



Academic Achievement And Educational Aspiration Among Secondary Students Of North 24 Parganas

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Abstract

Secondary education in India extends beyond the acquisition of academic knowledge; it is a formative stage that shapes character, nurtures personal growth, and enables students to discover their unique strengths and aspirations. Educational aspiration refers to the goals and expectations students set for their future academic and professional lives. Academic achievement, on the other hand, reflects their actual performance in school, measured through grades, test scores, and overall learning outcomes. This study aims to address the level of educational aspiration and academic achievement of secondary school students with respect to gender in Barasat subdivision of North 24pargana in India and find out whether there is any relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement. The present study was conducted with a sample of 200 students enrolled in West Bengal Board schools. Educational Aspiration Inventory developed by Dr. Yasmin Ghani Khan was administered. Academic achievement was measured using the percentage of marks obtained by the students in the Class IX annual examination. The findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference of the level of Educational Aspirations between male and female secondary school students but in case of academic achievement the results are inverse. However, a positive and significant relationship exists between academic achievement and educational aspiration.

Keywords – Academic achievement, educational aspiration, secondary school students, gender.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right under Article 21A of Indian Constitution, ensured by Right to Education Act (RTE, 2009) provide free and compulsory education to children between age group of 6-14. Though Secondary stage of education consisting of student age between 14-16 years, this stage acts as a link between Primary and Higher Education. Secondary education gains importance in developing countries for a number of reasons, emerging global economy requires a higher-level knowledge and skills that go beyond the basic literacy and numeracy provided by elementary education. It is rightly asserted that only people with higher educational qualifications and nations with large proportion of educated people are better positioned to take advantage of the increasing opportunities from global economy. Consequently, the universal provision of education is being redefined to include more years of schooling, particularly the secondary education. As per Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) report of Ministry of Human Resource and Development, in India Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in Secondary education 79.8% in 2020-21 and 79.56% in 2021-22, 79.56% which is lower than the 2020-21, whereas Dropout Rates in Secondary education for 2021-22, 12.61%. Dropout rates are higher for boys than girls in Secondary education. According to a UDISE+ report the dropout rate for boys was higher in secondary classes (18.3%) than girls (16.3%). According to the report, nearly 30% students in the country do not transition from the secondary to the senior secondary level. Boys and girls in Indian schools leave school education incomplete giving rise to the sensitive issue of school dropouts, as per National Family Health

and Survey (NFHS 4). Different study identifies reasons forcing Indian students to drop out of school, the reasons are such as lack of interest in studies, the domestic contribution of children for household chores, economic reasons and migration of families. One important factor of Dropout is lack of Aspiration which is an important variable for Academic Achievement.

Educational aspirations represent the academic goals students set for themselves and the level of education they hope to attain. These aspirations are closely linked to broader life ambitions, values, and career trajectories, and they serve as a powerful motivational force in shaping academic performance and long-term success (Khattab, 2015; Kao & Tienda, 1998). Importantly, aspirations differ from expectations: while aspirations reflect desired attainment, expectations are grounded in students' perceptions of what they can realistically achieve given their abilities and circumstances (Boxer et al., 2011; Reynolds & Johnson, 2011). Research consistently demonstrates that higher aspirations are associated with stronger academic achievement and more ambitious career choices, though the realism of these aspirations can vary (Garg et al., 2002). Thus, educational aspirations function not only as predictors of academic success but also as indicators of students' motivation, resilience, and future orientation.

