

## Self-Efficacy and Self-Concept as Predictors of Occupational Aspiration of Adolescents

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### Abstract:

*In this study, the relationships between self-efficacy, self-concept and occupational aspiration of adolescents were examined. Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of the participants. The purpose of the study was (i) to investigate the relationship between self constructs viz. Self- efficacy & self-concept and occupational aspiration and (ii) to find out the gender and residential differences in the selected variables. A random sample of 300 students (150 boys and 150 girls) from different government schools of Hyderabad city was selected using Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem, Self- Concept Scale developed by Ahluwalia and Occupational Aspiration Scale developed by Grewal. Analysis of the results were done using correlation and 't' test. The findings revealed that (a) self-efficacy and self-concept have large associations with adolescents' occupational aspiration and (b) there is significant gender and residential differences in the relationships between self-efficacy, self-concept and occupational aspiration of adolescents. No significant relationship is found in self-efficacy and gender of adolescents.*

**Keywords:** *Self-Efficacy, Self-concept, Occupational Aspiration, Adolescents, Gender*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Childhood marks the dawn of human development. The career development of children has been viewed as a critical part of the overall education of the individual. Development research posits that occupation selection is development process in which series of decisions are made over period of time that is from preteen years, continuing through high school where interests in, capacity for and values of an occupational choice is defined. Education and occupational aspirations relate to how much value people assign to formal education and how far they intend to pursue it. This is in the sense that the type of occupation, which an individual goes into, determines the way of life and how life is spent.

Aspiration has been defined as the “educational and vocational dreams” that adolescents have for their future. It is an individual’s desire to obtain status objective or goal such as particular occupation or level of education. Development of occupational aspiration is a process of circumscription and compromise in which an individual may change his or her career choices to one perceived as more appropriate or accessible. Rojewski (2005) defined occupational aspiration as “an individual’s expressed career related goals or choices”. Adolescents’ occupational aspirations and expectations have been viewed as a significant determinant of both short term educational and long term career choices ( Schoon & Parson, 2002), and as a reflection of adolescents’ future social mobility and career self-concept (Rojewski, 1995). Adolescents who experienced minimal academic risk expected occupations of greater prestige

(Rojewski, 1995), while adolescents experienced substantial risk of academic failure were more likely to report lower occupational aspiration and higher aspiration – expectations discrepancies (Rojewski & Hill, 1998). Indeed, Looker and Mc Nutt (1989) argued that adolescents, adolescents, occupational aspirations are a cause rather than an effect of educational and career attainment.

Self – efficacy is described as “building block” of career development (Lent, Brown, Hackett, 2002). It refers to people’s judgement about their capabilities to take actions to achieve designated types of performances. In a study by Eden and Aviram (1993), self-efficacy was found to be associated positively with looking for work. According to Flamer (2001), people with higher perceived self efficacy to fulfill job functions consider a wide range of occupational options. People’s occupations are among their most important social roles; occupations confer identities and restrict the kinds of identities and life styles people are able to create and sustain.

Self- concept plays a significant role in molding behaviour patterns of an individual. It is developed through interaction with the environment. Satisfactory and gratifying performances result into a more positive attitude towards him/ her. Self-concept is the cognitive or thinking aspect of self and generally refers to “ the totality of a complex, organized and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence”(Purkey, 1988). Franken (1994) states that, “there is a great deal of research which shows that the self-concept is perhaps the basis for all motivated behaviour. It is the self-concept that gives rise to possible selves and it is possible selves that create the motivation for behaviour”. While research has explored the relationship between occupational aspirations and a number of related variables such as age, socio economic status, self-esteem in addition to school attainment, very little work has focussed on the relationship with self-efficacy and gender in Indian situation. The present investigation will fill the void of knowledge. In the light of the above discussion, the present investigation is a humble attempt to study whether occupational aspiration is affected by self-efficacy and self-concept of adolescents?

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## II. METHODOLOGY

### Objectives:

1. To study the relationship between (i) self- efficacy and occupational aspiration and (ii) self-concept and occupational aspiration of adolescents.
2. To find out the difference, if any, between boys & girls and urban & rural on the said variables.

