VOCATIONAL PREFERENCES OF ADOLESCENTS AND CERTAIN SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL VARIABLES INFLUENCING THEM

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ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to answer two questions. Why do adolescents prefer a vocation as they do? And if they are definite for this, can their preferences be predicted? Incidentally it was examined if they had any patterns in their vocational preferences and the influencing variables that were selected to explain them.

The study was adequately delimited and carried out on a sample of 600 urban male adolescents of Rewari district Haryana. The role of intelligence, scholastic achievement, socio-economic status, ten values (religious, social, democratic, aesthetic, economic, knowledge, hedonistic, power, family prestige and health) and 15 needs (achievement, deference, order, exhibition, autonomy, affiliation, intraception, succorance, dominance, abasement, nurturance, change, endurance, heterosexuality, aggression) as influencing variables for vocational preferences in ten areas(physical science, biological science, computational, business, executive, persuasive, linguistic, humanitarian, artistic and musical), was studied. Standardized and well known tests were used for collecting the data. For example, Tandon's Group Test of Intelligence (1/61) was used to assess intelligence, High School examination marks of the Boards of Secondary education, Haryana and CBSE for scholastic achievement, R.L. Bhardwaj's Socio-economic Status Scale for socio-economic Status, Sherry-Varma Personal Values Questionnaire for values and Tripathi Personal Preference Schedule for needs.

Data were analyzed with hand and also with the help of computer to find out patterns of preferences, values and needs among the adolescents; coefficients of correlation between the preferences and the variables and regression equations to predict the preferences of the three groups of students (arts, commerce and science) in the ten vocational areas, necessary X2 and 't' tests were used to test the significance of a statistics whenever necessary. In order to carry out the whole work systematically and purposefully hypotheses were framed in null form and consequences were deduced from them. These consequences were put to empirical test.

INTRODUCTION

Work is as old as life itself. From the very beginning man has been working for his survival and for improving the quality of his life. In the primitive days the needs of man were very few and so were the types of work. But as human civilization advanced and his needs multiplied, millions of ramification of work shot up. Specialization in work became necessary in view of the fact that each of it needed special abilities and training to do it effectively and efficiently. Nobody could do every work with competence. Man felt that he had aptitude for certain types of work and could do them with ease and confidence. For others, he felt, he was not meant.

The concept of vocation grew from this feeling of man that he could do and had the ability for doing only some work and not all. Broadly speaking the meaning of the term is: feeling that one is called to (and qualified for) a certain kind of work. It is a calling for which a person has aptitude. In modern use the term also connotes trade and occupation. In short vocation is occupation for which a person has liking and aptitude. There are a number of vocations in the world of work. They can be classified into broad areas such as executive, scientific, persuasive, computational, linguistic, business, humanitarian, etc. The vocations in one area differ from those in others in respect of the abilities and skills needed to

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achieve success in them and in respect of the nature of work-activity and work values, viz. opportunity for progress, prestige, economic gains, adventure, sameness, security, opportunity to be creative, etc. As a man has personality, so has a vocation. The adolescents are exposed to the vocations carried out around them or they learn about some in distant places through education in course of their development. They also have information about the nature of the role expectation, status and work values of these vocations. Many times they form their own opinion about them on the basis of their stereotypes.

The adolescents prefer only a few of the many vocations about which they have some knowledge. This is known as their vocational preference. The term preference implies that we like some vocation or vocations more than the others. Choosing a vocation is an inevitable function of modern social life. In the wake of industrialization and its consequences, urbanization, the world of work has grown very complex. The traditional social structure of work in which a man used to work and certain categories of vocations which were looked down upon with contempt are considered respectable today. For example, tilling the land with a plough was below the dignity of high caste Hindus. But today they do not hesitate in tilling the same land by tractor. Today the task of vocational preference, therefore, has become very difficult for the adolescents. They are in a very bewildering position in view of the dilemma of traditional and emergent values. They are at the cross road. They have not broken away from the past totally nor have they accepted the new values. Under such circumstances it has become essential to understand them adequately before any plan can be made to help them adjust to the roles of emerging adult society.

