

CAREER ASPIRATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS

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Abstract

The present study examined the relationship between career aspiration and academic performance of higher secondary students. The investigator adopted survey method for the present study. The tools used for the study is career aspiration scale (2024) constructed and validated by the investigator and for assessing academic performance the marks obtained by the higher secondary students in the half yearly exam is taken. Data were collected from 300 higher secondary students of different schools in Kanyakumari District. The statistical technique used for the present study is 't'-test and correlation analysis. Results showed that there is no significant difference in career aspiration and academic performance of higher secondary students with regard to gender, locality of institution and also showed there is a significant difference in career aspiration and academic performance of higher secondary students.

Keywords: *Career Aspiration, Academic Performance, Higher Secondary Students*

Introduction

An aspiration is one's desire for any profession or occupation. It indicates one's preference, liking and willingness, inclination to a particular occupation or profession. Career aspirations are long-term hopes and ambitions. People develop them based on their personal experiences, including talents, values, lifestyle and more. Career aspiration plays a significant role in shaping an individuals' behavior in any higher education because it serves as motivation for the individual to achieve academic excellence. Choosing an occupation is one of the most difficult tasks a student has to do when he or she finishes school. Career aspirations are often shaped by personal interests, passions and the desire to make an impact or contribute to a particular field. Academic performance, on the other hand, refers to how well a student performs in their studies, typically measured through grades, test scores, assignments and other academic performances. Strong academic performance is often seen as an indicator of a student's ability to acquire and apply knowledge, and it can play a crucial role in pursuing career aspirations. Many career paths require certain academic qualifications or expertise, making academic performance an important factor in achieving one's career goals. The knowledge and skills acquired through academic performance often provide the foundation for pursuing career aspirations. Academic success can open doors to opportunities such as internships, scholarships and job offers, which can help individuals gain practical experience and establish a career path aligned with their aspirations. Career aspiration can be contextualized from both the present and future

perspectives. In this respect, career aspiration assists students to recognize and set goals for the future which in turn influences their academic performance.

Significance of the Study

The relationship between career aspirations and academic performance is a significant area of research in the field of education and psychology. Career aspirations refer to an individual's ambitions or goals related to their future career, while academic performance refers to the success or achievement a student attains in their educational journey. The need to explore the relationship between these two concepts arises from their profound influence on a student's development, motivation, and future prospects. Understanding how career aspirations impact academic performance, and vice versa, can provide valuable insights into the factors that drive student achievement and how educational systems can better support students in realizing their potential.

Career aspirations and academic performance are of ultimate importance to the learning process. When students know more about available career opportunities, they will be able to focus more on their academic performance. Career aspirations of higher secondary students are an important determinant of educational choices which are regarded as short-term and career choices which are regarded as long-term (Mau & Biko, 2000). According to Rukwaro (2012), career programs in most secondary schools are attempted in a random way since educators distinguished for this reason have not been prepared, hence lack professional competence in career guidance and counseling. A number of factors do influence students' career aspirations. This includes, among others, academic performance, parental influence, social economic status and gender. Various investigations have been done to find out the connection between career aspirations and academic performance. However, doubts are actually uncertain. Therefore, a need is felt to investigate the career aspirations and academic performance of higher secondary students.

Title of the Study

The problem is entitled as, Career aspiration and academic performance of higher secondary school students.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out whether there is any significant difference in career aspiration of higher secondary students with regard to gender.
2. To find out whether there is any significant difference in career aspiration of higher secondary students with regard to locality.
3. To find out whether there is any significant difference in academic performance of higher secondary students with regard to gender.
4. To find out whether there is any significant difference in academic performance of higher secondary students with regard to locality.

5. To find out whether there is any significant relationship between career aspiration and academic performance of higher secondary students.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in career aspiration of higher secondary students with regard to gender.
2. There is no significant difference in career aspiration of higher secondary students with regard to locality.
3. There is no significant difference in academic performance of higher secondary students with regard to gender.
4. There is no significant difference in academic performance of higher secondary students with regard to locality.
5. There is no significant relationship between career aspiration and academic performance of higher secondary students.

Methodology

The investigator has adopted survey method for the present study. The tool used for the study is career aspiration scale (2024) constructed and validated by the investigator and for assessing academic performance the marks obtained by the higher secondary students in the half yearly exam is taken. Data were collected from 300 higher secondary students of different schools in Kanyakumari District. The statistical techniques used for the present study are 't'-test and correlation analysis.

Analysis of the data

H₀: 1 There is no significant difference in career aspiration of higher secondary students with regard to gender.

**Table 1 Difference in Career Aspiration of Higher Secondary Students with
Regard to Gender**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated 't' Value	Remarks at 5% Level
Career aspiration	Male	145	148.80	21.520	0.132	NS
	Female	155	148.50	18.235		

NS – Not Significant

(The table value of 't' at 5% level of significance 1.96)

It is inferred from the table (1) that the calculated 't' value is less than the table value at 5% level of significance. Hence there is no significant difference in career aspiration of higher secondary students with regard to gender and the null hypothesis is accepted.

