

A Comparative Study of Career Preferences & Career Conflicts among the Secondary and Senior Secondary School Students

ABSTRACT

Education has a significant effect on the behaviour and profession of the individual. It prepares students for a career so that they can earn their livelihood. Thus, selecting an appropriate career is the most important decision that human beings have to make in their lives. This decision will affect them throughout their lives, so nothing is more important than choosing a career. When selecting a career, individuals have to struggle between two or more situations that need to be resolved, known as career conflicts. In today's world, where there are several career options available, there is pressure on individuals to select the best career for themselves. In the same way, most students in the secondary and senior secondary stage face a lot of career-related problems. Understanding the students' career plans and preferences can help them to determine their future prestige, wealth, and status. Thus, it becomes important to help them in their career selection and to avoid conflicts. In this regard, the presented study was conducted to analyse the career preferences and career conflicts among secondary and senior secondary school students. The study was descriptive; therefore, a survey method was used to conduct this study. This study selected a representative sample of 240 students from class 10th and class 12th from eight schools in two blocks of Sirsa districts of Haryana using a stratified random sampling technique. Appropriate data was collected through two standardized scales: the Career Preference Record (2009) by Bhargava & Bhargava and the Career Conflict Scale (2005) by Kumar and Rekha. The study's main findings were that overall, most of the secondary and senior secondary school students had given the first preference to law and order, second to education, and the least priority to agriculture as a career. It was also noticed that 'law and order' first, 'education' was the second preference of secondary students, whereas senior secondary students had given the first preference to 'education,' second to 'law & order,' and both secondary and senior secondary students, had given the least preference to agriculture as a career option. However, it was observed that there existed no significant differences between the career preferences of secondary and senior secondary school students. Further, it was found that there existed a significant difference between the career conflict among secondary and senior secondary school students. Moreover, it is also important to mention here, that the senior secondary school students had higher career conflicts rather than the secondary school students. It is suggested to the school administration, teachers, and counsellors that they need to develop a mechanism at the school level that will help the students select the best career options in their lives to avoid career conflicts.

Key Words: Career Preferences & Career Conflicts, Secondary, Senior Secondary School Students

INTRODUCTION

Education is the best way to encourage knowledge acquisition, skills, values, behaviour, and human development. It is the most powerful tool that affects nearly every aspect of

life. It has a significant effect on the profession or the individual, too. Most of the time, education helps the individual to decide to choose the profession. In truth, one of the most crucial ambitions of education is vocational goals. It prepares students for a career so that they can earn their livelihood. Career preference is one of the most vital choices every man or woman makes in his/her life. Thus, selecting an appropriate career is the most important decision that human beings have to make in their lives. This decision will affect them throughout their lives. There is nothing more important than choosing a career. Moreover, education and practice boost students' inner confidence and help them accomplish their career objectives. Students gain knowledge, skills, and experience through education, which helps them to grow in their careers. Various research studies reveal that greater confidence leads to better career advancement. When the students have a comprehensive idea of themselves and how they might live and work after their schooling, they will be more involved in education and inspire themselves for their future. In order to prepare young Indians for their future, high-quality education and mentoring are required. Education and guidance are essential for students in choosing their career or future. It also helps them to grow more in every field of life, including students' achievements, interests, strengths, and aspirations, and students can be aware of their subject choices and pathways. Identifying one's career interests helps individuals make strategic career decisions and career planning. Following your career means ensuring a career that customs your talents and associates with your values and preferences. For this reason, career planning is important to help students have a bright future. After 10 years of general schooling, the present system focuses on basic knowledge and activities related to different subjects. After the secondary stage, students must choose a stream for senior secondary and graduation. A student who plans his future early in life has an advantage over a student who decides by hit and trial. When selecting a career, individuals struggle between two or more situations that need to be resolved as soon as possible, known as career conflicts. Thus, choosing a profession is an important decision a person makes for himself and society. If a person chooses a career based on his interest, the chance for his success in the particular career becomes high; even through it, he can contribute his best to society. Along with this, it also becomes important to resolve career conflicts among individuals. Career conflict is a situation that affects a significant number of students. The students' future jobs are determined by their subject chosen at the senior secondary stage. Students may feel confused while choosing a career after completing 10th, 12th, or