Two questions have become very puzzling today:

1. Do the adolescents really make vocational preferences, or they just accept any vocation as it comes their way without giving any thought to the future success in life? If the answer to this question is in affirmative, that is, they make vocational preferences consciously and deliberately, another pertinent question arises.

2. Why do adolescents prefer vocations as they do, that is, what are their motives for preferring a vocation? Therefore, a need for finding out the factors which influence the vocational preferences of adolescents in the changing Indian society was rightly felt.

A review of the literature reveals that a very few studies have been done to find out the factors influencing the adolescents' vocational preferences. Classical literature reveals that human motives for doing a work are numerous such as needs, values, interests, intelligence, attitude, scholastic achievement, socio-economic status temperament, self concept etc. Moreover job centred factors are also responsible for the vocational preferences. Terwillinger James (1963) found that vocational preferences are determined by the activities which are involved in a job rather than by mere personal attributes which may characterize it. Bhatt L.J. found that security wages, benefits, advancement, working conditions, type of work, hours of work, supervisor, co-workers and holidays are important factors for the vocational preferences of an individual. All these factors are occupation centred. Super, Starishevsky, Milin and Jardaan (1963) studied self concept in relation to vocational preferences. They found that people prefer vocations perceived as congruent with their self concepts. Douglas H. Powel (1960), Laurence B. Green (1965), Steward L. (1959), MC Arthur C.C. (1965) and Grigg A.E. (1959) found that parental influences and socio-economic status influence the vocational preferences of the adolescents. W.H. Sewel (1695) found that the vocational preferences are also influenced by the community of residence. S.J. Segal (1961), Menninger K. (1957) and Beall Lynette (1967) found that intelligence and scholastic achievement influence the vocational preferences of the adolescents to a great extent. Ralph Samuel Kalpan (1962), Jack C. Meruin (1959), and Weistein M.S. 919530 and Krishna

Kumar (1967) found empirically that temperament, needs and other personality factors influence the vocational preferences of adolescents.

Values of an individual are very important determinants of his vocational preferences. Different types of values like theoretical, economic, political, social, aesthetic etc. motivate individuals to prefer different types of vocations. If a man's economic value is high, it is reasonable to expect that he would prefer a vocation which provides him an opportunity to be wealthy.

Studies by Kinnane John. F. and Suziedetis Antanas (1962) Ivey (1963), Eyde Lorraince (1962), Holland (1963) Mehta and Khare (1967) and Wooddruff (1942) all reveal that values play an important role in determining the vocational preferences of adolescents. The studies found out the relationship of individual needs and values with vocational preferences. But most of these studies have attempted to examine the role of one or two factors, at the most, in vocational preferences, As yet no serious attempt seems to have been made to examine the role of several factors in this important matter of life. In any individual's personality these factors always exist in some pattern and it is this pattern which determines the behaviour.

The studies by Sharma and Bhargava (1993); Shukla (1994); Sharma (1994); Mattoo (1994); Sheikh and Krishna (1995); Jansari and P. Kumar (1999) conducted in the field of vocational interests are also very important. Some have emphasized the role of intelligence and scholastic achievement. Out of these some studies have expressed the role of parental attitude and stream of study. One or two studies have given the importance to the role of socio-economic status in choosing a vocation by the adolescents. Katiyar (1975); Yadav Preeti (2008); and Jyoti (2007) have studied the relationship of values and vocational choices. If we put a look on all these studies, we find that most of the researchers have studied the role of one or two variables in the vocational preferences of adolescents. None of the researchers has studied the effect of five or more variables at one time.

However, it would be rather unmanageable for an individual researcher to study the role of all of them in shaping the vocational preferences of adolescents. The investigator, therefore, chose only five categories of socio psychological variables viz. needs, values, scholastic achievement, intelligence and socio-economic status as they have been considered as the most important human motives for preferring different vocations.

OBJECTIVES

(a) Major objectives:-

(1) To find out the nature and extent of relationship of intelligence, scholastic achievement, socio-economic status, values and needs with vocational preferences to determine their role as influencing variables.

