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Career-decisions, Self-efficacy and Self-esteem among Students of Private and Government Academic Institutions

Zainab Javed & Omama Tariq
Institute of Applied psychology,
University of the Punjab, Lahore

The research was conducted to examine associations among career decisions, self-efficacy and self-esteem in 100 male and 100 female students of government and private educational institutions. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer, 1996) and the Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996) were used to measure the study variables. A 2(Gender) X 2(Educational Institution) completely randomized design revealed that students of government academic institutions had greater career-decision making difficulties than students from private institutions and that female students had greater career-decision making difficulties compared to males. Female students also had lower self-efficacy than male students; however the self-esteem across genders was not significantly different. Self-esteem showed significant negative correlation with career-decision making difficulties; negative correlations were also found with its subscales of readiness, lack of information and, inconsistent information. Self-efficacy had significant negative correlation with one facet of career decision making difficulties i.e., lack of information. The study suggests that perceiving potential careers while studying in private institutions is easier than government educational institutions.

Keywords: Self-esteem, self-efficacy, career decision-making difficulties, educational institutions, gender

Rosenberg (1965) and other social-learning theorists define self-esteem in terms of the presence of a continued sense of personal worth or worthiness. The definition is commonly used for research purposes, however it contains complications of boundary-definition, making it difficult to separate self-esteem from factrs such as as narcissism and self-importance (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996).The term self-efficacy is linked to the level of confidence that a person has according to his abilities to perform an action(Bandura, 1997). However, self-esteem refers to the overall evaluation of oneself (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). Self-efficacy helps individuals to have self-confidence, so that they could execute their actions efficiently. A person's self-efficacy aids him to find out solutions to his/her problems (King, et al.2010).

Making a decision for career is a very difficult process and a lot of attention is required to accomplish it. However, a number of people can take such decisions very easily, but many people also face problems. These problems and difficulties create hazards in decision making due to which a person is unable to make the right decision (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996). Decisions about making career are extremely important for a person's life as they are related to health and finance. In making career related decisions, a person has to accept his/her capabilities, wellbeing, talent, and values to form a significant frame for life (Walsh & Osipow, 1988).

Researches have been conducted focusing on gender differences in self-esteem, efficacy and career decision making. Patton, Bartrum and Creed (2004) found that men's self-esteem affected thier career prospects, sequentially predicting their prospective career goals, planning and exploration. For women, the career pathway identified was dissimilar to that of men. Women's career goals were directly affected by levels of optimism which in turn predicted career planning and exploration. The results indicated that Self-esteem projected an individual's career expectations, which then directly impacted their career planning and exploration, bypassing career goals. Furthermore, Resnick, Fauble, & Osipow (1970) found that men who had high levels of self-esteem showed greater certainty regarding their career choices when compared with men who displayed low levels of self-esteem. Similarly, women having high self-esteem showed greater certainty about their career plans than women with low self-esteem (Resnick, Fauble, & Osipow, 1970).

Researches have revealed relationship between self-esteem, self-efficacy and career decision making. Betz, Klein, and Taylor (1996) indicated significant correlation between students' career decision self-efficacy and career decision making. Lent, Brown, Kevin and Larkin (1986) indicated that self-efficacy contributed significant unique variance to the prediction of perceived career options in technical/scientific fields.

Kishor (1981) investigated the relationship between self-esteem and locus of control orientation in career decision making in 224 adolescents from schools in Suva City. Correlational analysis showed that self-esteem and locus of control had significant relationship with decisional status, and the latter accounted for greater variance

Levy and Baumgardner (1991) stated that individuals who have a high level of self-esteem are more likely to choose challenging goals when compared with individuals who had low levels of self-esteem. It was also found that male participants chose more difficult goals than did the females. The results indicate that self-esteem affects goal choice. Interestingly previous studies have been supporting benefits of government sector (Iqbal, 2012).

To sum up, self-esteem and self-efficacy have a relationship with career decision making difficulties. Furthermore, gender differences have also been found in this relationship.

Career decision-making is an important and useful phenomenon that needs be addressed in Pakistan. Students approaching their master's level education are not sure of their future. Moreover,

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Zainab Javed, Institute of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan; e-mail: zainab.javed@hotmail.com

women may not be confident in a male dominant society, which influences their career decision-making. Pakistan, as a developing country aspires to improve its economy and needs young men and women to work together to help achieve such goals.

Hypotheses

- There will be differences in self-esteem, self-efficacy and career decision making difficulties in students belonging to government and private institutions.
- Male students will have higher self-esteem, self-efficacy and lesser career decision-making difficulties as compared to female students.
- There will be a relationship between self-esteem, self-efficacy and career decision-making difficulties.

Research Design

A 2(Gender) X 2(Educational Institution) completely randomized design was used in order to find out the effect of these variables on self-efficacy, self-esteem and career decision making difficulties.

Method

Sample

The sample comprised 50 male and 50 female students from government and 50 male and 50 female students from private institutions. Age range of sample was between 20-25 years. Students of final semester/year of undergraduate (B.Sc/LLB/BBA/BA) and Post-graduate (M.Sc/MBA) with at least 16 years of education were included.

