



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2016; 2(3): 701-704
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 25-01-2016
Accepted: 27-02-2016

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Relationship between self-efficacy and career aspiration among higher secondary school students

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Abstract

Being one of the major determinants of career aspiration, self efficacy plays a major role in developing career orientations among adolescent students. Formal education at higher secondary level is a turning point in the life of an individual at which he/she makes career decisions. The present study attempts to assess the level of self efficacy and career aspiration among higher secondary school students and to explore the relationship between these two constructs. A self efficacy scale (Singh & Narain, 2014) and a career aspiration scale (Grewal, 2011) were administered to a sample of 250 students from various higher secondary schools in Ernakulam district of Kerala state. The results of the study show that the higher secondary school students possess medium levels of self efficacy as well as career aspiration. It was found that there exists a significant positive correlation between self efficacy and career aspiration among higher secondary school students. The findings of the study indicate the need for enhancing self efficacy among higher secondary school students by providing conducive atmosphere for learning, setting realistic and challenging goals, etc. It is also recommended that career guidance programmes should be organised systematically in institutions to augment the career aspiration of students.

Keywords: Self efficacy, career aspiration, career guidance, career decisions and higher secondary school students

Introduction

Today we live in a society characterized by technological advancements, knowledge explosion, and globalization. Competition is an essential consequence in such a scenario. Now the process of education has become the most important factor which determines one's destiny. Pinpointing the goal, selection of appropriate and effective strategies to achieve it and working out the strategies without fail are crucial in the process of education. Mere academic achievement doesn't place one at the heights. Therefore it is important for a learner to take decisions about his/her future career considering the strengths, weaknesses, skills, and abilities he/she possesses; otherwise he/she may find it difficult to reach his/her potential level. Career aspiration is a predictor of one's future success. Individuals with high career aspiration are likely to be hard working for the attainment of their goals. Career aspiration is a cluster of needs, motives, and behavioral intentions which individuals articulate with respect to different career field options. The concept of aspiration is defined as an expectation or goal comprising intentions and attitudes. An intention is a plan of action undertaken to achieve a particular goal, whereas an attitude represents one's personal orientation toward a goal. Thus, the intention to pursue the goal and the attitude toward the goal comprise an individual's aspiration. Career aspirations are individual ambitions related to occupations (Rojewski, 2005) [12]. Adolescent career aspirations are linked to adult social status attainment (Ashby & Schoon, 2010) [2]. Thus one's level of career aspiration thus becomes an indicator of his/her future affluence.

Student career aspirations are influenced mostly by the beliefs and conceptions held on what men and women can normally be, rather than by their potentials, interests, values, and special abilities. Other factors influencing the student career aspirations are the opinion and attitude of the family members, teachers, relatives, and peers. Their interests and aptitudes are never considered in career decision making; hence majority choose careers, according to the opinion of peers, teachers, the financial potentials of the parents or with no specific reasons.

An important psychological factor that influences an individual's career aspiration is self efficacy. Self efficacy refers to the knowledge and belief about one's own potentials and abilities. It is defined as an individual's level of confidence in and beliefs about his/her

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capabilities to successfully carry out courses of action, perform given behaviors, accomplish given tasks, and attain desired performance outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Buchmann, 1997; Betz & Taylor, 2001) ^[5, 8, 6]. Self-efficacy is the confidence that one can successfully accomplish the performance required to produce a particular outcome. It is a judgment about how well one can organize and employ effective strategies in a situation that may include new and stressful elements. Self-efficacy can ultimately determine whether an individual will choose to perform or refrain from performing a task (Bandura, 1982) ^[4]. Actually, people's beliefs about their capabilities and potentials often determine how they interact with the outer world. People who have high self-efficacy are more likely to attempt and successfully execute tasks, whereas those with low self-efficacy find it difficult to achieve them because they are often fighting self doubt (Bandura, 1997) ^[5]. Both positive and negative self-efficacy beliefs have a big influence on what activities people choose to participate in.

Previous studies substantiate the influence of self efficacy on career aspiration. Austin (2009) ^[3] reported a significant relationship between self-efficacy and goal intentions of African American high school students. Scott (2010) ^[13] found that educational aspiration is the key factor in the career development process and educational aspirations are related to strong self-efficacy and high self esteem and high educational aspirations translate into attainment of career. Akanbi (2013) ^[11] concluded that the influence of self-efficacy on entrepreneurial behavior among college of education students. Reddan (2014) ^[11] proved the role of self-efficacy in making positive career decisions. Thus self efficacy can be regarded as a major determinant of career aspiration.

