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### **Career Decision Making Of Secondary School Students In Relation To Their Self-Esteem**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The present investigation was meant to study the career decision making of secondary school students in relation to their self-esteem. The study consisted of 200 school students of 11<sup>th</sup> class randomly drawn from two different schools of Chandigarh. Data was collected with the help of Career Decision Scale by Osipow<sup>35</sup> and Self Esteem Inventory by Coopersmith<sup>9</sup>. The data obtained were analysed statistically with the help of Mean, SD, t-ratio and correlation to arrive at the following conclusions: (i) There was significant difference between the career decision making of boys and girls, (ii) There was significant difference between the self-esteem of boys and girls (iii) There was significant and positive relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of boys (iv) There was significant and positive relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of girls (v) There was significant and positive relationship between career decision making and self-esteem.

**KEYWORDS:** Career Decision Making, Senior Secondary School Students, Self-Esteem

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Career choice is the most important event in an individual's life. Person's success and consequently, satisfaction and happiness depend on how accurately he chooses his Career. Improper selection of the Career or frequently changing the Career is very harmful for psychological health. Once we invest time, money and effort in moving along a particular career path it may not be easy to change the path. It is well known that individuals who make career choices based on personal interests and abilities, show significantly higher levels of job satisfaction and are more productive workers. Students who have gone through comprehensive career counselling are discerning in their career choices. Students, who make career choices without adequate and accurate counselling and guidance, are at risk of being impelled to choose careers that are not suitable for them. Choice of a career is not only central to one's lifestyle, but is also a vital aspect of the physical and emotional well-being of the individuals themselves and their families Osipow, Walsh and Tosi<sup>34</sup>. Career choice is a developmental process that extends throughout life; it involves not a single decision but a series of decisions. Career decision is not just a matter of selecting an occupation that is good match with person's characteristics, but in reality the process is lot more complicated. Good Career planning includes a match between requirements for a job, aptitude interests, personality of the youth and expectations from the parents. Good career planning leads to good career adjustment.

It is clear that in the modern world, making a vocational choice is not a single decision made at once, but a process involving many decisions and people, that combine to set a platform for individual's career development. The process of vocational decision-making begins from an early age; it nurtures gradually in the young age, when a child is ready with the answer to the question, what he wants to be when he grows up, and further continues in a developmental form throughout the lifespan.

Parsons<sup>35</sup> suggested that vocational choices should be based on three broad factors: a clear understanding of oneself, one's aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambition, resources, limitations and knowledge of their causes; knowledge of the requirements, conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts. These three broad factors of vocational choice provided simple guidelines for individuals to consider when choosing their career and emphasised the importance of individuals having an understanding of themselves, their career alternatives and how to use this information for rational career decision-making Jones<sup>16</sup>, The dictionary meaning of the term decision is the act of making conclusions or making up one's mind. The term career decision-making refers to decision of a career from among several choices available to the individual concerned. In everyday usage, the term career often seems to be associated with upward mobility,

advancement or getting on via a series of related jobs. Traditional views of career often associate the term with the professions where a clear series of steps can usually be identified Super and Hall<sup>42</sup>

Decision-making implies a process which occurs over a period of time. Theory and research reveal that decision making involves becoming aware of the need to make a decision going through a process of working on that decision (i.e. gathering information, identifying options, evaluating options, selecting among options) making a decision and then taking action to implement that decision Tiedman and O'Hara<sup>44</sup>; Harren<sup>14</sup>.

Career decisions involve a choice among occupational alternatives. Which alternative is chosen, depends on the career decision maker's preference for various factors or criteria on the basis of which he or she compares and evaluates the possible alternatives. The large number of alternatives available to the decision maker, the uncertainty concerning future preferences, and the complexity involved in combining personal and occupational information suggest that a better understanding of the way in which career decisions are made and the process underlying them is of theoretical as well as practical significance Gati, ShenhavandGivon.<sup>13</sup>

Decision making is the process of generating and evaluating alternatives and making choices among them. Is it always best to strive for optimal decisions? Probably not, shooting for perfect solutions can freeze decision makers into inaction. They become so afraid of not making the perfect decision that they create. When gathering data and information becomes more important than making decisions and taking action sometimes, it's better to make decisions, risk mistakes and then learn from the mistakes when you make them. After all, the saying isn't "decisions make perfect", its practice make perfect Harper<sup>15</sup>. The ability to make wise, educated decisions is essential to living a successful and fulfilled life. Individuals, groups or teams make decisions every day. Some decisions are very important and affect a lot of people whereas other decisions are small and affect only one or two people. A decision-making process based on data leads to good decisions. A major concern in management has been to understand and improve decision making Myers<sup>31</sup>.

