

Career choices of urban adolescents belonging to different economic status

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ARTICLE INFO :

Received : 04.04.2015
Revised : 17.04.2015
Accepted : 29.04.2015

KEY WORDS :

Adolescents, Career Interest, Income groups

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE :

Joshi, P. and Gir, S. (2015). Career choices of urban adolescents belonging to different economic status. *Adv. Res. J. Soc. Sci.*, 6 (1) : 42-46.

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ABSTRACT

The dominating task during the adolescent years is the achievement of a sense of personal identity to know oneself, to commit oneself to carefully explored beliefs, purposes and values and to move into adulthood with a sense of responsibility for ones choices. It is also a time when decisions regarding ones career are made. The present study was intended to investigate the influence of family income on career interests of adolescents. The sample comprised of 180 adolescents (30 boys and 30 girls) from three different categories of Income group between the age range of 15-18 years selected from various government and private co-ed schools of Udaipur city. Comprehensive Interest Schedule developed by Vohra (1992) was used which assesses the vocational or career interests of adolescents in eight broad career areas viz., influential, venturous, artistic, scientific, analytical, social, nature, clerical. The results of the study revealed that the parental economic status had strong influence on adolescents career interests as adolescents from High Income group showed greater interests towards influential career field, those from middle income group preferred venturous careers whereas adolescents from low income group preferred technical and clerical fields.

INTRODUCTION

Choosing a career is often considered a major turning point in adolescent's lives. This decision alone has the potential to open the door for success or close the door of opportunity. Earlier the students had no interest in selecting their vocations as the students preferred going in the vocation their parents wished them to go in but this trend has been changed. Career choice today has become a complex science with the advent of information technology, the emergence of post industrial revolution and job competition. There are wide array of occupational

choices available for adolescents to choose from. Also rapid scientific advancement, division of labour and specialization of functions in the modern society demands the fullest use of skilled manpower at all levels. Thus industrialization and post industrialization has made it possible for a common person to be richer as long as she/he has due skills and knowledge (Wattles, 2009). Career preparation in adolescence is an important precursor for successful career development across the life span and is closely related to adolescence adjustment and well-being (Skorikov, 2007). Several studies show that new students all over the world are usually faced

with a dilemma in making a career choice decision in their lives (Bandura *et al.*, 2001; McMahon and Watson 2005; Macgregor, 2007; Issa and Nwalo, 2008; Watson *et al.*, 2010). In most cases, the choice of careers, subjects, and courses of study and the subsequent career paths to follow are a nightmare for prospective undergraduate students (Issa and Nwalo, 2008). Most often, choosing the right subject combination leading to the right profession can make the difference between enjoying and detesting the career in future. Today one has not only to make due career planning but also exhaustive career research before making career choice so as to adjust with evolving socio-economic conditions. Navin (2009) has suggested that exploring career options before committing to a career increases future career success and satisfaction. Thus, adolescents career choices and variables influencing them should be identified and acknowledged. There are multiplicities of factors influencing vocational interests of adolescents including life context, personal aptitudes, educational attainment, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and financial. Among these factors, economic status of the family is a prominent factor which has a great bearing on career interests of adolescents. The economic condition prevailing in the family may present opportunities or obstacles which directly or immediately influence where or how adolescent get educated and enters the labour market. Parent's economic status determines the educational and vocational opportunities the child has and will have. In his study, Ngesi (2003) found that poor financial base of students from disadvantaged communities deter choices of appropriate educational programmes and careers. Such students tend to avoid careers which appear to them to require long period of training their finance cannot support. Kniveton (2004) found that the family provides information and guidance directly or indirectly and influences young people's career choice. For example, parents offer appropriate support for certain occupational choices which tend to follow their own (Small and McClean, 2002). Socio-economic status provides a context for the development of Occupational choice (Schoon and Parsons, 2002). Basically higher socio-economic status brings greater access to the resources needed to finance education, provide special learning experiences and provide opportunities to come in contact with role models in high prestige occupations. As a result, individuals from

