Career Aspirations and Vocational Interests: A Cross-Cultural analysis among secondary school students

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Abstract: Having a goal for one's future employment is an example of a professional desire that students should have. You can meet all of life's needs with a well-thought-out career strategy. Both the cultural milieu and one's parents impart values that influence one's professional goals. Approach: We searched the databases of SpringerLink, Scopus, ScienceDirect, EBSCHO, JSTOR, Proquest, and Google Scholar for relevant articles. With a mix of students and teenagers, the keywords used are aspirations and careers. In sum, in collectivistic cultures, family has a larger influence than in individualist ones in deciding students' future occupations. Teens from individualistic cultural backgrounds tend to prioritise their own interests while planning their future careers. Students and their families are more focused on the future. Consequently, research has been carried out to ascertain the correlation between levels of ambition and occupational inclinations. Finding out how high school students' levels of aspiration relate to their vocational interests was the primary goal of the research. A total of one hundred secondary school pupils, fifty of whom are female and fifty of whom are male, have been chosen for this research. In order to assist children in making an informed career decision, this research will be useful for educators, parents, guidance counsellors, principals, administrators, and policymakers.

Keywords: Vocational, Aspirants, higher secondary school, Culture

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INTRODUCTION

Rather of focusing on immediate, concrete objectives, career ambitions consider the big picture and aim far into the future. A common way for potential employers to learn more about you is to inquire about your long-term professional goals and objectives. Your short-term professional decisions are shaped by your vocational ambitions. Your educational and professional decisions throughout your career growth should ideally mirror your long-term career goals. Get to the top of your field. You should be able to carry out certain duties in your field, thus you may choose to get academic or technical training. Imagine you're a coder with big dreams of becoming a chief technology officer. Acquiring in-depth information and skills in preparation for a career in science or a practical pursuit should be your top goal. As an example of an answer, I had always aspired to be an authority in my field after finishing my degree. My goals for this role include expanding my technical knowledge and contributing to the improvement and resolution of prevalent industry issues. My ultimate goal is to have a substantial impact on the improvement of thousands of people's lives via my work in industry development and optimisation. The most recent career evaluation that utilises the RIASEC concept is VOCATION. It takes into account a person's interests across 12 different areas and then compares their profile to 138 different jobs to find the one that best suits them.

In order to keep an eye on social desirability, this evaluation has great dependability and has been culturally adjusted so that the questionnaire can be read objectively, without prejudice based on gender or age.The purpose of Vocation is to facilitate a variety of career coaching processes. Candidates may use it to narrow down their job options, map out their professional futures, and advance in their current positions. With the report's helpful analysis, the evaluator may start a meaningful conversation with the applicant, learn about their interests in the workplace, and choose a career path that fits their profile.

Level of Aspiration: Concept and Meaning

"Aspirations" is a word that many people use interchangeably with other similar terms, such as aims, purposes, dreams, plans, designs, intents, wants, longings, wishes, yearnings, longings, or aims. What motivates people to strive for greater things than they are right now are their aspirations. Even if we have a good idea of who we are, we have no idea of what we're capable of becoming.

A widely accepted definition of Level of Aspiration was given by Frank (1935). In his opinion, Level of Aspiration is "the level of future performance in a familiar task which an individual, knowing his level of past performance in that task, explain 1tly undertakes to reach". "Level of Aspiration is the degree of difficulty of that task chosen as a goal for the next action" (Hoppe, 1930). The idea of degree of ambition was described by Gardner (1940) as requiring both the subject to publicly declare their goals and to express them quantitatively. The term was first used by Hurlock (1967) to describe a desire for something above one's current level, with the goal of improving upon it. Basically, ambition is when a person sets a goal for themselves in an activity that is really important to them or when their ego is engaged.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Shoaib Kiani, et.al (2013) The purpose of the study was to inquire deeply into the high school students' career goals. With a total of 482 responses, the majority of students (N = 482) expressed interest in pursuing careers in medicine, teaching, law, or engineering. We used SDS (Self Directed Search) to find out how the sexes differed and how well the participants' career goals and interests lined up. The findings showed that when comparing job interests with ambitions, doctors and teachers had a modest degree of congruence, whereas lawyers, engineers, and soldiers had a condition of incongruence. Students, career counsellors, and educational policymakers may all benefit from the findings, which might aid in the decision-making process related to careers.

