



A Study of Career Decision-Making of Senior Secondary School Students

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Abstract

The study focused on understanding differences in career decision-making on the basis of gender and locality. To examine the career decision making, the investigator employed the Normative Survey Research Method. Random Stratified Sampling Technique from the senior secondary schools of Meerut city of Uttar Pradesh. The Sample was constituted of 100 students of Senior Secondary Education. Classes 11th out of which 50 boys and 50 girls were selected for the study. Career decision making Scale Dr. Kirandeep Singh (2014) applied for data collection. Statistical techniques employed for the analysis of data Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Standard Deviation and inferential Statistics: critical ration. Significant difference found between career decision-making senior secondary school on the basis of gender and locality.

Key Words- Career decision making, Gender and Locality

Introduction

Career decision-making is an important aspect of the educational, personal and social development of students, particularly during the senior secondary stage of education. This stage represents a critical period in the life of an individual because students begin to make important decisions regarding their future studies, professional aspirations and occupational pathways. The choices made during this period may influence the subjects they select, the courses they pursue in higher education and the careers they eventually enter. Therefore, the ability to make appropriate and informed career decisions is essential for the successful transition from school education to higher education and the world of work. Career decision-making refers to the process through which an individual identifies personal interests, abilities, values, aspirations and available opportunities, explores different educational and occupational alternatives, evaluates their advantages and limitations, and finally selects a suitable career direction. It is not a single event but a gradual process involving self-understanding, exploration, comparison, planning and decision-making. Effective career decision-making requires students to possess adequate knowledge about themselves as well as information about educational courses, professional qualifications, employment opportunities and changing requirements of the labour market. Students who are able to make thoughtful career

decisions are more likely to develop realistic aspirations and pursue educational pathways that correspond with their abilities and interests.

The senior secondary stage is particularly significant because students often have to choose among different academic streams and specialized courses that may determine their future educational and occupational possibilities. At this stage, students may experience uncertainty regarding whether to pursue science, commerce, humanities, vocational education or other emerging fields. The increasing diversity of career opportunities has further expanded the range of choices available to young people. Along with conventional professions such as medicine, engineering, teaching, law and administration, students can now consider careers in information technology, artificial intelligence, data science, biotechnology, digital communication, design, entrepreneurship, financial services, media and numerous other emerging areas. While this expansion provides greater opportunities, it can also make career selection more complicated for students who lack adequate guidance and reliable information.

Career decision-making is influenced by several personal and environmental factors. Students' academic achievement, interests, aptitude, personality, self-confidence, career aspirations and awareness of occupational opportunities may influence the decisions they make. At the same time, family expectations, parental education and occupation, socio-economic conditions, peer influence, teachers, school environment, social values and exposure to career information can significantly shape students' choices. In some cases, students may select careers primarily on the basis of social prestige, expected income or parental expectations rather than their own interests and capabilities. Such decisions may result in academic dissatisfaction, lack of motivation and difficulty in achieving long-term career satisfaction.

Significance of the Study

Career decision-making is a significant aspect of the educational, personal and vocational development of senior secondary school students. The senior secondary stage represents a critical period in which students make important decisions regarding subject streams, higher education, professional courses and future occupations. These decisions may have a lasting influence on their academic progress, career opportunities, personal satisfaction and social adjustment. In the present educational and occupational environment, students are confronted with a wide range of traditional as well as emerging career options, making career selection more complex than before. The significance of the present study lies in understanding how senior secondary school students identify, evaluate and select their preferred career pathways and the extent to which they are capable of making informed and appropriate career decisions. The findings may help teachers and school counsellors

understand students' career-related difficulties, interests and information needs and accordingly develop effective guidance and counselling programmes. The study may also assist parents in understanding the importance of considering their children's interests, abilities, aspirations and individual potential while supporting career choices. For students, the study may promote self-awareness, confidence, occupational awareness and rational decision-making by encouraging them to consider relevant information before selecting a career. Educational institutions may use the findings to organize career orientation programmes, aptitude and interest assessment activities, interactions with professionals, career exhibitions and counselling sessions. The study may further be useful to educational planners and policymakers in strengthening career guidance services at the senior secondary level and ensuring that students receive timely and reliable information about higher education and employment opportunities. In addition, appropriate career decision-making can contribute to better alignment between individual abilities and occupational requirements, thereby reducing the possibility of unsuitable career choices and future occupational dissatisfaction. Thus, the present study is significant for promoting informed, realistic and purposeful career decisions among senior secondary school students and for strengthening the overall system of career guidance and education.

