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Psychological security and its relationship to academic ambition among students at prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University

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Abstract

University students' academic performance is significantly influenced by psychological factors, yet the relationship between psychological security and academic ambition remains understudied in Saudi higher education. This study investigated this relationship among 350 students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University in Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia. The main objective of this research is to analyze the correlation between psychological security and academic ambition and to identify how demographic factors influence this relationship among university students. Using validated scales and statistical analyses, we measured psychological security and academic ambition levels, examining their correlation and potential demographic influences. Results revealed high psychological security but unexpectedly low academic ambition among students. A strong positive correlation emerged between these variables, with psychological security accounting for 51.1% of the variance in academic ambition. This paradoxical finding suggests a complex interplay between feeling secure and setting high academic goals in the context of Saudi Arabia's evolving societal and economic landscape. The study concludes that while psychological security is crucial for fostering academic ambition, other factors may be dampening students' academic aspirations. These findings underscore the need for a holistic approach to student development, integrating psychological support with academic guidance, and aligning educational practices with changing societal needs to enhance overall student success in higher education.

Keywords: Academic ambition, Psychological security, Students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University.

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1. Introduction

Psychological security is one of the fundamental psychological needs required to achieve stability and peace in various aspects of life. Due to changes brought about by modern political, social, and economic systems, there are increased levels of PH and perceived insecurity [1]. Psychological security as a moderator also refers to individual character and is

described as the ability to control positive feelings, which does not provide insight into the worst aspects of a personality. It is related to one's emotions, satisfaction, or the ability to accommodate other non-mental environmental features [2, 3]. It is only if this need is met that individuals can also satisfy other psychological and social needs [4, 5]. Psychological factors account for the prominence of a social setting, with characteristics contributing to the academic context, meaning that the psychological security concept is critical in personal regulation and integration discourses [6, 7]. On these preoccupations, Maslow focused on the requirements of law, order, and stability [8, 9]. Motivation, characterized as the organizational desire to accomplish aims and objectives, is an important concept for university students, especially since this environment calls for dedication and high-performance grades [10, 11]. It is also important to foster aspects of the student's psychological transformation and stress regulation, as well as to grasp other opportunities in life [12, 13]. The prognosis of the study mentioned above, such as the Bicropty study, provides causal evidence that feelings about the future are precursors to students' academic hopes.

The research problem under consideration pertains to psychological security as a process occurring within the university environment as well as to its impact on students' learning achievement. Psychological security is not only a powerful precondition but also useful in defining a positive academic climate. However, psychologically, many students are under pressure, resulting in academic vulnerability and an existential crisis, which is evident from this & Abo Arrah [3]. These psychological difficulties suggest the social relevance of intervention to enhance psychological security, which is likely to foster improved academic aspiration and performance.

The purpose of the present study is to assess psychological safety and academic success motivation among the students of Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University and to determine the interaction of these two variables. Additionally, the study compares the levels of psychological security and academic ambition across different subgroups of students based on gender, age, and ethnic background. The research questions aim to determine the mean scores of psychological security and academic aspiration to empirically test the hypothesis regarding the relationship between these two variables. Furthermore, the paper explores the potential link between the level of academic aspiration and psychological well-being characteristic of students.

This study has theoretical significance in that. The present paper thus complements existing research on Saudi higher education in that two factors, namely psychological security and academic ambition, have been more or less mentioned in the literature. Energy is offered on how educators and university counselors can develop programs that could facilitate an increase in students' psychological health, with the resultant positive impact on their academic endeavors. The findings will assist in developing the right strategies that could help in improving the learning atmosphere and enable the development of the students to face various challenges in the future. Therefore, based on the students of Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, this research study will obtain the necessary data on how universities can contribute to the learner's success in every aspect, whether it is academic or personal.

2. Study Concepts and Terminologies

Psychological Security: According to Al-Zahrani [13] this term refers to a student's sense of acceptance, appreciation, happiness, and the freedom to express thoughts, while being protected from external threats in the environment, diseases, and wars.

Psychological security is considered a fundamental aspect of psychological growth, self-harmony, and individual mental health. Procedurally, this term indicates the overall score obtained by the respondent through their responses to the psychological security scale employed in this study.

Academic Ambition: As defined by Abdel Muti et al. [12] academic ambition represents an individual's expectations, goals, and aspirations concerning their future achievements. Another definition by Balmain and Abdelhay [14] describes it as the level of individual expectations and distinct desires to attain future goals based on personal experiences.

Procedurally, this term signifies the overall score achieved by the respondent through their responses to the academic ambition level scale used in this study.