(2) To predict the vocational preferences by means of intelligence scholastic achievement, socio-economic status, values and needs.

(b) Subsidiary objectives:-

(1) To find out the patterns of vocational preferences of adolescents.

(2) To compare the vocational preferences of arts, commerce and science students.

(3) To find out the value system of adolescents.

(4) To find out the need patterns of adolescents.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

(1) Adolescents have realistic vocational preferences.

(2) Vocational preferences are purposeful activities and as such they are guided by some motives or factors and are not merely random acts.

(3) Vocational Preferences have their roots in the socio-cultural soil of a society.

HYPOTHESES

In order to carry out the study with clarify and arrive at testable conclusions the hypotheses are stated in null form as follows:

(1) Intelligence is not an influencing variable for vocational preferences of adolescents.

(2) Scholastic achievement is not an influencing variable for vocational preferences of adolescents.

(3) Socio-economic status is not an influencing variable for vocational preferences of adolescents.

(4) Values are not influencing variables for vocational preferences of adolescents.

(5) Needs are not influencing variables for vocational preferences of adolescents.

(6) Intelligence, scholastic achievement, socio-economic status, values and needs are not the predictors of vocational preferences.

DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD AND SAMPLE

The study has been delimited in respect of content and sample considering availability of resources, time and tools.

The study has been delimited in respect of vocational preferences, needs values and socio-economic status and scholastic achievement of adolescents. Of whatever intelligence and scholastic achievement the adolescents come in the sample has been studied. The delimitation has been as follows:

VOCATIONS

Factors for only four most preferred vocations from among those listed in Thrustone's Vocational Interest Schedule have been studied. The rank order of the vocations has been determined on the basis of the first choice of the adolescents in order to form exclusive groups.

NEEDS

The Study has been delimited to the following fifteen needs measured by Tripathi's personal preference schedule (TPPS).
(1) Abasement (2) Aggression (3) Affiliation
(4) Deference (5) Change (6) Dominance
(7) Achievement (8) Nurturance (9) Order
(10) Autonomy (11) Heterosexuality
(12) Exhibition (13) Endurance (14) Intraception
(15) Succorance

VALUES

The Study has been delimited to the following ten values:
(1) Religious (6) Knowledge
(2) Social (7) Hedonistic
(3) Democratic (8) Power
(4) Aesthetic (9) Family Prestige
(5) Economic (10) Health

PROCEDURE

Methodology: Descriptive Survey method of research has been used as it is suited for the problem under investigation.

SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE

Six hundred students of class XI have been selected by multi stage cluster-sampling technique for the present study. The students belonged to the three faculties Arts, Science and Commerce.

TOOLS

(1) Thrustone Interest Schedule
(2) R.K. Tandon's Group Test of Intelligence (Samoohik Mansik Yogyata Pariksha) 1/61
(3) Socio-economic Status Scale by R.L. Bhardwaj
(4) Personal Values Questionnaire by Sherry and Varma
(5) Tripathi's Personal Preference Schedule for measuring needs
(6) Aggregate of the marks of X class Examination

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data has been analyzed with the help of suitable statistical techniques like mean, S.D., 't' values, coefficients of correlation, multiple R, regression coefficients etc.

FINDINGS

The coefficients of correlation of intelligence, scholastic-achievement, socio-economic status

and vocational preferences. It was found that intelligence had positive relationship with the vocational preferences of arts students in physical science, biological science, computational, executive, persuasive, linguistic, humanitarian and artistic areas. For science students the relationship of intelligence with preferences in physical science, biological science, computational, executive, persuasive, linguistic, humanitarian, and artistic areas was negative. The null hypothesis that intelligence was not an influencing variables for vocational preferences was rejected for arts and science groups.

Scholastic achievement had positive correlation with preference in biological science area for the arts students; negative correlation with preference in business area for the commerce students, and again negative correlation with preference in biological science, computational, executive persuasive and linguistic areas for the science students. In these respects only, the null hypothesis was rejected and scholastic achievement was found to be an influencing variable. In other respects it was not rejected and scholastic achievement was not found to be an influencing variable for vocational preferences.

