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## Article

Examining the impact of parental education and socio-demographic factors on career aspirations in adolescent students in Delhi NCR, India: A cross-sectional study

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## MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Examining the impact of parental education and socio-demographic factors on career aspirations in adolescent students in Delhi NCR, India: A cross-sectional study

Praveen Kumar Pandey<sup>1</sup>, Prashant Kumar Pandey<sup>2</sup>, Samriti Mahajan<sup>1</sup>, Nandini Srivastava<sup>3</sup> and Mohd Asif Shah<sup>4,5\*</sup>

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influence career aspirations in students, including the role of university, gender, and parental education. The research methodology involved analyzing the attitudes of students at four universities in India using a closed-ended questionnaire and factor analysis, MANOVA, and Structural-Equation-Modeling (SEM) analysis. The results showed significant differences in the attitudes of students at private and government universities, and a significant effect of parental education, but no significant impact of gender. However, the study had a limitation of data collected from only four specific universities and may not be representative of the entire national university population. The findings have practical implications for universities to improve the positive attitudes of their students and increase their motivation levels. This study is original in its focus on the impact of parental education and socio-demographic factors on career aspirations in adolescent students in Delhi NCR, India, the first of its kind in this population in the Delhi NCR region of India.

**Subjects:** Educational Research; Education Studies; Higher Education;

**Keywords:** career aspirations; parental education; Structural-Equation-Modeling (SEM); attitude; gender; socio-demographic factors



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mohd Asif Shah is currently working as an Associate Professor at Kabridahar University, Ethiopia. He has more than hundred publications which are indexed in Scopus, and Web of Science Indexed Journals. Having more than ten years of teaching experience, he has been a popular instructor. His courses always fill up quickly as students enjoy his teaching style. He tries to deliver the information in a fun and interesting manner to aid students' grasp of the material and hold their interest.

JEL classification: J13; J24

## 1. Introduction

In the contemporary global architectural framework, the majority of individuals, including those engaged in higher education, aspire to dedicate a substantial portion of their lives to employment within organizations of their choosing. This aspiration, commonly denoted as “occupational aspirations,” encapsulates an individual’s yearning for a future career or profession. Occupational aspirations can be delineated by a proclivity, willingness, and inclination towards a specific occupation or professional trajectory (Gottfredson, 1981). These aspirations manifest through two distinctive perspectives: the idealistic and the realistic. The idealistic perspective entails career aspirations bereft of financial or opportunistic constraints, while the realistic perspective considers an individual’s vocational discernments within the parameters of practicality (Rojewski, 2005).

India is host to a diverse array of higher education institutions, broadly stratified into two principal categories: public and private institutions. Public universities, primarily funded by governmental entities, encompass central universities, state universities, and specialized institutions, whereas private universities are established and administered by non-governmental organizations or trusts. This dichotomy of institutional types enriches the tapestry of higher education in India and is a reflection of the ever-evolving educational requirements of the nation.

The higher education landscape in India is characterized by a remarkable spectrum of institutions, encompassing venerable establishments with centuries of historical legacy alongside contemporary universities tailored to meet the exigencies of modern education (Tobenkin, 2022). India boasts a roster of over a thousand universities and an expansive network of colleges, constituting one of the world’s most extensive higher education systems. Within this expansive system, millions of students are actively engaged in pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral degrees spanning a multitude of academic disciplines. This substantial enrollment attests to the burgeoning aspirations of India’s youth and underscores the growing significance of higher education as a conduit for personal advancement and professional growth (Jose, 2023).

Higher education in India occupies a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of the nation. It functions as a crucible for nurturing intellectual capital, catalyzing innovation, and cultivating a skilled workforce equipped to confront the multifaceted challenges of a dynamic global economy. India’s higher education institutions make substantial contributions to research endeavors, facilitate technology transfer, and foster entrepreneurship, thus positioning the nation on a trajectory towards self-sufficiency and global competitiveness.

To contextualize the realm of career aspirations among college graduates in India, it is imperative to examine the employment prospects for graduates within the country, particularly within the formal sector that encompasses large, medium, and small enterprises. The formal sector constitutes a significant segment of the Indian job market and profoundly influences the career choices made by college graduates. However, prior to delving into specific employment data, it is pertinent to explore the theoretical frameworks that underpin our comprehension of career aspirations.

Numerous theories have been posited by various scholars to elucidate the concept of career aspirations. These theories encompass the social class theory (Armstrong et al., 1977), learning motivation theory (Dweck, 1986), career development theory (Holland, 1973), and social mobility theory (Saleh, 1986; Sewell et al., 1970). Of particular significance is the association between career aspirations and social class, indicating that individuals hailing from lower socio-economic strata tend to harbor lower career aspirations, while those from more privileged backgrounds aspire to more prestigious vocations (Armstrong et al., 1977).

Moreover, studies exploring the impact of diverse factors on career aspirations have incorporated variables such as socio-economic status, gender (Dunne et al., 1981), and parental educational attainment (Burlin, 1976; Hoffman et al., 1992). These investigations consistently affirm the influential role of these factors in shaping individuals' career aspirations.

