

Gender Influences On Career Aspiration: A Study Among Secondary School Children Of West Bengal

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Abstract: Career choices can impact an individual's life either in a positive or a negative way. These career choices and ambitions can sometimes be influenced by parents, peers, and the environment. Providing adolescents with adequate means of knowledge and tools prepares them to realistically plan their future. This study aims to analyze the significant factors that influence career aspirations in secondary schools. In particular, the study will be concerned with gender differences and family background. The study adopts a survey research design and purposively targets boys and girls to their presumed vantage in accessing career information. Out of the 200 students, 100 are from rural areas and 100 from urban areas. The study uses a questionnaire on career aspiration, which reveals the differences in aspirations due to factors like location, gender, parent's education qualification, etc.

Key Words: Aspirations, Career, Gender, Education, Secondary school.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Career aspirations can be representative of an individual's orientation towards particular occupational goals. People who actively choose their careers rather than allowing fate or family to decide for them are happier with their careers (Parsons 1909)¹. Career aspirations have been a major concern since the fifteenth century. Until the nineteenth century, almost sixty-five books had been published on career counselling (Zytowski, 1972)². It wasn't until Frank Parsons that the theory of career development emerged on the surface in the early nineteenth century. Parsons's theory mentions that the individual's ideal career should be compatible with their personal traits such as skills, values, & personality (Parsons 1909)¹. Many other classical theories on career development suggest that career aspirations develop from a very specific age, from childhood to adulthood. Eli Ginzberg's theory suggested that children between the age of 11 to 17 start to recognize how different jobs can fulfil their values (Ginzberg 1952)³. Another pioneer psychologist Donald Super's theory, mentions that at the age of 15 to 24, individuals learn through classes, work experience & hobbies. They make tentative choices & develop their skill (Super 1953)^{4,5}. According to American psychologist Linda Gottfredson, adolescents develop two cognitive competencies related to career development, self-concept & perception of occupations (Gottfredson 1981)⁶ (Brown 2002)⁷.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Considerable amount of research has been carried out in the area of career aspirations in India & abroad. Attempts have been made to study career choices of students in relation to gender, parents' educational background, socio-economic status & academic achievement. The results of these studies revealed that career interests are dependent upon these variables. The gender differences have also been reported to exist. Singh (2011)⁸ found in his study that educational aspirations of boys are better than girls. Parents' educational background affects the child's career aspiration as well as their mental growth, studies have shown that paternal education level had the largest positive association with the career aspirations of students (Khampira 2020)⁹. Bindu & Padmanabhan (2016)¹⁰ found that the higher secondary school students possess average level of career aspiration & that gender & socio-economic status were found to influence the level of career aspiration.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this study is to examine & compare career aspirations of students in urban & rural schools in WEST BENGAL. The specific objectives of this study include:

- To find out whether the socio-economic status of parents influences their children's career.

- To find out whether the educational status of parents influences their children's career.
- To find out whether the gender of the child has any role to play in the career choice of youths.
- To find out whether information on career affects children's involvement in one career or the other.
- To find out whether interest of the child influences his or her career aspirations in life.

4. HYPOTHESIS :

The following null hypotheses were formulated for testing in this study:

- H_0 There are no significant differences in career aspirations, leadership, achievement & educational aspirations due to the gender of the children.
- H_0 There are no significant differences in career aspirations, leadership, achievement & educational aspirations due to the place of residence of the children.
- H_0 There are no significant differences in career aspirations, leadership, achievement & educational aspirations due to the type of family of the children.
- H_0 There are no significant difference in career aspirations, leadership, achievement & educational aspirations due to the educational level of the parents of the children.
- H_0 There are no significant differences in career aspirations, leadership, achievement & educational aspirations due to the different levels of academic achievement of the children.

5. METHOD:

The following study employed cross-sectional survey method to explore the problem. For the sample students of XIth & XIIth grade studying in different secondary schools affiliated to WBBSE in Kolkata & South 24Parganas were considered. The sample size was 200 out of which 100 were females & 100 were males. To draw the sample from the population Stratified sampling technique was adopted. The sample profile has been shown in Table 1.

