

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

Introduction and Overview of the Study

The scientific study of adolescence has increased tremendously in recent years, both, in quantity and quality, because, besides it being a distinct and important period in the life cycle of an individual, it marks, in certain respects, the peak in the physical and mental growth of an individual. Especially, the late adolescent years i.e., fifteen to eighteen years of age, are crucial as the formative years of life for selection of a vocation for the future. This is also the period when one has to think about the academic courses which are commensurate with one's vocational aspirations (Chadha, Nijhawan, & Pershed, 1983).

"Vocational aspiration" usually means what the individual considers to be the ideal vocation for him. Aspiration is quite similar to a person's fantasy choice. It refers to "the level at which an individual wishes to work, it seldom, if ever, refers to the field which one wants to enter.

Among the many factors that influence vocational aspirations, gender, sex roles, and social class are ubiquitous determinants of vocational aspirations. One of the most striking characteristics of the vocational world is intense gender segregation. Men tend to work in some occupations, women in others, and from very early years, boys and girls tend to aspire and prefer different vocations.

Apart from biology and anatomy, an individual's identification with socially, or culturally defined sex roles can also exert a significant influence

on one's vocational aspirations. According to Spence and Helmreich (1978) the political, economic and social changes over the past few decades have led to a blurring of the formerly sharp divisions between the roles of men and women. Theorists have now proposed models of sex role development beyond the conventional and/or stereotyped level and the recent trend is to view them as independent, uncorrelated dimensions so that individuals can manifest high levels of both masculine and feminine characteristics (Bem, 1977).

Every individual is born into a social environment that is the context within which individual's vocational aspirations develop. Adolescents belonging to different social classes have been found to differ in the way they attribute meaning and purpose to their life goals. They are not only aware of the differential prestige attached to vocations, but they also know their own positions as well as the positions of their families in the prestige system; they understand the connection which exists between the father's occupation and the family's economic and prestige positions (Crites, 1969).

Other specific determinants of vocational aspirations are individual level factors such as self-concept and achievement motivation. Adolescence has long been considered a time when self-concept concerns increase in prominence and academic self-concept influences the level of vocational aspirations which also become particularly salient during this period. Various studies have identified a positive relationship between self-concept and an individual's educational potential and vocational aspirations. Ghosh & Gordon's (1981) study has established a link between high self-concept and ambitious vocational aspirations. Students high on self-concept scale opt for professional and other prestigious vocations.

Achievement motivation is another important determinant of vocational aspirations. Many researchers believe that the academic

performance of students depend upon achievement motivation in addition to intelligence (Singh & Grewal, 1987). Studies have shown that subjects who were higher in achievement need set higher goals, performed better, and also had higher vocational aspirations than did subjects who were lower in achievement need. (Matsui, Okade, & Kakuyama, 1982).

In the past decade, the vocational aspirations of girls have become higher and the percentage of women who pursue traditionally male dominated fields such as law, medicine and engineering. Women today experience greater educational and career opportunities than ever before. Today, more women are entering institutions of higher learning and pursuing careers that were once thought appropriate for only men.

As the above stated variables contribute to the adolescents' vocational aspirations, interests and choices, the present study has attempted to depict the relationship of vocational aspirations to selected psychosocial variables. It focused on the effect of gender, social class, sex roles self-concept and achievement motivation on the vocational aspirations of adolescents.

The objectives of the present study were:

1. To find out the differences between the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls.
2. To find out the effect of social class on the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls.
3. To find out the effect of sex roles on the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls.

4. To find out the effect of self-concept on the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls.
5. To find out the effect of achievement motivation on the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls.
6. To find out the effect of interaction between gender, social class, sex roles, self-concept and achievement motivation on the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls.

Hypotheses

Based on the trends indicated in the review of literature the following hypotheses were generated:

1. There will be significant differences between the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls i.e. boys will differ from girls in their vocational aspirations.
2. There will be significant differences between the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls belonging to different social class i.e., adolescent boys and girls belonging to different social classes will differ in their vocational aspirations.
3. There will be significant differences between the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls belonging to different sex role categories i.e. boys and girls from different sex role categories will differ in their vocational aspirations.

