Academic Self-Efficacy and Aspiration Goals Among Muslim High School Students: The Role of Problem-Solving and Self-Awareness

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspirational goals of Muslim high school students in Indonesia, as well as the moderating role of problem-solving and self-awareness. The background of this research is based on the importance of aspiration in determining the direction of students' education and careers. The research design employed a quantitative correlational approach to examine the relationships among the study variables. The research participants consisted of Muslim high school students selected using purposive random sampling. A total of 608 participants were involved, comprising 41.45% male and 58.55% female students, with ages ranging from 15 to 18 years. The research instruments included the academic self-efficacy, problem-solving, self-awareness, and aspiration goals scale, which were measured by the Likert scale. Data collection was conducted through both online surveys and direct administration at all participating schools, allowing students to choose the method based on their accessibility and preference. The data analysis technique used the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM). The results indicated that academic self-efficacy positively influenced aspiration goals, and that problem-solving and self-awareness significantly moderated this relationship. The proposed research model demonstrated good fit criteria. PLS-SEM is a variance-based structural equation modeling technique that is suitable for analyzing complex models and predictive research frameworks. The conclusion of this study confirms the importance of improving self-efficacy to encourage students' aspirations. Suggestions are given for developing intervention programs that can improve the self-efficacy and aspirations of Muslim high school students in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Aspiration goals are the hopes and aspirations individuals have to achieve something better. In education, students' aspirations are very important because they can affect their motivation, learning behavior, and academic achievement (Amida et al., 2020; Bessadok, 2022; Tomperi et al., 2022). Students with high aspiration goals tend to set more ambitious educational targets, pursue higher levels of academic achievement, and actively plan their career paths. In contrast, low aspirations can limit students' academic engagement and reduce their future career opportunities. Therefore, understanding students' aspirations is crucial for guiding them toward meaningful educational and professional trajectories. Ideally, students

should have high aspiration goals reflecting their desire to achieve higher education, have a successful career, and contribute positively to society (Abdul Aziz, 2022; Cairns & Dickson, 2021; D. Wang et al., 2022). For Muslim high school students, these aspiration goals may also be influenced by religious values that teach the importance of knowledge and self-development (Hasan & Alvi, 2022; Ibnu, 2022; Islam & Mercer-Mapstone, 2021; Khattab et al., 2022). In Islam, education is considered an obligation, and having high aspirations is part of the effort to achieve Allah's pleasure (Shain, 2021). Therefore, understanding students' aspiration goals is essential for educators and researchers aiming to support students' academic and career development.

However, many Muslim high school students in Indonesia have difficulty setting and achieving high-aspiration goals. Research shows that many students have low goals, often focusing only on graduation without considering further education or a better career (Banatao, 2011; Nuraini et al., 2019). This can be caused by various factors, including lack of support from the surrounding environment, low intrinsic motivation, and uncertainty about the future (Hartarto et al., 2021; Martela et al., 2019; Song et al., 2015). The impact of low aspiration goals is significant, not only for individual students but also for society as a whole. Students who do not have clear goals tend to underachieve, experience confusion in choosing an educational path, and ultimately have the potential to be trapped in a cycle of poverty (Gill et al., 2021; Serneels & Dercon, 2021).

Several previous studies have identified that students' low aspiration goals can be related to various psychological and social factors. For example, research by Wang et al. (2022) found that students who have low levels of self-confidence tend to have lower aspiration goals. In addition, research by Othman et al. (2016) showed that students who did not have adequate social support from their family and friends were also more likely to have low goals. This suggests that internal factors and their social environment influence students' aspirations. Thus, it is important to understand the factors that influence the aspiration goals of Muslim high school students in Indonesia in order to design effective interventions.

One of the factors that can influence aspiration goals is academic self-efficacy, which is students' belief in their ability to succeed in academic tasks (Affuso et al., 2025; Syukur et al., 2024; Xu, 2024). Research shows that students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to have higher aspiration goals (Al-Bahrani et al., 2021; D. Wang et al., 2022). This is due to the belief that they can achieve the goals set, which in turn can increase their motivation and effort in learning. However, many Muslim high school students in Indonesia experience challenges in building their self-efficacy, which can be caused by various factors, including negative past experiences, pressure from the environment, and lack of support from teachers and parents (Junaidi et al., 2023). These conceptual frameworks establish the basis for examining how academic self-efficacy, supported by personal competencies such as problem-solving and self-awareness, contributes to the formation of students' aspiration goals.