Need of the Study

Career selection is one of the most significant decisions in the life of an individual, and the senior secondary stage represents a particularly important period in this process. At this stage, students are expected to make important academic choices related to subjects, streams, higher education and future occupations. The increasing number and diversity of career opportunities have made career selection more complex than in the past. Students today have to choose from conventional professions as well as numerous emerging fields such as information technology, artificial intelligence, data science, biotechnology, digital media, management, entrepreneurship, healthcare and other skill-oriented occupations. However, the availability of numerous alternatives does not necessarily ensure that students possess adequate knowledge and confidence to select an appropriate career. Many students make career decisions under the influence of parental expectations, peer groups, teachers, social prestige, financial considerations, academic performance and limited knowledge about occupational opportunities. In some cases, students may also experience confusion, indecisiveness and anxiety because they are unable to relate their interests and abilities to suitable career options. Therefore, there is a pressing need to examine the career decision-making of senior secondary school students and understand the factors that shape their choices. Such an investigation can help determine whether students are making informed decisions based on their interests, abilities, aspirations and available opportunities or whether their decisions are primarily influenced by external

pressures. The study is also needed to identify differences in career decision-making among students belonging to different backgrounds, such as gender, type of school, locality and socio-economic conditions. The findings may provide useful guidance to teachers, parents, school counsellors and educational administrators in developing systematic career guidance and counselling programmes at the senior secondary level. Early and appropriate career guidance can help students develop self-awareness, explore occupational alternatives, understand educational requirements and make realistic decisions regarding their future. Therefore, the present study is needed to strengthen career education and counselling practices and to facilitate informed, confident and appropriate career decision-making among senior secondary school students.

Justification of the Study

The selection of an appropriate career is one of the most significant decisions in the life of an individual, and the senior secondary stage is a particularly important period in which students begin to make choices that can shape their future educational and occupational pathways. At this stage, students are required to select subjects, courses and areas of specialization according to their interests, abilities and future aspirations. However, many students experience uncertainty and confusion while making career decisions because of limited self-awareness, inadequate information about career opportunities, parental expectations, peer influence, academic pressure, social perceptions and economic considerations. The rapid emergence of new occupations and changes in the nature of work have further increased the complexity of career selection. Students may sometimes choose a career merely on the basis of its social status, earning potential or the preferences of significant others without adequately examining whether it corresponds with their own aptitude, interests and personality. Such inappropriate decisions may result in academic dissatisfaction, loss of motivation, frequent changes in educational pathways and occupational dissatisfaction in later life. Therefore, there is a strong need to understand the nature of career decision-making among senior secondary school students and the factors that influence their choices. The present study is justified because systematic knowledge about students' career decision-making can help teachers and school counsellors identify areas in which students require guidance, develop suitable career counselling programmes and provide reliable information about educational and occupational alternatives. The study may also enable parents to better understand their children's aspirations and encourage them to make decisions based on their abilities and interests. Furthermore, the findings can assist educational institutions in strengthening career education and preparing students to respond effectively to changing employment opportunities. Thus, the study of career decision-making among senior secondary school students is academically, psychologically and socially relevant and may contribute to helping young people make informed, realistic and meaningful career choices.

Statement of the Problem

Inspired by all the considerations as mentioned above the investigator chose to take up the present problem entitled-

A Study of Career Decision-Making of Senior Secondary School Students

Operational Definitions of the Variables

For the present study the major variable is *Career Decision-Making*. Its operational meaning is defined below:

Career Decision-Making

Career decision-making is understood as the ability of senior secondary school students to understand their own interests and abilities, obtain relevant career information, consider available educational and occupational alternatives, evaluate those alternatives and make a reasoned choice regarding their future career. It therefore represents the extent to which students are able to make clear, informed, realistic and confident decisions about their future educational and occupational pathways.