high socio-economic status aspire to, expect and attain higher levels of education and more prestigious occupation than individuals from lower socio-economic status. (Rojewski and Kim, 2003). Thus in the present study the economic status of the family is considered as a main variable to gauge the career interests of adolescents.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was an attempt to assess and compare the career interests of adolescents belonging to different categories of income group. The total sample for the present study consisted of 180 adolescents (30 boys and 30 girls) from three different categories of Income group between the age ranges of 15 to 18 years, who were studying in coeducational government and private schools. The sample was selected from grades 9th to 12th of 6 coeducational schools of Udaipur city. For the purpose of assessment, Comprehensive Interest Schedule developed by Vohra (1992) was used which assesses the career interests of adolescents in eight broad career interest fields *viz.*, influential, venturesome, artistic, scientific, analytical, social, nature, clerical. The data was collected, coded and analyzed by using frequency, percentage.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Family plays a prominent role in the youth's educational and professional choices. A plethora of family factors determine professional decision such as social status, financial position, parent's education, culture and mentality. Status attainment research which examines the factors associated with adolescent's educational and occupational aspirations and achievement identifies family socio-economic status as a significant influence on career choice. Youth from higher socio-economic status families aspire for higher prestige careers more often than do their counterparts in lower socio-economic status families. For drawing out specific conclusions from the present study the data was analyzed with the help of Mean, S.D and t-test.

Data from the Table 1 reveals that the mean scores of high income group adolescents is more than the mean scores of low income group adolescents in influential [administrative (6.98) and enterprise (7.30)], venturesome [defence (4.18) and sports (5.86)], artistic [creative (4.56) and performing (3.96)] and analytical [expressive (4.46)

and computational (4.05)] fields. However low income group adolescents had high mean scores as compared to their high income counterparts in the field of clerical (3.96), technical (4.08) and education (3.73). Thus from the above findings, it can be concluded that adolescents from high income group were more inclined towards Influential, Venturous and Analytical career fields whereas adolescents from low income group had greater interests in education, technical and clerical fields. The results are supported by the findings of Osa Edoh and Alutu (2011)

which reveals that students from high and middle socio-economic status groups preferred to continue and aspire higher for high yielding jobs than those of the low socio-economic status. The findings are also in line with findings of Haider *et al.* (2014) which revealed significant difference between vocational interest of adolescents having high and low socio-economic status in executive, constructive and artistic areas of vocational interest and no significant difference was found in remaining seven areas of vocational interest *i.e.*, in scientific, executive,

Table 1 : Comparison of adolescents belonging to low and high categories of income group for their vocational interests in different career fields (n=120)

Career interest fields	Subfields	Mean		Standard deviation		Standard Error		t-Value
		LIG (n=60)	HIG (n=60)	LIG (n=60)	HIG (n=60)	LIG (n=60)	HIG (n=60)	
Influential	Administrative	1.76	6.98	1.55	1.58	0.20	0.20	18.172*
	Enterprising	2.20	7.30	1.94	1.67	0.25	0.21	15.401*
Venturous	Defence	2.40	4.18	1.97	2.07	0.25	0.26	4.826*
	Sports	2.75	5.86	2.56	2.25	0.33	0.29	7.069*
Artistic	Creative	3.18	4.56	2.43	2.61	0.31	0.33	2.994*
	Performing	3.01	3.96	2.48	2.55	0.32	0.32	2.068*
Scientific	Medical	2.86	2.90	2.71	1.78	0.35	0.23	0.080
	Technical	4.08	2.53	3.14	1.64	0.40	0.21	3.387*
Analytical	Expressive	3.63	4.46	2.67	2.11	0.34	0.27	1.892
	Computational	3.20	4.05	2.93	2.13	0.37	0.27	1.813
Social	Humanistic	2.55	2.86	2.32	1.91	0.30	0.24	0.814
	Education	3.73	2.71	2.96	2.04	0.38	0.26	2.186*
Nature		2.45	1.95	2.41	1.53	0.31	0.19	1.353
Clerical		3.96	1.68	3.63	1.57	0.46	0.20	4.462*

* indicate significance of value at P=0.01

Table 2 : Comparison of adolescents belonging to low and middle categories of income group for their vocational interests in different career fields (n=120)