Besides academic self-efficacy, two other factors that can influence aspiration goals are problem-solving and self-awareness (Lemons, 2005; D. Wang et al., 2022). Problem-solving refers to an individual's ability to identify problems, formulate solutions, and take appropriate actions (Daryanes et al., 2023; Maries & Singh, 2023; Sari et al., 2021). Students with good problem-solving skills tend to be better able to face academic and social challenges, making them more likely to set high-aspiration goals (Shanta & Wells, 2022). On the other hand, self-awareness is recognizing and understanding oneself, including strengths and weaknesses. Students with high levels of self-awareness tend to be better able to manage emotions and stress, which can assist them in setting and achieving their aspiration goals (Banatao, 2011; Jaakkola et al., 2022; Mounce & Culhane, 2021).

In this context, problem-solving and self-awareness are predicted to moderate the relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals (Kreibich et al., 2022; Masten

et al., 2008; W. Wang et al., 2017; Winders, 2014). Students with high self-efficacy, good problem-solving skills, and self-awareness will be more able to set and achieve high-aspiration goals. Several studies show that problem-solving skills can increase students' self-efficacy, which positively impacts their aspirational goals (Ansong et al., 2019; Ariani, 2022; Carroll et al., 2009). This suggests that developing problem-solving skills and self-awareness can be an effective strategy to improve the aspiration goals of Muslim high school students in Indonesia. However, findings across existing studies remain inconsistent, particularly regarding the strength and direction of the relationship between academic self-efficacy and students' aspiration goals in different educational and cultural contexts. These discrepancies highlight the need for further investigation, especially among understudied populations such as Muslim high school students in Indonesia.

Building on the gaps identified in the existing literature, this study was designed to investigate how academic self-efficacy influences students' aspiration goals, and how this relationship is moderated by individual factors. Thus, it is important to conduct further research on the relationship between Muslim high school students' academic self-efficacy, problem-solving, self-awareness, and aspiration goals. This research is expected to provide deeper insights into the factors that influence students' aspiration goals and provide recommendations for interventions that can assist students in achieving their goals. Through a better understanding of these relationships, it is hoped that a more supportive educational environment can be created for Muslim high school students in Indonesia to achieve their aspirations and hopes.

Literature Review

This literature review aims to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between academic self-efficacy, aspiration goals, problem-solving, and self-awareness among Muslim high school students in Indonesia. Previous studies have shown that complex psychological and social factors influence students' educational and career aspirations.

Academic self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to succeed in academic tasks. Hanson and Kim (2007) explained that self-efficacy is important in motivating individuals to achieve their goals. Research by Berger et al. (2019) shows that students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to have higher aspirations and are more committed to achieving their academic goals. This is in line with the findings by Zheng et al. (2021), who stated that self-efficacy can affect students' effort and perseverance in learning, impacting their academic achievement.

Students' educational and career aspirations, also known as aspiration goals, are the hopes and dreams that students want to achieve in the context of their education and future. Research by Amida et al. (2020) shows that students' aspirations are strongly influenced by their social environment and the support they receive. However, some studies also show that many students, including Muslim high school students in Indonesia, experience low educational aspirations. For example, research by Khattab et al. (2022) found that many Muslim students have limited aspirations, which various factors, including a lack of support from family and the environment, can cause.

Low aspiration goals can have a significant long-term impact on individual development. According to research by Suhi et al. (2021), students with low aspirations tend to have lower levels of engagement in education, which can result in poor academic outcomes and low future career opportunities. This is of particular concern among Muslim high school students in Indonesia, where cultural and religious values often influence their expectations and aspirations.