4. There will be significant differences between the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls belonging to different categories of self-concept i.e., adolescent boys and girls belonging to different self-concept categories will differ in their vocational aspirations.
5. There will be significant difference between the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls having different levels of achievement motivation i.e., adolescent boys and girls having different levels of achievement motivation will differ in their vocational aspirations.
6. There will be significant interactional effect between the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls in relation to their gender, social class, sex roles, self-concept, and achievement motivation i.e., adolescent boys and girls belonging to different social class and different sex role categories will be different in their self-concept, achievement motivation, as well as vocational aspirations.

Sample

In the present study the focus was on adolescents from higher secondary standards, as the last three years of school are very important for the selection of a vocation. These years also happen to be terminal points in the Indian education system.

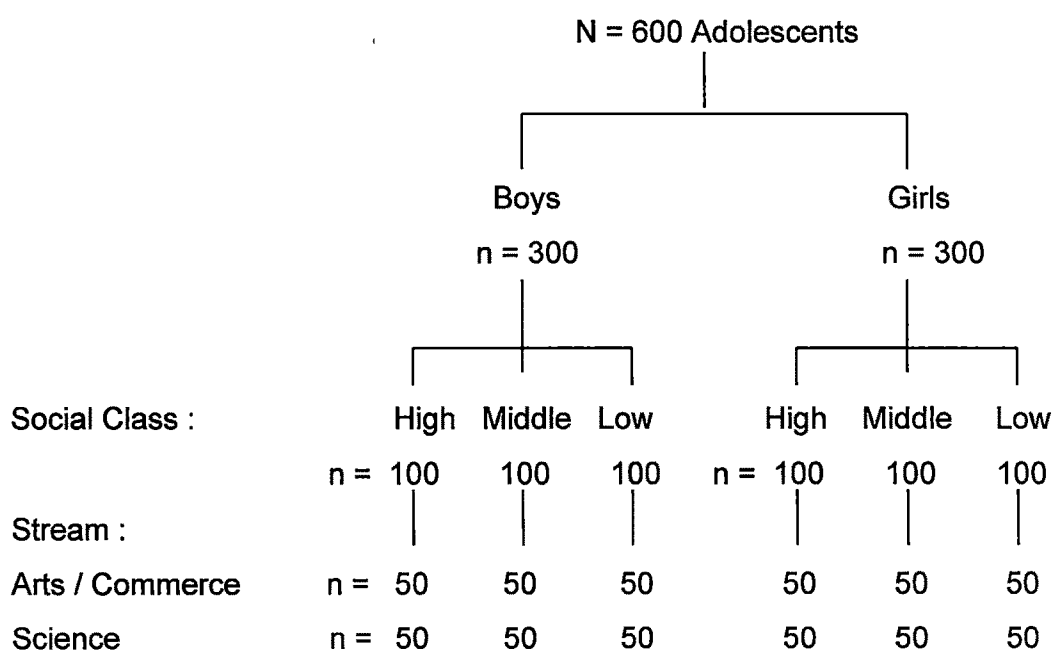
The sample for the present study comprised of 600 adolescent boys and girls between the ages of 15 to 18 years. All the subjects were residents of Baroda city and came from the higher secondary sections (i.e., 10th, 11th, and 12th standards) of English medium schools.

For the present study five English medium schools were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The medium of instruction was English.
2. All the schools were co-educational, i.e., there were girls as well as boys studying in the school.
3. All the schools either had science or arts/commerce stream, or both the streams.

The schools were selected from various areas of the city so that students from all the three social classes, namely, high, middle and low would be available.

The sampling design is given below :



The Variables

Independent variables.