3. Study Scope

The study aimed to assess the levels of psychological security and academic ambition among university students, exploring the relationship between these variables. Additionally, it sought to identify differences based on demographic factors and examine the predictive capacity of psychological security in estimating academic ambition. Conducted during the 2023 academic year, data were collected from students enrolled during this period. The study was geographically focused on Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University in Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia, and included a sample of 350 randomly selected male and female undergraduate students from both scientific and humanities colleges at the university.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Psychological Security

Since the dawn of humanity, individuals have strived to ensure their survival, attain a sense of security, and cultivate inner tranquility while distancing themselves from anything that jeopardizes their psychological well-being. Psychological security stands out as one of the fundamental needs that individuals aspire to fulfill, especially in the face of the rapid and successive changes that life presents [15].

Psychological security can be defined as an individual's experience of mental comfort, happiness, and tranquility, both internally and externally. This state is achieved when the individual is content with satisfying their innate, psychological, and social needs. It also encompasses the ability to adapt to one's life circumstances, effectively address challenges, and

resolve life's problems without succumbing to sadness or pain [16]. Moreover, psychological security can be described as a mental state in which individuals find comfort, calmness, and acceptance within their families and society [17]. According to Al-Qurala [18] it involves the feeling of protection from psychological, social, and economic threats.

Individuals encounter numerous disruptions in their lives, which negatively impact them and pose threats to their psychological security [10, 19]. Psychological security is regarded as a basic need for cultivating appropriate behavior. The pursuit of psychological security motivates individuals to establish stability, ensure familial and social well-being, and confront crises with confidence and wisdom [11]. It plays an essential role in shaping an individual's personality, from childhood to old age. The vulnerability of an individual's security becomes apparent when they are exposed to psychological and social pressures [20].

4.2. Academic Ambition

The concept of academic ambition holds significant interest for psychologists and educators, as it is considered a fundamental aspect of university students' personalities. These students evolve through their experiences, successes, and failures in their academic journeys, and they are both influenced by and have an impact on others [12].

Balmain and Abdelhay [14] define academic ambition as the academic level that university students aspire to achieve through self-determination, perseverance, determination, and the ability to overcome obstacles without losing hope. In the researcher's view, it represents the level of effort a student invests in attaining their desired academic future, driven by their noble goals, which are shaped by individual circumstances and past experiences of success and failure.

The examination of academic ambition's level is of paramount importance as it plays a pivotal role in a student's life. It fosters a spirit of research and scientific competition, influences mental well-being, contributes to academic and educational accomplishments, and aids in achieving personal harmony while providing insight into an individual's future personality [21].

The researcher contends that the significance of studying academic ambition extends beyond the individual student to society. A highly ambitious student signifies societal progress and elevation. Ambitious students exhibit qualities such as determination, optimism, responsibility, precise goal achievement, as well as personal, social, psychological, and teamwork skills [22]. The researcher emphasizes that one of the most notable attributes of ambitious students is their resilience in the face of challenges, their ability to persevere through failure, and their unwavering pursuit of their goals.

5. Literature Review

The researcher examined numerous studies pertaining to the variables under investigation, which can be categorized as follows:

5.1. Studies Concerning Psychological Security

Yosef and Hussein [23] conducted a study with the aim of exploring the relationship between psychological security and social interaction among gifted students in the Talent and Excellence secondary schools in Khartoum State. Using a descriptive correlational approach, they applied the tools of the study (*Psychological Security-Social Interaction*) to a sample of 152 male and female students. The study found that psychological security among gifted students in the secondary stage is characterized by high levels. Additionally, it revealed a positive correlation between psychological security and social interaction among the study sample. Moreover, there were statistically significant gender-based differences in psychological security, favoring females.

Swaid et al. [4] conducted a study to explore the relationship between psychological security, irrational thoughts, and mental health among preparatory stage students with hearing impairments. The study, employing a descriptive correlational approach, used tools including measures of psychological security, irrational thoughts, and mental health on a sample of 80 students with hearing impairments. The findings indicated a decrease in psychological security levels, an increase in irrational thoughts, and a decline in mental health levels. The study also identified a significant inverse correlation between the scores of preparatory stage students with hearing impairments and both psychological security and mental health.

Areshi [1] study was conducted to identify the level of psychological security, understand the level of future anxiety, explore the relationship between psychological security and future anxiety, and determine the predictive ability of psychological security on future anxiety among female high school students in the Jazan region. The study applied the research tools (*Psychological Security, Future Anxiety*) to a random sample of 500 female students from the second year of secondary schools affiliated with the General Education Administration in the Jazan region. Using a descriptive correlational approach, the study revealed, among other results, a positive correlation between psychological security and future anxiety, with high levels of psychological security among the second-year female students in the Jazan region.