Career interest fields	Subfields	Mean		Standard deviation		Standard Error		t-Value
		LIG (n=60)	MIG (n=60)	LIG (n=60)	MIG (n=60)	LIG (n=60)	MIG (n=60)	
Influential	Administrative	1.76	2.21	1.55	2.04	0.20	0.26	1.358
	Enterprising	2.20	2.06	1.94	1.79	0.25	0.23	0.390
Venturous	Defence	2.40	4.88	1.97	3.72	0.25	0.48	4.558*
	Sports	2.75	4.38	2.56	2.97	0.33	0.38	3.219*
Artistic	Creative	3.18	3.70	2.43	2.74	0.31	0.35	1.090
	Performing	3.01	2.75	2.48	2.45	0.32	0.31	0.592
Scientific	Medical	2.86	3.13	2.71	2.57	0.35	0.33	0.552
	Technical	4.08	3.31	3.14	2.89	0.40	0.37	1.390
Analytical	Expressive	3.63	2.65	2.67	2.62	0.34	0.33	2.031*
	Computational	3.20	4.13	2.93	3.33	0.37	0.43	1.627
Social	Humanistic	2.55	3.23	2.32	2.80	0.30	0.36	1.454
	Education	3.73	4.51	2.96	3.71	0.38	0.47	1.277
Nature		2.45	1.65	2.41	1.38	0.31	0.17	2.22*
Clerical		3.96	2.56	3.63	2.01	0.46	0.25	2.610*

* indicate significance of value at P=0.05

commercial, agriculture, persuasive, social and household areas. However, the results varied for literary or education field.

Perusal of Table 2 reveals that the mean scores of middle income group adolescents is more than the mean scores of low income group adolescents in Defence (4.88), Sports (4.38) and Expressive field (3.63). However in the Nature and Clerical fields the mean scores of adolescents belonging to low income group was high as compared to adolescents belonging to middle income group and were found to be 2.45 and 3.96, respectively. Thus while adolescents from middle income group preferred defence, sports and expressive fields those from low income group preferred nature and clerical fields. The findings are in line with the results of Jamabo (2014) which found significant relationship between parental income and adolescents' vocational aspiration.

Results presented in Table 3 reveal that the mean scores for high income group adolescents were found to be higher in the areas Administrative (6.98), Enterprising (7.30), Sports (5.86), Performing (3.96) and Expressive (4.46) whereas the mean scores of adolescents belonging to middle income group were found to be higher in Education subfield (4.51) and in Clerical field (2.56). Thus adolescents from high income group had greater inclination towards Administrative, Enterprising, Sports, Performing and expressive fields whereas those from middle income

group preferred education and clerical fields.

Conclusion :

Thus from the above results it can be concluded that economic status has a profound influence on adolescents vocational or career preferences. Adolescents from affluent families tend to choose vocations that they believe are befitting to their family's status while those from less privileged homes tend to grapple with vocations that are within the financial capacity of their parents. Adolescents from high income group perceive a given vocation with a view of prestigious level. They may choose the vocation because it is in line with their own social class level or the one which would shift them upwards on a social scale. Adolescents from middle income group prefer vocations that apart from social prestige offer economic security, matches with their interests and ideals and provide them with satisfaction. As middle class homes try to provide the necessary pre requisite for success of their children like good environment, motivation, financial assistance etc. adolescents with such backing strive for upward mobility whereas poor financial base of students from disadvantaged communities deter choices of appropriate educational programmes and careers. Such students tend to avoid careers which appear to them to require long period of training their finance cannot support.

Career interest fields	Subfields	Mean		Standard deviation		Standard error		t-Value
		MIG (n=60)	HIG (n=60)	MIG (n=60)	HIG (n=60)	MIG (n=60)	HIG (n=60)	
Influential	Administrative	2.21	6.98	2.04	1.58	0.26	0.20	14.267*
	Enterprising	2.06	7.30	1.79	1.67	0.23	0.21	16.541*
Venturous	Defence	4.88	4.18	3.72	2.07	0.48	0.26	1.271
	Sports	4.38	5.86	2.97	2.25	0.38	0.29	3.080*
Artistic	Creative	3.70	4.56	2.74	2.61	0.35	0.33	1.769
	Performing	2.75	3.96	2.45	2.55	0.31	0.32	2.663*
Scientific	Medical	3.13	2.90	2.57	1.78	0.33	0.23	0.577
	Technical	3.31	2.53	2.89	1.64	0.37	0.21	1.823
Analytical	Expressive	2.65	4.46	2.62	2.11	0.33	0.27	4.168*
	Computational	4.13	4.05	3.33	2.13	0.43	0.27	0.163
Social	Humanistic	3.23	2.86	2.80	1.91	0.36	0.24	0.837
	Education	4.51	2.71	3.71	2.04	0.47	0.26	3.291*
Nature		1.65	1.95	1.38	1.53	0.17	0.19	1.123
Clerical		2.56	1.68	2.01	1.57	0.25	0.20	2.676*

* indicate significance of value at P=0.05

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