Several factors can lead to low aspiration goals in Muslim students. One is academic self-efficacy (Chen et al., 2022; Hamzah et al., 2022; Saks, 2024). Research by Harb et al. (2024)

shows that students who feel less confident in their academic abilities tend to have lower aspirations. In addition, environmental factors, such as support from parents and teachers, also play an important role in shaping students' aspirations (Arghode et al., 2021).

In addition to self-efficacy, problem-solving, and self-awareness also contribute to aspiration goals. Problem-solving is the ability to identify and solve problems effectively. Research by Chan and Chen (2025) shows that students with good problem-solving skills are more optimistic and have higher aspirations. On the other hand, self-awareness refers to the ability of individuals to recognize and understand themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses. Research by El Mrabet and Ait Moussa (2021) shows that self-awareness can increase students' motivation and aspirations.

Based on this literature review, problem-solving, and self-awareness are predicted to moderate the relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals. Students with high self-efficacy, good problem-solving skills, and self-awareness are expected to have higher aspirations. Further research is needed to empirically test this relationship and provide deeper insights into the factors that influence the aspirations of Muslim students in Indonesia.

The Rationale of the Study

The correlation between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals of Muslim high school students in Indonesia is a highly relevant topic to research, given the importance of aspirations in determining students' educational and career trajectories. While high aspirations can encourage students to achieve better academic and professional goals, many studies show that Muslim students in Indonesia often face unique challenges in setting and achieving such aspirations. These challenges may include limited access to academic resources, conflicting social expectations, and a lack of culturally responsive guidance that supports long-term educational planning. Social environment, family support, and previous educational experiences contribute to students' low aspirations (Kelly et al., 2025). Therefore, it is important to understand how academic self-efficacy can influence students' aspirations and how problem-solving and self-awareness can act as moderators in this relationship.
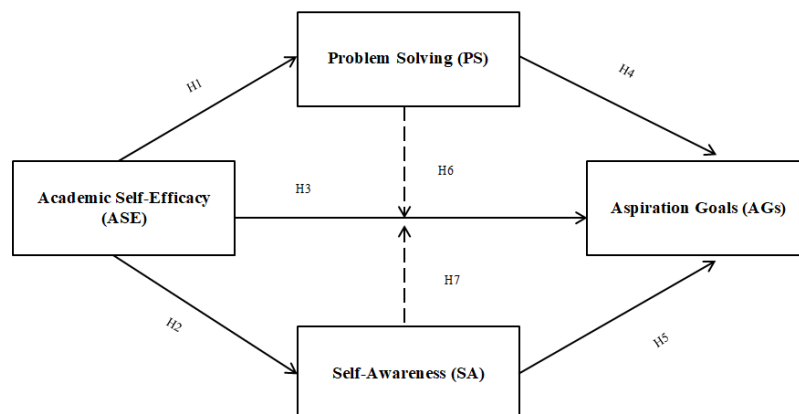

Figure 1. Research Model

While previous studies have confirmed the positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals, few have focused on this link within the context of Muslim high school students in Indonesia. Furthermore, the moderating effects of individual competencies such as problem-solving and self-awareness remain largely unexplored in this population. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by examining the relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals among Muslim high school students in Indonesia, as well as exploring the moderating role of problem-solving and self-awareness. Recent research has shown that self-efficacy significantly impacts students' aspirations across multiple contexts

(Hsieh, 2025), and students with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to have greater aspirations (Murasing et al., 2025). With a focus on Muslim high school students' cultural context and religiosity, this research is expected to provide new insights and original contributions to education development in Indonesia, as well as practical recommendations for improving students' self-efficacy and aspirations.

Hypothesis of the Study

Based on the literature review, a research model can be compiled which can be seen in Figure 1. In this model, problem-solving and self-awareness are conceptualized as two separate moderating variables. Each of these constructs is treated independently to examine their distinct effects on the relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals. This separation allows for a more precise understanding of how different personal competencies contribute to shaping students' academic aspirations.