Expanding upon these foundational theories, a body of literature has delved into the sociological and psychological dimensions that influence career choices among undergraduate students (Weidman, 1974, 1979, 1989). The work of Weidman, for instance, underscores variables such as reference groups, parental socialization, and pre-college and collegiate pressures as pivotal in comprehending career decisions among undergraduates. Notably, parental socialization emerges as a prominent influencer of the aspirations of incoming undergraduate students. Furthermore, students often reassess their initial career aspirations during their first year of college, influenced by their early experiences, which may include forays into the job market or exploration of new academic disciplines.

This insight underscores the significance of the initial college year as a formative phase during which students embark on a journey of career exploration. The college years serve as a critical developmental juncture through which students traverse the transition from adolescence to adulthood (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Given the potential disparities in the educational environments of private and government colleges in India, it is reasonable to anticipate variations in the career aspirations of students within both categories of institutions. Consequently, this study seeks to fathom the collegiate experiences of students in private and government colleges and discern disparities in their career aspirations. To achieve these objectives, a structured questionnaire with closed-ended queries has been formulated and disseminated to collect 1000 responses, equally divided between students in two private universities and two government universities. This approach ensures equitable representation and enhances the study's findings' validity. In complementing this comprehensive examination of collegiate experiences and career aspirations, the subsequent sections will delve into specific data pertaining to college graduates in India who are employed within the formal sector, encompassing enterprises of various sizes, including large, medium, and small companies.

### **1.1. Research gap**

According to one of the studies, career aspirations have a significant role in providing satisfaction from their life (De Vos et al., 2019). But, also, it has been mentioned under the scope of that study that the achievement and the leadership attributes don't provide them satisfaction. Also, the lack in the aptitude of the students is also found among the collegiate students (Zahid, 2017) and also the poor quality of education is also been found (Gupta & Kumar, 2016), which is directly indicating towards the immense need to provide quality education to the collegiate students which will boost the understanding of the students, so that they can better aspire for their future career. But, the problem here is that where to put the efforts for providing the quality education or improvisation of quality of education at first. The existing situation can be best stated by the phrase "building without the base". This means the importance of the career aspirations of the students is much known to everyone but the background to boost the aspiration level is missing out of the process. This further means that the education board is required to identify the institutions where the quality is lacking behind. The institutions, here, means the government and the private universities. So, this is indicating the existing gap in the society and because of this reason, the paper incorporated the objective of identifying this institution where the efforts should be made to improve the situation. In order to identify this thing, the attitude of the students of both private and government universities is been evaluated to identify the difference in the attitudes of the students of these universities and the institution which will show comparatively more attitude problem will be taken into the segment of "quality needed institution".

## 2. Objectives

- To understand the role of career aspirations in the students' life.
- To study the career anchors associated with career aspirations.
- To study the effect of gender on the attitude of the university students.
- To study the effect of parental education on the attitude of the university students.
- To study the effect of college type on the attitude of the university students.

## 3. Implications

The universities can analyze the progression in the formation of positive attitude of their students.

The universities can get the knowledge of the condition of lack of aptitude of their students and through this they can work upon their mechanism of building positive attitude of their students to keep them up in their motivation level and they can be placed better and can make their future secure.

## 4. Thematic evaluation

India's higher education system has a rich history dating back to ancient times when institutions like Nalanda and Takshashila were global centers of learning. Over centuries, higher education in India has undergone transformative phases, with British colonial influence shaping the modern education system (Snehi, 2019). The post-independence era witnessed significant expansion, diversification, and policy changes in response to evolving societal needs (Roy & Swamy, 2019).

India's higher education sector has witnessed several pivotal policy initiatives aimed at enhancing access, quality, and relevance. Key milestones include the National Policy on Education (1968) (Ministry of Education, 2013), which laid the foundation for modernizing the education system, and the subsequent National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020, which seeks to revamp higher education through reforms in curriculum, governance, and internationalization.

Despite commendable progress, the Indian higher education system grapples with multifarious challenges. These encompass issues related to access, equity, quality assurance, infrastructure, faculty shortage, and the need for research-driven institutions (Tobenkin, 2022). These challenges present a complex backdrop against which the Indian higher education system operates.

In recent decades, India has witnessed a surge in student enrollment in higher education, making it one of the world's largest systems. This trend has been marked by a growing preference for professional courses in fields such as engineering, medicine, and information technology. Enrollment data reveals the shifting aspirations and choices of Indian students as they seek to align their education with career prospects (Kumar et al., 2021). Research studies and reports specific to India have increasingly recognized the intricate interplay between higher education and the labor market. These investigations underscore how higher education equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and qualifications necessary for gainful employment (Kumar et al., 2021). Furthermore, studies have examined the role of higher education in enhancing employability, addressing skills gaps, and driving economic growth in India.