Table 1.
Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N =200)

Characteristics	*f* (%)
Gender	
Male	100 (50%)
Female	100 (50%)
Age (Years)	
20-22	128 (64%)
23-25	72 (34%)
Institution	
Government	100 (50%)
Private	100 (50%)
Education	
MSc	47 (23.5%)
BSc (Honours)	44 (22%)
BA (Honours)	22 (11.0%)
LLB	12 (6.0%)
BBA (Honours)	47 (23.5%)
MBA	28 (14.0%)
Family Status	
Joint	68 (34%)
Nuclear	132 (66%)

Instrument

*Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) (*Rosenberg, *1965)*. The scale comprised of 10 items with a 4-point Likert-type rating scale (4 = strongly agree through to 1 = strongly disagree) and included items like ("On the whole I am satisfied with myself", "I certainly feel useless at times").Rosenberg (1965) reported internal consistency and reliability of RSE ranging from .85 to .88 for college samples,.60 in the present study. Rosenberg (1965) holds that the scale "demonstrates concurrent, predictive and construct validity using known groups. RSE correlates significantly with other measures of self-esteem, including the Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. In addition, the RSE correlates in the predicted direction with measures of depression and anxiety."

*General Self-Efficacy Scale (*Schwarzer,1996). The scale consists of 10 items. The scale assesses optimistic beliefs of people about how coping in life. The reliability of present scale was .80. The reliability for present study was .80.Criterion-related validity was found in many studies. Positive correlation were found with emotions, work satisfaction and dispositional optimism; however negative were found with burnout, depression, stress, anxiety, and health complaints (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995).

Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire (Gati, Krausz & Osipow, 1996). Comprised of 34-items based on 9-point Likert-type scale (1 = *does not describe me*, to 9 = *describes me well*). It had three subscales, *Readiness, Lack of Information,* and *Difficulties related to Inconsistent Information* (Gati, Krausz & Osipow, 1996). Reliability reported by the authors was α = .80; reliability (α = .90) in the present study. The discriminant validity was high in a sample of Chinese students, where undecided students perceived more difficulties in career decision-making. Similar differences between decided and undecided students were found in other studies (Gati et al., 2000).

Procedure

The principal investigator obtained an authority letter from the Institute of Applied Psychology, Punjab University Lahore and presented it to the principals/deans of educational Institutions to gain permission for data collection. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that the data and personal information would be kept confidential. Also, they were informed that they were free to leave the study at any time they wished without any penalty or prejudice. The participants were then given the demographic information sheet and three scales/questionnaires to complete. Total time of participation was 20 to 25 minutes.

Results

The current research was aimed at investigating career decision making difficulties as possibly affected by self-esteem and self-efficacy. A Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was employed with post-hoc tests to elaborate significance for individual comparisons. In addition, biserial coefficient correlations were run across the dependent measures.

The results found no main effect for gender ($p > .05$), educational institution ($p > .05$) and their interaction ($p > .05$) for self-esteem (Table 2). A significant main effect for gender was detected for self-efficacy, where male students tended to have a greater self-efficacy (M= 31.55, SD = 4.60) than female students (M = 30.10, SD =

5.67). No main effect was revealed for educational institution (p > .05) or interaction (p > .05). A significant main effect for gender was detected for career decision making difficulty, where male students tended to have lower difficulty in making career decisions (M = 13.95, SD = 4.16) than female students (M =15.26, SD = 4.62). Similarly a main effect was revealed for educational institution where students from private educational institutions had lower difficulty in making career decisions (M =13.72, SD = 4.28) than students from government educational institutions (M =15.0, SD = 4.43). No significant interaction (p > .05) was detected for these two factors when measured for career decision-making.

Table 2
MANOVA for Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy and Career Decision making of students of private and government educational institutions (N=200)

Sources	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Self-Esteem					
Institute	.03	1	.03	.66	.41
Gender	.05	1	.05	1.14	.28
Institute*gender	.06	1	.06	1.27	.25
Self-Efficacy					
Institute	.24	1	.24	.91	.34
Gender	1.18	1	1.18	4.43	.03*
Institute*gender	.18	1	.18	.67	.41
Career Decision					
Institute	157.88	1	157.88	8.44	.01**
Gender	86.19	1	86.19	4.60	.03*
Institute*gender	7.64	1	7.64	.40	.52

*p< .05, *p<.01

Table 3
Relationship among Career Decision Making, Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy (N=200)

Variable	I	II	III
I. Career decision making difficulties		-.37**	-.11
II. Self-Esteem			.27**
III. Self-Efficacy			

**p< .01

Table 4
Correlation among Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy and Subscales Of Career Decision Making Difficulties (N=200)

	I	II	III	IV	V
I. Self-Efficacy		.27**	.02	-.14*	-.10
II. Self- Esteem			-.28**	-.36**	-.28**
III. Readiness				.38**	.36**
IV. Lack of Information					.72**
V. Inconsistent information					

*p< .05; **p< .01

The results (see Table 3) indicated that there was a highly significant negative relationship (r = -.37, p< .01) between self-esteem and career decision-making difficulties; and a non-significant (p= ns) relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making difficulties and finally a highly significant positive relationship (r = .27, p< .01) between self-esteem and self-efficacy as predicted by the hypotheses.

