



RESEARCH PAPER

The Effect of Personality on Career Aspirations of Secondary Schools' Students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

¹Dr. Alam Zeb, ²Prof. Dr. Arshad Ali and ³Mian Said Hussain*

1. Assistant Professor Center for Education and Staff Training, University of Swat, KP, Pakistan
2. Professor Institute of Education & Research, University of Peshawar, KP, Pakistan
3. M. Phil Scholar Center for Education and Staff Training, University of Swat, KP, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author:** hmainsaid@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effects of personality on career aspirations of secondary schools' students. Study's objectives were to; find out the effect of personality on career aspirations of secondary school students and develop strategies for career guidance of students. Study's design was quantitative. Its population was 30439 students. Its sample of 380 students was selected with simple random sampling. A questionnaire was developed, validated and piloted for collecting data. Data were gathered with self-administered questionnaires and analyzed with mean scores, standard deviations and chi-square test. The study found the effect of students' personality on career aspirations of students at secondary level. Factors of students' personality, i.e. students' interests, wills, aspirations, motivations and academic aptitudes affected students' career aspirations. The study recommended availability of career guidance facilities in secondary schools. It also recommended assessment mechanism for identification of students' interests and aptitudes for establishing appropriate career aspirations among secondary schools' students.

KEYWORDS Effect, Personality, Career Aspirations, Secondary Schools' Students, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Introduction

The personality of students is a key factor in the career choices of secondary school students (Kiani, 2010). Rottinghaus, Lindley, Green and Borgen (2002) identified students' personality as a major factor in the determination of career interests and aspirations of secondary level students. Their aptitudes, interests, academic achievement and aspirations play a significant role in career selection at this level. Academic achievement, activities and interests of the students at school shape the future careers' aspirations of secondary level students (Salami, 2008). Students' achievement at the school is closely related with the education and career aspirations. Students with higher career aspirations usually show higher career motivation (Reed, Bruch & Hasse, 2004).

The personalities of students significantly affect the career choices of secondary schools' students. Several studies have identified the influence of personality on the career choices of secondary schools' students. Kiani (2010) found that personality is a major factor in the career determination of secondary school students. He also found a match between students' personalities and their career choice decisions. The interests and aptitude also influence the career aspirations of students. Barret (2009) identified that the personality of an individual student, significantly influence the career choices of students. When the vocational aspirations of students are based on their personality traits then they tend to be successful in achieving the goals of their desired career outcomes, therefore; many research studies have established the relationship between personality and the career aspirations of students. Holland (1966b) identified the vocational interests of individual to be the product of his personality and on the basis of it, he presented the six

vocational types, i.e. Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional (RIASEC) as the different types of personality. He assumed that individuals like vocations which match their personality types. This match between personality of the individual and occupation leads individuals to success in their desired careers.

As personality is the most important factor in the career choices of secondary schools' students, therefore, it serves as an important tool in the making of proper career choices for students of this level (Borchert, 2002). Splaver (2000) found students' personalities as the most influential factor in determining the career choice decisions of students; therefore, students' interests, aptitudes and academic achievement play a major role in the career choice decisions of students. Jarlstrom (2000) reported that personality traits have a major influence on the career choice decisions and occupational development of students. Personality influences the career expectations of students. Newman et al (1999) reported that there is a strong relationship between personality and the career determination of students. It is concluded that personality is a significant element in the career aspirations of secondary schools' students, therefore; the study aimed at investigating the effect of personality in the career aspirations of secondary schools' students.

Literature Review

About the effect of personality on the career aspirations of secondary schools' students, Bacenli (2006) identified that personality variables are predictors for the career maturity and occupational development of students. Occupational development may be termed as the extension of individual's personality. Personality influences the occupational interests, career goals and occupational identity of the individual (Hartman, 2006). Holland (1985) highlighted that people are very much productive when there is harmony between their personality and their career choice. Therefore, he proposed the choice of personality fit careers for students that may lead to prosperity in future. The career's conscience of students develops as early as primary school level and students in elementary schools can associate their personality traits with their future careers (Nazli, 2007).

Several studies have identified the significant influence of personality on the career choice decisions of students at secondary level. Chemeli (2013) identified that personality of students significantly influence their career aspirations. The traits of personality are important guidelines for effective career guidance of students in schools. The work of Holland (1997) is of paramount importance in the field of vocational aspirations and occupational interests. He presented his theory of the types of personality (RIASEC) i.e. Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional. Realistic types are people with mechanical and athletic abilities and value tangibles. Investigative are people with scholarly bent of mind, intellectual and value science. Artistic are free, expressive, original and value aesthetic qualities. Social like to work with people, sympathetic, having teaching ability and value social and ethical activities. Enterprising are aggressive, confident, sociable and value political and economic achievement. Conventional type likes manipulation of data and records and value business and economic achievement.