Incorporating this comprehensive examination of the Indian higher education system into the literature review provides a robust contextual foundation for understanding the dynamics at play in the study. It underscores the critical role of higher education in India's socio-economic development and the pressing need to bridge the gap between education and employability, which is central to the objectives of this research.

### 4.1. Career aspirations effect on career

Career aspiration refers to an individual's goals and desires related to their occupation or work. It represents their mindset and orientation towards their desired career path and provides information about their interests and hopes in their profession (Hellenga et al., 2002; Rojewski, 1996;

VandenBos, 2007). Career development, on the other hand, refers to an individual's progress through their various jobs over the course of their career (Rubbab et al., 2021; Twumasi et al., 2018; Super, 1980, 1990). This progress can be measured through increases in remuneration or emotional respect within or outside an organization (Gutek & Larwood, 1987; Pandey et al., 2019). Career aspiration and development are driven by the pursuit of quality education and ongoing professional development (Jellenz et al., 2020; Yoshizaki & Hiraoka, 2015).

Factors such as gender can influence the impact of certain factors on career aspirations (Sands, 2011; Tang et al., 2008). The younger generation, in particular, tends to have a mindset of “working to live” rather than “living to work,” which is driven by career anchors such as exploratory, agile, perseverance, and self-determination attitudes (Beauregard, 2007; Schein, 1996). These career anchors play a significant role in determining career aspirations.

Several studies have focused on identifying the reasons behind students' career choices (Chuene et al., 1999; Dockery & Barns, 2005; Gallagher et al., 2008; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Yong, 1995; Young, 1995). Other research has examined the factors that influence career aspirations, including demographic factors such as age and gender (Sands, 2011), personal factors such as values and self-concept (Sands, 2011), and environmental factors such as parental education and occupation (Sands, 2011).

The type of university a student attends can also impact their career aspirations. Previous research has found that students who attend private universities tend to have higher career aspirations compared to those who attend public universities (Tang et al., 2008). This may be due to the fact that private universities often have more resources and opportunities available to their students, which can foster a sense of ambition and drive for success (Agarwala & Malach-Pines, 2008; Auyeung & Sands, 2010; Kim et al., 2002; Özbilgin et al., 2005; Sibson, 2011; Swenson et al., 1993; Tanova et al., 2008). On the other hand, public universities may not have the same level of resources, leading to lower career aspirations among their students. It is important to note that this relationship is not necessarily causal, and other factors such as socio-economic background and individual characteristics may also play a role in determining career aspirations. However, the type of university a student attends can still be a significant factor in shaping their career goals and ambitions.

#### **4.2. Gender on career exploration attitude**

There is evidence from literature that there is a gender gap in education, with disadvantaged groups being more affected by this gap based on factors such as class, race, and school composition (Entwisle, 2018; Mead, 2006). This gap is particularly evident in terms of the academic performance of boys, which tends to be lower than that of girls in resource-poor schools (Buchmann et al., 2008; Legewie & DiPrete, 2012). One reason for this may be that young men tend to see disobedience in institutional settings as a display of masculine power in situations where they feel weakened in other ways, while young women's peer groups are more resistant to the lack of resources because they do not see protection from school as a gender issue (Morris, 2012). This suggests that gender can influence attitudes and career choices, with males often acting as “breadwinners” and conforming to traditional gender roles. Meanwhile, females do not typically base their career choices on gender. In conclusion, it is important to consider the impact of gender on attitudes and career aspirations in order to address the gender gap in education and ensure equal opportunities for all individuals.

**H1-** There is a significant difference in attitude based on the gender of the students.

#### **4.3. Parental background on career**

There is evidence to suggest that the family background of a student can have an impact on their career development. According to a study by Penick and Jepsen (1992), factors such as



educational level, socio-economic status, and bio-genetic factors (such as gender and temperament) can all influence a student's career aspirations. Mortimer et al. (1992) found that parental education had a particularly strong impact on a student's aspirations. Students whose parents had post-secondary qualifications tended to prioritize education and career success. Another study found that if a teacher is a member of the student's family, it may also influence their career decisions (Marso & Pigge, 1994). DeRidder (1990) also found that students from low-income, poorly educated families were less likely to achieve their occupational goals, which can predetermine their career choices. These findings suggest that parental education can have an impact on a student's attitudes and career aspirations (Figure 1).