Senior Secondary School Students

In the present study, senior secondary school students refer to students studying in Classes XI in the selected senior secondary schools.

Objectives of the study

The present study conducted with the following objectives:

1. To find out the difference in decision making among senior secondary students on the basis of gender and locality.

Hypotheses of the study

To find out the differences in decision making among senior secondary students on the basis of gender and locality.

1. There is no significant difference in decision making of male and female senior secondary students.
2. There is no significant difference in decision making of rural male and urban male senior secondary students.
3. There is no significant difference in decision making of rural female and urban female senior secondary students.

4. There is no significant difference in decision making of urban male and urban female senior secondary students.
5. There is no significant difference in decision making of rural male and rural female senior secondary students.

Review of Related Studies

Suitable reviews organized chronologically -

Dani, Priyanka & Desai, Hetvi (2018) conducted a study on '**Factors Affecting the Career Decision Making of Secondary School Students.**' This paper presents the findings of a study conducted to explore the factors affecting the career decision making of secondary school students in Gandhinagar, India. The factors taken into consideration are: Personal, Social, Educational, work culture and family. The research was carried out on the random sample of 120 students of class 10th studying in a government school. The Career Conflict Scale by Dr. Aneet Kumar and Career Decision Scale Third Revision (1976) by Samuel H. Osipow, Clarke G. Carney, Jane Winer, Barbara Yanico and Maryanne Koschier. The data was analyzed with the help of Pearson's Product Moment Method of Correlation. The results revealed no significant one factor that affected the career decision making of the secondary students but a combination of them.

Abdinoor, Noor Mohamed (2020) conducted a study on '**Socio-Economic Status, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy, Career Maturity and Gender with Secondary School Students in Northern Kenya.**' This study examined differences of career decision-making self-efficacy and career maturity based on gender and socio-economic categories. Participants were 552 senior secondary students (372 males, 178 females and 2 participants did not report their gender). They were drawn from five public schools located in Wajir County in northern Kenya. Participants responded to survey questionnaires comprising of demographic section (age, gender, class standing, socio-economic status), Career Maturity Inventory, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale. Results indicated absence of impact of socio-economic status on career decision-making self-efficacy and career maturity. There was significant gender difference on career decision-making self-efficacy and mean difference in career maturity. Young women reported higher level of career decision-making self-efficacy and career maturity than young men. Implications for counsellors and recommendations for future researches are discussed.

Kanjani, Sapna (2023) conducted a study on ‘**The Impact of Personality Traits on Career Indecision in Young Adults.**’ The aim of the research was to understand how personality traits impact career indecision in young adults. It is often seen that young adults are actively exploring their interests and personalities to develop career aspirations and understand their personal strengths. For this purpose, an online survey was conducted for students aged 18-23 years. The sample comprised of 117 students from colleges and universities from various cities in India. Online survey method was used for the purpose of data collection and analysis, of quantitative data were carried out by employing descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS (version 29.0) software. The results indicated that conscientiousness personality trait was negatively correlated with career indecision. Lastly, openness trait significantly influenced career indecision scores.

Santhiya, R. (2026) conducted a study on ‘**Factors Influencing Career Decision-Making and Self Confidence among Senior Secondary Students: An Empirical Analysis.**’ This study investigates the interplay between parental influence, school-based counselling, and career self-confidence among 30 senior secondary students (Grades 10–12). Using a 30-item structured questionnaire (Sections 1–4), the research analyses how external pressures and professional guidance shape a student's ability to plan for the next five years. Preliminary data analysis indicates a significant correlation between parental occupation types (Professional/Business) and the total confidence scores of students.

Research Methodology

Research Method

To examine the career decision making of senior secondary students, the investigator employed the Normative Survey Research Method. This method is particularly suited for research aimed at identifying the typical or prevailing conditions and practices at a given time.