Career decision-making can be defined as a process that describes or explains the choices that a person makes when selecting a particular career. It also helps to identify different factors involved in a person's career decision-making and provides an understanding of the way these factors have an impact on their career decisions and choices Sharf<sup>40</sup>.The many career decisions that a person makes, beginning with one's first career fantasy and continuing through the adolescent and adult years, involve a complex synthesis of personal, social, and environmental components Emmerling andCherniss<sup>12</sup>.

According to Donahue<sup>11</sup> the career decision-making process involves six tools. These include engaging in making a choice and knowing that one needs to make a decision and thinking about it;

understanding one's self and one's options; identifying, expanding and narrowing a list of possible options; deciding on a study plan or occupation; acting on or implementing the plan; and finally, reflecting on decisions made and knowing that one has made a good choice.

Choosing one's career depends on what one wants to do. It is not an easy task due to the complex and fluid character of the world of work. It involves not one decision, but a large number of decisions over a considerable period of time. Hence, a person's life may be seen as a string of career decisions, reflecting individual's groping for an ideal fit between self and work Bordin<sup>6</sup>. By self, we generally mean the conscious reflection of one's own being or identity, as an object separate from other or from the environment. There are a variety of ways to think about the self. Two of the most widely used terms are self-concept and self esteem. Self-concept is the cognitive or thinking aspect of self (related to one's self-image) 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<sup>37</sup>.

Self-esteem in a very general term means that the value ascribed by the individual to himself, the quality of the way he views himself. Like other aspects of the self, it is learnt and builds by infracting with significant factors. Self-esteem is relatively permanent, positive or negative feeling about the self that become more positive or negative as a person encounters success or failure in daily life. Self-esteem research examines how individuals come to feel as they do about themselves. Psychologists seek to understand how self-esteem develops and what can be done to change negative views of the self once they have been established. Self-esteem is a structural entity of personality, which organizes behaviour and 18, integrates experiences and perception on the basis of belief regarding one's own self.

Coopersmith<sup>7</sup> explains self esteem in terms of evaluative attitudes towards self. It refers to an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which an individual thinks him to be successful, important and worthy. Self esteem is generally considered the evaluative component of the Self concept, a broader representation of the self that includes cognitive and behavioural aspects as well as evaluative or affective ones. It refers to an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person 58 values, approves of appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself Blascovich and Tomaka<sup>5</sup>. Self esteem empowers, energizes, and motivates to respond appropriately to challenges and opportunities. It inspires persons to achieve and allows them to take pleasure and pride in their achievements. It allows them to experience satisfaction. Maslow<sup>26</sup> studied the Self esteem needs and he reported that the self esteem is related to the process of becoming a self-actualizing person. According to him, all people have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based sense of self-regard or self-respect and they need esteem from themselves and from others. He classified

two categories of esteem needs. The first set of esteem needs includes the desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for mastery, for competence, for self-confidence and for a degree of independence and freedom. The second category of esteem needs involves the desire for prestige, status, recognition, attention, dignity and appreciation, all of which are characteristics of esteem based on other's views of the person. Coopersmith<sup>8</sup> stated that Self esteem is acquired inferential from comments made by others, personal perceptions, and actions of others. He stated that "self-esteem is a set of attitudes and beliefs that a person brings with him or herself when facing the world. It includes beliefs as to whether he or she can accept success or failure, how much effort should be put forth, whether failure at a task will hurt and whether he or she will become more capable as a result of different experiences. In psychological terms, self-esteem provides a mental set that prepares the person to respond according to expectations of success, acceptance and personal strength".

An interesting conceptual link that offers some promise as a way of relating self and occupational concepts is self esteem. Korman<sup>22</sup> began a series of investigations studying the role of self esteem in career preferences and vocational development. In one study, he found that high self esteem individuals are more likely to implement their self-concept through occupational choice than are low self esteem individuals (a finding that is a logical outgrowth of criticism). In a more complicated study, Korman<sup>23</sup> tested the hypothesis that self esteem is related to the perception of the difficulty of an occupation, and as a result, serves as a moderator of occupational choice. The results strongly indicated that individuals with high self esteem seek high ability demand situations in their work. A balancing effect is suggested by him; that is, those who see themselves as competent will seek and enter competence-demanding situations, and vice versa. He calls this as closed-loop situation, suggesting that feedback enhances an already existing tendency to accept or reject challenging situations, which feeds back on self esteem, and which then effects the tendency to accept challenge, and so on.

