

Impact of Family Financial Communication on Children's Educational Aspirations

Abstract

The increasing cost of education due to inflation is putting a heavy financial burden on families, making it crucial to understand how these expenses affect family dynamics and children's educational aspirations. This study, conducted in the Chandigarh region of India, investigates the relationship between family financial communication and children's educational aspirations. Using a qualitative approach, the research focused on students who completed the All-India Senior School Certificate Examination (AISSCE). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with parents and children, exploring how families discuss finances and the impact of these discussions on children's educational aspirations. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes. The results revealed that families with frequent and constructive financial conversations are more likely to have children who are driven and self-assured in their pursuit of academic and professional goals. In contrast, the absence of financial communication within families often leads to children feeling uncertain and confused, resulting in diminished drive and ambition. Additionally, families with high levels of financial planning and savings for education tend to have children with higher aspirations for higher education and successful careers, viewing education as a crucial investment in their future.

Keywords: Family financial communication, educational aspirations, Rising educational costs etc.

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INTRODUCTION

34 Adolescence marks a crucial juncture where the seeds of aspiration and expectation are
35 planted, profoundly shaping the educational trajectory of young minds (Eccles & Wigfield,
36 2002). Within this transformative period, educational aspirations emerge as manifestations
37 of grand visions for academic achievement and personal fulfillment, intricately intertwined
38 with the pragmatic realities of educational expectations (Garg, Kauppi, Urajnik, & Lewko,
39 2002). This dynamic interplay between aspirational ideals and tangible attainability forms
40 the foundation of a deeper investigation into the educational development of adolescents.

41 As adolescents embark on the journey of envisioning their future careers and academic
42 goals, the balance between their idealized aspirations and perceived attainability emerges
43 as a central theme (Schoon & Parsons, 2002). Prior research has consistently demonstrated
44 the disparities between students' aspirational peaks and the realistic footholds of
45 expectation, revealing the multifaceted nature of educational aspirations (Gutman &
46 Akerman, 2008). Moreover, studies highlight the significant influence of parental
47 involvement in shaping these aspirations, emphasizing the crucial role of family support in
48 guiding students' educational pathways (Jeynes, 2011).

49 In the context of rising educational costs, the role of family financial communication
50 becomes even more critical (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014). The cost of education has been
51 steadily increasing, placing significant financial pressure on families, particularly in India,
52 where inflation exacerbates the burden (Tilak, 2008). This financial strain not only affects
53 the economic stability of households but also significantly influences students' educational
54 ambitions and career trajectories (Agarwal, 2014). Understanding how families navigate
55 these financial pressures and communicate about education-related expenses is essential in
56 assessing the impact on children's academic aspirations and overall well-being (Wightman,
57 2012).

58 Family financial communication, which involves discussions on budgeting, saving, and
59 expenditures, is pivotal in shaping students' perceptions of education and their future
60 career outlook (Shim, Xiao, Barber, & Lyons, 2009). Studies indicate that constructive
61 financial discussions foster a sense of security and clarity, encouraging children to set and
62 pursue ambitious educational goals (Gudmunson & Danes, 2011). Conversely, a lack of
63 financial communication within families may lead to uncertainty, stress, and diminished
64 motivation to achieve academic success (Serido, Shim, Mishra, & Tang, 2010).

65 In a world where education costs continue to soar, understanding the intricate relationship
66 between family financial communication and students' educational aspirations has become
67 more crucial than ever (Huston, 2010). This study focuses on Chandigarh, a prominent

68 educational hub in India, known for its high academic standards and excellent educational
69 institutions (Kumar & Ahmad, 2018). Chandigarh provides a compelling setting for
70 examining how financial discussions within families influence students' academic
71 ambitions. By focusing on students who have recently completed the All-India Senior
72 School Certificate Examination (AISSCE) (i.e., 12th Board Exams), this research aims to
73 explore a critical period where decisions about higher education and career paths are made
74 (Sharma & Joshi, 2015).

