

## The Impact of Academic Self-Efficacy on the Career Aspirations of Senior Secondary Students

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### **Abstract**

The adolescents in schools are often preoccupied with many thoughts of future career prospects. This frequently predisposes these adolescents to irrational thoughts. Such irrational thoughts could be debilitating to the society and psychological well-being of adolescents. Transition from secondary school to workplace, college or university is a critical path through which every adolescent must pass through (Cassie, 2025). Career related problems often become a developmental phase for adolescents they pass through in making proper career choices for life. What needs to be done first when choosing one's career is to have career aspirations. Career aspirations refer to how much one aspires to achieve success in the chosen field and is something that helps in setting career goals, evolving one's career and achieving career success. If career aspiration is set high, the likelihood of realizing the aspiration becomes lower and one runs the risk of undermined self-esteem.

Meanwhile, the sense of self-efficacy serves as a primary mediating variable in determining one's specific career. When the learner makes a positive and successful judgment on one's own academic performance, sense of academic self-efficacy increases and also has a positive effect on achieving goals other than academic ones that is learners with high academic self-efficacy select challenging tasks and make more efforts to successfully carry out those tasks and persist even amidst challenges. This paper is concerned about the impact of academic self-efficacy on the career aspiration of senior secondary students.

**KEY WORDS:** self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, career aspiration

**INTRODUCTION:** A Career by itself is neutral. However career aspects of work that are performed within a social context. Running the course of a career is essentially that result of an intricate psychosocial process. A group of people (society in large) presents a wide variety of needs that demand attention. Education plays a vital role of both the individual and society. The

main goal of education is the development of all innate powers in an individual leading to an all-round development of his personality. Without education and educated person we cannot work in society. so, education fulfilled all the needs of human life. Education lays down the basic foundation that enables teenagers to build their future lives. In other words, good education enables people to find suitable jobs and earns a living, thus enabling them to live in a much enjoyable and comfy manner. Adolescence is that period of human life which rapidly occur change. The change is physiological, sociological and psychological. It is the right time to think seriously about their future and their career choice as well as adjustment with his own self and social life.

Sharma (1992) stated that “along with the primary education provided in the schools, it is essential for the children to receive a secondary education from the family. The child should be provided proper knowledge about the stage of adolescence in social, economic and educational point of view. During this period, the child requires proper care and education to become a perfect well-balanced person in the future. According to her, during this stage, the children everything required for future vocational courses and development. This secondary stage is the most important turning point of their education”.

Academic self-efficacy is expressed as the perception of the abilities and qualities that guide individuals’ determination to achieve success and educational goals (Sirosis, 2004).

There is evidence that self-efficacy has significant direct impacts on performance and has been closely related to achievement positively correlated with high self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 1990). Specifically in school setting, academic success has been shown to be predicted by students’ self-efficacy beliefs in their social, academic, and self-control abilities (Bandura et al. 1996). The abilities of students to prepare for careers in the workplace and to enhance their academic objectives are both directly impacted by their judgments of their academic self-efficacy, according to Bandura (2001). (Zimmerman, 1990).

Career aspiration is an individual’s expressed choices or goals in the vocational domain (Rojewsk, 2005). Career aspiration refers to what we want for the future, our desire, our dreams that once we hope to achieve and now they can be altered into reality. Career preparation has been viewed as a major development task for adolescence, the successful performance of which improves personal development, social adjustment and future well-being (Dar, 2019).

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The core objective of this theoretical paper is to investigate the link between academic self-efficacy and career aspiration among senior secondary school students. The paper seeks to:

1. Discuss the concept of academic self-efficacy and career aspirations.
2. Investigate the impact that a student's perception of his or her academic efficacy has on the nature and level of career aspirations.
3. Give some practical recommendations on how to foster the development of proper academic self-efficacy and career aspirations.

## 3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

**3.1 Understanding Academic Self-Efficacy** Academic self-efficacy is expressed as the perception of the abilities and qualities that guide an individual's determination to achieve success and educational goals (Sirosis, 2004). Rooted in Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy is not about the skills one actually possesses, but rather the *belief* in what one can accomplish with those skills.

There is substantial evidence that self-efficacy has significant direct impacts on performance. Achievement is positively correlated with high self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 1990). Specifically in school settings, academic success has been shown to be predicted by students' self-efficacy beliefs regarding their social, academic, and self-control abilities (Bandura et al., 1996). The ability of students to prepare for careers in the workplace and enhance their academic objectives is directly impacted by their judgments of their academic self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001).

**3.2 The Nature of Career Aspirations** Career aspirations are an individual's expressed choices or goals in the vocational domain (Rojewski, 2005). They refer to what students want for the future, their desires, and their dreams that they hope to alter into reality. Career preparation has been viewed as a major developmental task for adolescents; successful performance in this area improves personal development, social adjustment, and future well-being (Dar, 2019).

**3.3 The Intersection of Self-Efficacy and Career Aspirations** The transition from secondary school marks a time of significant vulnerability. If a student possesses high career aspirations but low academic self-efficacy, a psychological dissonance occurs. The student wants to succeed but lacks the internal belief that they are capable of the academic rigor required to reach that goal. Conversely, students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to view complex career paths (such as STEM fields, medicine, or advanced academia) not as insurmountable

hurdles, but as challenges to be mastered. They are more resilient in the face of academic setbacks, which allows them to sustain their long-term career aspirations over time.

#### **4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

This study is theoretically oriented, meaning that it involves integrating literature from psychology and education to construct a theoretical framework. Unlike other studies, it does not employ any empirical data. Instead, it relies on established theories, especially Bandura’s social cognitive theory, as well as recent findings from educational research to demonstrate the predictive power of academic self-efficacy regarding vocational success.

#### **5. DISCUSSION**

Based on the literature review, the concept of academic self-efficacy is a crucial determinant in whether one will have career aspirations. For instance, a student might have the potential to succeed in higher education and acquire a job requiring high expertise, yet lack the confidence in his or her ability to perform academically well. Therefore, he or she will not venture in such a direction due to low self-efficacy.

The environmental variables also have an enormous impact on self-efficacy development. For example, students will gain self-efficacy based on what they learn from instructors, how academic institutions cultivate them, and the support from home. Academic self-efficacy stems from mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasions, which are the key determinants that schools should capitalize on in boosting career aspirations.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

The results of this theory investigation are crucial for various players in the education field:

- School Counselors: Career guidance for students should start by evaluating their self-assurance in their ability to learn before moving onto the career itself. The use of cognitive restructuring strategies is necessary to assist the student in overcoming learned helplessness.
- Educators: Teachers need to offer students "mastery experiences" through providing opportunities to perform challenging tasks successfully. Feedback should be constructive and specific instead of just praising the child to boost their self-efficacy in academics.
- Parents: As Sharma (1992) stated, secondary education necessitates significant family involvement. Parents must develop a culture that rewards academic achievement rather than intelligence to promote ambitious self-efficacy in their children.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Transitioning through high school is characterized by many psychosocial struggles, but the most significant one is the construction of an individual’s career identity. The objective of this research paper is to prove that academic self-efficacy is not only an outcome of excellent performance in studies but also a critical ingredient required for healthy career goals. As long as young people trust in their ability to study and conquer educational barriers, they allow themselves to entertain grander ambitions in terms of pursuing fulfilling career opportunities.

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