Various dimensions of self esteem have been proposed. Vocational self esteem may be considered to be positive self-regard as it relates to one's value as a worker, or at least one's self-worth as a worker. Discussions of self esteem suggest that there are two kinds of high self esteem: secure and fragile Kernis<sup>21</sup>. He identifies other types of high self esteem: defensive high, genuine high, high explicit, implicit positive, contingent high, true high, unstable high, and stable high. The impact of most of these various types of high self esteem on vocational behaviour and experience has yet to be examined; self esteem is likely to have a strong impact on job satisfaction, job tenure, effort and performance at work, and quality of relations with co-workers. Vocational self esteem may be

differentiated from vocational self-efficacy, which has in recent years received substantially greater attention in research.

Our self-esteem is determined by many factors, including how well we view our own performance and appearance, and how satisfied we are with our relationships with other people Tafarodi and Swann<sup>43</sup>. Baumeister, Smart and Boden<sup>3</sup> defined self-esteem as a favourable global evaluation of oneself. The term self-esteem has acquired highly positive connotations, but it has simple synonyms the connotations of which are more mixed, including egotism, arrogance, conceitedness, narcissism, and sense of superiority, which share the fundamental meaning of favourable self-evaluation.

## **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

India is rapidly developing in higher education, which has made the society more complex than it was in the past. The number of occupations has increased and also there are many occupations within one career. For instance, farming which was a simple occupation some years ago is now a very complex career within many occupations to choose from. This includes poultry, vegetable farming, fruit farming etc. Decision making is a challenging task which is affected by several factors. Also it is one of the most important decisions taken by person which affects the whole life of individual. Making career decisions is a lifelong process. It is all about exploring and experiencing the world of work. It is also about understanding abilities, interests, skills and values. Julliusson, Karlsson and Garling<sup>20</sup> indicated past decisions influence the decisions people make in the future. It stands to reason that when something positive results from a decision, people are more likely to decide in a similar way, given a similar situation. On the other hand, people tend to avoid repeating past mistakes Sagie and Friedland.<sup>39</sup> This is significant to the extent that future decisions made based on past experiences are not necessarily the best decisions. Thoughtful decision making paves the way to a satisfying career choice. The more focussed you are, the less onerous the process will be. Self-esteem is our basic sense of worth or value. Self-esteem plays an important role in the overall decision making process of an individual. Positive self-esteem gives you the courage to be your person, believe in your own values, and make the right decision when the pressure is on. Friends can put a lot of pressure on teenager. They want to be part of crowd. Belonging to a crowd is a part of growing up- it helps them learn to be a friend and learn about the world around themselves. When a person values and respects self, it helps them avoid making a bad decision, which may affect the rest of their life. Self-esteem determines our life. It is the degree to which we find we respect ourselves. Good self-esteem means self-respect, a sense of self-worth, a feeling of basic goodness about oneself. Low self-esteem can mean constant self-doubt and self-criticism, social anxiety and isolation. It influences our decisions. Self-esteem can play a significant role in the process of career decision

making. Therefore, the investigator made an attempt to enquire the career decision making of senior secondary school students in relation to their self-esteem.

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE VARIABLES**

- i. *Career Decision-Making*: Operationally career decision-making is defined as the process of making informed career choices based on one's personal experiences.
- ii. *Senior Secondary School Students*: Secondary School students are students of class 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>. These are those students who are passing through the period of adolescence, which is the most important period of human's life. In the present study only students who were studying in class 11<sup>th</sup> were taken.
- iii. *Self-Esteem*: Self-esteem refers to an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which an individual thinks himself or herself to be successful, important and worthy.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the career decision making of senior secondary school students.
2. To examine the self esteem of senior secondary school students.
3. To study the relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of boys.
4. To study the relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of girls.
5. To study the relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of total sample.

## **HYPOTHESES**

1. There exists no significant difference between boys and girls of career decision making.
2. There exists no significant difference between boys and girls of self-esteem.
3. There exists no significant relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of boys.
4. There exists no significant relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of girls.
5. There exists no significant relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of total sample.