75 This study seeks to illuminate the relationship between family financial communication
76 and students' academic aspirations, offering a fresh perspective on how families can better
77 support their children's educational dreams while ensuring that financial barriers do not
78 impede their pursuit of higher education (Singh & Singh, 2019). Through this exploration,
79 we aim to inspire a more informed and supportive approach to family financial
80 discussions, ultimately fostering a generation of confident and motivated students
81 equipped to achieve their academic and professional goals (Eccles & Harold, 1993).

82

83 **LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH GAP**

84

85 The exploration of family financial communication and its impact on children's
86 educational aspirations has gained considerable attention in educational and psychological
87 research (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014; Xiao, Chatterjee, & Kim, 2014). Numerous studies
88 have investigated the intricate dynamics within families and how they shape adolescents'
89 academic trajectories, yet variations across socio-cultural contexts necessitate further
90 inquiry (Shim, Barber, Card, Xiao, & Serido, 2010). The unique cultural, economic, and
91 educational landscape of Chandigarh, India, remains underexplored, despite its status as an
92 educational hub with rising financial challenges for families (Kumar & Ahmad, 2021).

93 Research consistently shows that open and constructive financial communication within
94 families significantly influences children's educational aspirations (Gudmunson & Danes,
95 2011; Serido, Shim, Mishra, & Tang, 2010). Studies such as those by Jeynes (2011) and
96 Wightman (2012) highlight that children who are aware of their family's financial planning
97 and budgeting are more likely to develop a realistic understanding of their educational
98 possibilities and limitations. This awareness fosters a sense of responsibility and
99 motivation, encouraging students to set and pursue ambitious academic goals (Fernandes,
100 Lynch, & Netemeyer, 2014). In the Indian context, research by Sharma and Joshi (2015)
101 found that families who regularly discuss financial matters with their children tend to

102 promote higher educational aspirations. These discussions help children understand the
103 value of education as an investment, motivating them to strive for academic excellence
104 (Agarwal & Chakrabarti, 2022). Additionally, Xiao and Porto (2019) emphasize that
105 adolescents who engage in financial conversations within their families demonstrate
106 greater financial literacy, which positively correlates with higher academic persistence and
107 goal-setting.

108 Parental involvement is widely recognized as a key factor in shaping children's
109 educational aspirations (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Spera, 2005). In the Indian family
110 structure, where parental guidance plays a central role in decision-making, financial
111 communication further strengthens students' clarity regarding higher education goals and
112 career aspirations (Kumar, Singh, & Sharma, 2020). Research by Kumar and Ahmad
113 (2018) in urban Indian settings, including Chandigarh, suggests that parental support,
114 encouragement, and financial transparency significantly contribute to students' academic
115 motivation and confidence in their ability to pursue higher education despite financial
116 constraints. However, financial communication is not uniform across families. Gutter &
117 Copur (2011) highlight that low-income families tend to avoid financial discussions due to
118 economic stress, which in turn impacts children's educational confidence and decision-
119 making. In contrast, high-income families with structured financial planning and early
120 discussions about education-related expenses tend to raise children who are more
121 aspirational and career-oriented (Rothwell & Han, 2010).

122 The increasing cost of education due to inflation is a global concern, and India is no
123 exception (Tilak, 2008; OECD, 2021). Studies by Agarwal (2014) and Xue & Zhai (2022)
124 have documented the financial burdens faced by families in financing higher education,
125 which can create significant stress and uncertainty, impacting children's academic
126 performance and aspirations. In Chandigarh, a region known for its high educational
127 standards and competitive academic environment, the financial pressure on families is
128 particularly intense (Singh & Singh, 2019). Research by Mishra & Mukherjee (2023)
129 suggests that parents in Chandigarh increasingly express concerns about the affordability
130 of higher education, which significantly shapes family discussions on educational planning
131 and career decision-making. Rising tuition fees, coaching expenses, and living costs
132 exacerbate financial stress, making financial communication within families even more
133 crucial in determining students' academic ambitions (Joshi, Agarwal, & Mehta, 2022).

134 Psychological research has also linked financial stress to lower academic motivation
135 among adolescents (Friedline, Chen, & Morrow, 2015). Gudmunson & Danes (2011)

136 argue that financial anxiety in parents often translates to increased pressure on students,
137 leading to self-doubt and educational insecurity. Conversely, families that normalize
138 financial conversations help children develop resilience and confidence in navigating
139 higher education costs (Xiao & O'Neill, 2018).