Obinu and Ebunu (2010) found personality, interest and self-esteem of students as major influencing factors in the career choice decisions of students at secondary level. Gasser et al. (2004) found that those students who aspired for Medical, Engineering and Psychology and those who aspired for higher educational aspirations, significantly differed in their personality, self-efficacy and interests. Salami (2008) found that the areas of personality, interests, achievement and socio-cultural factors shape the career aspirations of students. Students with high academic achievement, better socio-economic status and high needs and demands from extended family were found with high aspirations for their future careers. Shumba and Naong (2012) found the influence of students' abilities, will

and aspirations in the career choices of students. Agarwala (2008) found skills, abilities and potentials of students as significant influences on the career choice decisions of students. Walsh and Osipow (1986) viewed educational psychology to be all about the occupational choices of the individual and his success and productivity. Martin et al. (2009) argued that adjustment of personality, interest and will with career plays a significant role in the achievement of career outcomes.

According to Mau and Bikos (2000) the career aspirations of students affect their academic progress and future career choice decisions. Reyes et al. (1999) conducted a study on the career aspirations and factors affecting the career choice decisions of students. The results of the study show the impact of high academic achievement, educational and career expectations and career information on the career aspirations of students. Several research studies have established the truth of the notion that occupational aspirations according to the personality of individuals lead to their successful careers in future (Aziz, 2001). Kiani, Hassan and Irfan (2013) studied the vocational aspirations of secondary schools' students and highlighted that the vocational aspirations of secondary school students for the professions of doctor, engineer, army, teacher, and lawyer. Gender differences in career aspirations and match between vocational aspirations and occupational interests were identified. Moderate match for the occupational aspirations of doctor and teacher and no match for the army, lawyer and engineer were found with the occupational interests. The career aspirations of male were more conventional and investigative while the aspirations of female were more social and artistic. According White (2002) the occupational aspirations of students play a significant role in the career choice decisions of students (Bandura et al, 2001).

Gotfredson (2005) found that during the age of adolescence students develop their self-concepts and future occupational perceptions which affects their career choices. Ferry et al. (2000) found that students' belief in their abilities and potentials is an important factor in the selection of science related careers by students. Roe (2006) reported the effects of students' personalities and self-concepts in shaping the career trajectories of students. Individual factors and beliefs about self affect the career choice decisions of students. Salami and Ilesanmi (2004) found the relationship between neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, esteem, self-concept and work outcomes. Otta and Williams (2012) found that there is significant influence of self-concept and vocational interests of students. Students with high self-concept aspired for scientific, literary, computational and civil services while students with low self-concept aspired for mechanical, musical and artistic careers. Gould (1972) found the influence of self-esteem on the career development of students and identified that low self-esteem and confidence lead students to career indecisions.

Ashworth and Evans (2001) found the significant influence of aptitudes on the career choices of students and those students with greater ability and potentials favored science related careers. Several studies have identified academic achievement of students as a major motivating force for shaping the career choice decisions of students. Achievement is a significant factor for encouraging students towards science and technology related careers. Those students who have high academic achievement are not afraid of such challenging careers and even female students with high achievement select careers in the fields of science and technology (Salami, 2000a). Students' belief in their intellectual abilities is an important element in career selection of students in the fields of science and technology (Salami, 2007).

Hill, Ramirez and Dumka (2003) found academic achievement, skills and abilities as major influences on the career choice decisions of students. Perry (2006) identified that young students career choice decisions are influenced by their personal attitudes and educational achievements. Beal and Crockett (2010) found that the aspirations and expectations of adolescents affect their future educational success and pave ways for their

future careers; therefore, their educational and occupational expectations affect their future career trajectories. Ali and Saunders (2009) explored the career aspirations of the secondary schools' students and found that educational aspirations of young students significantly influence the occupational and vocational aspirations of students about future.

It is concluded that students' personality and personal characteristics are significant contributors in shaping the career aspirations of students at secondary level, therefore; the study investigated the effect of personality on the career aspirations of secondary schools' students.

Material and Methods

The design for the conduction and reporting of the study was quantitative survey for investigating the effect of personality on the career aspirations of secondary schools' students. The population of the study was 30439 secondary school students from district Swat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The sample of the study was 380 which was determined with Raosoft online calculator for the determination of the sample for research studies. The sample was selected with using simple random sampling procedure. A questionnaire containing questions on the effect of personality on the career aspirations of students at secondary level was developed, validated with expert opinion of experts in the field of career guidance and pilot tested for the reliability. The reliability of the tool was 0.812. According to Law (2004) if the coefficient of reliability is 0.80 then it is excellent and if it is from 0.60 to 0.79 then it is adequate. The data were collected with using self-administered questionnaires and analyzed with mean scores standard deviation and the chi-square test of significance. Ethical principles for conduction of the study, participants and reporting the findings of research were followed.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Effect of Personality on the Career Aspirations of Secondary Schools' Students