The five independent variables in the present study were:

1. Gender.
2. Social Class.
3. Sex Roles.
4. Self-concept.
5. Achievement Motivation.

1. Gender: Gender is a crucial determinant of the course of life of an individual, and the existence of sex differences has been documented quite extensively in the literature. It encompasses the biological differences between the two sexes, which affects the development of specific psychological dispositions and reaction trends. Differences in the anatomy and functioning of hormones affect the behaviour of the individuals differently and behaviour is many times a function of the sex of an individual.
2. Social class: Social class may be defined as a group of people who share similar values and attitudes, a particular life-style and feel themselves to be similar to each other. The placing of an individual in a given social class system depends on his social relationships, his occupation, income, education, type of house and area of the community (Patel, 1989). A persons status in the society determines his view of the world and affects the way he or she behaves.
3. Sex roles: Sex role is the sum of socially designated behaviour for men and women. It refers to the constellation of qualities an individual understands to characterise males and females in his or her own culture (Block, 1973). The process by which the society transmutes males and

females into "masculine" and "feminine" is known as the process of sex typing (Bem, 1981).

4. Self-concept: Self-concept is the opinion an individual holds about oneself, which may be favourable or unfavourable. The opinions include physical, social, educational, moral and intellectual aspects. These opinions no matter how real or distorted they are, are held as powerful beliefs by the individual, and form his self-concept.
5. Achievement motivation: Achievement motivation is a learned motive, unconscious in nature, resulting from rewards or punishment of specific behaviour. It is a drive whereby behaviour involves competition, with a standard of excellence, and if successful, produces a positive effect or, if unsuccessful, a negative effect. It is a tendency to strive for success in situations involving an evaluation of one's performance in relation to some standard of excellence (Castenell, 1980).

Dependent variable.

Vocational aspirations: Vocational aspiration is what the individual considers to be the ideal vocation for him. It refers to the level at which an individual wishes to work. An aspiration is formulated solely in terms of the individual's wants and wishes, i.e., irrespective of the limitations imposed by reality (Crites, 1969).

Measures.

In the present study, the measures used for the different variables are

1. Socio-economic Status scale (Desai, 1983).
2. Sex role inventory (Patel & Gon, 1989).
3. Self concept questionnaire (SCQ) (Saraswat, 1984).
4. Achievement motive test (ACMT) (Bhargava, 1985).
5. Occupational aspiration scale (OAS) (Grewal, 1984).

1. Socio-economic status scale. In the present study the socio-economic status of the sample was determined by Desai's scale which was developed in 1983 (Appendix A). Each category includes specific items i.e., caste and sub-caste (for e.g., Bhangi, Chamar, Brahmin, etc.), occupation ranges from unskilled workers, labourers to managers, engineers etc.; education ranges from illiterate to Ph.D., M.Pharm. etc.; income ranges from less than Rs 300 to above Rs 10,000; residence ranges from pavement dwellers to bungalows; and vehicle ranges from a bicycle to car, station wagon, etc. Under each category there are specific items and each item carries a weight. These weights are added to get a final score and based on the score, the person is placed in any one of the three social classes, high, middle or low .
2. Sex role inventory. The sex role inventory, developed by Patel and Gon in 1989, contains 32 personality characteristics (see Appendix B). Out of these, 16 characteristics are stereotypically masculine (e.g., adventurous, independent) and 16 characteristics are stereotypically feminine (e.g., adaptable, sensitive to others' needs). The scale range is from 1 (never or almost never true) to 7 (always or almost always true) and hence, the individual's score also ranges from 1 to 7. The sex role inventory is essentially self-administering and may be given to

individuals as well as to large groups. It takes about 10 to 15 minutes to respond to the scale. In the present scale individuals are categorised into one of the following four sex roles based on the median split of the masculinity and femininity scores: (1) androgynous, (2) masculine, (3) feminine, and (4) undifferentiated.

3. Self-concept questionnaire. The self-concept inventory developed by Saraswat (1992) provides six separate dimensions of self-concept, viz., physical, social, intellectual, moral, educational and temperamental self-concept (Appendix C). It also gives a total self-concept score. The inventory contains 48 items. Each dimension contains eight items, and each item has five alternatives. Responses are obtained on the test booklet itself. There is no time limit but generally 20 minutes are sufficient for responding to all the items.
4. Achievement motive test. The achievement motive test developed by Bhargava (1984), measures the N Ach and is based on the lines following the pattern of Dr. Bishwanath Mukherji and the method of sentence completion test (Appendix D). The test consists of 50 items of incomplete sentences which are to be completed by the subject by putting a tick mark on any one of the three alternative responses given against each items.
5. Occupational aspiration scale. A scale for measuring the Level of Occupational Aspiration (LOA) was developed by Haller and Miller (1967) on the basis of rank ordering of 90 representative occupations out of a list prepared by the National Opinion Research Centre (NORC, 1947) of the USA. The present scale was adapted by the investigator by getting the prestige rating of 150 occupational titles, identical with the NORC list (Appendix E). These titles were taken from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles of India. The number was reduced to

108 by a panel of judges who were employed in different occupations. The final list was administered on 200 persons and were asked to rate each occupation on a five-point scale ranging from an occupation of 'excellent' to 'poor' standing.