140 Despite the extensive research on family financial communication and educational
141 aspirations, several gaps remain, particularly in the context of Chandigarh, India. While
142 some research has been conducted in urban Indian settings, there is limited empirical
143 evidence focusing specifically on Chandigarh, a highly competitive academic city with
144 unique socio-economic dynamics (Kumar & Ahmad, 2021). Given its distinct educational
145 landscape, a dedicated exploration is warranted. Much of the existing research relies on
146 quantitative data, providing broad trends and correlations. There is a need for qualitative
147 studies that offer deeper insights into the personal experiences and financial
148 communication patterns of families in Chandigarh regarding educational aspirations
149 (Agarwal & Chakrabarti, 2022). Few studies have examined the long-term effects of
150 family financial communication on children's educational and career trajectories.
151 Understanding how early financial discussions influence academic persistence, career
152 success, and financial independence is crucial for policymakers and educators (Lusardi &
153 Tufano, 2015).

154 The impact of family financial communication across different family structures, such as
155 nuclear and joint families, has not been extensively studied in Chandigarh. Given the
156 diverse family dynamics in India, this is an important area for further research (Sharma &
157 Kapoor, 2023). While financial stress has been studied in broader educational contexts, its
158 specific psychological impact on Chandigarh's students remains unexplored.
159 Understanding the emotional and mental health consequences of financial anxiety can
160 inform holistic support strategies for families (Singh & Sharma, 2023).

161 This study aims to fill these research gaps by conducting a comprehensive qualitative
162 analysis of the relationship between family financial communication and students'
163 educational aspirations in Chandigarh. By employing a qualitative approach, this research
164 will provide nuanced insights into family dynamics, financial stress, and academic
165 ambitions, offering valuable recommendations for families, educators, and policymakers.
166 Understanding these factors can help develop better financial literacy programs, create
167 targeted educational policies, and foster an environment where students can confidently
168 pursue their academic and professional goals despite financial constraints.

169

170 **RESEARCH QUESTION**

171 This study aims to explore the intricate dynamics of family financial conversations and
172 their impact on adolescents' educational ambitions. By examining the experiences of
173 families in Chandigarh, the research seeks to uncover the broader implications of financial
174 communication on academic outcomes. The major research question of the study is : *How*
175 *does family financial communication influence the educational aspirations of adolescents*
176 *in Chandigarh, India?*

177 **MAJOR OBJECTIVES**

- 178 1. To examine the nature and frequency of financial discussions within families in
179 Chandigarh.
- 180 2. To assess the impact of family financial communication on adolescents' perceptions of
181 education as an investment.
- 182 3. To investigate the role of parental guidance in shaping children's educational aspirations
183 amidst financial constraints.
- 184 4. To identify the psychological impact of financial stress on both parents and adolescents
185 and its effects on educational aspirations.

186 **METHODOLOGY**

187

188 ***Research Design***

189 This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the relationship between
190 family financial communication and adolescents' educational aspirations in Chandigarh. A
191 qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a deep exploration of personal
192 experiences, emotions, and contextual influences, providing rich insights into how
193 financial discussions within families impact students' academic ambitions. This approach
194 enables the researcher to capture subtle nuances in financial communication styles,
195 emotional responses, and decision-making patterns that would be difficult to quantify
196 using numerical data.

197 ***Participants***

198 The participants of this study include the students who have recently completed the All-
199 India Senior School Certificate Examination (AISSCE) i.e. 12th Board Exams in
200 Chandigarh. Parents of the selected adolescents are also studied, ensuring a diverse
201 representation of different socio-economic backgrounds and family structures (nuclear and
202 joint families).

203

204 ***Sampling Technique***

205 A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants. This approach ensures
206 that the sample is relevant to the research question and includes individuals who have
207 experienced the phenomenon under investigation. A sample of 36 families (comprising
208 both adolescents and parents) were selected to provide a comprehensive range of
209 perspectives.