LOCALITY	GENDER	
	MALE	FEMALE
RURAL	50	50
URBAN	50	50
TOTAL	100	100

Table1 Sample distribution

TOOLS USED:

Career Aspiration Scale – Revised (Gregor & O'Brien, 2015) was used in the present study.

It consists of 24 questions & three sub scales -educational aspiration, achievement aspiration & leadership aspiration. Each question is followed by four main response-options – not specified, yes, sometimes, no & irrelevant. The test-taker must indicate her / his answer to each question. Higher scores represent higher aspirations in all the categories. Cronbach's alpha of .91 computed for a school going adolescents' sample (N=497) showed very high reliability.

6. RESULT & DISCUSSION:

The study was carried out among 200 samples (100 females & 100 males) of URBAN & RURAL school of 14 – 16 years. The mean age of the participants were 15.06 years with $SD \pm 1.2$ Results were calculated & shown in a tabular form. The results obtained by administering the standardized test will be presented & discussed. Table 2 features the differences in career aspirations due to gender of the child here in leadership aspiration female subjects obtained a mean score of 20.75, Std. Deviation 4.929 & Std. Error Mean of .493, the male subjects obtained a mean score of 25.15, Std. Deviation 4.001 & Std. Error Mean of .400 In achievement aspiration female subjects scored a mean of 26.40, Std. Deviation 4.055 & std. error mean of .406, the male subjects obtained a mean score of 27.25Std. Deviation 3.517 & std. error mean of .352 In education aspiration female subjects scored a mean of 25.48, Std. Deviation 4.569 & std. error mean of .457, the male subjects obtained a mean score of 24.45Std. Deviation 4.147 & std. error mean of .415. In overall career aspiration female subjects scored a mean of 72.6300, Std. Deviation 8.78665 & std. error mean of .87866, the male subjects obtained a mean score of 76.8500Std. Deviation 8.44994 & std. error mean of .84499.

Table 2 Differences in career aspirations due to gender of the child

Table 2 Group Statistics					
	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
LEADERSHIP	Female	100	20.75	4.929	.493
	Male	100	25.15	4.001	.400
ACHEIVEMENT	Female	100	26.40	4.055	.406
	Male	100	27.25	3.517	.352
EDUCATIONAL	Female	100	25.48	4.569	.457
	Male	100	24.45	4.147	.415
ASPIRATION	Female	100	72.6300	8.78665	.87866
	Male	100	76.8500	8.44994	.84499

TABLE 3 <i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means							
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
LEADERSHIP	-6.931	198	.000	-4.400	.635	-5.652	-3.148
ACHEIVEMENT	-1.583	198	.115	-.850	.537	-1.909	.209
EDUCATIONAL	1.669	198	.097	1.030	.617	-.187	2.247
ASPIRATIONS	-3.462	198	.001	-4.22000	1.21904	-6.62397	-1.81603

Table 3 *t*-test for differences in career aspirations due to gender of the child

With the help of Table3 we tried to find out whether there is a significant difference in leadership aspirations due to the gender of the children. In leadership aspiration the calculated *t* value is -6.931 with a mean difference of -4.400, std.Error difference of .635 & the significance level is .000 which is less than .05 level of significance. So the null(H_0) hypothesis is rejected, there is a significant differences in leadership aspirations due to the gender of the children. As shown is table 2 we can say that the male subjects are more likely to have leadership traits in them. Similarly the calculated *t* value for the achievement aspiration is -1.583, with a mean difference of -.850 & std. Error difference of .537, here the degree of freedom is 198. The significance level is .115 being greater than the .05 level of significance we can conclude that the null (H_0) hypothesis is accepted & there is no significant difference in achievement aspiration due to the gender of child. The calculated *t* value for educational aspiration is 1.669 with a degree of freedom of 198 & mean difference of 1.030, std. Error difference .617. Here the significant difference is .097 which is greater than the .05 level of significance so it can be said that the null(H_0) hypothesis is accepted &

hence there is no significant difference in educational aspiration due to the gender of child. The calculated t value for overall aspiration is -3.462, with a degree of freedom of 198 & mean difference of -4.22000, std. Error difference is 1.21904. Here the calculated significance level is .001 & it happens to be smaller than the .05 significance level so the null (H_0) hypothesis is rejected, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in career aspiration due to the gender of child.