Al-Sammak [2] conducted a study aiming to uncover the level of psychological security and its relationship with some psychological variables. The study applied the study tools to a random sample of 279 male and 265 female students from Kuwait University. Using a comparative descriptive correlational approach, the study identified statistically significant differences between genders in psychological security, favoring males.

Al-Darawsheh and Alsfasfa [8] conducted a study to understand the levels of psychological security and psychological alienation among orphaned adolescent girls in Aqaba, Jordan, and the relationship between them. The study used the tools (*Psychological Security, Psychological Alienation*) on a sample of 173 orphaned teenage girls registered with the Aqaba Sons Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Orphans, with ages ranging from 12 to 18 years. The study, employing a descriptive approach, found that the level of psychological security was moderate, while the level of psychological

alienation was high. Furthermore, the study revealed a statistically significant inverse relationship between the levels of psychological security and psychological alienation among orphaned teenage girls at a significant level of 0.01.

Metwally [15] conducted a study to investigate the relationship between psychological security and life satisfaction among university students, considering some demographic variables. The study applied the tools (*Psychological Security, Life Satisfaction*) to a sample comprising 145 males and 155 females. Utilizing a comparative descriptive correlational approach, the study found a positive correlation between psychological security and life satisfaction.

Ibrahim [6] conducted a study to determine the level of psychological security and its relationship with achievement motivation and social adaptation among university students. The study applied the tools (*Psychological Security, Achievement Motivation, Social Adaptation*) to a random sample of 188 male and female students. The study found a high level of psychological security but no significant relationship between psychological security and achievement motivation or social adaptation.

5.2. Studies related to Academic Ambition

Abdullah [24] conducted a study to identify differences among female students at Qassim University. The study utilized the tools (*Mental Alertness, Academic Ambition, and Academic Thinking*) on a sample of 317 female students. The comparative descriptive approach revealed that students at Qassim University demonstrated a high level of positive thinking, average mental alertness, and a high level of academic ambition. The study also found differences in positive thinking in favor of the students from Qassim, with statistically significant differences in mental alertness and academic ambition.

Mahmoudi and Khedriyyeh [25] conducted a study to understand the level of positive thinking and its relationship with academic ambition among students of the common trunk, social sciences, University of Medea. The study applied the tools (*Positive Thinking, Level of Ambition*) to a sample of 70 students, employing a descriptive correlational approach. The study found a significant positive correlation between positive thinking and academic ambition in the study sample, with no significant gender-based differences in academic ambition.

Kajoor [26] conducted a study to reveal the level of academic ambition among students at the College of Education at King Faisal University and its relationship with some variables. The study applied the tool (*Academic Ambition Scale*) to a sample of 451 students, including 244 males and 207 females. The descriptive approach showed a high level of academic ambition among the students at King Faisal University. The study identified differences in the level of academic ambition in favor of males and found differences in the level of academic ambition in favor of graduate students.

Balmain and Abdelhay [14] conducted to exploration of the relationship between self-esteem and the level of academic ambition among university students based on certain variables. The study employed a descriptive-analytical approach and utilized tools (*Self-Concept, Academic Ambition*) on a sample of 102 male and female students at Ahmed Daraya University. The findings indicated that both self-esteem and ambition levels in the sample were moderate. Additionally, the study identified a correlational relationship between self-esteem and ambition levels in the sample.

5.3. Comments on Previous Studies

After a thorough review of the preceding research endeavors, several pertinent observations can be made. These studies have explored the realms of psychological security and academic ambition among university students, offering valuable practical and theoretical insights. They have significantly contributed to the field by elucidating critical concepts and terminology, as well as by shedding light on the underlying research problems. Nevertheless, the present study distinguishes itself by concentrating on students from Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. It employs a questionnaire as a measurement tool to assess the correlation between psychological security and academic ambition, considering variables such as gender and academic specialization within the research sample. The primary aim of this study is to further enrich the theoretical and cognitive foundations of the field, ultimately establishing a robust research framework for future investigations.

6. Methodology

Study Design: A descriptive methodology was chosen by the researcher as the most appropriate approach for fulfilling the study's objectives.

Sample and population: The study focused on a sample of students enrolled at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj, specifically targeting those attending during the first semester of the academic year 1445 A.H. (2023-2024). The sample was selected randomly from the university's student body, encompassing a diverse group of 350 male and female students. This approach ensured a representative cross-section of the university population, providing a broad perspective on psychological security and academic ambition among students at this institution during the specified academic period. Table 1

Table 1.
Distribution of Study Participants by Variables.