Aspiration influences the Academic achievement; there is a close relationship between academic achievement and level of aspiration. Higher level of aspiration helps in higher academic achievement. The level of aspiration is generally raised when performance is equal to level of aspiration and lowered when performance falls below the level of aspiration. The academic achievement of the students is an important significant determinant of their success in later life. A good academic achievement in Secondary Education boosts the confidence and morale of a student to face the problems of life and helps in developing a well-adjusted personality. Students in this stage develop certain aspirations regarding their educational and future careers. The secondary level students are facing new challenges in their life. According to (Elizabeth & Hurlock, 1973) there are three important aspects of aspirations- (i) What he wants to do; (ii) How will he expect to do; (iii) How important the performance is to him. Aspirations are thus ego involved; success leads to increased self-esteem, while failure brings embarrassment, remorse, inadequacy and inferiority. Aspiration has a profound influence on the personality of the students. Positive aspirations of achieving success are stronger than negative aspirations. The aspiration acts as a source of motivation and lead to achievement. The aspirations make them easy to choose the right one. Catherine Rethon. Muna Arephin. (2010) worked on "Structural and socio-psychological influences on adolescents' educational aspiration and subsequent academic achievement" and one the objective of the study was, how do aspiration impact on eventual achievement. They concluded that strong association of aspiration and academic achievement are present. Students with high educational aspiration tend to achieve higher.

Academic Achievement refers to the level of educational accomplishment of a student in various subjects taught in educational institutions. Devi, Binita (2020) studied "A study on academic achievement and educational aspiration of secondary school students in udalgiri district of Assam". Students who have better educational aspiration have better academic achievement. There was no significant difference between male and female students in their academic achievement but in educational aspiration.

Gender is also one of such factors that have considerable effects on students' academic performances. In its narrowest sense, gender means socially constructed sex roles of female/girls or male/boys. Consequently, there might be differences on academic achievement in girls and boys. Gender issues are currently the main focus of discussion and research in any society. The question of gender is a matter of grave concern especially among academics and policy formulators. Educational statistics and worldwide media have reported a clear gender gap in academic achievement between males and females with boys lagging behind girls in terms of subject grades, secondary school graduation, and tertiary level enrollment and completion (Clark, Lee, Goodman, & Yacco, 2008; Parker, Van Zanden, & Parker, 2018). Goel (2004) instigated the 'effect of home environment on educational aspirations', study showed that girls had much higher educational aspiration than boys. Boys felt more rejected with the autocratic atmosphere at home in comparison to girls who experienced more nurturance than boys. Even though research shows gender differences exist in academic achievement, many researchers are still finding differences in performance as well as their mental ability. It has been found that there was a real gender difference on academic achievement of secondary school students in. The boys have lower academic performance in comparison to girls in secondary level. This means that girls are found better on academic achievement than male students which reflects that female students have higher level of aspiration than boys.

II. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Secondary level of education considered as a staircase for educational aspiration among students and for that reason academic achievement holds a major position of their life's. It is a critical stage within the Indian education system, serving not only to prepare students for future academic and professional pursuits but also to cultivate responsible citizenship and strengthen democratic values. At this juncture, learners begin to align their aspirations with career goals, making secondary schooling a decisive point in shaping life trajectories. Educational aspiration emerges as a powerful motivational factor, driving students toward higher achievement. High aspirations promote academic success and personal growth, whereas limited aspirations can hinder performance (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2014; Zimmerman, 2002). A review of the literature reveals that no substantial research has been conducted on the relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement with respect to gender in higher secondary schools, particularly within the Barasat subdivision of North 24 Parganas district, India. Therefore, the researcher intends to address this gap.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

AB.Rahim Bakar and Shamsiah Mohamed (2004) analysed the academic performance, educational, and occupational aspirations of 245 randomly selected technical secondary school students. Their study revealed a significant correlation between aspiration and academic achievement among technical students. Academic achievement was categorized into low, average, and high-performance levels. All high-performing students expressed strong aspirations to pursue higher education, either at the bachelor's or master's level. However, the choice of courses for further study was often found to be unrealistic.

Gogoi Nitul dr. (2017) in the investigation "A study on gender differences and academic achievement in secondary schools in assam" found that urban female students were better achiever in academics in comparison to urban male. But in rural areas no significant differences were evident.