Relationship of career decision-making to self-efficacy was negative but not significant; additional analyses based on subscales of career decision-making questionnaire did detect a significant negative correlation between lack of information and self-efficacy.

Discussion

The present study was conducted to examine associations among career decisions, self-efficacy and self-esteem. The results indicated that male participants had significantly lower career decision-making difficulties than female students, which is consistent with previous findings (Patton, Bartrum, & Creed, 2004) and that students of private institutions had significantly lower career decision making difficulties compared to students in government institutions. These differences in male students and students who go to private institutions could be due to a patriarchal socialization and higher socio-economic status. Higher SES liberates students from worries about the cost of education and resources therefore perceive better chances of getting careers they want compared to the students of government institutions.

Data also detected, male students significantly had greater self-efficacy than female students, which is found in other studies as well (Busch, 1995). Like perceiving difficulties in getting into a career, Pakistani males associate with a dominating patriarchal role, which might be one of the major reasons of their higher level of efficacy.

We did not find significant main effects and interaction for gender and educational institutions for self-esteem. There could be other mediating factors which might be influencing career and self-esteem like quality of life and parental pressure.

Career decision-making difficulties were negatively correlated with self-esteem (p< .05) and self-efficacy (p> -.05), though this correlation was not significant. Resnick, Fauble and Osipow (1970) had indicated that self-esteem and career decision-making difficulty are negatively correlated. Similarly more recently, Norida, Tajudin, and Sahari (2011) suggested negative relationships between self-esteem and career decision making self-efficacy.

The study revealed significant negative relationship between self-esteem and overall career decision-making difficulties and its facets. As indicated in earlier researches ((Resnick, Fauble, & Osipow 1970; Norida, Tajudin, & Sahari, 2011); self-esteem was significantly related with career decision-making, which means that those students who have high career decision-making difficulties will have low self-esteem.

Like other societies and nations, Pakistani society thrusts social pressure on individuals to be self-efficacious, push forward for career goals. Extrinsic pressure like this may boost achievement motivation and render its effect on career as noted by Min, Zhao and Youdian (2011) in private school teachers, on their career management. The reason we did not detect a significant negative relationship between these two variables could be attributed to a smaller sample size.

Data revealed a clear negative relationship between career-making difficulties and self-esteem, and a positive relationship

between self-esteem and self-efficacy. Therefore, we conclude that perceptions of students about career decision-making difficulties were inversely related to self-esteem and self-efficacy, i.e., seeking and deciding about career is easy with higher self-esteem and self-efficacy. However, selected factors of gender and institutional affiliation partially explained this thinking, i.e., only for career-making difficulties and self-efficacy measures, but none for self-esteem. Since we did not find any interactions, effects of gender and institutional affiliation was separate and independent in this study. This implied that career seeking is easier for male than female students; and students who come from private rather than governmental educational institutions. Therefore, female students (like their male counterparts)who attend private educational institutions perceive or think that they can find and fit into their careers more easily compared to those students who attend government institutions. This institutional difference may reflect socioeconomic differences and differences in other perceived resources.

Conclusion

It was concluded from the research that career decision making is affected by self-esteem but not by self-efficacy and there are other factors which may affect career like motivational level. Gender difference was also found and it concluded that male students are more confident about their future, they evaluate themselves better than female students. They have less career decision making difficulties.

Implications

The results can be explained to different educational institutions of Pakistan so they could enhance the self-esteem of students through various psychological approaches. The research can be helpful in improving educational system of Pakistan. Factors hindering career decision making as proved in research, self-esteem should be paid special attention. So that proper career counseling could be provided to the individuals. The present research can create awareness amongst institutional heads and national policy makers, so that they can facilitate the career decision making process in young adults.

Limitations

Several limitations have been noted in the present research. The participants were drawn from one city of Pakistan (i.e., only from Lahore), therefore the sample was small in diversity, and this factor may limit the generalizations of results. As the researcher was not enough trained, lack of training and experience can be termed as a limitation. The time span provided for data collection and the entire research was limited.

Recommendations

Recommendation in the light of these limitations was given for future researches regarding betterment of research work. Researches which were found during the present research was mostly taken from western countries, further researches should be conducted in Pakistan because the difference of government and private institutions is usually observed in Pakistan. In future sample should be taken from different cities of Pakistan so that it could be more generalized. Future researches should also focus on other moderating and mediating factors affecting career decision making including financial issues, parental influence and social support. Career decision making have been shown to be related to a wide range of person and situation variables, including race, socio-economic status, educational aspirations, family and school environments, social support, parental aspirations and expectations and parenting style. Future studies could investigate factors like patriarchal socialization, socioeconomic status, parental or family connections, age and academic levels should be tested.

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