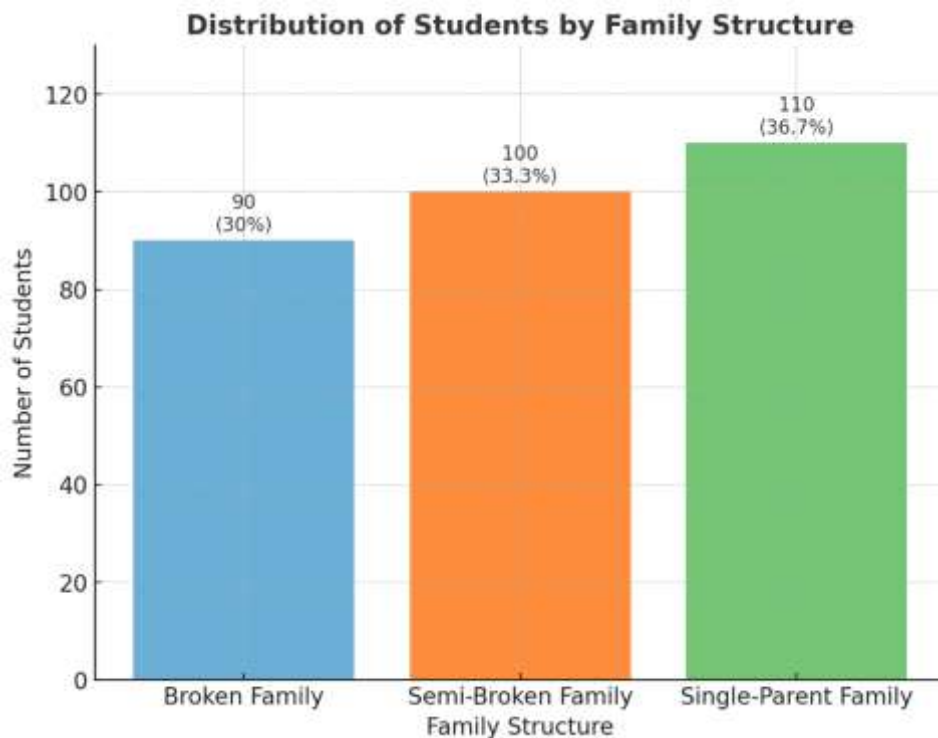


Figure 1: Family structure

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (version 25). Descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, were calculated for each family type. One-Way ANOVA was used to test for significance in the difference in academic ambitions for broken, semi-broken, and single-parent families. Post-hoc comparisons (Tukey’s HSD test) examined the difference between groups.

Hypothesis for the study

H₀: There is no significant difference in the academic ambitions of adolescents from broken, semi-broken, and single-parent families.

H₁: There is a significant difference in the academic ambitions of adolescents from these family structures.

Table 2: ANOVA Summary Table

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	Sig. (p)
Between Groups	1520.47	2	760.23	6.84	0.001 **
Within Groups	32740.15	297	110.24		
Total	34260.62	299			

The findings from the ANOVA ($F = 6.84$, $p = 0.001$) indicate that significant differences exist within academic ambitions across the three types of families. Pairwise comparisons indicated that adolescents from families with divorced parents scored lower on the ambition scale than adolescents from single-parent families, while adolescents from semi-divorced families were somewhere in between in terms of ambition.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate different academic aspirations for adolescents from different family structures. Adolescents from single-parent families appeared to be resilient and determined to strive for educational goals as a result of parental willingness and financial responsibility, which may have strengthened their focus on academic pursuits despite the absence of one parent. Students from semi-broken families who were from families where parents were together but experienced parent conflict and instability had the least confidence in their long-term educational aspirations. The ongoing pace of conflict and lack of emotional stability in these families seemed to negatively influence academic motivation and lifetime goal orientation. Adolescents from broken families showed the lowest academic aspirations overall, with poor academic aspirations often being attributed to emotional insecurity and/or lack of parental guidance, which contributed to their feelings of educational direction and self-belief. These findings are in line with Amato (2000), which provided further validation that family disruption could place children at more of a disadvantage as it pertains to academic and emotional development. Moreover, the study contributes to the literature by adding the distinction between semi-broken and broken family structures that discussed family structure and academic aspirations more nuanced than before.

7. CONCLUSION

The family is a crucial context for understanding adolescents' academic aspirations. In this study, we revealed differences in ambition between students who come from broken families, semi-broken families, and single-parent families. Although family stability is generally related to higher aspirations, broken families can play a detrimental role in educational ambition; in contrast, resilience, supportive extended families, and institutional support can protect against the effects of family instability. Future studies should examine a sample in various socio-economic and cultural contexts, and adjust methodology to a longitudinal design to elucidate academic anchors pertaining to ambition over time.

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