210

211 ***Data Collection Methods***

212

213 Semi-structured interviews were conducted at two schools in Chandigarh in July 2023 to
214 explore the impact of family financial communication on adolescents' educational
215 aspirations. One-on-one interviews were chosen to ensure confidentiality, given the
216 sensitive nature of discussing personal and family financial matters. Both parents and
217 adolescents were asked to describe their experiences with financial discussions and their
218 impact on educational aspirations. All participants were assured that their data would be
219 kept anonymous and confidential. The interviews focused on three main factors. First,
220 adolescents were asked to explain their reasons for their educational goals. Sample
221 questions included, "Can you tell me why you wish to go to university?" and "What
222 motivates you to pursue higher education?" These questions aimed to uncover the
223 underlying motivations behind their aspirations and how they align with future career
224 goals. Second, participants described the typical topics covered in financial discussions
225 within the family. Questions like, "When talking about educational expenses and future
226 plans with your parents, what do you usually discuss?" and "Can you describe a recent
227 discussion about paying for college or other educational expenses?" were used to gather
228 detailed information on the content and frequency of these financial conversations. Third,
229 the interviews explored the style of communication used by parents and the adolescents'
230 responses to these styles. For example, questions such as "How do your parents talk about
231 financial matters with you?" and "How comfortable do you feel discussing financial issues
232 with your parents?" aimed to understand the quality of parent-child financial
233 communication and its impact on educational goals.

234 To ensure privacy and avoid interruptions, the interviews were conducted in a private
235 setting at the schools. Each interview was audio-recorded with the consent of the
236 participants and lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. This approach enabled the collection of

237 comprehensive and detailed insights into the nature of family financial communication and
238 its impact on adolescents' educational aspirations.

239 *Data Analysis*

240

241 To analyse the qualitative data collected from the 36 families, the investigator used
242 thematic analysis. The process began with the investigator thoroughly read and re-read the
243 interview transcripts to become intimately familiar with the data. This step also included
244 listening to the audio recordings multiple times to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions
245 and to fully immerse in the content of the discussions. Next, the investigator generated
246 initial codes to identify important features of the data relevant to the research question.
247 This involved systematically working through each transcript, highlighting significant
248 segments of text. Codes were assigned to these segments to capture their essence, with
249 examples including "financial stress," "parental support," "educational goals," and
250 "communication frequency."

251 After coding the data, the investigator moved on to theme development by collating the
252 codes into potential themes. This step involved examining the codes for patterns and
253 relationships, and grouping similar codes together.

254 The potential themes were then reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately
255 represented the data. The investigator checked that the themes were coherent, internally
256 consistent, and distinct from one another. Themes were compared against the coded data
257 extracts and the entire data set to ensure they captured the most important aspects of the
258 data. Finally, each theme was clearly defined and given a descriptive name. The
259 investigator wrote detailed analyses of each theme, explaining what each represented and
260 how it related to the research question. For example, a theme named "Parental Influence
261 on Aspirations" included codes related to parental encouragement, discussions about
262 career goals, and the impact of parental expectations on adolescents' educational
263 aspirations. By following these steps, the investigator ensured that the thematic analysis
264 provided a structured and detailed understanding of how family financial communication
265 influences adolescents' educational aspirations. The analysis highlighted key patterns and
266 insights, offering a comprehensive view of the data collected from the 36 families. This
267 approach ensured that the findings were grounded in the data and reflective of the
268 participants' experiences.

269

270 **RESULTS**

271 ***Perceptions of Education***

272 The data revealed that both adolescents and their parents place a high value on education,
273 viewing it as crucial for future success and stability. The majority of students expressed
274 that achieving a higher level of education is essential for securing good jobs and
275 contributing to their family's well-being. For instance, one student mentioned, "*Education*
276 *is important because it opens up more opportunities for good jobs. With a good job, I can*
277 *help support my family*". Another student echoed this sentiment, saying, "*If I study hard*
278 *and go to a good university, I can make my parents proud and give them a better life*".
279 Parents also reinforced the significance of education, with one mother stating, "*We believe*
280 *that education is the key to a bright future for our children. It can provide them with the*
281 *skills and knowledge they need to succeed in life*". Similarly, a father emphasized, "*I*
282 *always tell my son that education is the most valuable thing we can invest in. It will help*
283 *him get a stable job and secure his future*". Financial sacrifices made by families to ensure
284 their children receive a quality education were frequently mentioned. One adolescent
285 shared, "*My parents save a lot of money to pay for my education because they know it will*
286 *pay off in the future. They always tell me that education is an investment*". Another added,
287 "*I understand that going to university costs a lot, but I also know that it will help me get a*
288 *better job and earn more money to support my family*".

