

Academic aspirations of undergraduate students of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana

■ Anjana Rai and Kanwaljit Kaur

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■ **ABSTRACT :** The present study was conducted to know and compare the factors affecting academic aspirations of undergraduate students of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. A sample of 150 students was selected through purposive sampling technique from three colleges of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana having Government funded programmes namely B.Sc. (Hons.) Home Science, B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture, B.Tech. (Agricultural Engineering and Technology). Fifty five percentage of students aspired for further study followed by service in Government and private sector. Only six per cent of the students were aspired to become entrepreneur. Significant variations were found among students of different colleges in relation to aspirations for job in Government sector. There was no association of the level of academic performance, father's occupation and mother's occupation with aspirations of the students, but significant association was observed between aspirations of the students and independent variables like father's education, mother's education, counseling services and family background.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Academic performance, Aspirations, Entrepreneur

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See end of the paper for authors' affiliations →

Anjana Rai

Department of Extension
Education and Communication
Management, College of Home
Science, Punjab Agricultural
University, Ludhiana (Punjab)
India

Email : anjanarai192@
gmail.com

In Agricultural Universities students do have some plans to pursue a specific career after getting their degree. They do aspire for a remunerative job as a fruit of their hard labour and have their own likings and disliking for various career avenues open to them after graduation. Some of the agricultural students may like to work for the State Agriculture Department, banks, seed companies, fertilizers companies, processing companies while students of College of Agriculture Engineering may like to work for tractor companies, processing companies, irrigation department and also in banks and students of College of Home Science may like to work for small enterprises, academics, self-help

groups, as a Home Scientist and NGO's while others may aspire for a job with Agricultural University or a private enterprise. Still others may aspire to pursue their career in army service or law which have hardly any relevance, whatever, with their programme of studies.

The choice of career is one of the most difficult and most important decision in a person's life, and it is made accordance in with his academic pursuits.

There are different factors that affect students' choice of course in college. One of this is family related factors. Students choose by following their parents' advice. They also have to choose with an expectation of financially supporting the family upon completing their

education. Studies from other Asian countries also show parents' impact in decision making of students when it comes to students' course preference.

Aside from family related factors, economic factors which include the employability and availability of job in the future is also considered by students. Employability, *i.e.*, the realistic feasibility of being employed in a stable job, then becomes an important factor in career decision-making. Keeping this in mind the study was conducted with the following objectives:

- To study academic aspirations of students of different colleges of PAU, Ludhiana.
- To know the various reasons for choice of further study after graduation.
- To study socio-personal factors affecting academic aspirations of the students.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in three colleges of PAU, Ludhiana having government funded undergraduate programmes namely B.Sc. (Hons.) Home Science, B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture, B. Tech. (Agricultural Engineering and Technology). A sample for study was selected through purposive sampling technique. Further 50 students of final year class of each programme were selected randomly. Thus total 150 students from three selected programmes comprised the sample for the study. The data for the study was collected through questionnaire.

Operational definition of academic aspirations:

Academic aspirations refer to students' desire for

getting further education after completion of their graduation programme.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the results have been reported under the following sub-headings.

- Academic aspirations of the students and comparison among students of different colleges
- Reasons for choice of further to their reasons related study after graduation and comparison among students of different colleges
- Association of socio- personal factors with the academic aspirations of the students.

Academic aspirations of students :

The data in the Table 1 indicated that more than half of the students (55.33%) had planned to continue their studies. Among these 66 per cent of Home Science student, 54 per cent of Agricultural Engineering and Technology students and 46 per cent students from college of Agriculture planned to continue their studies after their graduation. Rest of the students wanted to take up job in government services (15%) and private service (6.7%), respectively. Eight per cent wanted to get married and settle in life and negligible percentage of students (2.7%) planned to get married with NRI.