Variable	Taxonomic levels	Frequency	Ratio
Type	Male	83	23.7
	Female	267	76.3
	Total	350	100 %
College	Humanity	128	36.6
	Healthy	67	19.1
	Scientific	155	44.3
	Total	350	100 %

In Table 1, findings highlight the gender and college distribution variables within the sample. The gender distribution shows that most females, accounting for 76.3% of the sample, are compared to males who constitute 23.7%. Regarding the college variable, individuals from scientific colleges form the largest group, representing 44.3% of the sample. In contrast, those from health colleges are the least represented, making up only 19.1% of the sample.

6.1. Study Instruments and Construction Procedures

As to the various literature and studies on self-esteem, the researcher chose the Self-Esteem Scale constructed by Al-Nayib and Al-Bana [27] for the given sample population. Moreover, after considering prior studies and literature, the Academic Ambition Scale developed by Lunasi [21] was used because the targets of this study overlap with this scale. We then pre-tested the instruments to ensure they had face validity; after obtaining face validity, the instruments were distributed to the study sample, and internal reliability was assessed using the Pearson correlation coefficient. This included comparing the item scores of every item in the self-esteem and academic ambition scales and comparing them with the total scale scores.

Table 2.
Pearson Correlation Coefficients for the Psychological Security Scale Statements.

Phrase number	Correlation coefficient	Phrase number	Correlation coefficient
1	0.709**	9	0.489**
2	0.681**	10	0.655**
3	0.730**	11	0.638**
4	0.603**	12	0.575**
5	0.499**	13	0.465**
6	0.734**	14	0.694**
7	0.661**	15	0.590**
8	0.536**		

Note: ** Statistically significant at a significant level of 0.01 or less.

Table 2 shows the correlations of individual items of a 15-item psychological security scale with the total scores of participants. The coefficients ranged from 0.465 to 0.734, and the current results suggest moderate to strong linear associations between agreement with each of the statements and participants' overall self-estimated psychological security.

The results also show that the suggested links between the scale items that measure security stability and freedom from concern and the overall psychological security concept that the scale is intended to measure are valid. This convergence of these correlations enhances confidence in the scale's internal consistency regarding this unified latent variable.

The study's analysis of variance confirms Hsieh's hypothesis, showing that certain items have the highest correlation ($r = 0.709-0.734$), potentially serving as the most accurate indicators of participants' overall psychological security when calculating scale scores. As shown above, all but two of the items imply reasonable correlation values, thus demonstrating reasonable validity and reliability for this scale.

Table 3.

Pearson correlation coefficients for the academic ambition scale statements.

Phrase number	Correlation coefficient	Phrase number	Correlation coefficient
1	0.417**	18	0.521**
2	0.513**	19	0.405**
3	0.493**	20	0.673**
4	0.459**	21	0.644**
5	0.541**	22	0.626**
6	0.437**	23	0.482**
7	0.430**	24	0.233**
8	0.542**	25	0.636**
9	0.390**	26	0.388**
10	0.453**	27	0.444**
11	0.556**	28	0.588**
12	0.564**	29	0.502**
13	0.572**	30	0.360**
14	0.466**	31	0.662**
15	0.590**	32	0.347**
16	0.320**	33	0.375**
17	0.581**		

Note: ** Statistically significant at a significance level of 0.01 or lower.

Table 3 also displays the Pearson correlation coefficients of each statement of a 33-item academic ambition scale and the total student scores. The coefficients are up to 0.673, which suggests that a weak to strong linear relationship between each statement and overall academic ambition, as measured by the full-scale agreement, is present. Moderate, significant, and positive coefficients imply that endorsement of most statements practically corresponds with students' overall motivation and achievement goals. This affirms the scale's psychometric validity as a sensible measure of the nominal latent trait academic ambition. The latter demonstrates high convergent validity for most items to represent a single construct, given the high squared multiple correlations.

However, it should be noted that the interrelationships between the main variables are greater, and therefore statements 20, 21, 22, 25, and 31 have the highest coefficients of their own contribution to the construction of the overall scale, which ranges from 0.62 to 0.67. The following statements, which indicate the aspiration level regarding school performance, work ethic, status, perceived benefits of education, and pride, bear the closest correlations with overall academic aspiration. They act as very robust single identifiers of this underlying attribute. While a few appear to have a lower correlation ($r = 0.233$ for item 24), all are significant, indicating a fair degree of convergence. Altogether, the band of positive coefficients of inter-item differences in the sample re-validates the measurement, whereby the total scores reflect the inclination of students for academics.

6.2. Reliability of the Study Tool

To improve the study tool's reliability, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha (α) for the scale's general reliability. Reliability coefficients for the psychological security scale of the French version of the ESD are reported in Table 4 for the 15 items of the scale as well as for the 33 items of the aspiration etudes scale. Reliability coefficients for multi-item scales were calculated using alpha coefficients, and the obtained alpha coefficients of 0.833 and 0.878 reveal that both the scales used in the study have high internal consistency and reliability.