**H2-** There is a significant difference in attitude based on the parental education of the students.

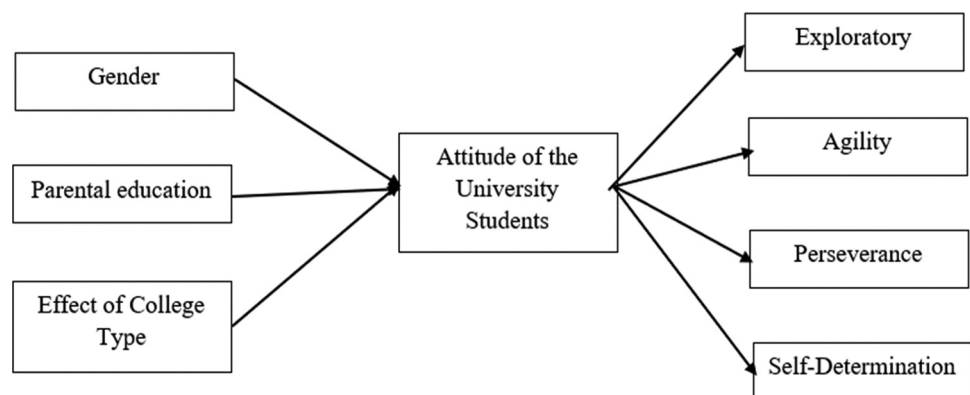
#### 4.4. Exploration of career aspiration or development

Furthermore, research has shown that individuals with a high level of career exploration tend to have a stronger sense of self-awareness and self-knowledge, which can lead to more informed and confident career decisions (Baran et al., 2019; Blustein, 1989; Super, 1957). This is because the process of exploration allows individuals to learn about themselves, their interests, values, and skills, as well as different career options and their respective requirements. Additionally, individuals with a strong exploratory attitude are more likely to engage in activities such as networking, internships, and job shadowing, which can provide valuable experience and insights into different career paths (Blustein, 1989; Luzzo et al., 1996; Nevill & Schlecker, 1988; Solberg et al., 1995). In conclusion, the exploratory attitude of students and individuals is an important factor in career development. It allows individuals to explore and learn about themselves, as well as different career options, and can lead to more informed and confident career decisions (Raskin, 1985; Vondracek, 1992). Research has also shown that this attitude is positively correlated with career-related self-efficacy and can be developed through various activities such as networking, internships, and job shadowing (Bartley & Robitschek, 2000; Solberg et al., 1995). Therefore, it is essential for individuals to cultivate and nurture an exploratory attitude in order to maximize their potential for career success.

##### 4.4.1. Agility on career aspiration

The concept of learning agility is a crucial aspect for individuals looking to excel in their careers and make a mark in the business world. It is a mindset and set of practices that allow leaders to grow and develop, using strategies and experiences to effectively solve complex situations (Flaum & Winkler, 2015). Learning agility is characterized by a comprehensive set of attributes and qualities that enable an individual to be flexible and adaptable in various circumstances, learn from their own mistakes and those of others, and effectively deal with extreme situations (FirstPost, 2014). This is especially important in the business environment, where agile behavior can lead to better results, even in adverse situations. The presence of

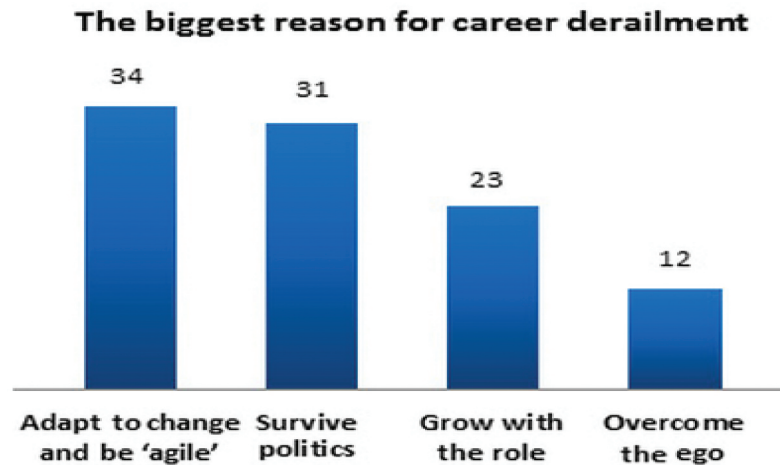
**Figure 1. Proposed Model.**





**Figure 2. Biggest Reason for Career Derailment.**

Source: (FirstPost, 2014).



agile qualities, such as flexibility, resilience, and adaptability, can be incorporated into an individual's behavior by imbibing the mindset of agility (Flaum & Winkler, 2015).

An agile graduate has a competitive edge in the business world and possesses exceptional business skills that make them a preferred choice for employers among a diverse pool of applicants (Study International Staff, 2019). The agile mindset of a company can also play a crucial role in driving business success, as it allows for the effective management of technology software and processes related to project management, sales, marketing, and other activities. This helps the company to stay competitive in the market and deliver on its promises to customers (Blomstrom, 2019).

Given the importance of learning agility, it is essential for individuals to seek admission to institutions that help them imbibe this mindset and attitude for the long-term. This ensures that their careers can continuously develop and sustain growth. A study found that approximately 34 per cent of professionals ranked the presence of agile behavior as the most important factor, with its absence potentially leading to career derailment (FirstPost, 2014). Therefore, it is evident that learning agility is a crucial aspect for career development and success (Figure 2). It allows individuals to adapt to changing circumstances and learn from their mistakes, making them more resilient and capable of handling complex situations. This is especially important in the business world, where the ability to adapt and change can give individuals a competitive edge.