Naqvi Fatma Talmeez and Khan Zabir Mohd. (2018) conducted a study titled "Level of Educational Aspiration and Its Predictors: A Study of Tribal and Non-Tribal Students of Government Schools" with a sample of 120 tribal and non-tribal students. The objective was to examine the relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement. To measure these variables, the researchers employed the Level of Educational Aspiration Test (LEAT) along with an adapted test series to assess achievement levels. The findings revealed that the relationship between aspiration and achievement among tribal students was positive but weak, whereas in the case of non-tribal (general category) students, the correlation was significant. Predictors of educational aspiration included gender, caste, and academic achievement, which together accounted for approximately 13% of the variance. A positive correlation was observed between aspiration, caste, and academic achievement, while gender was not found to be a determining factor in the level of aspiration

Dkhar, Bamonlang M. (2018) conducted a study titled "School Environment and Level of Educational Aspiration in Relation to Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya." The findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between educational aspiration and academic achievement among urban students, which was attributed to the availability of better facilities, diverse learning styles, and a continuous competitive environment. In contrast, a significant relationship was observed among rural students. The study further indicated that gender did not influence the level of aspiration. Moreover, the overall academic achievement of students in Jaintia Hills was found to be less encouraging.

Devi, Binita (2020) conducted a study titled "A Study on Academic Achievement and Educational Aspiration of Secondary School Students in Udalguri District of Assam." The study concluded that both academic achievement and educational aspiration were higher among rural students compared to their urban counterparts. It was observed that students with stronger educational aspirations demonstrated better academic achievement. While no significant difference was found between male and female students in terms of academic achievement, differences did emerge in educational aspiration. Significant variations were noted between female urban and female rural students, as well as between male urban and male rural students, across both variables.

Maya, P. V., & Jayanthi, N. L. N. (2024) researched on “Educational aspiration of secondary school students”, the results of the study indicate that most secondary school students possess a moderate level of educational aspiration. Female students were found to have significantly higher educational aspirations compared to their male counterparts.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To compare the mean scores of the level of Educational Aspirations of secondary school students of Barasat subdivision in North 24 Parganas between male and female students.
2. To compare the mean scores of the Academic achievement of secondary school students of Barasat subdivision in North 24 Parganas between male and female students.
3. To find out the relationship between Level of Educational Aspiration and Academic achievement of Secondary school students of Barasat Subdivision of North 24 parganas district of West Bengal.

V. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference of the level of Educational Aspirations between male and female secondary school students of Barasat subdivision in North 24 Parganas.
2. There is no significant difference of Academic achievement between Male and Female secondary school students of Barasat subdivision in North 24 Parganas.
3. There is no significant relationship between Level of Educational Aspiration and Academic achievement of Secondary school students of Barasat Subdivision of North 24 Parganas of West Bengal.

VI. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Method adopted

The research design for the present study is descriptive research of survey type. The primary data was collected by the researcher from the sample students After getting permission from the respected headmasters/headmistress of the school, the planned tool was distributed to the sample students of class IX and explain them the purpose of the study.

Population and Sample

The population of the study comprises students from class IX of government secondary schools. Schools are selected conveniently from the Barasat district of north 24 pargana of West Bengal. The sample for the study comprises 200 students both male and female (male 100, female 100). Quota Sampling Technique was used in selecting students of the school as respondents.

Tools for data collection

To measure the educational aspiration level, educational aspiration inventory was used. The test was developed by the Dr. Yasmin Ghani khan. The test contains 30 items, each item has three option “Yes”, “no”, and “don’t know” The statements have to be responded by ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ or “Don’t know” according to the examinee’s view, and wishes. The students have to respond by putting tick mark of the correct option for the statement, each option of each item has different scoring marks. The test-retest reliability was calculated as 0.92 and the split half reliability was calculated as 0.88. The co efficient of co relation was found to be 0.66 of Pearson product moment correlation significant at 0.1 level of significance.

Academic achievement in the present study refers to the final marks (%) obtained by the students in class IX annual exam. Marks was collected from the students as well as school office.

