

## **Career Maturity of Indian Adolescents as a Function of Self-Concept, Vocational Aspiration and Gender**

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Originated from the developmental theory of vocational behaviour, career maturity has been defined as the maturity of attitudes and competencies pertaining to career decision making. It has been found to be influenced differentially in different culture, race and gender groups by certain psychological, educational and demographic factors (Lawrence and Brown, 1976; Pound, 1978). The aim of the present piece of research work is to examine empirically that whether or not self-concept, occupational aspiration and gender work independently or in interaction with each other are capable of generating variance in career maturity in case of Hindi speaking Indian adolescents studying in class X. Employing a (2)<sup>3</sup> ex-post facto, non-experimental factorial design (fixed model) the two levels of self-concept, i.e. high and low, the two levels of occupational aspiration, i.e. realistic and idealistic and the two levels of gender, i.e. male and female were manipulated in the study. Employing the stratified random sampling technique, finally 480 students of class X (240 males and 240 females) within the age range of 14 to 16 years were drawn randomly from different Hindi medium schools of Raipur City of Chhattisgarh State to serve as subjects in the present study. All the three independent variables were found to be potential enough in generating variance in career maturity. Barring few exceptions, the first order interactions were not found significant whereas the second order interactions were found significant for almost all the components of career maturity. Theoretical interpretations have been given.

Originated from the developmental theory of vocational behaviour, career maturity, as the maturity of attitudes and competencies pertaining to career decision making, has been defined normatively in terms of congruence between individual's career behaviour and his expected behaviour at that age. The closer the correspondence between the two, the greater the individual's career maturity. It envisages that choice of an occupation is a process spanning throughout the life. Operationally, it is the maturity of attitudes and competencies

that are realistic in career decision making at the particular developmental stage reached on the continuum of career development from early exploratory years to decline (Crites, 1973, 74a, 74b). On the basis of his model Crites (1973, 78) developed a Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) consisting of six independent dimensions. One dimension is related to attitudinal variables and the rest of the five dimensions denote competencies pertaining to career decision making. The attitudinal variable includes (a) Decisiveness (b) Involvement (c)

Independence (d) Orientation and (e) Compromise in career decision making. Competencies are (a) Self-Appraisal (SA) or knowing yourself (b) Occupational Information (OI) or knowing about jobs (c) Goal Selection (GS) or choosing a job (d) Planning (PL) or looking ahead (e) Problem Solving (PS) or what should they do ?

For the last three decades a large pool of empirical studies have been undertaken to identify the factors associated with it, such as, socio-economic status, early childhood experiences, educational and vocational aspirations, needs and interests, locus of control, cognitive styles etc. (Osipow, 1973), work-values (Miller, 1974, educational grade (Gupta, 1987), role models (Ondroff and Hem, 1996), residential background and sex (Hasan, Rao and Thakur, 1998), perceived problem solving (Herry, 1999), school setting (Ortlepp et al., 2002), perceived work relation barriers (Patton et al., 2003), locus of control, dependence proneness and sex (Dewangan, 2004).

Self-concept, as the person's total view about himself or herself (Hamacheck, 1987) defined as 'those perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings which the individual views as part of characteristics of him/herself. It is his/her own conception of his/her health and physique, intellectual abilities, academic status, temperamental qualities, mental health, emotional tendencies and socio-economic status. Lawrence and Brown (1976) and Pound (1978) reported that the self-concept has different relationship with career maturity for different race and sex groups.

Occupational Aspiration, as the orientation toward the occupational goal (Haller and Miller, 1967) has been found to be a good predictor of vocational maturity of class X students (Khan and Alvi, 1983). However, they did not consider idealistic and realistic occupational aspiration separately. The realistic occupational aspiration is the

occupational goal for which the goal seeker is sure to achieve. Contrary to it, the idealistic vocational aspiration has been defined as the occupational goal for which the individual is free to choose but is not sure of getting it achieved. No such study has been reported in the concerned research literature.

Sex as a factor associated with career maturity operates differentially in different cultures (Lawrence and Brown, 1976). So it is clear that under Indian cultural set up sex as a determinant of career maturity might operate differentially than the western countries. No such systematic study has yet been conducted under Indian conditions.