289 Parents highlighted similar views, with one mother noting, "*We see paying for our*
290 *children's education as an investment in their future. It is expensive, but we believe it will*
291 *lead to better job opportunities for them*". Another father remarked, "*We have made many*
292 *financial sacrifices to ensure our children get the best education possible because we*
293 *believe it will improve their quality of life*". These findings highlight the strong emphasis
294 placed on education by both parents and adolescents. Education is seen not only as a
295 pathway to personal success but also as a means to fulfill familial duties and improve
296 overall family well-being. The themes of the importance of education and education as an
297 investment emerged clearly from the data, underscoring the deep-rooted belief in the
298 transformative power of education.

299 ***Career Aspirations***

300 Adolescents' career aspirations were shaped significantly by parental guidance, financial
301 communication, and external societal pressures. Many adolescents expressed aspirations
302 for stable, high-earning professions that aligned with family expectations and financial
303 considerations. For example, one student stated, "My parents want me to become a doctor
304 because it offers job security and good earnings." Similarly, another shared, "I want to

305 pursue engineering because my father always says it's a safe and respected field." Parents
306 often emphasized the importance of financially viable careers, with one mother noting,
307 "We encourage our son to aim for careers that provide financial stability. It's the best way
308 to ensure a secure future." Another parent added, "We focus on careers that balance
309 passion with financial viability." These discussions not only influenced career choices but
310 also encouraged adolescents to think pragmatically about the job market.

311 In families with strong financial communication, adolescents expressed confidence in
312 aligning their career goals with realistic opportunities. One adolescent remarked, "When
313 my parents discuss career options with me, I feel better prepared to make decisions."
314 External influences, such as peer comparisons and media portrayals, also played a role,
315 with some adolescents stating that societal pressures motivated them to pursue prestigious
316 professions. For instance, a student explained, "Seeing my friends preparing for
317 competitive exams made me realize the importance of choosing a career with respect and
318 financial rewards." In contrast, families that lacked open communication often left
319 adolescents feeling uncertain about their career paths, as one student shared, "I wish my
320 parents would talk more about what I should do in the future. It feels overwhelming
321 sometimes."

322 Overall, the findings highlighted that while adolescents aimed to follow their interests,
323 family discussions and financial considerations heavily shaped their career aspirations,
324 ensuring a balance between ambition and practicality.

325 *Financial Communication Dynamics in Families*

326 Thematic analysis of interview data highlighted the complex interplay between family
327 financial communication and adolescents' educational aspirations, with key themes
328 emerging around parental influence, transparency, emotional responses, and socio-
329 economic status. Parents played a crucial role in shaping aspirations, with many
330 adolescents acknowledging financial discussions as both motivational and stress-inducing,
331 particularly when parents emphasized stability and career advancement. One adolescent
332 shared, "My father always tells me that a good education is the key to a secure future. He
333 reminds me of the sacrifices they are making to ensure I study well." Another parent
334 echoed this sentiment, stating, "We constantly talk to our children about saving and
335 planning. We want them to understand that education is an investment, not just an
336 expense."

337 Transparency in financial discussions varied, with some families openly discussing
338 financial constraints and planning, while others avoided such conversations to prevent

339 distress. One participant noted, "My parents make sure I understand our financial
340 situation. They tell me where we need to cut costs and how I can help by applying for
341 scholarships." Conversely, another adolescent expressed frustration at the lack of
342 communication, saying, "We never talk about money. I just know that I have to perform
343 well academically, but I don't know how we will afford college."

344 Emotional responses to these discussions ranged from confidence and reassurance in
345 financially stable families to anxiety and guilt in households facing financial constraints.
346 One adolescent described the weight of financial stress, stating, "Whenever the topic of
347 money comes up, I feel guilty. I know my parents are struggling, and I don't want to add
348 to their burden." In contrast, another adolescent from a financially stable family said, "My
349 parents always assure me that they have planned for my education, so I don't have to
350 worry about it. That allows me to focus on my studies without stress."