However, learning agility is not just limited to professionals and leaders. It can also be beneficial for students and those just starting their careers. By developing an agile mindset early on, individuals can better navigate their career path and make informed decisions about their future. They can also take advantage of opportunities that may come their way, as they will be better equipped to handle new challenges and experiences.

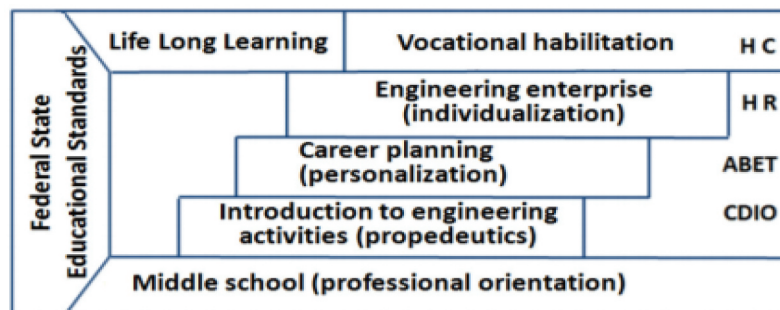
Overall, it is clear that learning agility is an important factor in career development. By focusing on developing this skill, individuals can set themselves up for success and have a more fulfilling and successful career.

#### **4.5. Perseverance on career aspirations**

Perseverance, often synonymous with enthusiasm, is a critical factor in an individual's career success (Thesaurus, 2016). It is defined as the habit of repeatedly working towards an end goal, and is known to have a positive impact on a student's learning ability and motivation (Brigham et al., 1992). Enthusiasm in behavior provides stability in the process and helps an individual stay committed to achieving their goals, even in the face of distractions or discouragements (Orosz et al., 2015).

**Figure 3. Self-determination on career.**

Source: (Guilbert et al., 2016)



The role of mindset in perseverance is also important. A person with a growth mindset, or the belief that abilities can be developed through hard work, is more likely to persevere through difficulties and achieve success (Dweck, 2007). On the other hand, a person with a fixed mindset, or the belief that abilities are fixed, may be more likely to give up when faced with challenges (Pollock, 2019; Toshniwal, 2019).

Perseverance is also critical in determining the strength of an individual's career aspirations. It helps individuals to think logically and practically about their career choices and make them more attainable. Therefore, it is important for individuals to focus on acquiring knowledge through consistent and dedicated effort in order to make the best career choice for their personality and knowledge. Overall, perseverance is a key factor in career success and should be considered when making decisions about education and career path.

The individualization and personification of the students are essential because they help students form their professional attitude (Figure 3). To support this element, educational institutions should offer a discipline called "Introduction to Engineering Activities." This discipline helps students develop their technical knowledge and practical skills related to design and engineering (Guilbert et al., 2016). It also helps students develop professional values and a desire to take on challenging professional situations. These factors can lead to a change in the environment in which students are working and learning.

In addition to this discipline, career planning is another important element for enhancing self-determination in students. Career planning training helps students develop their planning skills and understand the market and competencies needed for success. It also fosters competitiveness among students. Self-determination is crucial for academic and professional growth and can improve well-being and psychological health (Cherry, 2018a, 2018b). According to the theory of self-determination, this attribute helps individuals achieve growth and satisfaction in life. It gives a sense of self-direction that leads to increased satisfaction. Motivation, commitment, and passion for work are all reflected in performance, and employees who feel that their work has a positive impact on the company will be more motivated and satisfied with their work (American Psychological Association, 2004; Field & Hoffman, 1994; Valitova et al., 2015).

To improve psychological health and positive attitude, both companies and educational institutions should focus on training programs that enhance exploration, agility, perseverance, and self-determination (Hoffman & Field, 1995). These elements can boost competence, relatedness, and autonomy among students and give them the opportunity to actively participate in educational and career planning. Providing contextual support to students can further increase these behaviors and lead to better academic and professional outcomes. Overall, learning is the foundation for career planning and success. It helps students understand their interests, values, and goals and make informed decisions about their future (Paul et al., 2020). By focusing on exploration, agility, perseverance, and self-determination, educational institutions can help students develop the skills and attitude needed to succeed in their careers.

**H3-** There is a significant difference in the attitudinal aspects of students based on government and private college.

### 5. Methodological procedures

This section elaborates on the meticulous research methodology employed to achieve the objectives of this study, which aimed to discern attitudinal variances among students attending government and private universities in Delhi and to assess the impact of these attitudinal differences on their career aspirations. A structured and comprehensive approach was taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings.

The research population encompassed students enrolled in government and private universities located in Delhi, India. The inclusion of prominent institutions such as Amity University, Sharda University, Delhi University, and Jamia Milia Islamia ensured a diverse representation of students from varied educational backgrounds.

The sampling process adhered to rigorous procedures to obtain a representative sample. A total of 1084 participants were included in the study. To ensure the randomness and representativeness of the sample, a stratified sampling technique was employed. This method involved dividing the population into strata based on university type (government and private) and then selecting participants proportionally from each stratum. This approach guaranteed that the sample accurately mirrored the distribution of students across the different university types in Delhi.