Percentage of students of Agriculture College was higher to take up job in Government service (32%) and 10 per cent students of Agricultural Engineering in private service. Only six per cent of students aspired to become

Table 1 : Distribution of students according to their aspirations after graduation					(n = 150)
Aspirations after graduation	College of Agril. Engg.	College of H.Sc.	College of Agri.	Total	Kruskhalwallis H value
	n ₁ =50	n ₂ =50	n ₃ =50		
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	
Stay at home	-	-	-	-	-
Get married and settle in life	4 (8.0)	6 (12.0)	2 (4.0)	12 (8.0)	1.4 ^{NS}
Get married with NRI	2(4.0)	2 (4.0)	-	4 (2.66)	0.56 ^{NS}
Continue with further study	27(54.0)	33 (66.0)	23 (46.0)	83 (55.33)	4.3 ^{NS}
Become entrepreneur	4 (8.0)	3 (6.0)	2 (4.0)	9 (6.0)	2.6 ^{NS}
Continue family business/occupation	3 (6.0)	1 (2.0)	3 (6.0)	7 (4.66)	0.02 ^{NS}
Yet not decided	-	-	--	-	-
Take up job in Govt. services	4 (8.0)	3(6.0)	16 (32.0)	23 (15.33)	6.12*
Take up Job in private sector	5 (10.0)	2 (4.0)	3(6.0)	10(6.66)	3.13 ^{NS}
Diploma courses	-	-	-	-	-
Start own NGO	1 (2.0)	-	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	0.22 ^{NS}

* indicates significance of value at P=0.05 level of significance

NS= Non-significant

entrepreneur. The higher percentage (6%) students of Home science want to become entrepreneur. As data in Table 1 indicate that there were no variations were observed in aspirations of students of three different colleges, after graduation except take up job in private sector.

The data regarding reasons for choice of further study were recorded through multiple response in Table 2 on the whole 59 percentage of the students expressed that they continued the studies by their own interest. The responses to gain in knowledge and skills and to develop technology were given by 54 and 50 per cent of students, respectively. Thirty seven per cent of the students gave reason that applicability of course of study in real life situations. Further college wise data showed that highest percentage of Agricultural Engineering and Technology students (55%) expressed that the applicability of course of study in real life situations whereas least per cent of Home Science students (21%) had a view about applicability of course of study in real life situations.

Association between socio personal profile of students and their aspirations :

The association of socio personal profile of the students with their aspirations was seen by chi- square test.

Academic performance :

According to data presented in Table 3 it is evident that aspirations were non-significantly associated with the academic performance of the students as the chi – square value was 6.09 which was not significant at 5 per cent level of significance.

Bakar and Mohammed (2004) and Smoke (2006) found that there was no relationship between students OCPA and aspirations and supported the findings of present study.

Father's occupation :

The occupation of father was categorised as Govt. service, private service, business, farming and labour given in Table 3. The chi- square value between father's occupation and aspirations was 6.78 showed a non - significant association.

Mother's occupation :

The occupation of mother was categorised as Govt. service, private service, housewife, self-employed and labour. There was no association between mother's occupation and aspirations of students.

Dubow *et al.* (2009) reported the significant association between parents' occupation and aspirations of students and contradicted the findings of the present study.

Father's education :

Data in Table 3 indicated that the chi- square value was 19.37 which was significant at 1 per cent level of significance. Thus, father's education has significant impact on the aspirations of the students. The reasons may be that the more educated fathers guided and motivated their children in better way so, that their children wanted to continue their further study after graduation.

Singh (2000) also found significant association between father's education and educational aspirations

Table 2 : Distribution of students according to their reasons for choice of further study after graduation				(n = 83)
Reasons	College of Agril. Engg.	College of H.Sc.	College of Agri.	Total
	n ₁ =27 f (%)	n ₂ = 33 f (%)	n ₃ = 23 f (%)	f (%)
My own interest in the field of the study	20 (74.0)	16 (48.48)	13 (56.2)	49 (59.0)
Applicability of the course of study in real life situation	15 (55.5)	7 (21.2)	9 (39.0)	31 (37.3)
Availability of adequate facilities in this field	5 (18.5)	4(12.1)	4 (12.1)	13(15.7)
To obtain degree	15 (55.5)	14 (42.4)	16 (69.5)	45 (54.2)
Gain in knowledge and skills	24 (77.7)	12 (36.6)	9 (39.13)	42 (50.6)
To develop technology	6 (22.2)	3 (9.0)	4 (17.3)	13 (15.7)
More job opportunities	12 (44.4)	10 (30.3)	7 (30.4)	29 (34.9)
Family members like me to get this type of education	4 (14.8)	9 (27.2)	9 (27.2)	22 (26.5)
Parents expectation to obtain degree	11 (40.7)	14(42.4)	10 (43.7)	35 (42.1)

*Multiple Response

and supported the findings of present study.