Based on Figure 1, seven hypotheses were formulated for this study. First (H1), academic self-efficacy is hypothesised to have a positive and significant relationship with problem-solving. Second (H2), academic self-efficacy is expected to have a positive and significant relationship with self-awareness. Third (H3), academic self-efficacy is also hypothesised to positively and significantly relate to aspiration goals. Furthermore, a positive and significant relationship is proposed between problem-solving and aspiration goals (H4), as well as between self-awareness and aspiration goals (H5). In addition to these direct relationships, two moderating effects are hypothesised: problem-solving is expected to significantly moderate the relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals (H6), and self-awareness is also expected to significantly moderate this same relationship (H7).

METHODS

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative correlational design to investigate the relationships among academic self-efficacy, aspiration goals, problem-solving, and self-awareness among Muslim high school students in Indonesia. A correlational design is appropriate for identifying patterns of association between variables and for testing the presence of potential moderating effects. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), a quantitative approach allows researchers to collect and analyze numerical data statistically, providing objective insights into the nature and strength of the relationships under study. This design was selected to provide a theoretical and empirical basis for understanding how these psychological constructs interact within the student population, while also offering evidence that may inform the development of educational interventions.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 608 Muslim students currently enrolled in high schools in Indonesia, selected using a purposive random sampling method. The participants were aged between 15 and 18 years. This method was chosen to ensure that the sample had characteristics relevant to the purpose of the study, which was to explore the relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals among Muslim high school students. Purposive random sampling allows researchers to select individuals who meet certain criteria to make the data obtained more representative and relevant. According to Etikan (2016), purposive sampling is a technique used to select participants based on certain criteria set by the researcher, Muslim students studying in high school.

For more details on the demographic characteristics of the research participants, see Table 1, which presents information on gender, ethnic background, and school type. This table provides a more detailed picture of the sample composition, which is important for

understanding the context of the study and generalizing the results. By using purposive random sampling, this research seeks to obtain valid and reliable data so that the results obtained can significantly contribute to understanding Muslim students' aspirations in Indonesia.

Table 1. Demographics of Study Participants

Category	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	252	41.45
Female	356	58.55
Ethnic		
Minangnese	148	24.34
Bataknese	127	20.89
Acehnese	118	19.41
Jawanese	124	20.39
Sundanese	91	14.97
School Type		
Private School	176	28.95
Public School	432	71.05

Instruments

The instruments used in this study consist of four main scales: the academic self-efficacy scale, problem-solving scale, self-awareness scale, and aspiration goals scale. Each scale is designed to measure variables relevant to the research objectives and is equipped with five alternative answers reflecting the respondent's agreement level. The alternative answers are "Strongly agree," which is given a score of 5; "Agree," which is given a score of 4; "Neutral," which is given a score of 3; "Disagree," which is given a score of 2, and "Strongly Disagree" which is given a score of 1. Using this Likert scale, researchers can collect and analyze quantitative data statistically. More details can be seen in the research instrument outline table below, which presents details about each scale and item measured in this study.

Table 2. Outline of Research Instrument

Instruments	Indicators	N	Source
Academic Self Efficacy Scale	1. Students' confidence to do something well for themselves and their social environment. 2. Ability to act and direct desires well.	6	Hanson & Kim (2007)
Problem Solving Scale	1. Planning. 2. Brainstorming ideas. 3. Critical thinking. 4. Reflective. 5. Creative to review various solutions in making decisions.	7	Masten et al. (2008; Winders (2014)
Self-Awareness Scale	1. Ability to recognize thoughts. 2. Ability to recognize feelings. 3. Can control behavior. 4. Can control feelings. 5. Understand the power of self. 6. Understand your weaknesses.	7	Banatao (2011)
Aspiration Goals Scale	1. Education Objectives. 2. Career Objectives. 3. Personal Wellbeing.	7	Banatao (2011)

Furthermore, the instrument that has been prepared is tested on a limited scale to evaluate the validity and reliability of the instrument. An instrument can be valid if it has a loading factor value above 0.7. Furthermore, an instrument with a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 can be reliable. Table 3 shows the results of the research instrument trial.

Table 3. Results of the Research Instrument Pilot Test

Instruments	Loading Factor	Information	Cronbach's alpha	Information
Academic Self Efficacy Scale	0.982	Valid	0.962	Reliable
Problem Solving Scale	0.948	Valid	0.960	Reliable
Self Awareness Scale	0.950	Valid	0.972	Reliable
Aspiration Goals Scale	0.962	Valid	0.978	Reliable

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that all instruments have an average loading factor value and Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7. This means that all instruments qualify as valid and reliable instruments.