Since it has been demonstrated that different factors associated with career maturity operate differentially in different race, culture and gender groups (Lawrence and Brown, 1976 and Pound, 1978) and since there is dearth of such systematic study under Indian cultural set up, it is appropriate to investigate empirically that whether or not self-concept, occupational aspiration and gender independently or in interaction with each other accountable for differences in career maturity of class X adolescent students.

On the basis of the review of literature it was hypothesized that the adolescent students with high self-concept would show higher level of career maturity than the Ss with low level of self-concept. It was also hypothesized that the adolescents with realistic occupational aspiration would show higher level of career maturity than the Ss with idealistic occupational aspiration. It is also expected that males in comparison to females would show higher level of career maturity. It was hypothesized that the Ss with high self concept and realistic vocational aspiration would show higher level of career maturity than the Ss with low self-concept and idealistic vocational aspiration. It was also hypothesized that the male Ss with high self-concept would show higher level of career maturity than the female Ss with low self-

concept. It was predicted that the males with realistic vocational aspiration would show higher level of career maturity than the females with idealistic occupational aspiration.

It was also hypothesized that the male Ss with high self-concept and realistic occupational aspiration would show higher level of career maturity than the female Ss with low self concept and idealistic vocational aspiration.

### Method

#### Design

In the present piece of research a 2x2x2 factorial 'ex-post-facto' non-experimental design with fixed model was employed. Here, the dependent variable is career maturity and self-concept, vocational aspiration and gender are acted as independent variables in this study. There are two levels of self-concept, i.e. high and low self-concept, two levels of vocational aspiration, i.e. idealistic and realistic vocational aspiration and two levels of gender, i.e. male and female.

#### Sample

In order to meet the requirement of 2x2x2 factorial design the stratified random sampling technique was employed to select an unbiased representative sample from the universe. For this purpose an initial population of 1240 adolescent students (620 males and 620 females) of class X within the age range of 14 to 16 years, were drawn randomly from different Hindi medium government schools of Raipur city. From the initial sample eight homogenous strata according to the three specific characteristics of population, i.e., self-concept, vocational aspiration and gender, which were varied to two levels, were determined. In each cell or strata 30 Ss were put randomly. Thus, a total of 240 Ss (120 males and 120 females) were selected in the final sample. For the placement of Ss in different strata subjects were classified into different groups according to their scores on

Swatva Bodh Pareekshan (self concept scale) by Sherry, Varma and Goswami (1988) and Occupational Aspiration Scale by Grewal (1975). Sex is naturally dichotomous variable. Self-concept was classified into two groups, viz. high and low self-concept following the two opposite extreme group technique with the help of  $Q_3$  and  $Q_1$  as cutting point on the distribution of scores. The idealistic and realistic occupational aspiration groups were classified on the basis of two opposite extreme group technique on the distribution of scores pertaining to idealistic and realistic occupational aspiration. The Ss who scored 25( $Q_3$ ) or above on the items pertaining to idealistic occupational aspiration and 12( $Q_1$ ) or below on the items pertaining to realistic occupational aspiration were classified as idealistic occupational aspiration group. Similarly, the Ss who scored 25( $Q_3$ ) or above on the items denoting realistic occupational aspiration and 14( $Q_1$ ) or below on the items denoting idealistic occupational aspiration were classified as realistic occupational aspiration group.

#### Tools

*Career Maturity Inventory* : To measure the career maturity of Ss the Indian adaptation of Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) by Gupta (1989) was used. The inventory was originally constructed and standardized by Crites (1973, 1978). It measures the maturity of attitudes and competencies that are critical in realistic career decision-making. The items of the inventory are suitable for the students of class IX and X. The attitudinal variables assessed by attitude scale are (i) decisiveness, (ii) involvement, (iii) independence, (iv) orientation, and (v) compromise in career decision-making. The competence test-measure the cognitive variables in choosing an occupation. It has five independent dimensions- (a) self-appraisal, (b) occupational information (c) goal selection, (d) planning, and (e) problem solving. The test-retest reliability of CMI attitude scale is ranging between 0.70 to 0.92. The scale has fairly high

level of content and construct validities as expressed by experts. The split-half reliability coefficients have been calculated for all the five parts of the three grade levels (8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>). The correlations ranged from 0.54 to 0.88 and the findings on Indian sample for adapted competence test support the construct validity of the test.