### Hypotheses:

1. There will be significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and occupational aspiration
2. There will be significant positive relationship between self-concept and occupational aspiration
3. There will be significant differences between boys and girls, urban and rural with regard to self-efficacy, self-concept and occupational aspiration of adolescents.

### Sample:

For the purpose of the study, a representative sample of 300 high school students (150 boys and 150 girls) from different schools were selected using simple random sampling technique. Only the government schools were selected and surveyed for the sake of similarity in infrastructure and educational environment of the students. The age range of the students was 15 to 17 years.

## III. DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE

Respondents	Urban	Rural	Total
Boys	75	75	150
Girls	75	75	150
Total	150	150	300

### Tools Used

**1. General Self-Efficacy Scale (G.P.S.S.):** The General self-efficacy Scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem and translated by Shonali Sud (1998) was use to assess self-efficacy based on general personality disposition.

**2. Children’s Self-concept Scale (C.S.C.S.):** The Children’s Self- concept Scale developed by S.P.Ahluwalia is descriptive as well as evaluative scale. It takes into account: Behaviour, Intellectual and School status, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity, Happiness and satisfaction.

**3. Occupational Aspiration Scale (O.A.S.):** The Occupational Aspiration Scale developed and standardized by J.S.Grewal is meant for measuring realistic and idealistic occupational aspiration of adolescents.

## IV. RESULTS

### 1. Correlation of self-efficacy and self-concept with occupational aspiration of the students.

The correlation was calculated using Pearson’s Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation between these

variables. Results of the correlation coefficients between self-efficacy and self-concept with occupational Aspiration of the students are presented in Table No. 1

**Table No.1:** Correlation of Self-Efficacy and Self-Concept with Occupational Aspiration of the Students

Variables	Coefficients of Correlation				
	Total (N= 300)	Boys (N=150)	Girls (150)	Urban (150)	Rural (150)
Self-Efficacy and Occupational Aspiration	0.123 (0.05)	0.211 (0.01)	0.229 (0.01)	0.169 (0.05)	0.191 (0.05)
Self-Concept and Occupational Aspiration	0.149 (0.01)	0.171 (0.05)	0.219 (0.05)	0.221 (0.01)	0.201 (0.05)

Table No.1 depicts that self-efficacy has significant positive relationship with occupational aspiration for the total sample, boys & girls and urban & rural students. The unidirectional correlation pattern between the variables indicates that variables are directly proportional to each other. The significance of coefficient of correlation ‘r’ between the said variables viz; self-efficacy and occupational aspiration varies between 0.05 to 0.01 levels for total and sub samples. Thus hypothesis no.1 is substantiated. In case of self-concept and occupational aspiration of the students, the correlation coefficients for the total and sub-samples are again significant and positive. The significant positive relationship indicates that student’s proclivity impact the learning experiences to the large extent and develop interests in accordance with the self-concept which in turn influences occupational aspirations. Thus hypothesis no.2 is accepted and confirmed.

### 2. Comparison of boys and girls, urban and rural students with regard to their self- efficacy, self-concept and occupational aspiration

The comparison between the said sub-samples with regard to above said variables were done by testing the significance of difference between their means by using ‘t’ test. The results are presented in Table No.2.

**Table No.2:** Comparison of Boys and Girls, Urban and Rural Students for the Selected Variables

Variables	Boys (150)		Girls (150)		t- value	Urban (150)		Rural (150)		t- value
	M <sub>1</sub>	σ <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>2</sub>	σ <sub>2</sub>		M <sub>1</sub>	σ <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>2</sub>	σ <sub>2</sub>	
Self-Efficacy	35.10	6.83	34.17	6.35	1.22 (N.S.)	36.15	7.01	32.71	6.39	4.52 (0.01)
Self-Concept	47.84	8.14	44.76	8.98	3.14 (0.01)	48.31	8.75	45.81	9.12	2.42 (0.05)
Occupational Aspiration	65.21	9.29	56.71	8.01	8.58 (0.01)	72.61	9.46	65.75	9.09	6.47 (0.01)

Results from the above table indicates that the difference between means of boys & girls and urban & rural on the measures of self-efficacy, self-concept and occupational aspiration varies between 0.05 to 0.01 levels. Significance of difference between the means of the selected variables in case of the sexes shows the boys have an edge over girls whereas in case of locale (i.e. urban and rural), the urban outperformed their rural counterparts on every selected measure.