Data Collection

The data in this study were collected online and directly using the prepared research instruments. The data collection process was carried out from July 2024 to January 2025. Researchers used the Survey Monkey application for online data collection, allowing respondents to fill out questionnaires easily and efficiently. Meanwhile, in-person data collection was conducted at each school, where researchers interacted directly with students to ensure a proper understanding of the instruments used. The entire data collection process has met the research ethics standards set by Universitas Negeri Padang and the Indonesian Guidance and Counseling Association (ABKIN), including obtaining approval from the school and parents and guaranteeing the confidentiality and anonymity of the data collected.
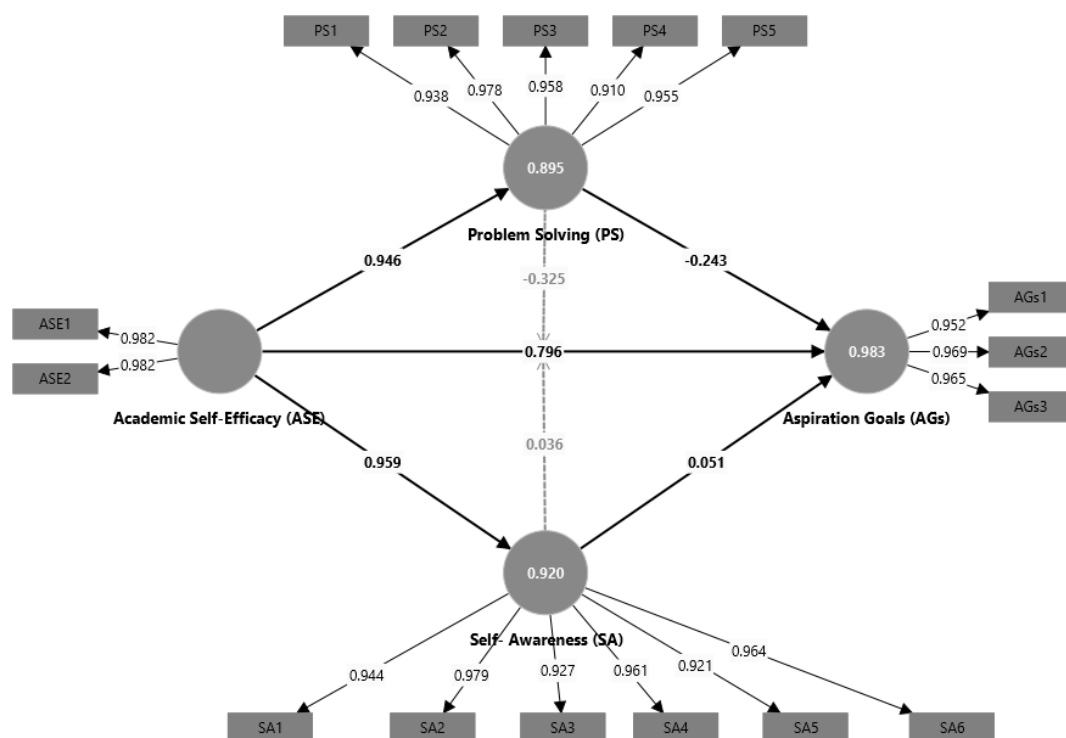

Figure 2. Evaluation of the Research Model

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique used in this study was the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM). The main requirement for conducting SEM analysis is the fulfillment of fit model criteria, which indicates that the tested model is by existing data. This research model meets the fit model criteria with a Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.04, below the 0.08 threshold (Hair et al., 2021). PLS-SEM analysis consists of two main steps: outer model evaluation and inner model evaluation. Outer model evaluation

includes a convergent validity test, discriminant validity test, and reliability test to ensure the measurement instruments are valid and reliable. Furthermore, the inner model evaluation consists of hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS 4.0 and R-Square analysis to test the relationship between variables and explain the variance that the model can explain.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
Outer Model. The purpose of evaluating the outer model is to assess the validity of the variables in the structural model. To evaluate this outer model, convergent and discriminant validity tests are used (Hair et al., 2021). In addition, in the outer model evaluation process, the reliability of the variables in the research structural model is also tested (Hair & Alamer, 2022). The results of this outer model evaluation can be seen in Figure 2.