Statistical techniques

To analyses the data for both educational aspiration and academic achievement quantitative statistical technique was used with the help of SPSS 20.0 software. The following statistical technique was used in this study to analyze and interpret the data Mean, Median, Sd, Normality test, t test, levene’s test for equality of variance, Mann Whitney test, Spearman’s rho.

VII. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of educational aspiration and academic achievement

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Aspiration	200	21.00	36.00	57.00	47.5900	4.97652	-0.459	0.172	-0.460	0.342
Percentage	200	56.00	36.00	92.00	61.6800	9.95001	0.254	0.172	-0.121	0.342
Valid N (listwise)	200									

From table 1 it is found that the mean score of students is 47.59 in respect of aspiration and mean academic achievement (percentage) score is 61.68. Standard deviation of aspiration score is 4.97 and academic achievement score is 9.95. Skewness and Kurtosis for the variables were computed. In case of aspiration skewness is -.459 and Kurtosis is -.460, both are negative, indicating that the data are slightly rightly skewed (negative) and peaked (leptokurtic) compared to normal distribution. For percentage skewness is .0254 and Kurtosis is -.121 indicating that the data are slightly left skewed (positive) and peaked.

Statistical package such as SPSS 2.0 report a statistic called standard error for both the skewness and Kurtosis scores. This allows a simple rule of thumb to be applied described by Rose et al., (2015). According to it divide either score by standard error and the result is greater than ± 1.96 ; it suggests that the data are not normal with respect to that statistic.

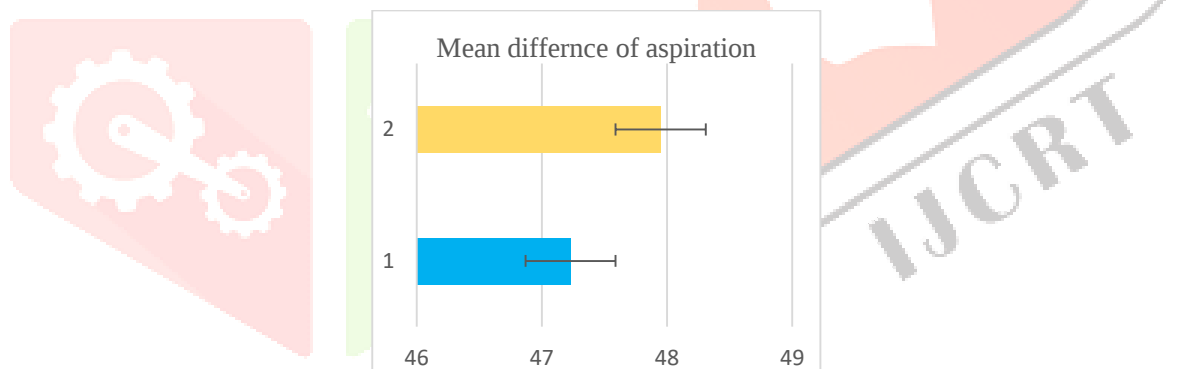


Fig 1 Graphical representation of Mean of educational aspiration of boys and girls:

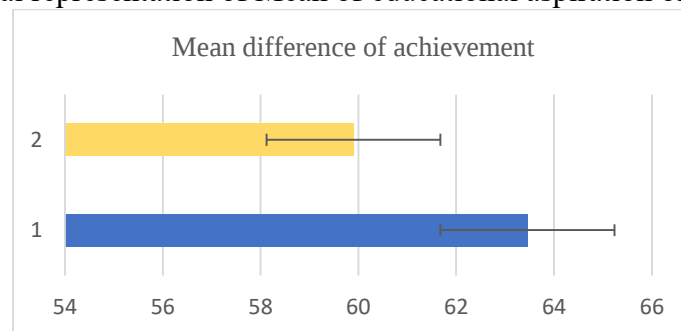


Fig 2 Graphical representation of Mean of academic achievement of boys and girls:

Table 2: Test of normality for both the variable

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk			
	Statistic	df	Sign.	Statistic	df	Sign.	
Aspiration	0.086	200	0.001	0.966	200	0.000	Not Normal
Percentage	0.057	200	0.200*	0.989	200	0.131	Normal Distribution

* This is a lower bound of the true significance

^a Lilliefors Significance Correction

The above table 2 presents the results from two well-known tests of normality, namely the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and the Shapiro-Wilk Test. The Shapiro-Wilk Test is more appropriate for small sample sizes (< 50 samples), but can also handle sample sizes as large as 2000. For this reason, we will use the Shapiro-Wilk test as our numerical means of assessing normality. If the sig. value of the Shapiro-Wilk Test is greater than 0.05, the data is normal. If it is below 0.05, the data significantly deviate from a normal distribution. Here in case of educational aspiration the significance value is .000 which is below 0.05, hence the data is deviate significantly from normality. In case of academic achievement, the test value is 0.123 which is greater than 0.05 and hence prove normality of the data.

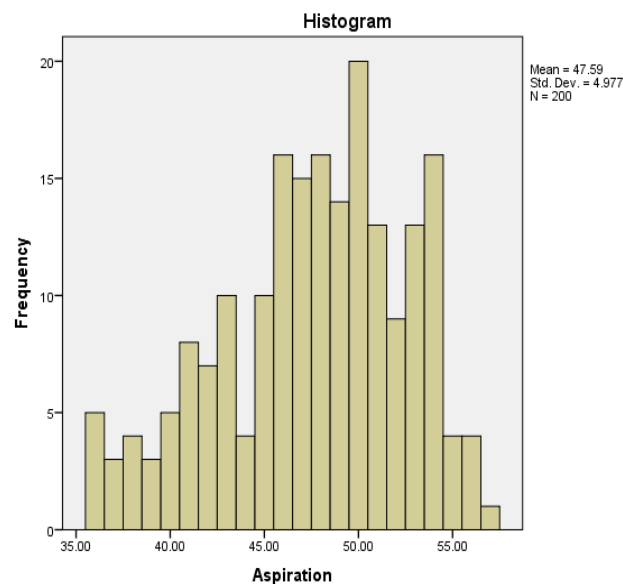


Fig 3 Histogram

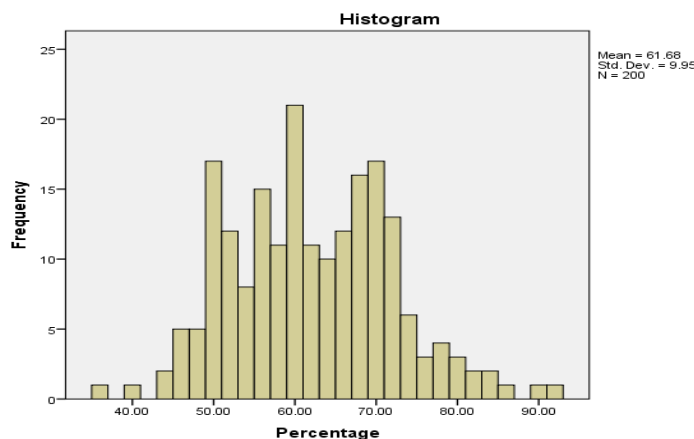


Fig 4 Histogram

Table 3: Mann-Whitney U test for comparison of educational aspiration between genders:

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Aspiration is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.284	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

From the above table 3 it is showed that the hypothesis test value is (U) 0.284 which is not significant at the (p value) 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is retained here. So, it can be said that the distribution of educational aspiration is same across categories of gender.

Table 4: N, Mean, SD and Std Error of academic achievement of male and female students

Group Statistics						
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	
Percentage	Boys	100	63.4600	11.28995	1.12900	
	Girls	100	59.9000	8.07102	.80710	

From the above table 4, it is observed that, there are slight differences in the mean scores and standard deviation of scores of academic achievements (percentage) with respect to the categorical variable Gender. Therefore, it is decided to find out whether this difference is significant or not. For this purpose, independent samples 't' test is employed.