## V. DISCUSSION

Education should produce and promote individuals whose skills are consistent and in tune with the needs of the society. It is important for students to acquire accurate and realistic knowledge about occupations and to understand the different ways and means through which it can be achieved. They should be guided to make choices that are congruent with their personal qualities, interests, aptitudes, motivational level and self-constructs. Their true perception along with genuine self-efficacy and self-concept would gain headway to aspire and achieve concrete educational and occupational goals. Adolescents should, therefore, be trained to understand self and to make career decisions on an informed and planful manner, rather than being unduly influenced by the environment or by others such as parents, teachers or peers.

In the present investigation, it is found that boys outperformed girls and rural lag behind their urban counterparts on all the selected variables. Similar results are also reported by Betz, Borgen & Harmon (2006); Betz. et al. (2003) for self efficacy and occupational aspiration. The difference between boys and girls on the measure of self-efficacy favours the boys. The presence of gender difference may be due to boys' efficacious outlook which produces personal accomplishment and lead them to work hard and persist in the face of setbacks. Bandura (1997) and Flammer (1990) found that individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs report strong feelings of well being and high self-esteem in general. On the other hand the low self-efficacy, in case of girls, readily leads to a sense of helplessness about one's capability to cope more effectively with the challenges and demands of work. This can be distressing and depressing, thereby preventing even highly talented girls from performing effectively. However in case of urban and rural, the significant result favouring the former indicates high assurances in the capabilities to approach difficult tasks as challenges to be accepted rather than threats to be avoided. Comparison between boys and girls on the self concept measure favours the boys. This difference may be due to gender bias attitude of the parents and society where boys are given a more positive feedback along with least restrictive environment to accomplish their goals, thereby raising their self-concept. This finding gets the support from the findings of Harter (1982) and Marsh (1989).

The results regarding the occupational aspiration reveal that boys' proclivity in accordance with their self-concept and motivational levels shapes behaviour pattern and they begin to perceive and respond circumstances in a way that reinforces learning experiences. This plays an obvious role in the development of interest which in turn influences occupational aspirations of boys accordingly. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Maher and Brascamp

(1986). On the other hand, girls' occupational aspiration may be constrained by traditional expectations and general constraints imposed by society and culture. Besides these specific effects it appears likely that educational experiences differ for boys and girls (Dunne, 1980). This finding gets the support from the findings of Coleman (1976), Cosby (1978). However comparisons between urban and rural sample yield the results which go against rural adolescents. Lower occupational aspiration level of rural adolescents may be related to reduced access to higher education, limited exposures to world of work and a lack of work – related role models (Apostal and Bilden, 1991). As a result, fewer rural youth pursue college education, due to a perceived lack of post secondary opportunities, effectively limiting their work and educational aspirations and attainment (Hektner, 1995). This finding is in agreement with the findings of Cobb et al. (1985), Burchinal (1961). Thus the hypothesis no. 3 is substantiated.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The finding and analysis presented establish the dependence of occupational aspirations on self-efficacy and self-concept. Both the variables, acting as motivational force, seem to be positively associated with other desirable qualities, such higher academic aspiration and attainment, and so on. If youth have lower aspirations as a result of lower self constructs they should be encouraged and guided to raise their aspirations in general and occupational and vocational aspirations in particular. Through a conscious planning and concerted efforts by parents, teachers, educationists and psychologists, adolescents will be better prepared both effectively and cognitively to aspire and attain their occupational and career aspirations. It can therefore be conclusively said that, "If women and men have equal chances in life, things will be different. We are working it out...., women, and men different but equal".

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