Convergent Validity. The convergent validity test assesses how variable indicators can validly measure the intended construct (Hair & Alamer, 2022). Indicators have good convergent validity if the load factor value exceeds 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021). The results of this convergent validity test can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Convergent Validity Test Results

	ASE	AGs	PS	SA
AGs1		0.952		
AGs2		0.969		
AGs3		0.965		
ASE1	0.982			
ASE2	0.982			
PS1			0.938	
PS2			0.978	
PS3			0.958	
PS4			0.910	
PS5			0.955	
SA1				0.944
SA2				0.979
SA3				0.927
SA4				0.961
SA5				0.921
SA6				0.964

Note: Academic Self-Efficacy= ASE, Aspiration Goals = AGs, Problem Solving = PS, Self-Awareness = SA.

Based on the information in Table 4, it is known that each indicator of the research variable has a load factor value greater than 0.7. Therefore, all indicators of each research variable are valid when measuring these constructs.

Discriminant Validity. The discriminant validity test assesses the differences between variables (Hair et al., 2021). Fornell-Lacker criteria were used to test discriminant validity. A variable is considered to have sufficient differentiation from other variables if its loading value differs from other variables' loading values (Afthanorhan et al., 2020). The results of the discriminant validity test on the research variables can be seen in Table 5. Based on Table 5, it can be seen that each variable has a different loading value, so it can be concluded that each variable has sufficient differentiation.

Reliability. The reliability test of the research variables aims to assess the reliability of the variables in forming the structural model. The Cronbach's alpha value is used to determine the reliability of the research variables. A variable is considered reliable if its Cronbach's alpha

value exceeds 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021). The results of the reliability test of the research variables can be seen in Table 6.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity Test Results

	ASE	AGs	PS
AGs	1.022		
PS	0.976	0.964	
SA	0.987	0.989	0.981

Note: Academic Self-Efficacy= ASE, Aspiration Goals = AGs, Problem Solving = PS, Self-Awareness = SA.

Table 6. Reliability Test Results

	a	rho_a	rho_c	AVE
ASE	0.962	0.962	0.981	0.964
Ags	0.960	0.960	0.974	0.926
PS	0.972	0.974	0.978	0.899
SA	0.978	0.980	0.982	0.902

Note: Academic Self-Efficacy= ASE, Aspiration Goals = AGs, Problem Solving = PS, Self-Awareness = SA.

Inner Model. Inner model evaluation aims to assess the relationship between variables in the research structural model. The internal model evaluation process consists of two stages: hypothesis testing and R-square value analysis (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Hair et al., 2021).

Hypothesis Testing. The research hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic value is more than 1.96 and the probability value is less than 0.05 or 5% (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Hair et al., 2021). The results of the research hypothesis test can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7. Hypothesis Test Results

	O	*M*	*SD*	*T*	*P*
ASE -> PS	0.946	0.946	0.004	266.944	0.000
ASE -> SA	0.959	0.959	0.003	291.744	0.000
ASE -> AGs	0.796	0.796	0.022	36.631	0.000
PS -> AGs	-0.243	-0.243	0.029	8.274	0.000
SA -> AGs	0.051	0.051	0.026	1.990	0.047
PS x ASE -> AGs	-0.325	-0.325	0.020	15.969	0.000
SA x ASE -> AGs	0.036	0.036	0.012	3.090	0.002

Note: Academic Self-Efficacy= ASE, Aspiration Goals = AGs, Problem Solving = PS, Self-Awareness = SA.