To collect comprehensive and reliable data, both primary and secondary data collection methods were employed. The primary data collection process was executed through face-to-face interviews with the study participants. A structured questionnaire was used, featuring questions that gauged participants' attitudes toward various aspects related to career aspirations. The interviews were conducted by author and the co-author, ensuring consistency and reliability in data collection. The data collection phase spanned over 26 days, during which rigorous procedures were implemented to approach and engage with the respondents. Personal survey allowed for in-depth exploration of respondents' attitudes and provided valuable qualitative insights. In addition to primary data, secondary data sources were consulted. Information was gathered from reputable magazines, scholarly journals, books, and authoritative websites, all of which were directly related to the research topic. Secondary data served to augment the primary data and provided contextual information to enrich the study.

### 6. Data analysis

Data analysis was performed with the utmost rigor to derive meaningful insights from the collected data. Factor analysis, a robust statistical method widely recognized in social and behavioral sciences, was applied to examine the underlying structure of the variables in the dataset. This technique unveiled common patterns or factors among a group of variables, thereby reducing the dimensionality of the dataset while retaining essential information. MANOVA was employed to ascertain the presence of significant attitudinal differences among students in government and private universities. This multivariate statistical test assessed the variations in means of multiple dependent variables across different groups. SEM analysis was utilized to model and scrutinize the intricate relationships between the key variables of interest. This comprehensive modeling technique allowed for an in-depth exploration of how these variables interacted and influenced one another.

To ensure the highest level of accuracy and reliability in data analysis, the IBM SPSS 25.0 and Smart PLS 3 software were chosen.

### 7. Data analysis & findings

The collected data were sufficient for conducting a factor analysis. Upon analyzing the questions included in the questionnaire, four specific attitudinal sub-scales or career anchors were identified:

**Table 1. Reliability test**

Cronbach Value	0.898
KMO Value	0.922
Bartlett's Sig. Value	0.00

**Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component			
	Exploration	Agility	Self-determination	Perseverance
Persevere1				.797
Persevere2				.651
Persevere3				.467
Explore1	.485			
Explore2	.639			
Explore3	.628			
Explore4	.547			
Explore5	.442			
Explore6	.582			
Explore7	.543			
Explore8	.590			
Explore9	.508			
Explore10	.520			
Explore11	.432			
Agile1		.616		
Agile2		.575		
Agile3		.418		
Agile4		.534		
Agile5		.633		
Agile6		.633		
Agile7		.469		
Agile8		.534		
Agile9		.513		
Self-determine1			.716	
Self-determine2			.495	
Self-determine3			.513	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

<sup>a</sup>Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

exploratory, agility, perseverance, and self-determination. To assess the factorability of the data, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was conducted, which indicated that the factors were robust, with a KMO value of 0.915 (Table 1). These results suggest that the data collected are reliable and suitable for conducting a factor analysis.

### 7.1. Attitudinal difference between private and government universities

The present study employs Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis to investigate the intricate relationship between the type of university and the psychological construct of agility. SEM is a robust statistical technique that enables exploration of complex interdependencies among variables, providing valuable insights into their associations.

The SEM analysis yielded a noteworthy and statistically significant finding, indicating a positive relationship between the type of university and agility. This result is supported by a  $p$ -value of less than 0.05, indicating a high level of statistical significance (as presented in Table 3). This finding suggests that the type of university an individual attends has a discernible impact on their agility.

Moreover, the analysis suggests that government universities exert a more substantial influence on agility compared to private universities. Specifically, students attending government universities are more likely to exhibit higher levels of agility, as indicated by the statistically significant relationship. This outcome aligns with the work of Chan and Muthuveloo (2020), who have explored similar dynamics in the context of university types.

It is essential to delineate the concept of agility, a psychological construct that underpins our study. Agility refers to an individual's ability to adeptly adapt to changing situations and environments. It encompasses the capacity to navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and exhibit resilience in the face of evolving circumstances. Research has consistently linked agility to a spectrum of positive outcomes, including academic success, enhanced well-being, and improved mental health.

### **7.2. Impact of gender on attitude**

A Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between gender and self-determination. The results of the SEM model indicated that there was a statistically significant negative relationship between these two variables. Specifically, the data suggested that males tend to have higher levels of self-determination compared to females.

Self-determination is an important psychological construct that refers to an individual's ability to make their own choices and decisions, and to act on them independently. It is related to various positive outcomes such as academic achievement, well-being, and mental health. The finding that males tend to have higher levels of self-determination compared to females is consistent with previous research on this topic, and may have important implications for the design of interventions aimed at promoting self-determination in individuals (Parker et al., 2021). Further research is needed to better understand the mechanisms underlying this relationship, and to identify potential strategies for promoting self-determination among individuals of all genders. The results of this study emphasize the necessity of gender-sensitive interventions that aim to foster self-determination among individuals of all genders within the Indian context. These interventions should acknowledge and tackle the distinctive societal and cultural elements that influence self-determination in India. For instance, initiatives could concentrate on equipping women with the necessary resources, opportunities, and support networks to augment their self-determination in educational and professional decision-making.