*The Occupational Aspiration Scale* – The occupational aspiration scale as abbreviated by O.A.S. is constructed and standardised by Grewal (1975). The scale is meant for measuring realistic and idealistic occupational aspiration of adolescents. In the scale 80 occupations with different prestige values are arranged in mixed order in eight multiple-choice items. Prestige values for occupations were derived by getting the prestige rating of 150 occupational titles. These titles were taken from Dictionary of Occupational Titles of India (NCO, 1968). This number was reduced to 80 by a panel of judges who were employed in different occupations. This final list was administered on 200 Indian male and female subjects and were asked to rate occupations on a five point scale ranging from an occupation of 'excellent' to 'poor' standing. Social standing of each occupation was calculated out of a rank of 100 by manipulating frequency ratings in each of the five categories by 1.0, 0.8, 0.6, 0.4, 0.2 respectively. Prestige values were derived from '0' to '9' depending upon their ranks which ranged from 20 to 95. Each item consists ten occupations nearly of all occupational status arranged in mixed order. Four items are meant for assessing idealistic and remaining four items are intended to assess realistic occupational aspiration. There are ten alternatives for each question; only one alternative is to be checked. The score for each alternative is based on the prestige value given in the scoring key. The score of each item ranges from '0' (lowest) to '9' (highest). A score of '9' indicates that a job from among the highest eight prestige occupations has been preferred and a score of '0' indicated that one of the lowest eight

occupations has been preferred. An individual's score for the whole inventory ranges from '0' to '72'. Test-retest reliability of the test is reported to be 0.84 and the coefficient of the validity against Haller and Miller Occupational Aspiration Scale is found to be 0.75.

*Swatva Bodh Parikshan (SBP)* – For measuring self-concept of the Ss, Swatva Bodh Parikshan constructed and standardized by Sherry, Varma and Goswami (1988) was employed. The test is meant for measuring the self-concept of the school going adolescents of urban and rural areas. The test is intended to measure those perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and feelings which the individual views as part of characteristics of himself. It is his own conception of his health and physique, intellectual abilities, academic status, behaviour, temperamental qualities, mental health, emotional tendencies and socio-economic status. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the test is 0.733 whereas rational equivalence reliability coefficient is 0.761. The factorial validity of the test is satisfactory.

### **Procedure**

After the random stratification of sample the dependent variable measure, the Career Maturity Inventory by Gupta (1989) was administered in group setting and scoring of the protocols was done according to the system mentioned in the manual of the inventory.

### **Results and Discussion**

After ensuring the homogeneity of variance the scores of all the six independent dimensions of Career Maturity were subjected to a 2x2x2 ANOVA treatment to workout the main and interactional effects of the three factors under investigation. The Table-1 reveals it clearly that the self-concept, vocational aspiration and gender are able to account for the variance of all the components of career maturity.

A perusal of Table-1 reveals that the high self-concept group scored high on all the dimensions of career maturity scale. Since the total view of such subjects about themselves are high so in order to maintain and enhance their self-concept they are involved in career exploration, sought career related information and developed proper attitude towards career. They have better self-appraisals, greater magnitude of occupational aspiration. They are competent enough in goal selection, planning and problem solving related to career choice, than the subjects with low self-concept level. Although, conducted in different cultural set up the findings of the present study is in consonance with the findings of Helbing (1985); Khan and Alvi (1983); Levy and Leboyer (1984); Pavlok and Kammer (1985); Ono and Sakanayagi (1986) and Taylor (1985).

Occupational aspiration has also emerged as a factor affecting vocational maturity. In order to become vocationally mature, one should aspire a career or vocation in the context of his real abilities, potentialities or capacities and perceiving the realities of his/her surrounding or situation. In the present study it is clearly discerned that the Ss with real occupational aspiration have shown higher level of career maturity than the Ss with idealistic occupational aspiration. The finding is supported by the work of Lipshitz (1989) who reported a significant positive relationship between justified vocational aspiration and career decision making. This justified occupational aspiration is as good as realistic occupational aspiration. Grewal (1971) also reported that the Ss with realistic and long range occupational aspiration displayed significantly higher level of vocational maturity than the Ss with ideal and short range occupational aspiration. It is obvious that the realistic occupational aspiration is positively related to career decision making.