Significance of the Study

The major objective of schooling is to prepare the learner to enter to a career. The period of higher secondary education is a turning point in the life of students; they make career choices during this period of study. Most of the students develop career aspirations based on the information they get regarding various occupations from different sources. However, it has been observed that psychological variables like self efficacy may be an important determinant of career aspiration. Students' aspirations influence their future career. High aspiration of students is a motivating force to pursue their studies as well as to achieve their goals. For students studying in higher secondary schools it is a decisive moment in their life as it is the time for choosing a profession on the basis of their interests and aptitudes. They plan for their expectations at this period. Therefore it is worthwhile to study the level of self efficacy and career aspiration among higher secondary school students as the former is considered to be one that profoundly influences the latter.

Statement of the Problem

Present study investigates the influence of "Relationship between Self Efficacy and Career Aspiration among Higher Secondary School Students."

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the level of self efficacy among higher secondary school students
2. To study the level of career aspiration among higher secondary school students

3. To find out whether there exist significant relationship between self efficacy and career aspiration among higher secondary school students

Hypothesis of the Study

1. The level of self efficacy among higher secondary school students is high
2. The level of career aspiration among higher secondary school students is high.
3. There is no significant relationship between self efficacy and career aspiration among higher secondary school students.

Sample of the study

To conduct the present study the investigator adopted normative survey method. The sample for the study consisted of 250 students selected randomly from various higher secondary schools of Ernakulam district in Kerala.

Statistical techniques used in the study

The descriptive and inferential statistical techniques such as arithmetic mean, median, mode, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness, and Pearson's coefficient of correlation were employed for the analysis of data.

Tools used for the study

The data required for the study were collected using a self efficacy scale (Singh & Narain, 2014) ^[14] and a career aspiration scale (Grewal, 2011) ^[10].

Operational Definitions of Key Term Used

Self Efficacy

Self-efficacy beliefs play a key role in the regulatory processes through which an individual's motivation and performance attainments are governed and analysed. Self-efficacy judgments determine how much effort people will take to perform a task and how long they will persist with it.

Career Aspiration

Researchers have defined the concept of aspiration as an expectation or goal comprising intentions and attitudes. An intention is a plan of action undertaken to achieve a particular goal, whereas an attitude represents one's personal orientation toward a goal. Thus, the intention to pursue the goal and the attitude toward the goal comprise an individual's aspirations

Description of the tools

Self efficacy

The self efficacy scale consisted of 20 items out of which 16 were positive and four were negative. The scoring of positive items was done by giving a score 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1 for strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree respectively. The negative items were scored by giving a score 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 for strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree respectively. Thus the maximum score that can be obtained by a respondent is 100 and minimum is 20. The total score obtained by each respondent was calculated and the statistical constants for the distribution were found out.

Carrier Aspiration

The career aspiration scale consisted of eight items with 10 alternatives each. Each alternative has an assigned score (ranging from 0 to 9) and the maximum score that can be

obtained by a respondent is 72 and the minimum score is 0. Then statistical constants Mean, Median, Mode, SD and Kurtosis calculated for the distribution of career aspiration scores

Statistical Analysis

The details are given in table 1.

Table 1: Statistical constants for the distribution of self efficacy scores in the total sample

Sl. No	Statistic	Value
1.	Arithmetic mean (M)	77.32
2.	Median	78.13
3.	Mode	79.74
4.	Standard deviation (σ)	11.78
5.	Kurtosis	0.257
6.	Skewness	-0.206

From the table 1 it is clear that the arithmetic mean, median, mode, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness are 77.32, 78.13, 79.74, 11.78, 0.287, and -0.206 respectively. Since the mean (77.32) is less than the median (78.13) and the median is less than mode (79.74), it can be said that the distribution of self efficacy scores is negatively skewed. The negative value of skewness (-0.206) indicates the non-symmetrical nature of the distribution; the scores tend to be clustered at the high end of the scale and are spread out more gradually towards the low end. The kurtosis value (0.257) is slightly less than .263, the kurtosis value characteristic of a normal distribution (Garrett, 1966, p. 102)^[9]. Hence the variation of the distribution from mesokurtic nature is negligible. Considering the norms of the test, it can be inferred that the higher secondary school students possess average level of self efficacy.

The students in the total sample were categorized in to three groups - high, average, and poor - based on the numbers of students obtained scores 85 and above, between 73 and 85, and 73 or less respectively. The number and percentage of students belong to each category is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Level of self efficacy of higher secondary school students

Sl. No.	Score	Level of Self efficacy	Number	%
1	73 or less	Poor	41	16.40
2	74 to 84	Average	162	64.80
3	85 and above	High	47	18.80
Total			250	100

From the table 2 it is seen that 16.40% of the students have low, 64.80% of them have average, and 18.80% of them have high level of self efficacy. The results have been represented in figure 1.

