

# 4 **The Relationship between Motivational Orientation & Educational Aspirations in Urban, African American Youth**

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## ***ABSTRACT***

*African American youth are characterized as experiencing declining academic motivation and engagement while simultaneously maintaining optimism for their future success. Thus, researchers hypothesize academic motivation to be a negative factor for educational aspirations when applied to an urban sample of African American middle school students (N = 198). The authors tested this hypothesis using a cross-sectional sample of sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Logistic regression analyses failed to support the hypothesis; however, the results highlighted the disproportionate ratio between African American females and males in desiring postsecondary education, which is consistent with national data on academic achievement. Implications for middle school educators, school counselors, and parents are discussed.*