## **SAMPLE**

The present study consists of 200 students including boys and girls studying in 11<sup>th</sup> class drawn from two Government Senior Secondary schools of Chandigarh. The 100 students comprising of 50 boys and 50 girls each were taken from both the schools. The sample was taken using random sample techniques. The school wise distribution of the sample has been presented in table-1

**Table 1 School-Wise Distribution of the Sample**

SrNo	Name of School	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Government Modal Senior Secondary School, Sector- 37, Chandigarh	50	50	100
	Government Modal Senior Secondary School, Sector- 33, Chandigarh	50	50	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>200</b>

## DESIGN

The design of the present study was based on sample of 200 students of Government senior secondary schools of Chandigarh. The variables under the study were career decision making and self-esteem of senior secondary school students. Career decision making was dependent variable and self-esteem was taken as independent variable. In the present study descriptive survey method of investigation was utilized to know about career decision making and self-esteem of senior secondary school students.

## TOOLS USED

1. Career Decision Scale by Osipow<sup>33</sup> was used.
2. Self-Esteem Inventory by Coopersmith<sup>9</sup> was used.

## PROCEDURE

In the present study, tools were employed on random sample of 200 students of government senior secondary school of Chandigarh. Before collection of data, permission of the school Principal was taken by explaining to him/her purpose of the study. After getting permission of the school Principal, tools were administered to the students. Instructions were given to the students regarding, how to fill questionnaire and requested the students to give true response to each item. After collecting data, scoring was done and compared by using statistical techniques and then interpreted accordingly.

## ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, t-test and correlation were used in the study. The results are given in the following tables 2, 3, 4 & 5

**Table 2: t-ratio between boys and girls of career decision making of senior secondary school students**

Variable	Boys			Girls			SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD		
Career Decision Making	100	5.17	1.79	100	5.98	1.63	0.24	3.38**

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level of significance

(Critical Value 1.97 at 0.05 and 2.60 at 0.01 levels, df 198)

Table-2 reveals that the mean score of career decision making of boys is 5.17, which is lower than the corresponding mean scores of career decision making of girls is 5.98. The t-value testing the significance of mean difference between career decision making of boys and girls is 3.38, which in comparison to the table value was found significant at 0.01 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis **H<sub>1</sub>**: There exists no significance difference between boys and girls of career decision making, is rejected. The result indicates that girls are more conscious towards career decision making than that of boys. The results are supported by the finding of Kushwaha and Hasan<sup>24</sup> found that sex

have emerged as potential factors in generating significant variance upon career decision making. Mize<sup>28</sup> found women as a group scored higher for career maturity than men. The results are contradicted by the finding of Albion<sup>2</sup> found no gender differences in overall levels of career decidedness. Sharma<sup>14</sup> found that no significant gender difference was found on the variable of career decision-making.

**Table 3: t-ratio between Boys and Girls of Self-Esteem Senior Secondary School Students**

Variable	Boys			Girls			SE <sub>p</sub>	t-value
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD		
Self-esteem	100	77.26	3.79	100	75.17	1.79	0.42	4.98**

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level of significance  
(Critical Value 1.97 at 0.05 and 2.60 at 0.01 levels, df 198)

Table-3 shows that the mean score of self esteem of boys is 77.26, which is higher than the corresponding mean score of self esteem of girls is 75.17. The t-value testing the significance of mean difference between self esteem of boys and girls is 4.98, which in comparison to the table value was found significant at 0.01 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis **H<sub>2</sub>**: There exists no significant difference between boys and girls of self-esteem, is rejected. The result indicates that boys have more self esteem than that of girls. The results are supported by the findings of Patton, Bartum and Creed<sup>36</sup> who reported self esteem for males as performing a positive and contributory role to career development. Joshi and Srivastava<sup>18</sup> who found boys score significantly higher on self-esteem as compared to girls. Bean and Northrup<sup>4</sup> who found significant gender difference for males and females on the self esteem scores. Marcotte, Fortin, Potvin and Papillion<sup>25</sup> also found that girls have a lower self-esteem than boys. The findings is contradicted by Patton, Bartrun and Creed<sup>36</sup>, who found no statistically significant difference in the scores of male and female students on the self esteem scale. Sari<sup>38</sup> found the levels of self esteem was higher among female students than male students, this difference was not statistically significant.