Procedure of data collection.

The present study was conducted in the following three phases:

Phase I: A pilot study was conducted on a representative sample of 30 subjects to test the suitability, and applicability of the tools used in the present study. The pilot study revealed that the tools were found to be suitable. In the case of the Sex Role Inventory, however, it was found that some of the personality traits (characteristics) had to be explained in simpler terms or given equivalent meaning in the local language. The investigator thus prepared for the same during the actual data collection. Also, the Deo - Mohan projective test of Achievement Motivation (Set of cards) (N - Ach) was initially given to the students. The test consisted of 5 pictures in 2 sets separately for boys and girls. The traditional TAT type content analysis system of scoring was to be adopted. However, as the pictures lacked clarity, the adolescents faced a problem in comprehending the tasks that were being performed. Finally, the Achievement Motive test by Bhargava was used after translating it from Hindi to English.

Phase II: Principals of different schools were contacted personally and the time and place for administering the tools was scheduled according to the convenience of the classroom teachers.

Phase III: For the purpose of the actual study, the investigator met the students in small groups in their classrooms. The students were

classified into the three social classes based on Stratified Random Sampling. The booklet containing the scales (social class scale, sex role inventory, self-concept scale, achievement motivation scale and the occupational aspiration scale) was distributed among the subjects after the initial rapport was established. The subjects were assured that their responses would be treated as confidential. They were asked not to discuss the tools amongst themselves, and the need for "individual opinion" was stressed. On completion the booklets, were closely scrutinised. Incomplete, wrongly filled or copied answers were eliminated from data set.

Plan of Analysis.

The statistical techniques used to analyze the data are stated below :

T - tests were computed to find out

- if there was any significant gender difference in the vocational aspirations of adolescents
- if there was any significant difference in the vocational aspirations of adolescents with high and low self-concepts
- if adolescents from the two different study streams , namely, arts/ commerce and science, differed significantly in their (a) self-concept (b) achievement motivation (c) vocational aspirations.

One way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were computed to find out

- the relationship between the vocational aspirations of adolescents and their social class (i.e., high, middle and low)

- the relationship between the vocational aspirations of adolescents and their sex roles (i.e., androgynous, masculine, feminine and undifferentiated)
- the relationship between the vocational aspirations of adolescents and their achievement motivation (high, average and low).

A chi - square and contingency coefficient were computed to find out the relationship between study stream (i.e., arts /commerce and science) and sex roles (i.e., androgynous, masculine, feminine and undifferentiated).

Results and Interpretation

Vocational Aspirations and Psychosocial Variables

With regard to gender, girls were found to be significantly lower than boys in their vocational aspirations. Basically, Indian social norms prescribe two clearly differentiated roles for men and women, and majority of the Indian women have been socialised to believe in the traditional subordinate role - that of giving priority to family and children. Therefore, venturing into the outer world and exploring and aspiring for something which falls out of the stereotyped may not elicit interest or effort.

Social class in relation to vocational aspirations revealed a significant difference. A probable reason for this could be that the attitudes, values, life-styles and goals of people are different by virtue of their status in the society. Differential socio-economic class structures and the related ethos create differential patterns of social ambiance for the child. For instance, the learning environments in the middle and upper classes seem to be aimed

more at setting long-term goals and they emphasise a stronger sense of control over events and a greater optimism as to the realisation of one's future goals. The lower class individuals on the other hand, seem many a times to be forced to compromise with situational and societal demands which are different from personal demands.