Muna Abdullah Al-Bahrani et.al (2020) This research compares and contrasts the effects of mathematical education on the job goals of male and female high school students. This research looks at how high school seniors' stated job goals change depending on their parents' educational level and their own grade point average. Approximately 2,717 pupils from grades 10 and 11 were given a job desire scale to fill out. According to the results, women score higher than men when it comes to job aspirations. The career ambition score of students majoring in pure mathematics is greater than that of those majoring in applied mathematics. Teens' job goals are significantly impacted by their parents' educational background and GPA, according to the results. When developing treatments, it is recommended to take contextual factors into account.

Mengting Li (2018) This research followed students from Grade 10 to Grade 12 in several Chinese secondary schools to see how their sense of purpose in life in Grade 10 influenced their occupational identity in Grade 12. The mediating role of vocational exploration and commitment (VECP) and vocational exploration and commitment (VECS) reported by parents of children in 11th grade was also investigated. Four hundred thirty-five students and their parents or guardians from Hong Kong, four hundred twenty-two from metropolitan Shanghai, and thirty-08 from rural Zhejiang made up the participants. In the rural samples from Shanghai and Zhejiang, there was a notable finding regarding the partial mediation of the VECS in the link between professional identity and meaning in life. Meaning in life and professional identity were significant predictors of the VECP in the Hong Kong sample. It follows that the correlations between parents' views of their children's occupational devotion and their own professional advancement may be less than thought. This article examines the ways in which parents in various geographical settings in China impact their children's professional development, as well as the patterns of linkages between teenagers' sense of purpose in life, their dedication to and identity within their chosen profession, and these factors.

Alexandra Wicht et.al (2022) Before joining the workforce, females are more likely to have lofty career goals than boys, according to previous studies. We shed light on the potential processes behind these gender disparities and examine whether this gender gap in vocational ambitions applies to German secondary school pupils generally. We used the German National Educational Panel Study's large and representative sample of ninth graders (N = 10,743) to achieve this goal. The International Socio-Economic Index of vocational level (ISEI) was used to categorise the vocational ambitions of adolescents based on the socioeconomic level of the desired employment. Based on Cohen's d =.36, the results indicated that compared to boys, females had vocational ambitions that were 6.5 ISEI points higher. An further finding from mediation analysis was that variations in professional interest between the sexes may account for 50% of the disparity in career goals. This shows that, in contrast to males, girls' higher career goals are more driven by their own interests in the field than by a desire for more social status.

METHODS

Prior to inclusion, all publications had to meet the following criteria: (1) be research articles published during the last ten years (2013–2023); (2) be in English; (3) be full-text articles; and (4) use both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A number of databases are used while searching for articles, including Google Scholar, SpringerLink, Scopus, ScienceDirect, EBSCHO, JSTOR, and Proquest. This database is being used since it is a search engine that may be suggested and contains a lot of loaded content. Use of the terms "aspirations" and "careers" in addition to "collectivism" and "individualism" is used. Researchers just use these keywords as search phrases, without using any extra key phrase combinations. The results of the examination demonstrated the abundance of references that may serve as sources for further study. In order to conduct their investigation, researchers resorted to English-language publications as no relevant material was found in Indonesian. Researchers have used meta-synthesis, a method for integrating data to generate new ideas and concepts at a more profound and comprehensive level, to synthesise qualitative descriptive data (Perry & Hammond, 2002). The approach utilised is a synthesis of meta-aggregation, which gathers the results of several previous investigations in order to answer research problems. From research subjects, specific themes are derived in order to construct an

analytical framework. A synthesis of different study results according to the relevant topics is produced by comparing and summarising the retrieved papers.

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between secondary school students' levels of ambition and their occupational interests. Two educational institutions made up the sample for this research. Fifty students from A.M.U. Girls High School and fifty students from A.B.K. Boys School make up the one hundred student sample.

Table 1: Total Sample of the Study

Name of School	Sample
A.M.U. Girls High School	50 Girls
A.B.K. Boys School	50 boys
Total	100 Students

