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CAREER MATURITY OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH RESPECT TO GENDER AND ACADEMIC STREAM

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken to study career maturity of senior secondary school students with respect to gender and academic stream. In the present study, survey technique under descriptive research was applied. The sample of the study was 819 senior secondary school students selected by a combination of multistage, stratified random sampling and incidental sampling techniques. Standardized tool 'Career Maturity Inventry' by Nirmala Gupta were used to collect the data. Data was analysed by applying the descriptive statistic and Analysis of Variance. The study reveals that male and female senior secondary school students did not differ significantly in their career maturity. Study found a significance difference in career maturity of senior secondary school students with respect to their academic stream. Further, study was also indicated that gender and academic stream do not affect the career maturity of senior secondary school students significantly.

Keywords: *Career Maturity, Gender, Academic-Stream*

INTRODUCTION

Career development is an important aspect of student's educational and personal growth, particularly during the senior secondary stage. At this stage, students begin to make important decisions regarding their higher education, professional development and prospective career.

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Career maturity refers to an individual's psychological and practical preparedness to explore vocational choices and handle job-related developmental phase. A higher level of career maturity can help the students to make realistic option and adjust successfully to future academic and occupational requirements. The progression of career maturity is affect by some personal, social, educational and environmental factors. Gender is one factor that may influence the students' professional goals and decision processes. Academic stream is another essential factor that may shape students exposure to subject's career options and educational route. Senior secondary students studying in different academic streams may show differences in their career clarity. The senior secondary stage is a turning point for giving appropriate career guidance and counselling to students. By understanding the student's career maturity school can identify students career-development needs. It can also help teachers and counsellors to design appropriate advice plans for diverse groups of students. However, differences in career maturity with respect to gender and academic stream require systematic empirical study. The present study therefore examines the career maturity of senior secondary school students with respect to gender and academic stream. The findings of the study may contribute to effective career guidance practices and support the students in making informed and suitable career decisions. **Dar (2019)** found a significant differences in career aspirations (achievement aspiration, educational aspiration and overall career aspirations) of adolescents with regard to their academic streams. In spite of this, no significant difference was found in the leadership aspiration of the students with respect to their academic streams. **Gehlawat (2019)** found that no significant differences between the career maturity of male and female adolescents studying in government and private schools. Significant differences were also found among the career maturity of adolescents belonging to arts and science stream students of government and private schools. Furthermore, the study indicated that science stream students from both government and private schools were more career mature as compare to the students belonging to arts stream. **Jakhar (2019)** revealed that no significant correlation between the occupational aspirations and career maturity of the arts stream of senior secondary school students. Study also showed no significant correlation between the occupational aspirations and career maturity of the science stream students of senior secondary schools. **Lalnunsiami et.al (2021)** revealed that out of 300 college students, 222 (74%) students were found to have an average level of career maturity. Additionally, no significant difference was found between the male and female college students with respect to

their career maturity. However, out of 100 students from each academic stream, students belonging to arts streams only 5% exhibited a high level of career maturity. Among arts students 74% exhibit an average level of career maturity while, 21% students demonstrate a low level of career maturity. The study showed that only 14% of commerce students possessed a high level of career maturity, with 80% scoring at an average level and 6% students showed a low level of career maturity. Furthermore, only 21% students of science stream possess high level of career maturity and majority of science students (69%) have showed an average level of career maturity and remaining 10% of students showed low level of career maturity. **Samanta et. al (2023)** revealed that the science stream youth employed in the public and private sector exhibit a higher level of career maturity as compared to youth belonging to arts stream. **Kaur (2024)** highlighted that female student's exhibit significantly higher career maturity than compare to their male counterparts. **Lalnunsiami et al. (2024)** indicated that the college students of Aizawl district exhibit a low level of creativity, whereas, male students possess low level of creativity as compared to their counterparts. Study concluded that out of the three academic streams, arts stream students secured higher score on the level of creativity among different academic streams.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the difference in career maturity of senior secondary school students with respect to their gender.
- To study the difference in career maturity of senior secondary school students with respect to their academic-stream.
- To study the interactional effects of gender and academic-stream on career maturity of senior secondary school students.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- There exists no significant difference in career maturity of senior secondary school students with respect to their gender.
- There exists no significant difference in career maturity of senior secondary school students with respect to their academic stream.
- There exists no significant interactional between Gender and academic-stream with respect to career maturity of senior secondary school students.

METHODOLOGY

In the present study, survey technique under descriptive method of research was used to fulfill the objectives of the study.

SAMPLING

In the present study, a representative sample of 819 senior secondary school students were selected from schools of Mandi, Kullu, Kinnaur and Shimla districts of Himachal Pradesh.