**Table 4: Correlation between Career Decision Making and Self Esteem of Boys**

Variables	N	Group	Value of 'r'
Career Decision Making and Self Esteem	100	Boys	0.592**

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level  
(Critical Value 0.195 at 0.05 and 0.254 at 0.01 levels, df 98)

Table-4 found that positive and significant correlation of 0.592 between career decision making and self esteem of boys, which in comparison to the table value was found positive and significant at 0.01 levels of significance. Hence, null hypothesis **H<sub>3</sub>**: There exists no significant relationship between career decision making self-esteem and of boys, is rejected. The result indicates that the relationship between career decision making and self esteem of boys is highly correlated to each other. The finding is supported by Patton, Bartrun and Creed<sup>36</sup> found that optimism and self-esteem influenced career expectations in males, sequentially predicting career goals, career planning and

career exploration. Mize<sup>28</sup> found that significant correlations were found with the career decision participants decidedness and comfort scales for all male participants.

**Table 5: Correlation between Career Decision Making and Self Esteem of Girls**

Variables	N	Group	Value of 'r'
Career Decision Making and Self Esteem	100	Girls	0.294**

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level

(Critical Value 0.195 at 0.05 and 0.254 at 0.01 levels, df 98)

Table-5 found that positive and significant correlation of 0.294 between career decision making and self esteem of girls, which in comparison to the table value was found positive and significant at 0.01 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis **H<sub>4</sub>**: There exists no significant relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of girls, is rejected. The result indicates that the relationship between self esteem and career decision making of girls is highly correlated to each other. The finding is supported by Patton, Bartrun and Creed<sup>36</sup> found that optimism and self-esteem influenced career expectations in females, sequentially predicting career goals, career planning and career exploration. Mize<sup>28</sup> found that significant correlations were found with the career decision participants decidedness and comfort scales for all female participants.

**Table 6: Correlation between Career Decision Making and Self Esteem of Total Sample**

Variables	N	Value of 'r'
Career Decision Making and Self Esteem	200	0.797**

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level

(Critical Value 0.138 at 0.05 and 0.181 at 0.01 levels, df 198)

Table-6 shows that positive and significant correlation of 0.797 between career decision making and self-esteem of total sample, which in comparison to the table value was found positive and significant at 0.01 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis **H<sub>5</sub>**: There exists no significant relationship between self esteem and career decision making of total sample, is rejected. The result indicates that the relationship between self esteem and career decision making of total sample is highly correlated to each other. The findings are supported by Patton, Bartrun and Creed<sup>36</sup> who found self esteem predicted career expectations which then directly influenced career planning and career exploration by passing career goals. Judge and Hurst<sup>19</sup> also found that participants who scored high on self-evaluations enjoyed success earlier in their careers, engaged in continued higher education and advanced more quickly than those who scored lower on self-evaluations. Norida, Tajudin, and Sahari<sup>31</sup> showed that there were significant relationships between self-esteem and career decision-making self-efficacy. Davidson, Metcalfe, Mueller, Molony and Vodouris<sup>10</sup> showed that self-esteem affects the career path of students in generation of Canada while low self-esteem was show to be more likely to take time off. Abdullah<sup>1</sup> found that there are significant relationships between self-esteem and career decision-making as well as between social support and career decision-making. Migunde, Othuon and Mbagaya<sup>27</sup> found that self esteem was found to be positively correlated to career maturity. Javed and Tariq<sup>17</sup> found that self-esteem showed significant negative

correlation with career-decision making difficulties. Ogutu, Odera and Maragia<sup>32</sup> found that self-efficacy variable contributed significantly in the relationship between self-efficacy and career decision making. Munir and Tarigan<sup>29</sup> found that there is a significant and positive relationship between self-esteem and career maturity.

## **FINDINGS**

- i. There was significant difference between the boys and girls of career decision making.
- ii. There was significant difference between the boys and girls of self-esteem.
- iii. There was significant and positive relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of boys.
- iv. There was significant and positive relationship between career decision making and self-esteem of girls.
- v. There was significant and positive relationship between career decision making and self-esteem.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion, the relationship between self-esteem and career decision-making was examined and validated using a structural equation model. The findings show that there are significant relationships between self-esteem and career decision-making. It is very important for students to build their self-esteem in order to make them more confident in preparing themselves for their careers. The findings show that self-esteem such as parental influence has a strong relationship on career decision-making among students. This highlights the importance of parental support and guidance for good career decision-making among students. Both present and previous researches have shown that self-esteem is important in adolescents development. As a result, parents and teacher should help foster self-esteem development in adolescents. Given that self-esteem only accounted for a small variance in the career decision making variables under study research should be carried out to determine whether self esteem can also function as an outcome variable. The results demonstrate that self esteem has a significant role to play in adolescents' career development.

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