H0: 2 There is no significant difference in career aspiration of higher secondary students with regard to locality.

**Table 2 Difference in Career Aspiration of Higher Secondary Students with
Regard to Locality**

Variable	Locality	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated 't' Value	Remarks at 5% Level
Career aspiration	Rural	228	148.53	18.048	0.057	NS
	Urban	72	148.68	20.433		

NS – Not Significant

(The table value of 't' at 5% level of significance is 1.96)

It is inferred from the table (2) that the calculated 't' value is less than the table value at 5% level of significance. Hence, there is no significant difference in career aspiration of higher secondary students with regard to locality of the institution and the null hypothesis is accepted.

H0: 3 There is no significant difference in academic performance of higher secondary students with regard to gender.

**Table 3 Difference in Academic Performance of Higher Secondary Students with
Regard to Gender**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated 't' Value	Remarks at 5% Level
Academic performance	Male	145	372.65	63.674	1.459	NS
	Female	155	382.94	58.531		

NS –Not Significant

(The table value of 't' at 5% level of significance is 1.96)

It is inferred from the table (3) that the calculated 't' value is less than the table value at 5% level of significance. Hence there is no significant difference in academic performance of higher secondary students with regard to gender and the null hypothesis is accepted.

H0: 4 There is no significant difference in academic performance of higher secondary students with regard to locality.

**Table 4 Difference in Academic Performance of Higher Secondary Students with
Regard to Locality**

Variable	Locality	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated 't' Value	Remarks at 5% Level
Academic achievement	Rural	228	375.89	62.244	1.046	NS
	Urban	72	384.54	57.627		

NS – Not Significant

(The table value of 't' at 5% level of significance is 1.96)

It is inferred from the table (4) that the calculated 't' value is less than the table value at 5% level of significance. Hence, there is no significant difference in academic performance of higher secondary students with regard to locality and the null hypothesis is accepted.

H₀: 5 There is no significant relationship between career aspiration and academic performance of higher secondary students.

**Table 5 Relationship between Career Aspiration and Academic Performance of Higher
Secondary Students**

Variables	N	Calculated 'r' Value	Remarks at 5% Level
Career aspiration And Academic performance	300	0.149	S

S – Significant

(The table value of 'r' at 5% level of significance is 0.139)

It is inferred from the table (5) that the calculated 'r' value is greater than the table value at 5% level of significance. Hence, there is significant relationship between career aspiration and academic performance of higher secondary students and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Findings and Interpretations

1. No significant difference is revealed between male and female higher secondary students in their career aspiration. This may be due to the fact that both have similar exposure to career opportunities, receive comparable encouragement from parents, teachers, and society. Additionally, modern educational systems and societal norms promote equal career expectations and ambitions for males and females.
2. No significant difference is revealed between higher secondary students of rural and urban area in their career aspiration. This may be due to the fact that both may share similar aspirations, driven by individual interests, motivations, and parental expectations.

3. No significant difference is revealed between male and female higher secondary students in their academic performance. This may due to the fact that both experience equal access to education and resources, effective teaching methods, and a supportive learning environment can contribute to similar performance.
4. No significant difference is revealed between higher secondary students of rural and urban area in their academic performance. This may due to the fact that both the schools often have better facilities, qualified teachers, and access to modern technology, more opportunities for extracurricular activities, coaching, and access to educational support services.
5. Significant relationship is revealed between career aspiration and academic performance of higher secondary students. This may be due to the fact that career aspirations can drive motivation and focus, leading to better academic performance. Students with clear career goals may be more likely to prioritize their studies, work harder, and seek resources to achieve their objectives. High career aspirations can also enhance students' sense of purpose and direction, leading to increased effort and persistence in their academic pursuits. As a result, students with strong career aspirations may perform better academically, as they are more invested in achieving their goals and securing a successful future.

Conclusion

Significant relationship is revealed between career aspiration and academic performance of higher secondary students. Students with high career aspirations are often more focused, driven, and goal-oriented. They understand that strong academic performance is a crucial step toward achieving their future career goals, whether in medicine, engineering, business, or other professional fields. As a result, they tend to invest more time and effort in their studies, leading to better academic outcomes. Career aspiration gives students a sense of direction and purpose. When students have a clear vision of their future careers, they are more likely to adopt disciplined study habits, seek help when needed, and participate actively in academic activities. Their aspirations act as a source of intrinsic motivation, encouraging them to overcome academic challenges and stay committed to their educational journey. Moreover, academic success often reinforces students' self-confidence and belief in their ability to achieve their career goals. This creates a positive feedback loop where good performance strengthens aspiration, and strong aspiration drives further achievement.

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