### **7.3. Impact of parental education on attitude**

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between the attitudes of students at private and government colleges and their parents' educational qualifications (Table 2). To this end, a one-way multivariate analysis was conducted, and the results indicated that there was a significant difference in the attitudes of the students based on their respective parents' educational qualifications, as indicated by the  $F$  statistic ( $F(64,4136) = 1.863, p < 0.005$ ) and the Wilks' Lambda value (Wilks' Lambda = 0.895).

To further examine the individual effects of fathers' and mothers' educational qualifications on the attitudes of the students, additional between-subjects tests were conducted. When considering the effects of both fathers' and mothers' educational qualifications on the various sub-scales of attitude, it was found that fathers' educational qualifications did not have an effect on any of the sub-scales. However, mothers' educational qualifications had a significant effect on all sub-scales of attitude except for perseverance ( $p$ -value =  $0.380 > 0.05$ ). When both fathers' and mothers' educational qualifications were combined, it was found that they had a significant effect on all sub-scales of attitude. These results suggest that parents' educational qualifications may play a role in shaping the attitudes of students at private and government colleges (Table 3) (Hammer et al., 2021).

**Table 2. Multivariate tests (parental education VS attitude)**

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Father's Education	Wilks' Lambda	.975	1.653	16.000	3226.771	.049
Mother's Education	Wilks' Lambda	.967	2.201	16.000	3226.771	.004
Father's Education * Mother's Education	Wilks' Lambda	.895	1.863	64.000	4136.330	.000
<b>Tests of Between-Subjects Effects</b>						
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Father's Education	Self-Determination	6.940	4	1.735	2.263	.061
	Explore	4.069	4	1.017	2.191	.068
	Agile	4.855	4	1.214	2.212	.066
	Perseverance	1.469	4	.367	.498	.738
Mother's Education	Self-Determination	7.860	4	1.965	2.563	.037
	Explore	5.970	4	1.492	3.214	.012
	Agile	10.228	4	2.557	4.660	.001
	Perseverance	3.099	4	.775	1.050	.380
Father's Education * Mother's Education	Self-Determination	27.053	16	1.691	2.205	.004
	Explore	17.141	16	1.071	2.307	.002
	Agile	23.380	16	1.461	2.663	.000
	Perseverance	19.784	16	1.236	1.675	.046

A Structural Equation Model (SEM) was also conducted to examine the relationship between parents' educational qualifications and the attitudes of the students (Figure 4). The results of the SEM analysis were consistent with those of the one-way multivariate analysis, indicating that fathers' education had no impact on any of the sub-scales, but mothers' education had a positive impact on every sub-scale, including perseverance. Overall, these findings suggest that parents' educational qualifications may influence the attitudes of students at private and government colleges. Further research is needed to better understand the mechanisms underlying this relationship, and to identify potential strategies for promoting positive attitudes among students. The implications of these findings within the Indian context are profound. In a nation where parental guidance often holds significant sway over students' academic and career choices, the educational qualifications of parents are pivotal. This is particularly relevant in the Indian context, where societal expectations and cultural influences intersect with educational aspirations.