351 Socio-economic status further influenced these discussions, with higher SES families
352 focusing on long-term financial strategies and investment education, while lower SES
353 families emphasized budgeting and sacrifices for educational opportunities. A parent from
354 a high SES background explained, "We discuss financial planning with our children so
355 they can learn about savings and investments early on." Meanwhile, an adolescent from a
356 lower SES family shared, "I know my parents are making sacrifices for my education. I
357 want to do well so that I can support them in the future."

358 Ultimately, open and constructive financial discussions fostered financial literacy and
359 confidence, whereas a lack of communication often led to uncertainty and stress. These
360 findings underscore the importance of promoting financial education within families to
361 better equip adolescents for informed academic and financial decision-making.

362 ***Impact on Educational Goals***

363 The findings reveal that family financial communication significantly influences
364 adolescents' educational goals. Families that engage in open discussions about financial
365 planning and savings for education tend to have children with higher academic ambitions.
366 Adolescents in these households express greater clarity regarding their future educational
367 pathways, as they understand the financial resources available to them. One student
368 explained, "*My parents have always kept me informed about our financial situation. They
369 show me how they budget for my education, and that makes me feel responsible. I know I
370 have to work hard because they are making sacrifices for me.*"

371 Conversely, students from families that do not discuss financial matters often experience
372 uncertainty about their educational choices. Many students in these households reported

373 feeling hesitant about pursuing higher education due to financial constraints and lack of
374 guidance on funding options. A student shared, *“I want to go to university, but I don’t*
375 *know if my family can afford it. My parents don’t talk about these things with me, so I have*
376 *no idea what to expect.”* Another student expressed similar concerns, *“I feel like I have to*
377 *figure everything out on my own—scholarships, loans, and all. It’s stressful when you don’t*
378 *know what your financial future looks like.”*

379 Parents also emphasized the importance of financial planning for their children's
380 education. One father stated, *“We started saving for our son’s education the moment he*
381 *was born. We always remind him that education is our top priority, and he should never*
382 *hesitate to aim high.”* However, some parents admitted that financial conversations were
383 difficult: *“We don’t discuss money openly because we don’t want to burden our daughter*
384 *with worries about expenses. But now I realize that she needs to know so she can plan*
385 *better.”*

386 Interestingly, some students reported that financial discussions motivated them to take
387 proactive steps in financing their education. *“When I realized how expensive college*
388 *would be, I started looking for scholarships and internships on my own. I also started*
389 *tutoring younger students to save up,”* one adolescent mentioned. This demonstrates that
390 financial conversations can empower students to take ownership of their educational
391 aspirations.

392 ***Role of External Influences***

393 Apart from family financial communication, external factors such as peer influences,
394 societal expectations, and media exposure play a crucial role in shaping educational
395 aspirations. Many students reported that their career goals were influenced by observing
396 their peers' choices and by the broader societal emphasis on financially rewarding
397 professions. One student noted, *“Most of my classmates are preparing for medical or*
398 *engineering entrance exams because they believe those careers guarantee a good salary. It*
399 *makes me feel like I should do the same, even though I want to study literature.”*

400 Additionally, media representations of successful professionals often reinforced certain
401 career aspirations, leading students to align their educational goals with perceived societal
402 success. *“I see so many YouTube videos about millionaires in tech, and it makes me*
403 *wonder if I should just pursue software engineering even though I enjoy architecture*
404 *more,”* another student stated. Some adolescents also highlighted that their school
405 environments and interactions with teachers and career counselors contributed to shaping
406 their perceptions of higher education. One respondent mentioned, *“Our school counselors*

407 *focus a lot on science and commerce streams. I rarely hear about career options in*
408 *humanities, which makes it feel like a less viable path.”*