graduation. Generally, most students go for common career options like engineering, teaching, management, medicine, chartered accountancy, media, etc. The career choice is based on the available employment options /opportunities in the particular field and, most essential, the student's interest. When a student thinks about professional choice, many things instantly come to mind, such as job descriptions, career outlook, education, and training required. However, many other factors may affect the decision, like abilities and skills, interests and personality culture, life roles, economic status, and social, previous experience, etc. Therefore, career preference is one of the most vital choices every man or woman makes in life. Deciding on the right career is one of the most difficult or extreme selections an individual makes. Deciding on a profession is perhaps the most essential selection for an individual and has far-accomplishing effects on one's future. It is well-known that each aspect of a student's life is affected by career choice. A successful career choice can affect a person's success; similarly, a bad career choice also affects a person's chances of success. Career choice is a decision that not only informs a student about different disciplines in secondary and senior secondary schools but also influences their further education. Therefore, most secondary and senior secondary school students recognize the importance of getting accurate career and educational information from parents, teachers, and counsellors. However, today, most students in the secondary/ senior secondary stage face career-related problems in the form of making wrong decisions. In such situations, to understand students' career plans help students to determine their career preferences that will be able to determined their future prestige, wealth, and social status. The stakeholders' moral duty is to help students in their career selection. The most complicated trouble confronting children these days includes choosing a sensible and appropriate profession, making ready for it, liking it and keeping it. In today's world, where there are multiple options available for a career, due to individuals having the pressure to select a good career for themselves, most secondary/senior secondary stage students face many problems related with the selection of any careers. Thus, choosing a profession is an important decision a person needs to make to survive in society. Along with this, there is also a great need to solve the career conflicts of the students. Everyone wants to select the best option for him; therefore, making the best decision naturally demands dealing with conflicts. Thus, conflicts within decision-making are common. If an option existed that met all of one's values, a decision would be redundant. Whatever any career option is examined, there are appropriate gains and losses, and this leads to

struggle between what to realize and what to neglect calls for a decision. Students are under much pressure to select a good career for themselves. However, it became more important for the students in the secondary/ senior secondary stage to get rid of various career-related problems.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sara (2010) conducted a study on 600 college students (240 female and 360 male) to examine the consequences of mastering patterns on the career choices of senior secondary students in Jigawa kingdom, Nigeria. The study's main finding was that there existed a large gender difference in student learning patterns and career choices. Further, Hossain and Siddique (2012) conducted a research study on the career preferences of companies that graduated from a private university in Bangladesh, and interviews with 256 senior business students were conducted. Their study showed that most of the respondents' preferred areas of expertise are banks and multinationals. Similarly, financial gain and social popularity were the main motivations for student choice. From a motivational point of view, male graduates are greatly influenced by their financial advantage, social status, and the appropriate opportunities in their chosen field. Alternatively, female graduates state that financial interests, social fame, and employment security have the greatest impact on their career options. A research study was conducted by Kaygin and Gulluce (2013) to study the association between career desire and man or woman values. For this, observations were conducted of the students of Turkish universities, and it was found that a great relationship existed between career choices and student personal values. A study by Pascuala (2014) was conducted on 69 fourth-year students of the University of Rizal System Laboratory School of Morong Rizal, Philippines, to analyse the factors affecting high school student's career preferences. The study's main findings were that most of the students preferred to take scientific-related field courses for Filipinos, and the least preferred the agricultural field. It was also noticed that most students preferred to take professional courses and courses related to their father's occupation. Other factors such as the mother's occupation, monthly family income, students' sibling position, and students' third-year general average grades are not related to the student's preferred course in college to their occupational preference. The study was carried out by Singh & Singh (2015) on 100 secondary-level students of Bareilly District to explore the career preferences of secondary-level students. The main findings of the study indicated that the students gave their first preference to the stream of science and technology; further, it was

also found that there existed a difference between the career choice of male and female students and the students of the U.P. Board and CBSE Board. It was also noticed that almost all secondary-level students prefer the same career option, and their parents' occupations do not affect the career preferences of their children. A research study was conducted in Kenya by Nyamwange (2016) on 296 first-year students selected from six universities to examine the influence of interest on career choice decisions among first-year university students. The results show that most students (91.9%) have prior knowledge of what a career entails, which is important to developing an interest in a career. The study also noticed that student interest is significant in determining career choice decisions for an individual's career. Yamboo (2016) conducted a study using questionnaires and interview techniques on 382 college students and 265 secondary faculty instructors in the Kisumu metropolis. The main finding of this study was that personality differences were the main cause of conflicts among the students. The main purpose of the study by Hellen, Omari, and Are (2017) was to analyse the influence of gender, age, peer group, and parents on students' career choices. For this purpose, 231 students in the School of Business and Economics of Kisii University were taken as samples. The findings revealed that gender had strongly influenced the students' career choices, and age was also the second strongest factor that influenced their career choice. It was also noticed that peer group and parental guidance had a moderate influence on the student's career choices. In their study, Mirza, Syeda, and Mirza (2018) found that, based on the confirmed factors, a model was developed for career selection using Structure Equation Modelling. It is acknowledged that students' career selection is directly influenced by motivation. It is concluded that most students choose their career by choice, and almost all the students revealed that grades and educational background influence their decisions. The aim of the study, conducted by Khanra and Sarkar (2019), was to compare the career preferences between male and female students of higher secondary schools. A sample of 800 students (376 male and 424 female) from 20 higher secondary schools in the Howrah district of West Bengal was used. The study's main findings were that female students preferred 'Mass Media and Journalism,' 'Artistic and Design' (AD), Agriculture (AG), Medical,' 'Tourism and Hospitality Industry, and Education' as career fields rather than male students. Like their counterparts, ' male students prefer 'Science and Technology,' 'Commerce and Management' Defence,' and 'Law and order' as career fields rather than female students. In research, Idowu, Ifedayo, & Idowu, (2020) studied