Mother's education :

It is clear from Table 3 that the chi- square value came to be 27.09 which was significant at 1% level of significance. Thus, indicated that there was significant association between aspirations of the students and mother's education.

Azhar *et al.* (2013); Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013) and Singh (1998) found significant association between parent's education and aspirations of students and supported the findings of present study.

Availing counselling services :

The analysis presented in Table 3 show that there was significant association between the students who had availed counselling services in college and their aspirations.

Family background :

There was significant association found between the family background and aspirations of the students as the chi – square value was 11.41 it was significant at 5 % level of significance.

Pradhan (2001) observed that place of residence

Table 3 : Association between socio-personal profile of the students and their aspirations						(n =150)
Socio personal profile of students	Aspirations of students					Chi-square value
	Get married	Continue with further studies	Continue business	Take up job	Total	
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	
	16 (10.7)	83 (55.33)	18 (15.33)	33 (25.33)	150 (100)	
Academic performance						
High	2(12.5)	23 (27.7)	4 (22.2)	12 (36.3)	41 (27.3)	6.09 ^{NS}
Medium	11(68.7)	44 (53.0)	9(50.0)	16 (48.4)	80 (53.3)	
Low	4(25.0)	15 (18.0)	5 (27.7)	5(15.15)	29(19.3)	
Father's occupation						
Govt. service	4(25.0)	39(46.9)	-	15(45.4)	58(38.66)	6.78 ^{NS}
Private service	4(25.0)	6(7.2)	5(27.7)	2(6.06)	17(34.0)	
Business	4(25.0)	6(7.2)	13(72.2)	1(3.03)	24(16.0)	
Farming	3(18.7)	32(38.5)	-	15(45.4)	50(33.33)	
Labour	1(5.55)	-	-	-	1(0.66)	
Mother's occupation						
Govt. service	2(12.25)	11(13.2)	2(11.1)	12(36.3)	27 (18.0)	10.77 ^{NS}
Private service	1(6.25)	1(1.20)	-	-	2(1.33)	
Housewife	11(68.7)	67(80.7)	15(83.3)	19(57.5)	112(74.7)	
Self employed	2(12.25)	4(4.8)	1(5.55)	2(6.06)	9(6.0)	
Labour	-	-	-	-	-	
Father's education						
Low	-	-	-	-	-	19.37*
Medium	2(12.5)	12(14.4)	8(44.44)	16(48.4)	38(25.3)	
High	14(87.5)	71(85.5)	10(55.55)	17 (51.5)	112(74.7)	
Mother's education						
Low	2(12.5)	3(3.6)	3(16.7)	3(9.09)	11(7.3)	27.09**
Medium	5(31.25)	26(31.3)	14(77.8)	18(54.0)	63(42.0)	
High	9(56.25)	54(65.0)	1(5.55)	12(36.3)	76(50.7)	
Availing counseling services						
Yes	2 (12.5)	34(40.0)	2(11.11)	20(60.6)	58(38.7)	17.14**
No	14(87.5)	49(59.0)	16(88.8)	13(39.3)	92(61.3)	
Family background						
Rural	10(62.5)	20(24.09)	7(38.88)	7(21.21)	44(29.33)	11.41*
Urban	6(37.5)	63(75.09)	11(61.11)	26(78.7)	106(70.7)	

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

NS= Non-significant

of a person (residing in rural or urban areas) were not affected the level of aspirations of college youth and contradicted the findings of present study.

Conclusion and suggestions :

– Significant association was observed between aspirations of the students and independent variables like father's education, mother's education, counseling services and family background.

– From all three colleges, very few students aspired to become entrepreneur after graduation, so there is need to conduct further study on the entrepreneurial behaviour of students after graduation.

– Highest percentage of students of Home Science aspired to continue further study among all three colleges. The reason may be that there is less job opportunities in Home science after graduation. So, more job opportunities should be provided to students of Home Science who could not continue their studies.

Authors' affiliations:

Kanwaljit Kaur, Department of Extension Education and Communication Management, College of Home Science, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana (Punjab) India

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