

Conflict in Career Decision Making among Adolescents: Gender Differences

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Abstract

The present study was aimed to analyse the difference in the career conflict of male and female adolescents. It is assumed that the career conflict of male and female adolescents does not differ significantly. Career-conflict scale having 62 items was used for the data collection from 200 adolescents of 14-18 years. Data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and the Significance of Difference Statistical techniques. The findings of the study revealed that majority of adolescents were in a state of conflict when they have to decide about their career. Secondly significant differences existed in the career conflict of male and female adolescents. The study recommended that parents should not be biased on gender of their offspring's. In today's world females go along with the males and possess higher careers in every field if given a chance. So parents should encourage their daughters to get higher education and pursue a career rather than making them housewives.

Introduction

Career choice is one of the most important decisions in an individual's life but, there are certain factors that affect the career choice including personal (self) and environmental factors. In the context of career decision making, values -satisfaction, rewards and preferences are assumed to play an important role in several theories of career development. However in spite of value considerations, resources (financial as well as psychic) must be considered to be implementing a career decision.

Adolescence is the period when a major turning takes place in the life of a student because the career will depend upon the subjects selected at this level. On the recommendation of National Policy on Education 1986, school curriculum after the 10th class has been diversified into academic and vocational streams. The educational and vocational decision at this stage paves the way for future decisions to be taken by any individual in the world of work. Mudaliar Commission (1952-53) recommended fostering of manual labour and promotion of technical skill for the advancement of industry and technology. Kothari Commission (1964-66) pointed out that the existing system of education is largely unrelated to life. In order to secure proper development, "Education must be related to productivity". Humayun Kabir was of opinion that the basis of prosperity of any nation was the Scientific and Vocational education. In 1917, Sadler Commission expressed opinion that a good part of the entire education from primary to University should be vocationalised; especially secondary education should be vocationalised in a large measure. The Secondary Education Commission (1953) in their Report corroborated this concept of vocationalisation of education right at the secondary stage. The Education Commission (1964-66) also recommended that introduction of work-experience should be given high priority an integral part of general education and vocationalisation of education especially at the secondary level.

Choice of career is the most crucial stage for adolescent boys and girls. At a particular stage of life, an adolescent has to make a fair decision of career choice in his/her life for betterment of future. But career choice of adolescents is influenced by many factors including personal, social and environmental factors which create conflicts for an adolescent to choose best suitable career.

Many research studies have shown that there are differences in the career choice of adolescent boys and girls. Girls have been found typically to explore careers from a narrower set of career options than do boys. Gottfredson (1981) demonstrated how this occurs based on occupational sex role socialization. Girls and boys learn early which occupations are suitable for them and which ones are not.

Susan & Debra (2006) revealed in a study that males had greater self-efficacy for IT occupations, greater passion for computing, and less positive attitudes toward capabilities of women in IT and traditional work role expectations concerning women's efficacy for careers in IT still persist.

According to Berz (2002) and Gates (2001), many females have been socialized to adopt nurturing roles rather than career or achieving roles that they traditionally have not planned seriously for careers have not explored career options extensively, and have restricted their career choices to careers that are gender stereotyped. The motivation for work is the same for both sexes. However, female and males make different choices because of their socialization experiences and the ways that social forces structure the opportunities available to them.

Osakinle and Adegoroye (2008) explored that some females in the last decade have embraced the domestic patterns of an earlier historical period. They have married, bore children and committed themselves to full-time mothers. These "traditional" females have worked outside the home only intermittently and have subordinated their work role to the family role. The in-school adolescent was a male or female did not matter on their choice of career. Mothers who work regularly outside the home show effort and pride in their work and have a strong influence on their adolescents' career choices.

According to Gottfredson (2005), adolescents start to eliminate occupational choices based on sex types and prestige levels. For example, female students might avoid choosing occupations that are perceived as too masculine such as mining and also might consider eliminating choices that are received as having low social prestige status such as a career as a house maid.

Creed, Conlon & Zimmer- Gembeck (2007) revealed that girls tend to aspire to a narrower range of occupations than boys because they believe many jobs are unsuitable for them whereas boys have a greater occupational understanding, focus and see more occupational opportunities than girls.

Kniveton (2004) indicated that males preferred investigative and realistic career types while females preferred social, artistic and conventional careers. These findings may be due to the existing gender stereotyping which is still at large all over the world. Females still choose careers that correspond with their traditional gender roles and males also choose careers that match those of their traditional gender roles.

Migunde et. al. (2011) explored that there are certain careers that are preferred by both males and females i.e. investigative and enterprising careers however the realistic career type was mostly chosen by males while the social career type was mostly chosen by females.

Swanson and Tokar (1991a, 1991b) found that while the types of career barriers perceived by Euro-American male and female college students were essentially the same, there were gender differences in the salience of some of these barriers. For example, female respondents perceived discrimination and child rearing as greater barriers than did males.