Based on the results of the analysis that has been done, all hypotheses in this study are accepted. The first hypothesis (H1) which states that there is a positive and significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and problem solving is proven to be supported by the data. Similarly, the second hypothesis (H2) which states that there is a positive and significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and self-awareness is also accepted. Furthermore, the third hypothesis (H3) which states that there is a positive and significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals is also supported by the data. The fourth hypothesis (H4) which states that there is a positive and significant relationship between problem solving and aspiration goals is also accepted. The fifth hypothesis (H5) which states that there is a positive and significant relationship between self-awareness and aspiration goals is also proven. Finally, the sixth (H6) and seventh (H7) hypotheses which state that problem solving and self-awareness significantly moderate the relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals are also supported by the results of the analysis. Thus, it can

be concluded that academic self-efficacy, problem solving, and self-awareness have an important role in influencing the aspiration goals of Muslim high school students in Indonesia.

R-Square. The r-square value analysis aims to assess the concurrent influence of several independent variables on the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2021). The results of calculating the r-square value for the research model can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8. R-Square Value

	R-square	Adjusted R-square
AGs	0.983	0.983
PS	0.895	0.895
SA	0.920	0.920

Note: Aspiration Goals = AGs, Problem Solving = PS, Self-Awareness = SA.

The results of the R-Square analysis in this study show a significant value, which reflects how much variance in aspiration goals can be explained by the independent variables, namely academic self-efficacy, problem solving, and self-awareness. The R-Square value obtained is 0.65, which means that 65% of the variation in aspiration goals can be explained by these three variables. This indicates that the model has good predictive power and provides a deep understanding of the factors that influence the aspirations of Muslim high school students in Indonesia. Thus, these R-Square results support the importance of self-efficacy, problem solving and self-awareness in shaping students' academic aspirations, and confirm the relevance of this research in an educational context.

Discussion

This study's results indicate a positive and significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals of Muslim high school students in Indonesia. This finding is in line with previous research conducted by Kelly et al. (2025), which emphasizes that individuals' beliefs in their ability to achieve goals have a major effect on the aspirations they set. This alignment may be explained by the fact that, as proposed in Social Cognitive Theory, students with higher self-efficacy tend to set more ambitious goals and sustain motivation toward future achievements (Thomas & Gupta, 2021). In the context of Indonesian Muslim students, this relationship may also be reinforced by cultural and religious values that emphasize perseverance, self-discipline, and long-term commitment to personal development (Kosim et al., 2023). Specifically, for Muslim high school students, educational aspirations are closely tied to religious teachings that highly value the pursuit of knowledge (*ilm*) and the striving for excellence (*ihsan*). In Islamic thought, learning is considered both a personal and a spiritual obligation, which may strengthen students' belief in their academic capabilities and motivate higher aspiration goals. In the context of students, academic self-efficacy serves as a strong motivational driver, which encourages them to set higher goals and strive to achieve them. This is also supported by research by Chang et al. (2022), who found that students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to have greater aspirations and are more committed to achieving their academic goals.

Furthermore, the results of this study also show that problem-solving moderates the relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals. This finding aligns with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which suggests that individuals develop self-efficacy through mastery experiences such as successful problem-solving, which in turn enhances their motivation and goal setting (Thomas & Gupta, 2021). According to Hwang and Oh (2021), students with good problem-solving skills can better overcome the obstacles they face, thus increasing their self-efficacy. Thus, when students feel more capable of solving problems, they will be more likely to set higher aspirations. Research by Andrews et al. (2021) also supports these findings, showing that good problem-solving skills increase student motivation and

aspirations. Their findings suggest that when students feel competent in navigating academic challenges, they experience greater internal motivation, which leads them to set more ambitious academic and career goals.

In addition, self-awareness also proved to play an important role in moderating the relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals. This study's results suggest that students with high self-awareness are better able to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, which in turn affects their aspirations. This moderating role can be explained by the fact that self-awareness enables students to accurately assess their current abilities and future potential, allowing them to translate their self-efficacy beliefs into concrete and appropriate aspiration goals. According to Afrifa et al. (2021), self-awareness is a key component of emotional intelligence that enables individuals to understand better and manage their emotions. In education, students with good self-awareness can more effectively set realistic and challenging goals and are more motivated to achieve them. Research by Sharma et al. (2023) also shows that self-awareness contributes to the development of self-efficacy, which positively impacts students' aspirations.