Socio-economic status was found to be positively correlated with the preference of arts students in biological science, business and persuasive areas; with the preference of commerce students in business areas, and negatively correlated with preference of science students in computational, executive, persuasive and linguistic areas. The null hypothesis in respect of this variable (socio-economic status) was, therefore, partly rejected.
A consistency about the nature of these influencing variables observed. All these three independent variables acted as positive influencers for the arts students and negative for the science. The picture of their role as influencing variable was blurred and nebulous in case of commerce students.

The significant correlation between values and vocational preferences. Among the values, family prestige, health, hedonistic, knowledge, democratic and aesthetic, were significant influencers for vocational preferences of the adolescents. The null hypothesis that values are not influencing variables for the vocational preferences was rejected in respect of them. One interesting finding was that role of different values as influencers were not the same for the different streams, nor for different vocations. However, religious, social, economic and power values did not emerge as significant influencing variables for the vocational preferences in this study.

The significant correlations between needs and vocational were found. The null hypothesis that needs were not the influencing variables for the vocational preferences of the adolescents was rejected for all the needs except aggression, intraception, and autonomy. Here, too, the role of the needs as influencing variables was not even and it varied from vocation to vocation and from one course of study to another. The significant regression coefficients, 't' values, multiple R and R2 for the ten areas of vocational preferences were found. The null hypothesis that the independence variables were not the predictors of the vocational preference of the adolescents was rejected partly. Intelligence, scholastic achievement, socio-economic status, values(knowledge, health, hedonistic) and needs (all except need autonomy) were significant predictors of preference in one or the other vocational area and for one and the other group of students. The most frequent predictors, however, were scholastic achievement, socio-economic status, need order, need dominance, need nurturance, need change, intelligence, health value, need affiliation and need heterosexuality.

The means, rank orders of means and standard deviations of vocational preferences of all the groups. Here, it was found that the most preferred vocational fields for the adolescents were executive, linguistic and physical science, and the least preferred were musical, artistic and

biological science. Their preferences for computational, business, persuasive, linguistic and humanitarian areas were moderate. However, the patterns of vocational preferences of students belonging to different courses of study were different.

The most preferred vocational areas for the arts group were found to be executive, linguistic and persuasive, and the least preferred were musical, biological science and artistic. The pattern of preferences for the commerce group was executive, computational and business as the most preferred and biological science, musical and physical science as the least preferred. Similarly science students accorded top ranks to vocations in the physical science, executive and biological science areas and lowest ranks to musical, artistic and computational areas. The relationship of courses of study with the vocational preferences of adolescents was clear from the patterns of the preferences of the students from the different streams. Their vocational preferences conformed to their courses of study.

The means, rank order of means and standard deviation of values of the students. Among the adolescents of the sample were studied. The hedonistic, economic and power values were at the top and democratic, knowledge and family prestige values were at the bottom. The other values occupied intermediate position in their value system. The value systems of the three groups were different from one another. However, science and commerce groups were less dissimilar from each other than from arts group. The three dominant values for arts students were hedonistic, economic and aesthetic; for commerce group hedonistic, power and economic and for the science group hedonistic, economic and power. Similarly three weak values among the arts students were democratic, family prestige and social; among the commerce students knowledge, democratic and social and among the science students knowledge, family prestige and aesthetic.

The three dominant needs of the adolescents were order, deference and achievement and their three weak needs were dominance, intraception and aggression. The other needs occupied intermediate position in their hierarchy of needs. However, this pattern did not remain invariant over the three educational streams. The dominant needs were abasement, endurance and deference for the arts group; deference, order and exhibition for the commerce group and order, deference and achievement for the science group. Need aggression, intraception and succorance were weak among the arts students; nurturance, dominance and intraception among the commerce students and dominance, intraception and nurturance among the science students.