Cronbach's alpha values are generally high, indicating that the scale items are positively correlated, which suggests that the measures obtained are consistent with the postulated constructs, namely, psychological security and academic ambition. If the items were dissimilar, that is, they assessed different aspects of the construct, the alpha values would be much lower. Alphas above 0.8 statistically confirm each scale's construct validity, testifying to the scales' sound psychometric qualities and their uniformity across participants. This way, absolute scores are fixed to render participant scores on each scale as stable and reliable measures of their standing on these latent factors.

These are positive implications for the scales and their application in research and practice. Researchers can confidently employ these scales for assessing psychological security and academic ambition, and the scores obtained can be considered true indicators of participants' standings on these respective factors. Consequently, the high reliability underscores the proper construction and calibration of the scales, enabling other researchers to use them with confidence in their quality.

The data collected for this study are quantitative data obtained from various reliable scales measuring perceived psychological safety and academic hope. In comparing the means of these two groups of readers, T-tests are used together with correlation coefficients as well as regression analysis to make sense of the collected data. The study subject is 350 students of Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University; as such, it offers a large sample size for conclusion-making.

Table 4.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure the reliability of the psychological security and academic ambition scale.

The scale	Phrase number	Alpha persistence
Psychological security scale	15	0.833
Academic ambition scale	33	0.878

6.3. Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected from the sample of 350 students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, the following statistical tools and techniques were employed:

- 1) Statistical Software: In the current study, the data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 28). This software was preferred because of its ability to handle large datasets and conduct multiple hypothesis tests simultaneously.
- 2) Descriptive Statistics: In psychometric data analysis, the comparison of means for two independent variables, psychological security and academic ambition of students, was conducted. Tools such as standard deviation, test frequencies, and percentages were used to describe the demographic features of the sample. References were maintained as in the original text.
- 3) Pearson Correlation Coefficient: In testing the relationship between psychological security and academic ambitions, a directional Pearson correlation coefficient test was conducted. This test indicates the extent and the steepness of the relationship between the two variables, with the aim of demonstrating that the existing relationship is linear.
- 4) Simple Linear Regression: A multiple hypothesis random simple linear regression test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis: To what extent does psychological security influence academic ambition? The regression analysis revealed that psychological security contributed 51.1% to the variability of academic ambition, indicating a significant relationship.
- 5) T-tests: When comparing two independent variables for variance, an independent sample t-test was used to compare interests in psychological security and/or academic ambition by gender and academic discipline.

The ethical clearance to this end, this study undertook to seek ethical clearance from a university. The study ensured that all protocols of the university were followed at all times throughout the study, insofar as participants' rights, participants' identity, and well-being were concerned.

7. Results

This research, conducted at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj, aims to identify the interference pattern of self-esteem and academic aspirations. Pearson correlation and t-tests are used to measure self-esteem levels, academic desire, and the relationship between the two. The results indicate that self-esteem is generally above average compared to the overall population, while academic motivation is below average. As expected, a strong positive relationship is observed between self-esteem and academic ambition. Subgroup analysis shows self-esteem as a significant positive predictor of academic ambition. These findings support the inference of psychological orientation in the academic arena, particularly the relevance of self-esteem in driving motivation among university learners. In the results section, a detailed discussion and analysis of the findings will be provided, addressing the key questions.

Research Question 1: "What is the level of self-esteem among students at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj?" To determine the level of self-esteem among students at the university, a t-test for a single sample was used. The results are presented in the following table.

Table 5 shows a statistically significant difference at 0.01 or below between the study mean and the hypothetical population mean on the Self-Esteem Scale among students at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj. These differences are advantageous to the mean of the sample compared to the hypothetical mean, which suggests that the students have higher self-esteem. This finding is supported by Yosef and Hussein [23], Sweid et al. [4], Areshi [1], Al-Darawsheh and Alsfasfa [8] and Ibrahim [6].

The researcher finds this result quite reasonable based on Saudi Arabian policies and visions that seek to promote students' self-esteem in universities, which have started producing positive impacts. In addition, at the level of Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University, one of the most important universities in the Kingdom, great attention is paid to enhancing the quality of students' lives, including self-esteem. This is achieved through nurturing the academic climate, employing competent academic staff, and providing consultancies and counseling for students in their academic and psychological development.

Table 5.

Distribution of Study Sample Participants According to Self-Esteem Scale Mean and Hypothetical Mean.

The scale	SMA	Standard deviation	Hypothetical mean	T- Value	Indication
Psychological security	3.51	0.663	3	14.422	0.000**

Note: **Statistically significant at a significance level of 0.01 or lower.