409 However, in families with strong financial communication, adolescents exhibited a higher
410 ability to critically assess these external influences and align their career choices with both
411 their interests and realistic financial considerations. A parent shared, *“We always tell our*
412 *son to choose a career he enjoys, but we also discuss practical aspects like earning*
413 *potential and job security. That way, he makes informed decisions.”* Another parent stated,
414 *“We encourage our daughter to explore different fields but also remind her to think about*
415 *affordability, competition, and long-term stability.”*

416 Some students expressed pressure from relatives and society to pursue financially secure
417 careers. *“My uncle keeps telling me that I should become a doctor because it’s a respected*
418 *profession. But I’m more interested in business. I feel torn between following my passion*
419 *and making my family proud,”* one student shared. Another student added, *“I love art, but*
420 *my relatives always say, ‘How will you earn money with that?’ It’s frustrating because I*
421 *know that financial stability matters, but I also want to enjoy what I do.”*

422 **Psychological Impact**

423 The study uncovered significant psychological effects of financial communication, or the
424 lack thereof, on students’ academic motivation and emotional well-being. Adolescents who
425 were aware of their family’s financial planning for education displayed greater confidence
426 and lower anxiety about their academic futures. *“I don’t stress about college fees because*
427 *my parents have a clear plan. They’ve shown me different options like education loans and*
428 *scholarships, which makes me feel prepared,”* one student noted.

429 On the other hand, students from families where financial matters were not discussed often
430 reported experiencing stress and uncertainty about their ability to afford higher education.
431 Some students expressed feelings of guilt or pressure, knowing that their parents were
432 making significant financial sacrifices for their education. *“My parents are working extra*
433 *shifts just to save for my college. That makes me feel like I have to succeed at all costs, or*
434 *I’ll be letting them down,”* one adolescent confessed. Another student stated, *“Whenever*
435 *my parents talk about money, it’s always about struggles. It makes me feel guilty for*
436 *wanting to go to an expensive university.”*

437 In extreme cases, financial stress within the family led to diminished academic motivation,
438 as students felt overwhelmed by financial concerns rather than focusing on their studies.
439 *“I sometimes feel like giving up on my dreams because I know we can’t afford a private*
440 *college. I don’t even want to think about it anymore,”* a student admitted. Another shared,

441 *“I have friends who can afford coaching classes for competitive exams, but I can't. It*
442 *makes me feel like I'm already at a disadvantage.”*

443 Parents also acknowledged the emotional impact financial stress had on their children.
444 One mother expressed, *“We try to hide our financial struggles, but I can see that my son*
445 *worries about money. He has started asking if we can afford his college, and it breaks my*
446 *heart.”* Some parents reported that financial stress affected their relationships with their
447 children. *“I get irritated when my kids ask for things because I am constantly worried*
448 *about expenses. I know it's not fair to them, but it's hard,”* a father admitted.

449 However, some students found strength in their financial hardships. *“I know money is*
450 *tight, but that just makes me more determined to succeed. I want to earn enough so that*
451 *my parents never have to worry about finances again,”* one student proudly shared. This
452 highlights how financial communication, even in challenging circumstances, can
453 positively shape resilience and motivation.

454

455 **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

456 The findings of this study highlight the significant role of family financial communication
457 in shaping adolescents' educational aspirations. Open and constructive discussions about
458 financial matters within families contribute to a sense of security and motivation among
459 adolescents. In contrast, the absence of financial discussions often leads to uncertainty,
460 stress, and diminished academic motivation. These findings have several important
461 implications for families, educators, and policymakers. Families should strive to engage in
462 open and honest financial discussions with their children, educating them about financial
463 planning, budgeting, and investment in education to empower them with realistic yet
464 ambitious educational goals. When adolescents are aware of their family's financial status
465 and the importance of managing resources effectively, they develop a sense of
466 responsibility and financial literacy that helps them make informed decisions about their
467 academic future. Transparency regarding financial limitations can help adolescents
468 develop a practical understanding of their higher education options while alleviating
469 anxiety. Parents who engage in constructive discussions about saving for education,
470 scholarships, and potential financial aid opportunities provide children with a roadmap for
471 achieving their goals. Conversely, families that avoid discussing financial matters may
472 unintentionally leave their children feeling confused or unprepared for the economic
473 realities of higher education. Additionally, fostering a supportive family environment
474 where financial concerns are addressed positively can enhance children's confidence in

475 pursuing their academic and career aspirations. When adolescents receive reassurance
476 from their parents that financial obstacles can be managed through proper planning and
477 decision-making, they are more likely to stay focused on their studies and aim for higher
478 educational achievements. Parents should also encourage their children to participate in
479 financial discussions, helping them understand the significance of long-term financial
480 planning.