Table 5: Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and t-test for Equality of Means of Academic achievement of male and female students.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Percentage	Equal variances assumed	11.737	0.001	2.565	198	0.011	3.56000	1.38782	0.82319	6.29681
	Equal variances not assumed			2.565	179.234	0.011	3.56000	1.38782	0.82143	6.29857

The analysis of this table 5 shows that, in case of Levene's Test for Equality of Variance the F value is 11.737 and corresponding p value is .001 ($p < .01$) for the variations in respect of gender. Here, for percentage the variability is the same in gender, thus equal variance cannot be assumed for this purpose. This table also shows that, in case of comparing the mean score of percentage between boys and girls, the calculated 't' value is 2.565 and $p = .011$ ($p < .05$). Hence, t is significant at .05 level. So, H_0 2 is rejected and it can be said that the boys' students ($M = 63.4600$) are significantly different from the girls' students ($M = 59.9000$) with respect to academic achievement.

Table 6: Spearman's rho Correlation test

			Aspiration	Percentage
Spearman's rho	Aspiration	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.544**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.000
		N	200	200
	Academic achievement	Correlation Coefficient	0.544**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	-
		N	200	200

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From the above table 6 the SPSS output shows the correlation between educational aspiration and academic achievement (percentage). The correlation coefficient or r value is .544, which indicates a positive, moderate relationship between variables. The significant level is .000, even less than 0.01 and we can confidently say that there is a real significant relation between the variable.

VIII. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. It has been found that the value of Mann Whitney- U test was .284 at the 0.05 level of significance which is not significant in case of educational aspiration of male and female students, so the null hypothesis is retained and accepted that there is no significant difference of the level of Educational Aspirations between male and female secondary school students of Barasat subdivision in North 24 Parganas.
2. It has been found that the t value of male and female students in case of academic achievement is 2.565 which is significant at the 0.01 level of significance hence null hypothesis is rejected and there is significant difference exists between genders of secondary school students of Barasat subdivision in north 24 parganas.
3. From the present study, it has been found that the coefficient of correlation (r) between Academic Achievement and educational aspiration score of secondary school students is .544 which indicates a positive moderate relation between variable and .000 significance value even less than 0.01 which is highly significant.

IX. LIMITATIONS

1. It is not possible to control the mental state of the respondents.
2. The presence or absence of the student in the class is not controllable.

X. RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTIONS

1. The present study was only conducted in Barasat subdivision of North 24 pargana district of west Bengal so the universal validity of the findings may not be concluded. So, there is a need to conduct the study in wider area.
2. The study was conducted on the basis of gender, it may be conducted upon other variable like location, medium of instruction, type of school, and age of the students.
3. A comparative study can be conducted on academic achievement and educational aspiration among the students of primary and secondary level or secondary and higher level.
4. In the present study the sample size was kept small but it is recommended to take a larger sample for future reference.

XI. CONCLUSION

The secondary education makes an important contribution to democratic citizenship and social cohesion, which are extremely important principles in India. There can be no major expansion or improvement of higher education in India without first improving and expanding the secondary level. Indeed, secondary education can be a "bridge" between elementary and higher education. It is one of the important platforms for the students to choose their further future goals. Their educational aspiration as well as academic achievement determines their future path. It was evident that schools play a positive role in achievement level and educational aspiration of students. In the present study it was noted that the educational aspiration level between male and female students were indifferent. So, there is no significant difference in the mean score of aspiration among higher secondary school students based on gender. It has

been found that there was a real gender difference on academic achievement of secondary school students in Barasat subdivision. The female students have lower academic achievement in comparison to male students in secondary level. This means that male students are found better on academic achievement than female students. This indicates that though having high educational aspiration the female students were not academically high achiever in case of secondary school students of Barasat subdivision of north 24 pargana. On the other hand, the data from male students reflect that there is high achievement as well as high educational aspiration. From this it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship exist between the two variable, educational aspiration and academic achievement.

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