Under Indian cultural set up, the pattern of socialization for males and females is different. In our culture during the child rearing a male student is expected to choose a suitable career for his future whereas for females marriage is expected to be of their primary concern. It is because of this fact the males displayed greater career maturity than the females.

Barring few exceptions, the two factor interactions could not turn out to be significant at acceptable level of confidence. Since, all the three factors are potentially enough in generating significant variance upon career maturity, when the two independent variables were put to interact each other, because of their own potentiality they nullified the interactional effects of each other and their interactional differences were found to be almost equal, but as and when the third variable was put to test, the interactional effect, because of the potentiality of the third variable the interactional difference became significant and that is why significant interactional effect in the second order interactions are discerned.

The male subjects whose primary goal is to choose a suitable career for themselves and whose total view about themselves are high and who know to tap their real abilities, potentialities and capacities, involved themselves in career exploration, sought career related information and developed proper attitude about their career. Consequently they displayed significant variance upon career maturity.

It may be concluded that under Indian cultural setup, the self-concept, occupational aspiration and gender are important factors that can influence career maturity of class X students.

**Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the scores of each component of Career Maturity Inventory for Eight Treatment Groups. The corresponding Main and Interaction effects of Self-concept, Occupational Aspiration and gender have also been shown (n=60, N=480).**

Components of Career Maturity	Values of Statistical Properties	High Self-concept				Low Self-concept				Summary of ANOVA	
		Realistic Occupational Aspiration		Idealistic Occupational Aspiration		Realistic Occupational Aspiration		Idealistic Occupational Aspiration		Effects	F-Ratio df (1,248)
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Attitudinal	Mean	39.217	35.717	34.733	30.417	29.683	25.583	24.883	23.15	Main Effect Self-Concept(SC) 1027.37** Aspiration (ASP) 219.87 Sex 141.48	
	SD	2.917	2.823	2.524	4.126	2.626	4.068	2.719	2.881	Interaction SC x ASP 3.42 SC x SEX 3.49 ASP x SEX 2.83 SC x ASP x SEX 7.69**	
Self Appraisal	Mean	9.467	7.95	8.333	7.567	5.533	4.95	4.65	3.8	Main Effect Self-Concept (SC) 22.056** Aspiration (ASP) 50.08** SEX 54.89**	
	SD	1.408	1.241	1.569	1.28	1.613	1.141	1.582	1.005	Interaction SC x ASP 1.06 SC x SEX 2.87 ASP x SEX 0.93 SC x ASP x SEX 4.107*	
Occupational Information	Mean	9.333	8.167	7.067	7.267	5.333	5.233	4.417	3.7	Main Effect Self-Concept (SC) 632.13** Aspiration (ASP) 15.32** SEX 11.63**	
	SD	1.548	1.617	1.939	1.3	1.349	1.212	1.293	0.997	Interaction SC x ASP 1.88 SC x SEX 0.82 ASP x SEX 2.06 SC x ASP x SEX 14.38**	
Goal Selection	Mean	8.83	7.9	7.35	7.5	5.417	4.583	4.617	3.823	Main Effect Self-Concept (SC) 626.58** Aspiration (ASP) 43.74** SEX 21.64**	
	SD	1.379	1.434	1.947	1.46	1.499	1.293	1.195	1.181	Interaction SC x ASP 0.53 SC x ASP 2.21 SC x SEX 5.05* SC x ASP x SEX 4.23*	
Planning	Mean	7.25	7.833	7.217	6.85	5.367	5.133	4.95	3.842	Main Effect Self-Concept(SC) 504.24** Aspiration (ASP) 53.23** SEX 6.26*	
	SD	0.895	1.167	2.057	1.162	1.207	1.081	1.336	1.076	Interaction SC x ASP 3.43 SC x SEX 3.39	

										SC x ASP SC x ASP x SEX	3.39 5.06*
Problem Solving	Mean	7.3	7.833	6.8	7	5.367	4.917	4.95	3.79	Main Effect Self-Concept(SC) Aspiration (ASP) SEX	400.62** 30.28** 5.59*
	SD	1.28	1.475	1.811	1.235	1.275	1.369	1.213	0.994	Interaction SC x ASP SC x SEX ASP x SEX SC x ASP x SEX	0.114 3.11 4.12* 19.10**

\*\* p<.01 \* p<.05

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