Table 4 Group Statistics					
	LOCALITY	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
LEADERSHIP	RURAL	100	22.12	5.450	.545
	URBAN	100	23.78	4.357	.436
ACHEIVEMENT	RURAL	100	27.71	3.616	.362
	URBAN	100	25.94	3.811	.381
EDUCATIONAL	RURAL	100	23.85	4.300	.430
	URBAN	100	26.08	4.196	.420
ASPIRATION	RURAL	100	73.6800	8.51959	.85196
	URBAN	100	75.8000	9.09656	.90966

Table 4 Differences in career aspirations due to place of residence

Table 4 features the differences in career aspirations due to place of residence here in leadership aspiration subjects residing in rural areas obtained a mean score of 22.12, Std. Deviation 5.450 & Std. Error Mean of .545, the subjects residing in urban areas obtained a mean score of 23.78, Std. Deviation 4.357 & Std. Error Mean of .436 In achievement aspiration subjects residing in rural areas obtained a mean score of 27.71, Std. Deviation 3.616 & Std. Error Mean of .362, the subjects residing in urban areas obtained a mean score of 25.94, Std. Deviation 3.811 & Std. Error Mean of .381 In education aspiration subjects residing in rural areas obtained a mean score of 23.85, Std. Deviation 4.300 & Std. Error Mean of .430, the subjects residing in urban areas obtained a mean score of 26.08, Std. Deviation 4.196 & Std. Error Mean of .420 In overall career aspiration subjects residing in rural areas obtained a mean score of 73.6800, Std. Deviation 8.51959 & Std. Error Mean of .85196, the subjects residing in urban areas obtained a mean score of 75.800, Std. Deviation 9.09656 & Std. Error Mean of .90966

Table 5 t -test for Equality of Means								
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
LEADERSHIP	-2.379	198	.018	-1.660	.698	-3.036	-.284	
ACHEIVEMENT	3.369	198	.001	1.770	.525	.734	2.806	
EDUCATIONAL	-3.711	198	.000	-2.230	.601	-3.415	-1.045	
ASPIRATIONS	-1.701	198	.091	-2.12000	1.24632	-4.57776	.33776	

Table 5 t -test for differences in career aspirations due to place of residence

With the help of Table5 we tried to find out whether there is a significant difference in leadership aspirations due to the place of residence. In leadership aspiration the calculated t value is -2.379 with a mean difference of -1.660, std. Error difference of .698 & the significance level is .018 which is higher than .05 level of significance. So, the null (H_0) hypothesis is accepted, there is a significant difference in leadership aspirations due to the place of residence.

Similarly, the calculated t value for the achievement aspiration is 3.369, with a mean difference of 1.770 & std. Error difference of .525, here the degree of freedom is 198. The significance level is .001, being smaller than the .05 level of significance we can conclude that the null (H_0) hypothesis is rejected & there is a significant difference in achievement aspiration due to the place of residence. From the table 4 we can say that the students belonging to rural area have higher achievement aspiration rate. The calculated t value for educational aspiration is -3.711 with a degree of freedom of 198 & mean difference of -2.230, std. Error difference .601. Here the significant difference is .000 which is lesser than the .05 level of significance so it can be said that the null(H_0) hypothesis is rejected & hence there is a significant difference in educational aspiration due to the place of residence. As shown in table 4 students residing in urban areas have much higher educational aspiration than the students who reside in rural areas. The calculated t value for overall aspiration is -1.701, with a degree of freedom of 198 & mean difference of -2.12000, std. Error difference is 1.24632. Here the calculated significance level is .091 & it happens to be greater than the .05 significance level so the null (H_0) hypothesis is accepted, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in career aspiration due to the place of residence.