TOOL USED

Following research tool was employed in the present study-

- Career Maturity Inventry by Nirmala Gupta (2013).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

For analysis and interpretation of data descriptive statistic and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were use, details of which are given below-

In order to study the main and interactional effects of gender and academic stream on career maturity of senior secondary school students, Analysis of Variance (2X2 factor design) having two types of gender i.e. male and female and two types of academic stream i.e. arts and science, was applied on the mean career maturity scores. The means and standard deviations of career maturity scores with respect to gender and academic stream are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1: MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF CAREER MATURITY SCORES WITH REGARD TO GENDER AND ACADEMIC STREAM

Sr. No.	Academic Stream (B) / Gender (A)	Mean Career Maturity Scores		
		Arts	Science	Total
Male	Mean	67.8	76.54	71.60
	S.D.	10.761	10.237	11.376
	N	249	190	439
Female	Mean	69.72	77.60	72.50
	S.D.	12.276	9.871	12.076
	N	246	134	380
Total	Mean	68.7	76.98	72.02
	S. D	11.566	10.086	11.708
	N	495	324	819

In order to study the career maturity of senior secondary school students with regard to

gender and academic stream, F- values were calculated. The results are given in Table 2 as follows:

TABLE 2 SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR CAREER MATURITY SCORES OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH RESPECT TO GENDER AND ACADEMIC STREAM

Sr. No.	Source of Variation Variance	Sum of Square	(df)	Mean Squares Variance	F-Ratios
1	Gender (A)	419.916	1	419.916	3.478^{NS}
2	Academic Stream (B)	13215.586	1	13215.586	109.449**
3	Gender X Academic Stream	32.363	1	32.363	0.268^{NS}
4.	Error Variance	98408.732	815	120.747	
5	Total	112121.687	818		

NS- Not Significant.

** Significant at 0.05 level of significant.

Main Effects

Gender (A)

Table 2 indicated that the calculated value of 'F-Ratio' for the main effect of gender on the career maturity of senior secondary school students, for a degree of freedom, 1 and 815, was found to be 3.478 which is less than the F-table value (3.85) even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis no.1that, "There exists no significant difference in career maturity of senior secondary school students with respect to their gender" was retained. Thus, it is interpreted that male and female senior secondary school students did not differ significantly in their career maturity. However, on the basis of mean values, it is clear that female senior secondary school students possessed high level of career maturity (Mean 72.50) as compared to male senior secondary school students (Mean 71.60).

Academic Stream (B)

The calculated value of 'F-Ratio' for the main effect of academic stream on the career maturity of senior secondary school students, for a degree of freedom1 and 815, was found to be109.449 which is much greater than the F-table value (6.66) even at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis no. 2, There exists no significant difference in career maturity of senior secondary school students with respect to their academic stream" was not accepted. Thus, it is interpreted that there is a significance difference in career maturity of senior secondary school

students with respect to their academic stream. However, on the basis of mean scores, it can be interpreted that senior secondary school students belonging to science stream (76.98) had reflected higher level of career maturity as compared to senior secondary school students of arts stream (68.77).

Interactional Effect (AXB)

Table 2 further shows that the calculated value of 'F' for finding the interactional effect of gender and academic stream on career maturity of senior secondary school students, for a degree of freedom 1 and 815, came out to be 0.268 which is less than the F-table value (3.85) even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the Hypothesis no.6 that, "There exists no significant interactional effect of gender and academic stream with regard to career maturity of senior secondary school students," was accepted. Hence, it may be concluded that gender and academic stream (in collectively) do not affect the career maturity of senior secondary school students significantly.

CONCLUSION

- Male and female senior secondary school students did not differ significantly in their level of career maturity. However, mean career maturity scores of female senior secondary school students (Mean 72.50) was higher than male senior secondary school students (Mean 71.60).
- The findings indicated that academic stream plays an important role in the career maturity of senior secondary school students. A significant difference was found in the level of career maturity of students belonging to different academic streams. Further, on the basis of mean scores science stream students (M = 76.98) showed a higher level of career maturity as compared to students belonging to arts stream (M = 68.77).
- Gender and academic stream do not interact significantly with regard to career maturity of senior secondary school students. Therefore, it may be interpreted that gender and academic stream taken together did not affect significantly affected the career maturity of senior secondary school students.

IMLICATIONS

The present study was undertaken to study the career maturity of senior secondary school students with respect to gender and academic stream. Based on the findings it was observed that there was no significant gender difference in career maturity of male and female senior secondary school students. However, mean career maturity scores of female senior secondary

school students (72.50) was higher than male senior secondary school students (71.60). Thus, parents and schools should provide equal opportunities, guidance, counselling and career development activities to both male and female students to support their career advancement. The present study showed that a significant difference in the level of career maturity of students belonging to different academic streams. Therefore, schools should provide suitable career guidance and counselling according to the needs of the students in different academic streams. Teachers and counsellors should help students to understand their interests, abilities and available occupational choices. Special attention should be given by the parents and teachers to students who need more support in career planning. Such guidance and assistance can help to students make informed and right job choices. Further, study was also indicated that gender and academic stream taken together did not affect significantly the career maturity of senior secondary school students. Hence, career related guidance and counselling should be impart equally to all students, regardless of their gender and academic stream. Teachers and counsellors should focus on the student's unique interests, talent, abilities and career goals. This approach enables students to develop better career choices, awareness and make appropriate career decisions.

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