Population of the study

The Population, of the present study was constituted of all the students of senior secondary schools situated in the Meerut City in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Sample of the Study and Sampling Technique

From the underlined population a representative sample was drawn by using a Random Stratified Sampling Technique from the senior secondary schools of Meerut City of Uttar Pradesh. The Sample was constituted of 100 students of Senior Secondary Education. Classe 11th out of which

50 boys and 50 girls and 50 Urban and 50 Rural were selected for the study. To execute the procedure of random sampling, first of all a list of schools of Meerut City was prepared.

- Gender – Male and Female
- Location – Urban and Rural

After stratification, schools and students may be selected randomly from each stratum.

Variables of the Study

Following variables have been incorporated in the present study:

1. Career Decision-Making

Tools used for the Study

In order to collect data for the present research, following tools have been administered-

1. Career Decision-Making Scale- Prepared and standardized by Dr. Kirandeep Singh (2014)

Statistical Techniques Employed for the Analysis of Data

- Descriptive Statistics: Mean and Standard Deviation
- Inferential Statistics: Critical Ratio

Objective: 1- Result pertaining to the difference between decision making of male and female senior secondary students.

Hypothesis: 1- There is no significant difference in decision making of male and female senior secondary students.

TABLE -1

Mean Standard Deviation and t value of career decision making of male and female senior secondary students

Variable	Group	N	Mean Scores	S.D.	C.R.	Level of Significance
Career decision making	Male	50	29.54	3.52	3.47	Significant at 0.01
	Female	50	27.22	3.15		

- Significant at 0.01 Level

The table 1 presents the comparison of career decision-making among male and female students. The mean score of male students was 29.54 with a standard deviation of 3.52, whereas the mean score of female students was 27.22 with a standard deviation of 3.15. Since the obtained C.R. of 3.47 significant at the 0.01 level, it indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between male and female students in career decision-making. The higher mean score of male students (29.54) than female students (27.22) indicated that male students possessed a higher level of career decision-making than female students. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that ‘there is no significant difference in career decision-making between male and female students’ rejected.

ective: 2- Result pertaining to the difference between decision making of rural male and urban male senior secondary students.

hypothesis: 2- There is no significant difference in decision making of rural male and urban male senior secondary students.

TABLE -2

Mean Standard Deviation and t value of career decision making of rural male and urban male senior secondary students

Variable	Group	N	Mean Scores	S.D.	C.R.	Level of Significance
Career decision making	Rural male	50	26.13	3.59	3.08	Significant at 0.01
	Urban male	50	28.24	3.26		

- *Significant at 0.01 Level*

The table 2 presents a comparison of career decision-making between rural male and urban male students. The mean score of rural male students was 26.13 with a standard deviation of 3.59, whereas the mean score of urban male students was 28.24 with a standard deviation of 3.26. Since the obtained t-value of 3.08 was significant at the 0.01 level, it indicated that there was a significant difference in career decision-making between rural male and urban male students. The higher mean score of urban male students (28.24) than rural male students (26.13) indicated that urban male students had a higher level of career decision-making than rural male students. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that ‘there is no significant difference in career decision-making between rural male and urban male students’ rejected.

jective: 3- Result pertaining to the difference between decision making of rural female and urban female senior secondary students.

hypothesis: 3- There is no significant difference in decision making of rural female and urban female senior secondary students.

TABLE- 3

Mean Standard Deviation and t value of career decision making of rural female and urban female senior secondary students

Variable	Group	N	Mean Scores	S.D.	C.R.	Level of Significance
Career decision making	Rural female	50	23.19	3.20	3.00	Significant at 0.01
	Urban female	50	25.22	3.54		

- *Significant at 0.01 Level*

The table 3 presents a comparison of career decision-making between rural female and urban female students. The mean score of rural female students was 23.19 with a standard deviation of 3.20, whereas the mean score of urban female students was 25.22 with a standard deviation of 3.54. Since the obtained C.R. of 3.00 was significant at the 0.01 level, it indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in career decision-making between rural female and urban female students. The higher mean score of urban female students (25.22) than rural female students (23.19) indicated that urban female students had a higher level of career decision-making than rural female students. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that ‘there was no significant difference in career decision-making between rural female and urban female students’ rejected.

jective: 4- Result pertaining to the difference between decision making of urban male and urban female senior secondary students.

hypothesis: 4- There is no significant difference in decision making of urban male and urban female senior secondary students.