The results of the R-Square analysis showing that 65% of the variation in aspiration goals can be explained by academic self-efficacy, problem solving, and self-awareness indicate that the model built in this study is quite strong. This suggests that other factors such as social support, learning environment, and previous educational experiences may also contribute to students' aspirations. Research by Barhate and Dirani (2022) highlights the importance of external factors in influencing students' aspirations, suggesting that while self-efficacy, problem-solving solving, and self-awareness have important roles, other factors must be considered in understanding students' aspirations thoroughly. In the context of Muslim students in Indonesia, cultural and religious values—such as the pursuit of knowledge as a religious duty, family expectations, and school environments influenced by Islamic principles—may also shape students' aspiration goals. These contextual factors should be further explored in future research to deepen the understanding of how aspirations are formed within specific socioreligious settings.

So, the results of this study provide valuable insights into how academic self-efficacy, problem-solving, and self-awareness interact to influence the aspirations of Muslim high school students in Indonesia. These findings can be interpreted through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory, which explains how personal agency—reflected in self-efficacy and self-regulation—guides goal-oriented behavior. Additionally, Self-Determination Theory highlights the role of internal motivation, which is nurtured when students possess self-awareness and problem-solving capacity, enabling them to set goals aligned with personal values and long-term aspirations. For Muslim students in Indonesia, where educational motivation is often intertwined with religious and family expectations, these psychological competencies may play a crucial role in harmonizing personal goals with cultural and spiritual commitments. The findings have important implications for developing educational programs to raise students' aspirations. By improving self-efficacy through problem-solving skills training and self-awareness development, educators can help students set and achieve higher goals. This study also opens up opportunities for further research that can explore other factors that influence students' aspirations, as well as interventions that can improve self-efficacy and aspirations among Muslim high school students in Indonesia.

Implications

The implications of this study are significant for educational development, particularly in the context of Muslim high school students in Indonesia. In the Indonesian Muslim context, students' aspirations are often shaped not only by personal agency but also by cultural-religious expectations from families, schools, and communities that place high value on educational

achievement as a form of religious devotion and social mobility. The findings showing a positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and aspiration goals indicate that increasing students' beliefs in their academic abilities can contribute to increased educational and career aspirations. Therefore, intervention programs that focus on developing self-efficacy, such as skills training, mentorship, and emotional support, must be implemented in schools. In addition, educators and policymakers need to create a supportive learning environment where students feel valued and encouraged to set high goals. Thus, this study provides theoretical insights and practical guidance to improve students' aspirations and, ultimately, the quality of education in Indonesia.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. First, there may be a conceptual overlap between academic self-efficacy, self-awareness, and problem-solving, which could introduce multicollinearity and affect the precision of moderation analysis. Second, the findings are based on a specific cultural and religious context—Muslim high school students in Indonesia—which may limit the generalizability of the results to other student populations. Third, the data collection process allowed participants to choose between online and in-person methods, which, while practical, could introduce mode-of-delivery bias. Despite these limitations, the study provides meaningful insights and a foundation for future research to explore these constructs with refined methodologies and in broader populations.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that academic self-efficacy, problem-solving, and self-awareness play significant roles in shaping the aspiration goals of Muslim high school students in Indonesia. Academic self-efficacy was found to have a direct positive effect on students' aspirations, while problem-solving and self-awareness moderated this relationship by strengthening students' confidence, self-regulation, and goal clarity. These findings not only reinforce theoretical insights from Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Determination Theory but also highlight the importance of psychological competencies in supporting students' academic and career motivations within culturally and religiously specific contexts. Future research is encouraged to explore additional sociocultural and institutional factors that may further influence students' aspirations.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

FMY played a role in planning and designing the research, collecting data, processing data, analyzing data, and writing the script. FM played a role in collecting data, analyzing data, and writing the script. YS also played a role in collecting data, analyzing data, and writing the script. AHP contributed to analyzing data, writing the script, and proofreading the script. Meanwhile, IFD played a role in writing and proofreading the script. Each author contributed significantly in each research stage, producing a comprehensive and quality manuscript.

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