Research Question 2: "What is the level of academic ambition among students at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj?"

To assess the level of academic ambition among students at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj, a t-test for a single sample was conducted. The results are presented in the following table:

Table 6.

Distribution of Study Sample Participants Based on Academic Ambition Scale Mean and Hypothetical Mean.

The scale	SMA	Standard deviation	Hypothetical mean	T- Value	Indication
Academic ambition	2.39	0.286	3	-40.15	0.000**

Table 6 also revealed statistically significant differences at or below the 0.01 level of significance between the study's mean scores and the hypothetical mean on the Academic Ambition Scale for students at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj. These differences provide a hypothetical mean since the study sample obtained a low mean score, indicating that students have low academic aspirations. This finding differs from Stallman [28] and Kajoor [26] research. The researcher explains some of the reasons for this gap in meeting job market demands, university disciplines, and social preferences that might enhance certain fields of study over others.

Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between self-esteem and academic aspiration among students at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj that is detected at the .05 level of significance? Since the present study aimed to determine the correlation between self-esteem and academic aspiration of students at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj, the researcher used Pearson correlation coefficients. The table below displays the results.

Table 7.

Self-Esteem and Academic Ambition Correlation Among Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University Students.

Dimensions	Academic ambition	
	Correlation Coefficient	Statistical significance
Psychological security	0.715	0.000**

Note: ** is significant at the level (0.01).

Based on the findings in Table 7, a highly significant positive correlation ($p < 0.01$) exists between self-esteem and academic ambition among Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University students in Al-Kharj. This suggests that an increase in self-esteem is associated with higher levels of academic ambition in these students.

Research Question 4: Can academic ambition be predicted based on self-esteem among students at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj?

Therefore, to establish the level of predictability of academic ambition among students at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of the independent variable, self-esteem, on the dependent variable, academic ambition.

Table 8.

Shows Academic Ambition Prediction by Self-Esteem in Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj.

Dependent variable	Correlation coefficient	Determination Coefficient	F	Significance level	Independent variable	Regression coefficient	T	Significance level
	R	R ²	Calculated	Sig. F		B	Calculated	Sig. T
Academic ambition	0.715	0.511	363.005	0.000*	Constant	1.304	22.563	0.000*
					Psychological security	0.308	19.053	0.000*

Note: **is significant at the level (0.01).

A significant level of positive association or correlation between self-esteem and academic ambition was obtained with a coefficient value of 0.715. The F-value of 363.005 (standardized es $F_3 = 17.978$; $p < 0.001$) indicates a significant association of self-esteem with ambition, and a coefficient of determination of 0.511 suggests a high measure of predictability of scores for ambition. Additionally, the highly statistically significant self-esteem predictor appears to support the estimation of ambition, as evidenced by the t-test value of 19.053 ($p < 0.001$). Table 8.

In any case, the results obtained in this study offer solid empirical evidence in favor of the proposed hypothesis of a positive link between self-esteem and academic aspiration. In this context, it is hypothesized that a) meeting basic psychological needs can enhance students' psychological well-being, which is crucial for their achievement. Low-self-esteem learners may be more likely to be unproductive in their classwork and collective settings. Therefore, the data support this hypothesis by pointing to self-esteem as a key element that would improve students' ambition and lead to their academic success. Individual emotional upliftment may motivate students to work harder to achieve their academic goals.

The outstanding result revealed that psychological security has a direct positive relationship with academic ambition, and the proportion of variance in academic ambition explained by psychological security amounts to 51.1%. However, the level of psychological security was high, while the level of academic ambition was unexpectedly low. The implication from this study is that students at PSUAS have different levels of psychological security and academic ambition; hence, the findings of this study can be seen as pointers to understanding student psychology and performance in Saudi higher education.

The first consequence of high psychological security, accompanied by a low level of academic self-efficacy, reflects an interesting paradox. It is possible that several factors within Saudi Arabia, which is currently changing at a very fast rate, could contribute to this break. Students may prioritize employment over further education, and while they may feel comfortable on their campuses, the changing economy, fueled by initiatives like Vision 2030, may be increasing uncertainty regarding future job prospects. Furthermore, ongoing cultural changes in Saudi Arabia could also contribute to

this effect, as students who feel secure at the university level may be unaware of their future roles in a society that is undergoing constant transformation.

In addition, the strong positive relationship established by the coefficient of determination test, whereby 51.1% of the variance in psychological security predicts the level of academic ambition, jointly proclaims the importance of psychological health in academic contexts. This implies that psychological security could be a significant approach to boost academic aspiration and, therefore, performance. From this, I gain insight into how student development requires more than just a set of academic assistance plans.