Sex roles were not significantly related to vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls. One of the reasons for this could be the possibility of a discrepancy between one's wishes and actually choosing a vocation. That is, when lifting the restrictions and requesting their ideal vocational aspirations, respondents' aspirations seem to be relatively high. Thus, it is likely that the adolescents belonging to the various sex role categories had similar higher aspirations, not keeping in mind the various limitations they might have to encounter. However, the trend was in favour of masculine and androgynous adolescents. Those with a masculine sex role orientation aspired for higher vocations, whereas, adolescents with a feminine sex role orientation had the lowest means. Basically, both males and females choose their vocations for traditional reasons, i.e., male dominated fields are selected for their status and potential for material gain, and female dominated fields for their value on service and interpersonal skills.

Self-concept and the vocational aspirations did not reveal any significant difference. A close relationship has been reported between high career maturity scores and higher self-concept. However, in the present research, no such evidence has been revealed. This may well be an indication that by and large the adolescents' vocational choice has been in consonance with their perceptions of their abilities. Also, in a traditional culture such as India, one's self-concept is intricately interlinked to one's gender role orientation. Thus, choosing vocations that are in line with one's gender, would generally elicit positive reinforcement from significant others, thereby, making the adolescent feel fairly satisfied with oneself.

There was a significant difference between achievement motivation and the vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls. Researchers in the field of education have demonstrated that academic performance is invariably the function of achievement motivation (Gupta & Veeraraghavan, 1989). Achievement motivation is closely related to vocational aspirations, and therefore it would be natural for high achieving adolescents to have higher aspirations and low achieving adolescents to have lower aspirations.

Study Stream and Psychosocial Variables

A significant relationship was revealed between sex roles and study stream. More adolescents from the science stream have a masculine orientation. According to Gottfredson (1981) investigative work (science and medicine) is the field with the highest average prestige, and traditionally, the science stream has always been viewed as a masculine domain, reserved mainly for the males. Those who opt for this field are basically supposed to be bright, serious, career minded individuals, with high goals and aspirations in life, as well as high commitment levels and men are usually socialized to develop these traits. As they have a very clear goal in their mind, they are on the whole more circumspect and thus end up performing well. Hence, adolescent girls as well as boys having masculine traits have opted for science. Interestingly, there are more androgynous adolescents in the arts/commerce field than the science stream. Due to the changing times there are a lot of opportunities as well as varieties in jobs that are not highly sex-typed in the arts/commerce field, hence it is possible to pursue varied vocations such as executive, linguistic, computational business, etc.

An interesting finding revealed in the present study was that adolescents belonging to the arts/commerce stream have a higher self-concept than those from the science stream. A similar finding was revealed

in Arora's (1985) study wherein the medical students had a low self-concept. The reason may be that the students from the science field may not feel satisfied with what they have achieved and, therefore, strive to improve upon what they actually possess. This desire may be due to the fact that medical professions are put on a high pedestal by society, family members, close relatives and friends. expects more from doctors. Thus, besides being accountable to themselves, they are accountable to others too. Basically, the respondents from the science stream face a lot of competition and have to undergo a lot of pressures to excel. Often they develop a deep rooted fear of failure that they will not be able to do as well and all this may eventually lead to a lower self-concept. Those belonging to the arts/commerce stream, on the other hand, do not necessarily have as high aspirations as those from the science stream, and they do not have much to lose even if they do not perform as well.

With reference to achievement motivation the results have revealed that adolescents belonging to the science stream had higher achievement motivation scores than those from the arts/commerce stream. This needs to be viewed in light of the finding that those who had higher vocational aspirations belonged to the science stream. According to Gupta and Veeraraghavan (1989) researches in the field of education have demonstrated that academic performance is invariably the function of achievement motivation. That is, those who have higher achievement motivation scores are more inclined towards academics, hence, it is not surprising that their vocational aspirations are also higher.

Conclusion and Implications

The findings of the present research reveal the social and psychological factors that influence adolescents' vocational aspirations. The major trends indicated are in the expected directions, that is, gender, social class and achievement motivation show a significant relationship with the vocational aspirations.