481 Educational institutions and counselors play a crucial role in supporting students from
482 diverse socio-economic backgrounds by incorporating financial literacy programs. Schools
483 can integrate financial planning workshops, career counseling sessions, and informational
484 sessions on scholarships and student loans to equip students with the knowledge necessary
485 for making informed academic decisions. Teachers and school counselors can help
486 students develop a balanced perspective on career aspirations, ensuring that financial
487 considerations are addressed without limiting their ambitions. Workshops and counseling
488 sessions on financial planning, scholarships, and educational loans can help students make
489 informed decisions regarding their academic and career pathways. Providing access to
490 career guidance resources that take financial factors into account can further help students
491 align their aspirations with realistic and achievable educational pathways. Schools can also
492 facilitate parental guidance sessions to educate families on the importance of financial
493 communication and planning for their children's education. Encouraging families to
494 engage in these discussions within a school-supported environment can help normalize
495 financial conversations and provide parents with tools to guide their children effectively.
496 Moreover, schools and educators should advocate for the inclusion of financial literacy as
497 a part of the formal curriculum. Teaching students essential financial skills, such as
498 budgeting, saving, investment planning, and understanding student loans, can help them
499 navigate the financial challenges associated with higher education. This initiative can
500 bridge the gap between financial constraints and academic aspirations, ensuring that
501 students are well-prepared to make informed educational and career choices.

502 Given the increasing cost of education, policymakers should focus on developing
503 initiatives that support families in managing educational expenses. Expanding access to
504 financial aid, scholarships, and affordable loan schemes can help reduce financial stress on
505 families and encourage higher educational aspirations among students. Additionally,
506 incorporating financial literacy into school curricula can equip students with essential
507 skills to navigate financial challenges in their academic and professional lives.
508 Governments and educational bodies should work together to create policies that provide

509 financial support to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Increasing
510 the availability of need-based scholarships and simplifying the process for obtaining
511 financial aid can ensure that students with academic potential are not hindered by financial
512 constraints. Financial education programs should be integrated into both school and
513 community-level initiatives, ensuring that families from all socio-economic backgrounds
514 can benefit from enhanced financial knowledge and planning strategies. Another crucial
515 policy implication is the introduction of structured financial planning initiatives that assist
516 families in budgeting for higher education expenses. Providing financial literacy training
517 at the community level can help parents develop strategies for long-term savings and
518 investment in their children's education. Governments should also consider offering tax
519 incentives or subsidies for families actively saving for their children's higher education.
520 Policymakers should also explore the impact of rising educational costs and inflation on
521 students' aspirations and find ways to mitigate the financial burden. Ensuring that public
522 and private institutions provide financial counseling services, affordable student loans, and
523 flexible repayment plans can significantly ease the financial pressure on students and their
524 families. Moreover, initiatives that encourage part-time work opportunities or internships
525 for students can help bridge financial gaps while also providing valuable work experience.

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529 **CONCLUSION**

530 This study sheds light on the intricate relationship between family financial
531 communication and adolescents' educational aspirations, particularly in the context of
532 Chandigarh, India. The findings underscore the importance of open financial discussions
533 in fostering a sense of security, motivation, and ambition among students. While financial
534 constraints pose challenges, effective communication and planning within families can
535 mitigate the negative impact on children's academic and career trajectories. The study
536 contributes to the existing literature by providing qualitative insights into how family
537 financial dynamics influence educational aspirations in a rapidly evolving economic
538 landscape. Future research can build on these findings by exploring longitudinal impacts
539 of financial discussions on career outcomes and examining the effectiveness of financial
540 literacy interventions at the school and community levels. Ultimately, fostering transparent
541 and supportive financial communication within families can contribute to the development

542 of a confident and goal-oriented generation prepared to navigate the challenges of higher
543 education and beyond.

544

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