RESULT

Despite the large amount of literature generated by article searches, this analysis relies on only seven of those publications. Searching for "aspirations" and "careers" together with "collectivism" and "individualism" produced 689 relevant articles. Duplicate material, titles, abstracts, and keywords were also checked for in the articles. That being said, 54 articles were processed, 143 were partially accessible, and 492 were not reprocessed due to not fitting the criteria for professional and cultural goals. Out of the 54 articles that were re-screened with a focus on the entire text and ultimately produced the result, only seven were in line with the study's objectives. The other 47 were not re-processed because they failed to offer cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism that were relevant to the study.
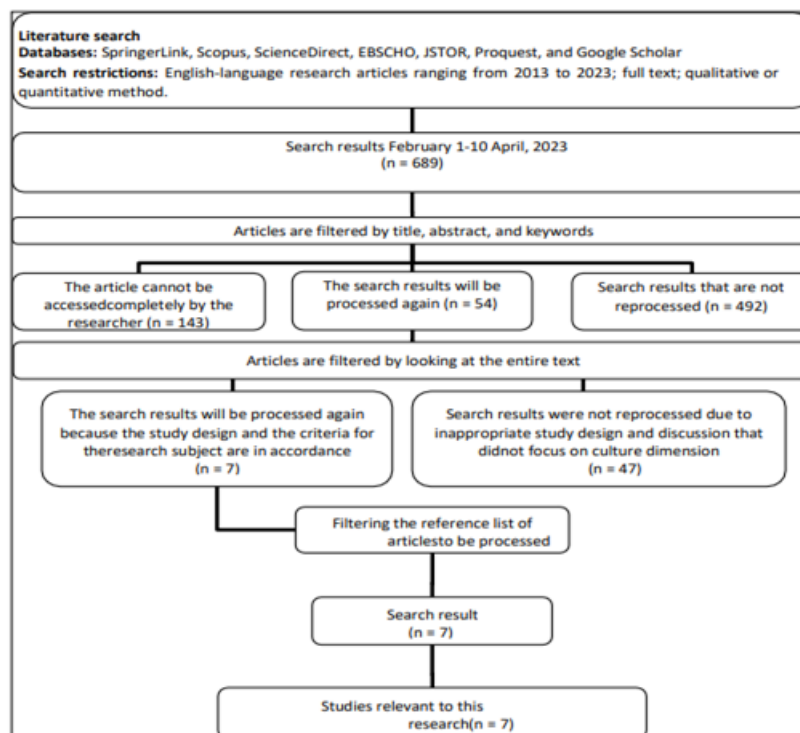

Figure 1: Stages of Search for Research Articles

There is a tendency for students in collectivist cultures to conform to their surroundings, which impacts their professional aspirations. Teachers are seen to have more education than parents, which gives them more sway over their students (Cheung et al., 2013). The need to seek assistance while deciding on a professional path is felt even by Chinese students (Guan et al., 2015).

Individualistic cultural origins are associated with students who value autonomy and who place a premium on following their passions while deciding on a professional path. It is believed that in communal societies, parents should encourage their children to pursue their dreams and provide them with the resources they need to become independent and successful workers. Parents in a society that respects uniqueness often tell their children to do what makes them happy and to not be afraid to change occupations if they don't like it. Students in individualistic cultures were shown to have significant feelings of independence, as shown by their assessments of how family attitudes obstructed their professional goals (Fan et al., 2014). Guan et al. (2015) found that when it comes to choosing a profession, students in the US have a strong sense of internal control.

Objectives No-1

The goal of this study is to determine if there is a correlation between secondary school students' occupational preferences and their ambition levels.

Hypothesis 1: Secondary school pupils' levels of ambition are unrelated to their occupational preferences.

Table 2: Relationship between vocational interest and level of aspiration of secondary school students

Variable	No of Students	Mean	S.D.	Df	Calculated 'r'	Hypothesis
Vocational Interests	100	246	46.74	98	.086	Accepted
Level of Aspiration	100	130	13.59			

Interpretation 1:

It is clear from the data in the table above that the computed value of r', which is 0.086, is far lower than the critical value as shown in the table. As a result, it makes zero sense. This leads us to accept the null hypothesis. There seems to be no correlation between secondary school pupils' career goals and their interest in the field.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that the vocational goals of students from various cultural backgrounds were distinct. How kids see their future careers is shaped by the cultural norms and values that are inculcated in them by their parents. It has been shown that cultural factors impact the professional goals that students have. Within a relationally oriented collectivist society, pupils' reliance on the evaluations of parents and

educators is apparent. In contrast, students in an individualistic society tend to prioritise their own interests and ideas above academic success because of the great importance placed on independence in such culture. One might explore Hofstede's proposed cultural characteristics in deeper depth to generate suggestions for future studies on how culture affects students' career goals. such as traditional gender norms, levels of indulgence, remoteness from authority, and aversion to ambiguity. We can conclude from the research that AMU secondary school students have a good grasp of the world of work and the careers available to them. Levels of desire and interest in a certain career are not dependent on one another, according to the research. They discovered that students' levels of ambition had little to do with their occupational preferences. Although someone may have loftier goals in life, it doesn't mean they necessarily have more advanced career aspirations.

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