Level of self efficacy of the higher secondary school students

Career aspiration of higher secondary school students

Scores of the selected sample of 250 higher secondary school students were collected and subjected to descriptive data analysis. The career aspiration scale consisted of eight items with 10 alternatives each. Each alternative has an assigned score (ranging from zero to nine) and the maximum score that can be obtained by a respondent is 72. The statistical constants calculated for the distribution of career aspiration scores is given in table 3.

Table 3: Statistical constants for the distribution of career aspiration scores in the total sample

Sl. No	Statistic	Value
1.	Arithmetic mean (M)	51.64
2.	Median	52.21
3.	Mode	53.35
4.	Standard deviation (σ)	8.02
5.	Kurtosis	0.279
6.	Skewness	-0.213

From the table 3 it is evident that the arithmetic mean, median, mode, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness are 51.64, 52.21, 53.35, 8.02, .279, and -0.213 respectively. Since the mean (51.64) is less than the median (52.21) and the median is less than mode (53.35), it can be said that the distribution of career aspiration scores is negatively skewed. The negative value of skewness (-0.213) indicates the non-symmetrical nature of the distribution; the scores tend to be clustered at the high end of the scale and are spread out more gradually towards the low end. The kurtosis value (.279) is slightly greater than .263, the kurtosis value characteristic of a normal distribution. Hence the variation of the distribution from mesokurtic nature is negligible. Since the mean score obtained by the higher secondary school students (51.64) is not much different from the mean score (51.38) and P₅₀ score (52) of the standardization sample, it can be interpreted that the higher secondary school students possess average level of career aspiration.

Distribution of career aspiration scores

The students in the total sample were categorized in to three groups - high, average, and low - based on the numbers of students obtained scores above M+ σ , between M + σ and M- σ , and below M- σ respectively. The number and percentage of students belong to each category is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Level of career aspiration of higher secondary school students

Sl. No.	Level of Career Aspiration	Number	%
1	Low	34	13.60
2	Average	173	69.20
3	High	43	17.20
Total		250	100

It is obvious from the table 4 that 13.60% of the students have low, 69.20% of them have average, and 17.20% of them have high level of career aspiration.

Relationship between self efficacy and career aspiration

Null Hypothesis

“There is no significant relationship between self efficacy and career aspiration of higher secondary school students.”

To find out the extent of relationship between self efficacy and career aspiration of higher secondary school students, the scores of self efficacy and the scores of career aspiration of the respondents were subjected to Pearson’s product-moment correlation test. The details are presented in the table 5.

Table 5: Relationship between self efficacy and career aspiration of higher secondary school students

Sl. No.	Variables Correlated	N	r	Verbal Interpretation	t _r
1.	Self-efficacy	250	.621**	Substantial or Marked Relationship	12.49**
2.	Career aspiration				

** p < .01

When the self efficacy scores and the career aspiration scores were subjected to Pearson's correlation test, the r obtained is .621 and the value exceeds the table value .181 at .01 level of significance required to reject the null hypothesis. Also the obtained value of t_r , 12.49 is much greater than 2.58, the critical value at .01 level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The present study hypothesized that there is significant relationship between self efficacy and career aspiration of higher secondary school students. The result of the study confirms this hypothesis. Substantial positive relationship is found between the variables. The value of r (.621) lies in between .40 and .70. Therefore it can be understood that the relationship between the variables is significant and substantial or marked (Garrett, 1966, p. 176)^[9]. Thus it can be interpreted that there is a substantial positive relationship between self efficacy and career aspiration of higher secondary school students. The finding of the study is consistent with that reported in Austin (2009)^[3], Scott (2010)^[13], Akanbi (2013)^[1] and in Reddan (2014)^[11].

Major Findings of the study

- The self efficacy of higher secondary school students has average level.
- The career aspiration of higher secondary school students has average level.
- There is significant relationship between self efficacy and career aspiration among higher secondary school students.

Conclusion

Present study was an attempt to find out the relationship between self efficacy and career aspiration of higher secondary school students of Kerala. The findings of the study reveal that the higher secondary school students possess an average level of self efficacy as well as career aspiration. The following suggestions were made based on the findings of the study in order to enhance self efficacy and to develop career aspirations among higher secondary school students.

1. Provide favorable atmosphere for learning in school and home,
2. Assess the aptitude of students in a scientific manner,
3. Allow students to know their strengths and weaknesses,
4. Help students to set realistic and challenging goals based on their capabilities and interests,
5. To help students to make wise and informed career decisions with respect to their interests, capabilities and potential.
6. Provide career and life planning education programmes for higher secondary school students,
7. Arrange career conferences and career talks in the institutions to explore the world of work and dignity of labor

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