The research also pays much attention to poor psychological coping with exacerbations in at-risk groups that significantly hinder academic achievement. This, along with the changes that have been established in the concept of psychological security, indicates that universities can play an active role in the development and improvement of students' psychological well-being by providing pervasive support for important psychological needs and offering corresponding opportunities.

8. Novel Contributions

This research presents several valuable contributions to the literature regarding psychological security and academic aspiration among university learners. This study serves as an initial reference point in exploring this relationship at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia, and provides context-related findings about the students' psychological climates within this educational setting. The study demonstrates that a student exhibits higher self-esteem than the mean score; a strategy in Saudi Arabian policies is to increase self-esteem in learning institutions. However, it also reveals unexpectedly low levels of academic efficacy despite high levels of self-esteem among the learners. This departs from expectations regarding the separation of self-esteem and academic desire among Saudi Arabian learners; it also reflects a situational socio-cultural and economic context that influences the learners' aspirations.

This research shows a positive correlation between psychological security and academic aspiration, with a coefficient of determination of 0.51 and $r = 0.715$. The findings also reveal that psychological security, $F(1, 268) = 526.26$, $p < .01$, predicts 51.1% of the variability in academic ambitions, while the remaining variables account for 52.6% of the total variability. The present study provides novel and significant evidence for the importance of psychological security in fostering students' academic aspirations. This quantification extends the understanding beyond the general levels of relationship reported in prior studies, offering a more detailed picture of the connection between these psychological factors.

The implications of the findings suggest that programs aimed at improving psychological security may serve as a useful approach to increasing academic motivation, even when general aspirations are low. This insight offers a new perspective for educational institutions seeking to enhance students' engagement and performance. Therefore, by focusing on strengthening the concept of psychological security, universities could potentially stimulate higher levels of students' academic aspirations.

Altogether, these submissions enhance the knowledge of antecedent psychological factors concerning academic achievement in Saudi higher learning institutions. They serve as an appropriate foundation on which specific client-centered programs aimed at increasing achievement among students can be formulated, thus emphasizing the role of psychological determinants in school processes. Using self-esteem and psychological security as the major independent variables, the study therefore provides important suggestions to educators, policymakers, and university administrators while highlighting the importance of self-esteem and psychological security in enhancing academic motivation among university students in KSA and related cultural settings.

9. Discussion

The results of the current study on self-esteem and academic aspiration in PSU students support and expand the prior literature. One basic similarity is the association of self-esteem with academic aspiration, specifically a correlation coefficient of 0.715. This result aligns with previous studies, including the study of Nietosniitty [29] and Vahedian-Azimi and Moayed [30], which tax on the relationship between self-esteem and academic motivation. The high self-esteem values reflected by students in Prince Sultan University are also in agreement with Salih et al. [31], where self-esteem enhances academic performance among Saudi students. Considering the above conclusions, self-esteem appears to have a significant impact on the psychological health of students and provides a solid foundation for their potential academic achievements.

However, the study also presents an intriguing paradox: unlike the case of students who, although they have high self-esteem, their academic drive is relatively low. This is contrary to the conclusion drawn by Vahedian-Azimi and Moayed [30] and Salih et al. [31] high self-esteem consistently promotes high academic motivation. Variations in results may be attributed to cross-cultural and cross-contextual differences. In this study, however, societal and economic trends, such as changes in the labor market, appear to influence the desire to pursue education. This is supported by Komarraju and Dial [32], who found that students' socially oriented academic identity was negatively linked to academic aspiration. The low academic aspiration observed in this study could be due to changes occurring within society, career goals, or perceptions towards education.

The second major difference lies in the relative correlation between academic aspirations and self-esteem. Wibowo [33] stated that self-esteem and academic performance share a moderately positive relationship, but in the current study, a somewhat more significant correlation between self-esteem and academic self-efficacy appeared.

10. Contribution to the Existing Body of Knowledge

This current study thus extends the existing literature by examining the interaction between self-esteem and academic aspiration in Saudi university students. The present work established that self-esteem does not immediately produce stronger academic aspirations, contrary to most theoretical and empirical works that claim a direct and positive link between both factors. This contradicts the widely held belief that an increase in self-esteem leads directly to an increase in academic motivation. Therefore, the study's results suggest that we should consider a broader range of factors, beyond just motivational ones, to influence students' academic motivation, such as societal roles and career choices that may have a connection to their academic motivation. Furthermore, the strong correlation of self-esteem with academic aspiration established by regression analysis enhances understanding of the role of self-esteem in student growth. Nevertheless, given the still significant proportion of the variance of academic ambition, which is explained by self-esteem at 46%, there is a clear message that other factors cannot be ignored. Further research should be directed to these factors to enrich the understanding of the given psychological and socio-economic predispositions of students' motivation in higher learning institutions.