Table 6 Group Statistics					
	FAMILY	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
LEADERSHIP	JOINT	40	22.48	5.008	.792
	NUCLEAR	160	23.07	4.996	.395
ACHEIVEMENT	JOINT	40	25.45	4.920	.778
	NUCLEAR	160	23.17	3.411	.270
EDUCATIONAL	JOINT	40	23.03	4.644	.734
	NUCLEAR	160	24.45	4.192	.331
ASPIRATION	JOINT	40	70.9500	9.58618	1.51571
	NUCLEAR	160	71.6875	8.43039	.66648

Table 6 Differences in career aspirations due to type of family

Table 6 features the differences in career aspirations due to type of family here in leadership aspiration subjects belonging to joint families obtained a mean score of 22.48, Std. Deviation 5.008 & Std. Error Mean of .792, the subjects belonging to nuclear families obtained a mean score of 23.07, Std. Deviation 4.996 & Std. Error Mean of .395 In achievement aspiration subjects belonging to joint families obtained a mean score of 25.45, Std. Deviation 4.920 & Std. Error Mean of .778, the subjects belonging to nuclear families obtained a mean score of 23.17, Std. Deviation 3.411 & Std. Error Mean of .270 In education aspiration subjects belonging to joint families obtained a mean score of 23.03, Std. Deviation 4.644 & Std. Error Mean of .734, the subjects belonging to nuclear families obtained a mean score of 24.45, Std. Deviation 4.192 & Std. Error Mean of .331 In overall career aspiration subjects belonging to joint families obtained a mean score of 70.9500, Std. Deviation 9.58618 & Std. Error Mean of 1.51571, the subjects belonging to nuclear families obtained a mean score of 71.6875, Std. Deviation 8.43039 & Std. Error Mean of .66648

Table 7 t-test for Equality of Means							
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
LEADERSHIP	-.672	198	.502	-.594	.884	-2.336	1.149
ACHEIVEMENT	2.588	198	.080	-1.719	.664	-3.028	-.409
EDUCATIONAL	-3.202	198	.342	-2.425	.757	-3.919	-.931
ASPIRATIONS	-3.091	198	.322	-4.73750	1.53270	-7.76000	-1.71500

Table 7 t-test for differences in career aspirations due to type of family

With the help of Table 7 we tried to find out whether there is a significant difference in leadership aspirations due to the type of family. In leadership aspiration the calculated t value is -0.672 with a mean difference of -0.594 , std. Error difference of $.884$ & the significance level is $.502$ which is higher than $.05$ level of significance. So the null (H_0) hypothesis is accepted, there is no significant differences in leadership aspirations due to the type of family.

Similarly the calculated t value for the achievement aspiration is 2.588 , with a mean difference of -1.719 & std. Error difference of $.664$, here the degree of freedom is 198 . The significance level is $.080$, being greater than the $.05$ level of significance we can conclude that the null (H_0) hypothesis is accepted & there is no significant difference in achievement aspiration due to the type of family. The calculated t value for educational aspiration is -3.202 with a degree of freedom of 198 & mean difference of -2.425 std. Error difference $.757$. Here the significant difference is $.342$ which is higher than the $.05$ level of significance so it can be said that the null(H_0) hypothesis is accepted & hence there is no significant difference in educational aspiration due to the type of family. The calculated t value for career aspiration is -3.091 , with a degree of freedom of 198 & mean difference of -4.73750 , std. Error difference is 1.53270 . Here the calculated significance level is $.322$ & it happens to be greater than the $.05$ significance level so the null (H_0) hypothesis is accepted, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in career aspiration due to the type of family.

TABLE 8 ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
LEADERSHIP	Between Groups	663.090	5	132.618	5.991	.000
	Within Groups	4294.410	194	22.136		
	Total	4957.500	199			
ACHEIVEMENT	Between Groups	296.418	5	59.284	4.436	.001
	Within Groups	2592.457	194	13.363		
	Total	2888.875	199			
EDUCATIONAL	Between Groups	237.296	5	47.459	2.568	.028
	Within Groups	3585.459	194	18.482		
	Total	3822.755	199			
ASPIRATIONS	Between Groups	1291.882	5	258.376	3.503	.005
	Within Groups	14310.598	194	73.766		
	Total	15602.480	199			

Table 8 ANOVA parental qualifications & career aspirations

In table 8 ANOVA was calculated to find out whether there is a significant differences in leadership/achievement/educational & career aspirations due to the educational level of the parents of the children. Parents educational level was categorized into six categories, which are 1 parents with primary education (nursery to v), 2 parents with secondary school education (vi to x), 3 parents with high school education(xi & xii), 4 college level education (under graduation),5 university level education (post graduation), 6 illiterate parents. Here in leadership aspiration the total obtained sum of squares is 4957.500 with a mean score of 132.618 & 22.136 & degree of freedom 5 & 194 respectively for between & within groups. F is 5.991 & the significance level is $.000$ being smaller than the $.05$ level of significance here we can conclude that the null (H_0) hypothesis is rejected & there is a significant difference in leadership aspiration due to the education level of the parents of the child. In achievement aspiration the total obtained sum of squares is 2888.875 with a mean score of 59.284 & 13.363 respectively for between & within groups. F is 4.436 & the significance level is $.001$ being smaller than the $.05$ level of significance here we can conclude that the null (H_0) hypothesis is rejected & there is a significant difference in achievement aspiration due to the education level of the parents of the child.