373 male and female high school students from three private and three public schools in Ota City, Andodo, and Ota Local Government in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study showed that formal parental education significantly impacts student career choices, but socio-economic status does not affect junior high school career choices. Moreover, it was also noticed that there existed significant differences in some career preference fields between male and female students of higher secondary schools. The research by Singh and Kumari (2020) aimed to determine the job preferences of 193 students randomly chosen from different high schools. The main findings revealed that women preferred human services and education, while men preferred business management and administration, according to an analysis of the data. According to research, several elements influence a student's job choice, including gender, parental occupation, kind of school, and residential surroundings. A study was conducted by Bala (2021) on a sample of 120 students from two governments and two private higher secondary schools in Hiranagar town of Kathua district (Jammu & Kashmir). Moreover, the main findings of the study were that irrespective of different regions (rural/ urban) and streams (science, maths), all the students gave their first preference to jobs related to defence services. Descriptive research was conducted by Quino (2022) to determine students' career interests in senior high school in order to prepare them for college better. For this purpose, online survey questionnaires were conducted from 231 Senior High School students. The study results revealed that financial aid, educational quality, tuition affordability, and environment and culture influence a student's decision to enrol in college. The findings indicated that the various factors influencing students' choices are adaptable regardless of age, gender, or family wealth. The study's main objective by Singh (2023) was to examine the level of career conflict among senior secondary girl students in the Bhojpur district of Bihar. The 200 girls' sample was taken from urban and rural family backgrounds of Bihar Board and CBSE board. The study's main finding was that the Bihar board and urban areas students have slightly higher levels of career conflict than the CBSE board.

From the review, it is clear that having prior knowledge of what a career entails is important to developing an interest in career perspectives. There existed a significant relationship between career choices and students' values. Various influences existed on students' career choices, such as gender, study board, father's occupation, educational background, grades, etc. Moreover, the peer group and parental guidance moderately influenced the student's career choices. It was also noticed that the leading cause of

student conflicts was personality differences. Thus, without any doubt, selecting an appropriate career is the most important decision for individuals, and it is something they can make for their future lives and livelihood. This decision will affect them as an individual throughout their life. There is nothing more important than choosing a career for an individual. Therefore, in this regard, the presented study was conducted to analyse the career preferences and career conflicts among secondary and senior secondary school students. The researchers also found a great interest in finding the areas of the most preferred career of our adolescents/students at secondary and senior secondary school levels.

Statement of the Problem

A Comparative Study of Career Preferences & Career Conflicts Among the Secondary and Senior Secondary School Students.

Objective of the Study

1. To study the career preferences/choices of senior secondary and secondary school students.
2. To compare the career preferences/choices among secondary and senior secondary school students.
3. To find out the significant difference between the career preferences of secondary and senior secondary school students.
4. To study the career conflicts among secondary and senior secondary school levels.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in career preferences among secondary and senior secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference in career conflict among secondary and senior secondary school students.