Therefore, this work substantiates the important function of self-esteem in psychological functioning and questions the extant literature on academic achievement motivation. The findings demand that the role of self-esteem in the context of other variables affecting students' results should be understood in a manner that accounts for current dynamic socio-economic environments, such as those in KSA. This implies that students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University have a medium level of psychological capital. They have contributed positively to Saudi universities' efforts to enhance students' support services and quality of life index [13]. The absence of such funds for counselors decreases motivation among faculty and hampers the development of an environment that helps students enhance their psychological resilience.

High psychological security was evident among the students, but they had low academic aspirations. This outcome can be considered counterintuitive in comparison to several earlier studies [26] and may indicate a gap between safety and adopting challenging educational objectives. It raises questions regarding the alteration of goals in the sphere of career choosing, as well as shifts in people's expectations within an evolving job environment. Therefore, the a strongly confirmed close positive connection between psychological security and academic aspiration. [1] confirms our hypothesis about the significance of psychological well-being in advancing academic pursuits to a certain extent. It can be forecasted that the enhancement of students' psychological security increases their inactive potential to be successful scholars and, hence, reflects a 0.511 correlation.

Furthermore, the professed paper best illustrates how personal issues can prevent learning achievements as well as other vulnerable populations. This result underlines the importance of social and educational support programs needed for struggling and at-risk youth learners. The flexibility of psychological security means that effective organizations' support, especially counseling targeting the relationship between ambition and individuals' resources, matters for students' performance. This bears the potential of creating a revolution, especially for universities, in that they have the capacity to change students' academic destiny. These results stress the multifaceted interdependence of psychological functioning and academic striving for academic success in higher learning and dictate the importance of integrating complementary development activities of the students with equal focus given to both psychological and educational elements for student success. Given the issues that universities face when it comes to student mental health and academic outcomes, this research can provide important lessons for institutions to create students who are more 'tough-minded' and 'more ambitious'.

Moreover, the study also stressed the need for education as a sector to respond to current and future cultural and economic trends in a way that any academic dreams become as valid as they should be achieved. The presented results pose important questions for both the scientific area of higher education research and the general society, taking into consideration such an exceptionally high psychological security, but at the same time, a low academic voyage. This questions current practices and provides implications for the formulation of specific improvements for students in Saudi universities towards more helpful educational approaches and initiatives. However, several limitations must be considered when interpreting these results. Data collection for the questionnaires spanned approximately six months, introducing the possibility of temporal effects.

Third, the study included only those students who were already loyal customers of academic brands, which restricts the generalization of the results concerning unfamiliar brands. Since the sample was recruited from the target population of only Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia, therefore, the generalizability of the results may not be representative of the Saudi population or other students from other countries. The nature of the research used in this paper is also cross-sectional; therefore, one should not make causal assumptions regarding the psychology of psychological security on academic ambition. In addition, most of the measures employed were self-administered, thus inflating the possibility of response bias. Researchers could overcome these limitations in future studies by using a longitudinal approach, including other types of students, and employing additional objective data on students' performances.

11. Conclusion

This cross-sectional study at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia explored the mediating role of psychological security with academic ambition. The study revealed that, despite having above-average psychological security, students' academic competitiveness remains low. The study established a positive and significant relationship between psychological security and academic ambition, with the analytical level of psychological security predicting a higher level of academic ambition. Additionally, 51.1% of the respondents indicated that psychological security positively influenced their academic ambition. There is also an implication that, without psychological security, the ambition to

achieve academically is difficult to attain. As a result, universities should focus on developing students' psychological safety to help them transform their academic visions into tangible achievements.

In support of this, the following recommendations are made: First, university officials must develop promotional campaigns to share examples of self-esteem as motivation and encouragement for students. Additionally, promoting university culture through motivational seminars that encourage ideas from students and awarding exceptional students' performances could positively impact students' academic motivation. Further academic counseling sessions aimed at aligning students' goals and skills might also enhance outcomes.

Consequent studies are needed to review the permanency of psychological security on academic aspiration. This also entails following the changes of these variables with a specific focus on the dynamic nature of such variables through experimental programs aimed at increasing self-esteem to measure its effects on ambition. Examining variables that might act as moderators, encouragement and tenacity in particular, will also shed more light on how and why psychological security impacts academic aspiration. However, to avoid limitations in the generalization of the study, the study should be repeated in other universities and across different fields of study.

Last of all, the study recommends further research to identify other variables that may lead to low academic achievement while psychological safety is high. While cultural and social factors, as well as cross-sectional analyses with other forms of learning environments, may shed more light on these processes, they aid universities in applying more specific measures to promote psychological safety while maintaining competitiveness and academic drive.

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