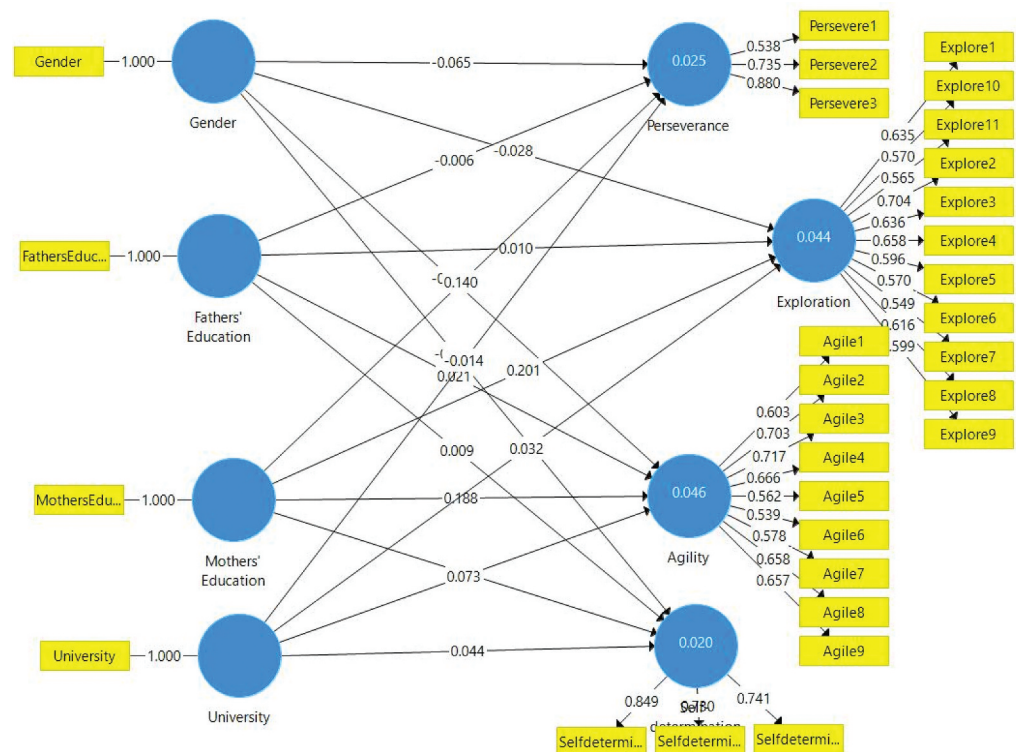
## 8. Conclusion and discussion

This study aims to investigate the determinants of attitude formation among students enrolled in both private and government universities in India. The research was initiated due to a notable gap in the existing literature, which lacked comprehensive exploration of these specific factors. Additionally, concerns regarding declining educational quality and student aptitude provided additional motivation for this investigation. Through rigorous data analysis, three significant findings emerged.

The study offers valuable insights into the influence of university type, i.e., private or government, on students' adaptability, or agility, within the Indian higher education context. Agility, characterized by the ability to adjust to dynamic circumstances, is increasingly crucial in today's rapidly evolving world. The research highlights that government universities appear to exert a more pronounced impact on students' agility, thus unveiling a nuanced aspect of the Indian



**Figure 4. Calculated SEM Model.**



higher education system. Government universities in India are often associated with traditional and structured curricula, while private institutions are known for more innovative and dynamic approaches to education. This discovery aligns with the notion that government universities, boasting historical legacies and well-defined systems, have a substantial influence on shaping students' adaptability. Given the diversity of the Indian higher education landscape, tailored interventions are essential to foster agility, considering the unique characteristics of these institutions.

This study also sheds light on gender-related disparities in self-determination among Indian students, which warrants thoughtful consideration. The research reveals that male students tend to exhibit higher levels of self-determination than their female counterparts, raising questions about the socio-cultural factors at play within India's education system. In the Indian context, traditional gender roles and societal expectations may contribute to these disparities. Bridging this gender gap in self-determination is not only pivotal for individual empowerment but also critical for promoting gender equality in education. Interventions designed for the Indian context should aim to empower female students, encouraging them to make independent choices and decisions, ultimately contributing to their academic success and overall well-being.

Furthermore, this study underscores the enduring significance of family and parental support within the Indian educational landscape. Parents in India often play a pivotal role in guiding their children's educational choices and aspirations. The findings reveal that both fathers' and mothers' educational qualifications significantly influence students' attitudes, underscoring the multifaceted impact of parental education. This underscores the aspirational values deeply ingrained in Indian society, where parental education is perceived as a key determinant of a child's success. These findings emphasize the need for targeted support and guidance for students whose parents may not possess advanced educational qualifications.



**Table 3. Path Coefficient (SEM)**

	Coefficients	P Values	Hypotheses Decision
Fathers' Education -> Agility	0.021	0.536	Not Supported
Fathers' Education -> Exploration	0.011	0.772	Not Supported
Fathers' Education -> Perseverance	-0.005	0.872	Not Supported
Fathers' Education -> Self-determination	0.009	0.804	Not Supported
Gender -> Agility	-0.056	0.094	Not Supported
Gender -> Exploration	-0.029	0.381	Not Supported
Gender -> Perseverance	-0.068	0.06	Not Supported
Gender -> Self-determination	-0.096	0.005	Supported
Mothers' Education -> Agility	0.193	0	Supported
Mothers' Education -> Exploration	0.208	0	Supported
Mothers' Education -> Perseverance	0.143	0	Supported
Mothers' Education -> Self-determination	0.1	0.009	Supported
University -> Agility	0.075	0.019	Supported
University -> Exploration	0.032	0.326	Not Supported
University -> Perseverance	-0.014	0.638	Not Supported
University -> Self-determination	0.043	0.369	Not Supported

Further, it is essential to interpret the results of this study cautiously, given certain limitations. The primary limitation stems from the contextual specificity of the research. This study focused exclusively on Delhi, a region characterized by its unique cultural, educational, and social dynamics. Consequently, the attitudes and influences observed among students in this specific context may not be directly transferable to students in other regions or countries with distinct educational systems, cultural backgrounds, and social structures. Moreover, the research scope was tailored to address specific factors that had not been extensively explored in prior literature. While this focused approach facilitated an in-depth examination of these factors within the chosen context, it may not fully encompass the myriad variables that could impact attitudes in other settings. Therefore, caution regarding the generalizability of findings is warranted, acknowledging the contextual and scope-related factors. Consequently, further research is necessary to replicate and extend these findings, as well as to identify potential mechanisms underlying any observed relationships.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

#### Declaration

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