Statements	Number	Mean	S. D	χ^2	P
Interest affected your career aspiration	380	3.82	.82	48.79	.000
Personal will affected your career aspiration	380	3.67	.62	61.40	.000
Aspirations affected your career aspiration	380	3.91	.89	39.54	.000
Motivation affected your career aspiration	380	3.71	.24	72.36	.000
Self-concept/esteem affected your career aspiration	380	3.65	.47	94.68	.000
Aptitude affected your career aspiration	380	3.57	.56	51.69	.000
Academic achievement/grades affected your career aspiration	380	3.74	.43	91.41	.000
Personal skills and abilities affected your career aspiration	380	3.63	.67	57.87	.000
Self-educational expectations affected your career aspiration	380	3.69	.51	32.45	.000
Personal career expectations affected your career aspiration	380	3.58	.29	59.29	.000

Table 1 demonstrates the effect of personality on the career aspirations of secondary schools' students. The mean scores of 3.82, 3.67, 3.91, 3.71, 3.65, 3.57, 3.74, 3.63, 3.69 and 3.58 highlighted that respondent students agreed that students' interests, wills, aspirations, motivations, self-concepts, aptitudes, academic achievement, skills and abilities, educational and expectations affected the career aspirations of secondary school students. On application of the Chi-square test, the findings were found statistically significant. It identified that students' interests, wills, aspirations, motivations, self-concepts, aptitudes, academic achievement, skills and abilities, educational and expectations significantly affected the career aspirations of secondary schools' students.

Discussions

The study found the significant effect of personality on the career aspirations of secondary schools' students and found that the factors of personality, i.e. students' interests, wills, aspirations, motivations, self-concepts, aptitudes, academic achievement, skills and abilities, educational and expectations significantly affected the career aspirations of secondary schools' students. These findings have also been identified by other research studies and in this context; Kiani (2010) found that personality is a major factor in the career determination of the secondary school students. In the same manner, Kerka (2001) identified that career choices in secondary schools are influenced by many factors like students' personality, interests, aptitudes, and self-concept. Similarly, Salami (2008) reported the influence of personality types, interests and academic achievement, in the educational and career aspirations of the students. Holland (1985) also highlighted that people are very much productive when there is harmony between their personality and the career choice. Therefore, he proposed the choice of personality fit careers for students that may lead to prosperity in the future. Super's Developmental Self-concept Theory also assumes that psychological traits like interests, needs, abilities, intelligence and special aptitude pave the way for the career development of the students (Ireh, 2000). Likewise, the studies of Beal and Crockett (2010); Ferry et al. (2000); Agarwala (2008) and Reyes et al. (1999) also identified similar findings. The Social Cognitive Career Choice Theory (SCCT) by Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994) assumes that individuals' beliefs about their self-efficacy and outcome expectations significantly influence their career choices and individuals will have great interests in occupations, when they consider themselves good at the required skills of the occupations. Interest will develop the occupational goals of the individual for adopting that occupation. These goals take the individuals to the selection of the careers. The findings of the study have significant theoretical and practical implications for the career guidance of students in secondary schools.

Conclusion

The study found that students' personality and its characteristics significantly affect the career aspirations of secondary schools' students and that the factors of personality, i.e. students' interests, wills, aspirations, motivations, self-concepts, aptitudes, academic achievement, skills and abilities, educational and expectations significantly affected the career aspirations of secondary schools' students. Therefore, students' personal characteristics needs to be considered for effective career guidance of students in secondary schools of Pakistan.

Recommendations

Keeping in view the objectives and findings of the study, the researchers made the following recommendations.

- The study recommends the provision of career guidance facilities for the effective career planning of the students in secondary schools. As the career guidance facilities are not available in secondary schools, therefore, it is very difficult for the students of secondary schools to select appropriate subjects of their study at this level, which are based on their interests, aptitudes and knowledge of the career opportunities.
- For the effective career guidance of the students, there is the need to know the interests and aptitudes of the students in secondary schools. Therefore, the study recommends the establishment of assessment mechanisms for identification of students, interests and aptitudes and the integration of these with the career choice decisions of students.
- Teachers are the key players in the subjects' selection and career choice decisions of the students in secondary schools. The students at this level have maximum

interaction with their teachers. So, keeping in view the role of teachers in the context of career planning of students in secondary schools; the study recommends the development of career guidance, as an integral part of teachers' education/training programs to equip them with the required skills and know how about the career guidance of students.

- Career guidance in secondary schools needs the provision of books, brochures and social media. Therefore, the schools must be provided with books, brochures and Internet facility for the facilitation of students, in career guidance.
- The study also recommends the active role and involvement of the policy makers, governmental authorities and community for the provision of material and financial resources to help establish the facilities of career guidance in secondary schools.

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