TABLE- 4

Mean Standard Deviation and t value of career decision making of urban male and urban female senior secondary students

Variable	Group	N	Mean Scores	S.D.	C.R.	Level of Significance
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Career decision making	Urban male	50	28.24	3.26	4.44	Significant at 0.01
	Urban female	50	25.22	3.54		

- *Significant at 0.01 Level*

The table 4 shows a comparison of career decision-making between urban male and urban female students. The mean score obtained by urban male students was 28.24 with a standard deviation of 3.26, whereas the mean score of urban female students was 25.22 with a standard deviation of 3.54. The calculated t-value was 4.44, which was found to be significant at the 0.01 level of significance. The obtained t-value of 4.44 indicated that there was a significant difference in career decision-making between urban male and urban female students. A comparison of the mean scores revealed that urban male students ($M = 28.24$) scored higher than urban female students ($M = 25.22$). This indicated that urban male students possessed a comparatively higher level of career decision-making than urban female students. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that ‘there is no significant difference in career decision-making between urban male and urban female students’ rejected.

- Objective: 5-** Result pertaining to the difference between decision making of rural male and rural female senior secondary students.
- Hypothesis: 5-** There is no significant difference in decision making of rural male and rural female senior secondary students.

TABLE- 5

Mean Standard Deviation and t value of career decision making of rural male and rural female senior secondary students

Variable	Group	N	Mean Scores	S.D.	C.R.	Level of Significance
Career decision making	Rural male	50	26.13	3.59	4.32	Significant at 0.01
	Rural female	50	23.19	3.20		

- *Significant at 0.01 Level*

The table 5 presents a comparison of career decision-making between rural male and rural female students. The mean score of rural male students was 26.13 with a standard deviation of 3.59, whereas the mean score of rural female students was 23.19 with a standard deviation of 3.20. The

obtained t-value was 4.32, which was significant at the 0.01 level of significance. Since the obtained t-value of 4.32 was significant at the 0.01 level, it indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in career decision-making between rural male and rural female students. The mean score of rural male students (26.13) was higher than that of rural female students (23.19). This indicated that rural male students possessed a higher level of career decision-making than rural female students. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that ‘there was no significant difference in career decision-making between rural male and rural female students’ rejected.

Findings of the Study

Following major findings were obtained:

- **Significant gender difference in career decision-making**

The study revealed a significant difference in career decision-making between male and female senior secondary school students at the 0.01 level of significance. The mean score of male students (29.54) was higher than that of female students (27.22), indicating that male students demonstrated a comparatively higher level of career decision-making.

- **Significant difference between rural and urban male students**

A significant difference was found between rural male and urban male students in career decision-making at the 0.01 level of significance. Urban male students obtained a higher mean score (28.24) than rural male students (26.13), indicating better career decision-making among urban male students.

- **Significant difference between rural and urban female students**

The findings showed a significant difference between rural female and urban female students in career decision-making at the **0.01 level of significance**. Urban female students had a higher mean score (25.22) than rural female students (23.19), indicating that urban female students demonstrated better career decision-making.

- **Significant difference between urban male and female students**

The findings showed a significant difference between urban male and female students in career decision-making at the 0.01 level of significance. Urban male students had a higher mean score (28.24) than Urban female students (25.22), indicating that urban male students demonstrated better career decision-making.

- **Significant gender difference rural male and female students**

A significant difference was found between rural male and female students in career decision-making at the 0.01 level of significance. Rural male students obtained a higher mean score (26.13) than rural female students (23.19). Thus, rural male students demonstrated a comparatively higher level of career decision-making.

Conclusion

The study concluded that career decision-making among senior secondary school students differed significantly with respect to gender and locality. Male students demonstrated higher career decision-making than female students, while urban students showed better career decision-making than rural students. The findings highlighted the need for effective career guidance and counselling, particularly for rural and female students, to help them make informed and appropriate career choices.

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