McWhirter (1997) said that males and females were equally confident that they could overcome the barriers related to their career and educational goals. Perhaps although they were realistic in their anticipation of specific barriers, the female participants were less realistic about how these barriers might actually affect their future attainments. The absence of interaction effects suggests that these gender differences hold true.

Objective of the Study

1. To study the level of career conflict among adolescents.
2. To analyse the difference in the career conflict of male and female adolescents.

Hypothesis of the Study

1. The level of career conflict among adolescents will be high.
2. The career conflict of male and female adolescents does not differ significantly.

Delimitation of the Study

The present study was delimited to adolescents in the age group of 14-18 years of Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Nawanshahr and Hoshiarpur district of Punjab only.

Tool

Investigator used career-conflict scale for the data collection. The scale consisted of 62 items. It was constructed and standardized by the investigators. It was standardized on 1024 adolescents and reliability of the scale was found to be 0.85

Data Collection

This scale is meant for male and female adolescents in the age group of 14-18 years. The data for conducting the study was collected from 200 adolescents. 50 adolescents from each district were selected for the study.

Statistical Techniques

To interpret the data, mean, standard deviation and the Significance of Difference of Statistics were used.

Results and Interpretation

1. Level of Career Conflict among Adolescents

The first objective of the study was to explore the level of career conflict of adolescents. The scores of Career Conflict Scale of adolescents were calculated. On the basis of values of different levels given in the manual of the standardised scale, three groups of career conflict scores were formed i.e. Low Career Conflict group (LCC), those who score who scores less than 211, Moderate Career Conflict group (MCC), those who score between 211-223 and High Career Conflict group (HCC),

those who scores more than 223. After comparing the scores of 200 adolescents with the level of career conflict given in standardised scale, percentage of adolescents who belong to LCC, MCC and HCC was calculated and result has been presented in table 1. The results of the study revealed that 52.5% of adolescents fall in the range of high level of career conflicts, 25.5% of adolescents fall in range of moderate level of conflict and only 22% adolescents fall in the range of low level of career conflicts. Therefore first hypothesis of the study which stated that ‘the level of career conflicts among adolescents is high’ has been accepted.

It could be interpreted from the above discussion that majority of adolescents were in a state of conflict when they have to decide about their career. According to investigator, the main reasons behind this may be due to lack of guidance and lack of information about different careers and influence of family members on their choice of career. Many adolescents may be lacking in the confidence in choosing a suitable career for them and they feel that they may need a trustworthy person to decide about their career resulting them in a state of conflict.

2. Difference in the Career Conflict of Male and Female Adolescents

The second objective of the study was to analyse the difference in the career conflict of male and female adolescents. To achieve this objective, the scores of Career Conflict Scale of male and female adolescents were tabulated. Mean and SD values were calculated on their scores which were found to be 222.45, 18.39 and 228.41, 21.66 respectively. In order to analyse the significance of difference in the career conflict of male and female adolescents, the scores of the career conflict scale of male and female adolescents were tabulated. The data obtained had been subjected to the calculation of t-ratio and result has been presented in table 2.

The results indicated that t-ratio for the career conflict of female and male adolescents have been found significant at 0.01 level of confidence. Thus, hypothesis of the study which stated that ‘The level of career conflict of male and female adolescents does not differ significantly’ has been rejected. It could be interpreted from the above discussion that high level of difference exists in the career conflicts of male and female adolescents. Researches showed that girls tend to aspire to a narrower range of occupations than boys because they believe many jobs are unsuitable for them. (Creed, Conlon & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). According to investigator, main reason behind this may be due to fact that the career of females was not given considerable importance than career of males. Gender restrictions imposed on them by family members and society were responsible. The education and career of the male child was considered more important than the female child because parents feel that the male child has to run the family in the future. Therefore career of females may not be given equal importance with that of males.

Conclusions

After analysing and interpreting the data, it may be inferred that majority of adolescents were in a state of conflict when they have to decide about their career. Secondly significant differences existed in the career conflict of male and female adolescents.

It is recommended that parents should not be biased while treating with male and female children because both of them are the essential part of society and

education for both is equally important. In today's world females go along with the males and possess higher careers in every field if given a chance. So parents should encourage their daughters to get higher education and pursue a career rather than making them housewives.

Table-1

Level of Career Conflict among Adolescents

Level Of Conflict	N	Percentage
Adolescents with high level of conflict	105	52.5%
Adolescents with moderate level of conflict	51	25.5%
Adolescents with low level of conflict	44	22 %

Table-2

Difference in the Career Conflict of Male and Female Adolescents

Gender	Mean	SD	df		t-ratio
Females	M ₁ =228.41	21.66	100-1	198	5.22**
Males	M ₂ =222.45	18.39	100-1		

** Significant at 0.01 Level of Confidence

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