In educational aspiration the total obtained sum of squares is 3822.755 with a mean score of 47.459 & 18.482 respectively for between & within groups. F is 2.568 & the significance level is $.028$ being smaller than

the .05 level of significance here we can conclude that the null(H_0) hypothesis is rejected & there is a significant difference in educational aspiration due to the education level of the parents of the child.

In career aspiration the total obtained sum of squares is 15602.480 with a mean score of 258.376&73.766 respectively for between & within groups. F is 3.503 & the significance level is .005 being smaller than the .05 level of significance here we can conclude that the null(H_0) hypothesis is rejected & there is a significant difference in career aspiration due to the education level of the parents of the child.

Table 9 ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
LEADERSHIP	Between Groups	208.276	2	104.138	4.320	.415
	Within Groups	4749.224	197	24.108		
	Total	4957.500	199			
ACHEIVEMENT	Between Groups	14.721	2	7.361	.505	.005
	Within Groups	2874.154	197	14.590		
	Total	2888.875	199			
EDUCATIONAL	Between Groups	35.607	2	17.804	.926	.008
	Within Groups	3787.148	197	19.224		
	Total	3822.755	199			
ASPIRATIONS	Between Groups	398.662	2	199.331	2.583	.278
	Within Groups	15203.818	197	77.177		
	Total	15602.480	199			

Table 9 ANOVA academic achievement & career aspirations

In table 9 ANOVA was calculated to find out whether There is a significant differences in leadership/achievement/educational & career aspirations due to the different levels of academic achievement of the children . Children’s academic achievement level was categorized into three categories, which are 1 students obtaining 80% & above marks, 2 marks between 60 to 80%, & 3 represents marks less than 60%. Here in leadership aspiration the total obtained sum of squares is 4957.500with a mean score of 104.138&24.108 & degree of freedom 2& 197 respectively for between & within groups. F is 4.320& the significance level is .415being higher than the .05 level of significance here we can conclude that the null(H_0)hypothesis is accepted & there is no significant difference in leadership aspiration due to the different levels of academic achievement of the children.

In achievement aspiration the total obtained sum of squares is 2888.875 with a mean score of 7.361&14.590 & degree of freedom 2 & 197 respectively for between & within groups. F is .505 & the significance level is .005 being smaller than the .05 level of significance here we can conclude that the null(H_0) hypothesis is rejected & there is a significant difference in achievement aspiration due to the different levels of academic achievement of the children.

In educational aspiration the total obtained sum of squares is 3822.755with a mean score of 17.804&19.224& degree of freedom 2 & 197 respectively for between & within groups. F is .926 & the significance level is .008 being smaller than the .05 level of significance here we can conclude that the null(H_0) hypothesis is rejected & there is a significant difference in educational aspiration due to the different levels of academic achievement of the children.

In career aspiration the total obtained sum of squares is 15602.480 with a mean score of 199.331&77.177 & degree of freedom 2 & 197 respectively for between & within groups. F is 2.583 & the significance level is .278 being greater than the .05 level of significance here we can conclude that the null(H_0) hypothesis is accepted & there is no significant difference in career aspiration due to the different levels of academic achievement of the children.

7. CONCLUSION:

Statistically significant gender difference is observed in educational aspirations & overall aspirations of the students. Statistically significant difference is observed in educational aspirations & achievement aspiration of the students depending upon their place of residence. No statistically significant difference is found in career aspirations of

the students based on their type of family. Statistically significant difference is observed in leadership/ educational/ achievement as well as overall career aspirations of the students when they are classified according to the level of education of their parents. Statistically significant difference is observed in educational aspirations & achievement aspiration of the students with different categories of academic achievement .

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