



Aspiration interventions

Background

The summary below presents the research evidence on aspiration interventions in the Arab World.

The Teaching & Learning Toolkit focuses on impact on outcomes for learners; it presents an estimate of the average impact of aspiration interventions on learning progress, based on the synthesis of a large number of quantitative studies from around the world.

This page offers a summary and analysis of individual studies on aspiration interventions in the Arab world. In contrast to the Toolkit it includes studies which do not estimate impact, but instead investigate the implementation of interventions and how they are perceived by school leaders, teachers and students using a range of research methods. This information is valuable for school leaders and teachers interested in finding out more about particular examples of aspiration interventions that have been delivered in the Arab world.

Summary of the research in the Arab World

Aspirations are what children and young people hope to achieve for themselves in the future. Raising aspirations is often believed to be an effective way to motivate students to work harder so as to achieve the steps necessary for later success. However, literature to date showed little or no positive impact of aspiration interventions on educational achievement.

There are no studies in the Arab world examining the impact of aspiration interventions on student learning and achievement. Existing studies have focused on the importance of community and family engagement to increase students intrinsic motivation and build aspirational thinking. This was evident in many studies that looked into the relationship between family engagement and students' performance and motivation (Alnafea & Curtis, 2017; Yang et al., 2018). Through a cross-sectional survey design, 351 primary students (11 and 12 years-old) and their mothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia indicated that the home



environment and parenting style influence student's motivation, meta-cognition and learning behavior in school (Alnafea & Curtis, 2017). Authoritative and authoritarian maternal parenting styles were correlated directly with students' learning motivation at the primary and secondary levels in Saudi Arabia and Oman respectively (Alhadabi, 2019; Alnafea & Curtis, 2017).

Other studies have examined classroom-based interventions to increase students' motivation and aspirations. A qualitative study conducted in Khartoum, Sudan indicated that adequate classroom interaction and effective student teacher interaction to motivate students to learn and be engaged in learning (Mohamed & AbuBaker, 2018). Exploring the perceptions of four English teachers and 32 students, who were interviewed, observed, and engaged in focus groups, data showed that the quality of interaction in a student-centered classroom enhanced their engagement and motivation. As such, authors of this study highlighted the significant role of the teacher and his/her ability to adopt various teaching methods to develop rapport with students and ensure successful classroom interaction. Implementing the cooperative learning (CL) approach, for instance, is identified as a teaching technique to ensure a student-centered classroom. In a study conducted in Saudi Arabia, Alghamdy (2019) asked two English teachers to implement cooperative learning in their classrooms for 12 weeks. Interviews conducted with their tenth-grade male students (n=10), aged 14-15 years showed that the CL approach strengthened students' relationships and created friendships with each other, helped them build their self-confidence, and increased their motivation.



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Summary:

The evidence base on aspiration interventions is very limited. More rigorous studies are required, focusing on both student-level and school-level interventions. There are no empirical studies of interventions to raise aspirations that report impact on achievement or learning.

Existing studies have looked at two variables, parental engagement and teaching methodologies, while investigating students' motivation and aspirational thinking. Studies in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Sudan suggested ways to enhance that focusing on high quality teacher-student and parent-student interaction may have a positive impact on students' intrinsic motivation.

Empirical studies are highly needed to explore aspiration interventions and its impact on students learning and achievement in the Arab world.



References

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Search terms

Aspiration intervention; achievement; goal setting; change in aspiration.

Databases searched

Academic Search Complete

ERIC (EBSCO)

Education Source

Google scholar

ProQuest Central

ProQuest Dissertations

Web of science