Gender, sex roles and social class are pervasive variables that influence much of one's life goals. Interestingly, despite modernization, the traditional orientation of adolescent girls aspiring for lesser whereas adolescents with a masculine and androgynous sex role orientation aspiring for higher vocations persists. This indicates the deep-rooted sociocultural beliefs and attitudes that reinforce differential gender socialization. In the last two decades, however, concern about vocational equality has focused on men as well as women. Empirical investigations have emphasized encouraging women to cross over into traditionally male occupations for higher psychological and monetary rewards and to reduce the sexually segregated nature of the labor force.

The significant influence of social class on one's vocational aspirations must be viewed in relation to gender and sex role orientation. It is quite likely that families from lower social strata are more steeped in tradition. Coupled with a relatively small range of experiences beyond the family, it is not surprising that the adolescent develops aspirations that are more realistic in their social context. Whereas, adolescents' belonging to high social class aspire for vocations with higher money and prestige attached to them.

Interestingly, a crucial variable such as self-concept does not seem to play a significant role in determining one's vocational aspiration. This may well be an indication that by and large the adolescents' vocational choice has

been in consonance with their perceptions of their abilities. Also, in a traditional culture such as India, one's self-concept is intricately inter linked to one's gender role orientation. Thus, choosing vocations that are in line with one's gender, would generally elicit positive reinforcement from significant others, thereby, making the adolescent feel fairly satisfied with oneself.

As achievement motivation is closely related to high academic achievement it is natural for high achieving adolescents' to have higher aspirations and low achieving adolescents' to have lower aspirations.

With respect to the study stream, more adolescents' from the science stream have a masculine orientation. Whereas, there are more androgynous adolescents in the arts/commerce stream. They also have a higher self-concept than those from the science stream. Basically, society, family members, close relatives and friends expect a lot from the adolescents' from the science field. Therefore, besides being accountable to themselves, they are accountable to others too. In the process they might develop a deep rooted fear of failure that they will not be able to do as well and all this may eventually lead to a lower self-concept. Adolescents' from the science stream also had high N-ach scores, besides having higher vocational aspirations. As stated earlier, those who have high N-ach scores are more inclined towards academics, hence it is not surprising that they have high vocational aspirations.

One of the major implications of the present study would be to make adolescent girls and boys aware of the range of vocations available to them. Both, girls and boys can be encouraged to aspire for vocations that are stereotypically dominated by one gender. For instance, if a boy has the aptitude for becoming a teacher, he may be encouraged to pursue this vocation. It is heartening to note that the feminist movement and the increased communication network has enhanced awareness about various

vocations and opened new avenues. Consequently, the present day adolescents' experience greater educational and career opportunities than ever before.

One of the fall outs of such scenario is that students often make career plans without possessing adequate knowledge about various vocations. Thus, they fall an easy prey to pressure from parents and suggestions from friends, and aspire for unrealistic career decisions without assessing their suitability for themselves. This leads, in many instances, to floundering from job to job, resulting in dissatisfaction and maladjustment in the vocation thus selected. In view of this, adolescents need individual as well as group counseling to enable them to choose vocations that are in line with their interest, aptitude and ability. In fact, such counseling may also be extended to parents as they play a significant role in this process. Parents should set up a democratic home environment by showing unconditional positive regard for the adolescent, by listening to his or her ideas, suggestions, opinions and points of view, be they idiosyncratic or revolutionary. Parents can induce a meaningful dialogue with the adolescent on significant issues like future goals and plans, about their own selves, and possible vocations they can opt for.

Suggestions for future research.

1. The present research included adolescents from the urban area only. A comparative study of the urban and rural adolescents can be carried out since the social setting and economic conditions are different in urban and rural areas.
2. The present study took into consideration only English medium schools. Further research can be carried out on adolescents from

Gujarati or Hindi medium schools since the social setting, economic conditions and home environment in the schools are likely to be different.

3. The present study dealt with the perspectives of adolescents. It would be interesting to know what parents themselves think about adolescents' choices of vocations, how they encourage or discourage their children from choosing certain vocations, the factors that guide them to direct their children's choices, and such other aspects.
4. In terms of methodology, it may be useful to conduct a more in depth study using qualitative research methods such as individual in depth interviews and small group discussions to capture some of the thought processes that adolescents' experience while aspiring for certain vocations.