

ASPIRING TO A SELECTIVE UNIVERSITY AND ACHIEVEMENT OF ASPIRATIONS: DETERMINANT FACTORS

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ABSTRACT

The following paper presents the results of a research aimed to firstly assess how the cultural capital of students obtained in their last year of high school influences their aspirations to attend a selective university and their degree of achievement. An original questionnaire was applied to 1054 students in 23 different educational establishments of Concepcion Metropolitan Area. The analysis shows a persistent influence of cultural capital on aspirations and their subsequent realization even after incorporating variables related to the student academic achievement. Furthermore, this study confirms a strong influence of the school socioeconomic composition even after taking into account the student academic level and their family cultural capital. Finally, it shows that strategies adopted by students to facilitate their entering into university, as attending courses to prepare entrance exams, strongly affect aspirations and completion of university studies. Inequality in access is considerably influenced by objective structural factors but also by the rational choice strategies undertaken by students.

Keywords: higher education, educational aspirations, social inequalities, cultural capital, selective admission

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