Research Methodology

The present research study was descriptive; therefore, the data was collected through the survey method. A stratified random sampling method was used for two blocks of the Sirsa district, namely Rania and Sirsa, Haryana. Moreover, after that, four schools were chosen from a block, based on rural and urban, as well as government and private schools. After selecting schools, Principals were personally contacted with a request to

conduct research in their schools. After obtaining permission from the schools, the classes in charge of the 10th and 12th classes were personally contacted to conduct the study. Therefore, 240 students of class 10th (120) and class 12th (120) were asked to complete the two standardized scales named Career Preference Record (2009) Bhargava & Bhargava and Career Conflict Scale (2005) by Kumar and Rekha. However, from the results, only 200 were appropriately completed by the students, which were considered for further analysis.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Mean scores, standard deviation, and t-test statistical techniques were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

CAREER PREFERENCES AMONG THE BOTH SENIOR SECONDARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

As per the first objective of the study, i.e., to study the career preferences/choices of senior secondary and secondary school students, the mean scores, standard deviation, and preference order of areas of the career of both secondary and senior secondary school students were as following:

Table 1: Career preferences among the both Senior secondary and secondary school students

Areas of Career	Secondary and Senior Secondary Students (200)		
	Mean	SD	Preference
Mass Media and Journalism (MMj)	8.69	1.41	VII
Artistic and Designing (AD)	9.95	5.65	III
Science and Technology (ScT)	9.33	2.12	IV
Agriculture (AG)	7.31	4.46	X
Commerce and Management (CM)	8.81	4.36	VI
Medical (M)	7.82	4.45	IX
Defence (D)	9.22	4.11	V
Tourism and Hospitality Management (TH)	8.32	4.12	VIII
Law and Order (LO)	10.38	3.93	I
Education (E)	10.17	4.17	II

From the above table 1, it is observed from the data that the main career preference areas of the secondary and senior secondary school students are given as: I. Law and Order (LO), II. Education (E), III. Artistic and Designing (AD), IV. Science and Technology (ScT), V. Defence (D), VI. Commerce and Management (CM), VII. Mass Media and Journalism (MM), VIII, Tourism and Hospitality Management (TH), IX. Medical (M), X. Agriculture (A). Therefore, it is

clear that both secondary and senior secondary school students had given the first preference to law and order, second to education, and the least priority to agriculture as a career.

COMPARISON BETWEEN CAREER PREFERENCES AMONG THE SENIOR SECONDARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

As per the second objective of the study, to compare the career preferences/choices among secondary and senior secondary school students, the mean scores, standard deviation, and preference order of areas of the career of senior secondary and secondary school students were the following;

Table 2: COMPARISON BETWEEN CAREER PREFERENCES AMONG THE SECONDARY AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Areas of Career	Secondary School Students (100)			Senior Secondary School Students (100)		
	Mean	SD	Preference	Mean	SD	Preference
Mass Media and Journalism (MMj)	8.51	4.08	VI	8.88	3.79	VII
Artistic and Designing (AD)	10.03	4.46	III	9.87	4.24	III
Science and Technology (ScT)	9.13	4.49	V	9.54	3.79	IV
Agriculture (AG)	6.91	4.57	X	7.72	4.29	X
Commerce and Management (CM)	8.48	4.57	VII	9.15	4.09	VI
Medical (M)	7.13	4.59	IX	7.91	4.28	IX
Defence (D)	9.15	4.32	IV	9.3	3.79	V
Tourism and Hospitality Management (TH)	8.1	4.36	VIII	8.54	3.82	VIII
Law and Order (LO)	10.36	4.15	II	10.41	3.67	I
Education (E)	10.43	4.25	I	9.92	4.09	II

Table 2 compares the main career preferences of senior secondary and secondary students. Thus, it is clear here that secondary school students' main career preference areas in order of rank are: - I. Education, II. Law and order, III. Artistic and Designing, VI. Defence, V. Science and Technology, VI. Mass Media and Journalism, VII. Commerce and Management, VIII. Tourism and hospitality, IX. Medical, X. Agriculture. Moreover, the career preference areas of senior secondary school students in order of rank are noted as: I. Law and order, II. Education, III. Artistic and Designing, IV. Science and technology, V. Defence, VI. Commerce and management, VII. Mass media and journalism, VIII. Tourism and hospitality, IX. Medical, X. Agriculture.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is noticed that law and order were first, and education was the second preference of secondary students. In contrast, senior secondary students had given first preference to education and second preference to law and order. However, it is important to mention that both the secondary and senior secondary students had the least preference for agriculture as a career. Therefore, day by day, the interest in agriculture as a career is decreasing among the students. In contrast, most people are associated with agriculture in India for their livelihoods.

SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CAREER PREFERENCES AMONG THE SECONDARY AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

As per the third objective of the study, to find out the significant difference among the career preferences of the secondary and senior secondary school students, the mean scores, standard deviation, and preference order of career conflicts of both secondary and senior secondary school students were as following;

Table 3: SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CAREER PREFERENCES AMONG THE SECONDARY AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Areas of Career	Secondary School Students (N=100)		Senior Secondary School Students (N=100)		t-value	Status
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Mass Media and Journalism (MMj)	8.51	4.08	8.88	3.79	0.66	N.S
Artistic and Designing (AD)	10.03	4.46	9.87	4.24	0.26	N.S
Science and Technology (ScT)	9.13	4.49	9.54	3.79	0.69	N.S
Agriculture (AG)	6.91	4.57	7.72	4.29	1.29	N.S
Commerce and Management (CM)	8.48	4.57	9.15	4.09	1.09	N.S
Medical (M)	7.13	4.59	7.91	4.28	1.24	N.S
Defence (D)	9.15	4.32	9.3	3.79	0.26	N.S
Tourism and Hospitality Management (TH)	8.1	4.36	8.54	3.82	0.75	N.S
Law and Order (LO)	10.36	4.15	10.41	3.67	0.09	N.S
Education (E)	9.92	4.09	10.43	4.25	0.39	N.S

Table 3 shows the significance level of the difference between career preferences among secondary and senior secondary school students. It is noticed that all of the t-values in the table related to career preferences among secondary and senior secondary school students are not

significant at any of the levels of significance. Most of the senior secondary and secondary students preferred “law and order, education and artistic and designing, defence, etc. Hence, the hypothesis, i.e., “there is no significant difference in career preferences of secondary and senior secondary school students,” is accepted. There was no significant difference in career preferences of secondary and senior secondary school students. However, as per the last objective of the study, the career preferences of secondary and senior secondary school students differ. However, no significant difference existed between the career preferences of secondary and senior secondary school students.

CAREER CONFLICTS AMONG THE SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS AND SECONDARY STUDENTS

As per the fourth objective of the study, to study the career conflicts at secondary and senior secondary school level, the chi-square test was applied and the chi-square statistics, p-value, and level of significance as given:

Table: 4: LEVELS OF CAREER CONFLICTS AMONG THE SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS AND SECONDARY STUDENTS

Levels of Career Conflicts/ Groups	Extremely High Career Conflicts	Average Career Conflicts	Extremely Low Career Conflicts	Chi-Square Test (P-Value)
Secondary Students	48 (48%)	10 (10%)	42 (42%)	0.0045
Senior Secondary Students	50 (50%)	25(25%)	25(25%)	

$$[\chi^2 = 10.78, \text{d.f.} = 2]$$

As depicted in Table 4, most of the students with high and moderate levels of career conflicts, i.e., fifty percent and twenty-five percent, respectively, are from senior secondary school. Conversely, the students with low levels of career conflicts, i.e., forty-two percent, belong to secondary schools. The calculated value of the Chi-square test is 10.78, which is greater than the table value, showing significance at the 0.01 level, thereby inferring a significant difference between the career conflicts at secondary and senior secondary school levels. Hence, the null hypothesis that "there is no significant difference in career conflict among secondary and senior secondary school students is rejected. Moreover, it implies that a significant difference exists between the level of career conflict among the secondary and senior secondary schools' students. And senior secondary school students had a higher level of conflict as compare to secondary school

students. This may be because the senior secondary class get more exposure to career awareness perspectives, and they might come into more dilemmas after selecting their academic streams for their career areas. Now, NEP 2020 emphasizes the multidisciplinary approach, and students can choose subjects according to their interests across the discipline after the 9th class; it can help the students stay more flexible in selecting a career.

Conclusion

It was found that the main career preference areas of all the secondary and senior secondary level students were law and order, second preference was given to education, and the least priority was agriculture. The main reason for selecting law and order services is that there is a higher scope of jobs in the army, police, and other armed forces and a good scope in the teaching fields. No significant difference existed in career areas between secondary and senior secondary school students. Further, it is also observed that there existed a significant difference in career conflict of secondary and senior secondary school students. There existed a higher level of career conflicts among senior secondary school rather than the secondary school students. Moreover, now, NEP 2020 emphasises the multidisciplinary approach, and students have the choice to choose subjects according to their interests across the discipline after the 9th class; it can help the students stay more flexible in selecting a career. The career choice is based on the available employment/options opportunity in the particular field or, most essential, the student's interest. Thus, a higher level of career conflicts was noticed among the senior secondary school students. It is suggested that the school administration, teachers, and counsellors develop a mechanism to help students select the best career for their future lives. It is also recommended to school administration that teachers and counsellors of the schools create awareness regarding different career options after the 10th and 12th classes. Moreover, they first need to decide the student's needs, abilities, and interests for a particular career with the help of conducting various aptitude tests. After identifying the right career for students, the career counsellor/teachers need to prepare a detailed execution plan with complete career profiles so that the students can implement them effectively for a better future.

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