Table showing   Coefficients of Correlation of Intelligence, Scholastic Achievement and Socio-economic Status with Vocational Preferences

(N=200 for each group)

Area	Intelligence			Scholastic achievement			Socio-economic Status		
	Arts	Commerce	Science	Arts	Commerce	Science	Arts	Commerce	Science
Physical Sc.	.147*	.14	.036	.072	.066	.073	.039*	.075	.031
Biological Sci	.157*	.13	-.194**	.142*	.067	-.211**	.179*	-.023	-.121
Computational	.116*	.067	.256**	.110	.122	.189**	.119	.023	.289*
Business	.111	-.114	-.123	.053	-.141*	-.013	.145*	.201**	-.061
Executive	.147*	.001	-.189**	.046	.001	-.149	.132	.075	-.138*
Persuasive	.156*	-.041	-.342**	.048	-.041	-.248**	.144*	-.002	-.345*
Linguistic	.188**	-.0002	-.197**	.091	.023	-.183**	.108	-.015	-.238
Humanitarian	.190**	.009	.153*	.069	.025	.126	.067	.027	.195
Artistic	.139*	.001	.140*	.042	.038	.116	.096	.025	.136
Musical	.069	-.105	.035	-.003	-.129	.081	.066	-.011	.02

* Significant at .05 level
** Significant at .01 level

70

Table showing Significant correlations between values and vocational preferences

Values	Physical science	Biological	Computational	Business	Executive	Persuasive	Linguistic	Humanitarian	Artistic	Musical
Religious										
Social										
Democratic			-.152* (S)	-.176* (S)	-.148* (S)					
Aesthetic	-.168* (A)								.198** (C)	
Economic Knowledge		.138* (C)	-.151* (A)		-.234** (S)	.167* (S)	-.167* (S)			
Hedonistic				.181** (S)	.151* (A)			-.166* (C)		.160* (A)
Power Family Prestige	.139* (S)	.235** (S)	.228** (S)		.167* (S)	.238** (S)	.199** (S)	.195** (S)		-.155* (A)
Health	.182** (C)	.168* (C) -.177* (S)	.228** (S) .167* (A)		.166* (A)	.148* (A)				

Key to symbols: (A) For arts students   *Significant at .05 level
                   (C) For commerce students   **Significant at .01 level
                   (S) For science students

Table Showing Significant correlations between values and vocational preferences

Values	Phy. Sci.	Bio Sci.	Computational	Business	Executive	Persuasive	Linguistic	Humanitarian	Artistic	Musical
			Areas of preferences							
Achievement			.157** (A)							
Deference			.202** (A) .147* (C)							
Order Exhibition Autonomy	.143* (C)					.255** (A)	.200** (A) .157* (C)		.154* (A)	
Affiliation	-.177* (S)									
Intraception Succorance		.0148* (C)								
Dominance						.160* (S)				
Abasement Nurturance	-.167* (A) .185** (A)							.159* (S)		
Change	.138* (A) -.175* (C) .139* (S)						.139* (C)			
Endurance	.146* (S)									
Heterosexuality Aggression			-.211** (C)	-.145* (C)						

Key to symbols: (A) Arts Group (C) Commerce Group (S) Science Group
* Significant at .05 level
** Significant at .01 level

Table Showing Significant regression coefficients and 't' values for different areas of vocational preferences.

Area	Arts Group			Commerce Group			Science Group		
	Significant Predictors	Reg. Coeff	'T' Value	Significant Predictors	Reg. Coeff	'T' Value	Significant Predictors	Reg. Coeff.	'T' Value
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Physical Science	Intelligence	.106	3.331**	Need Exhibition	-.126	-2.126**	Need Nurturance	.122	2.591
	Achievement	-.018	-2.285**	Need change	-.100	-1.991*	Need change	.107	2.501
	Health Value	.082	2.179*						
	Need Exhibition	.080	2.144*						
	Need Dominance	-.096	-2.569*						
	Need Nurturance	-.039	-2.207*						
	Need Aggression	-.095	-2.177*						
	Multiple R = .487,	R² = .237		R = .371	R² = .137		R = .424,	R² = .180	
Biological Science	Achievement	.016	2.297	Knowledge Value	.097	2.073*	Nil		
	Health Value	.071	2.024	Need Nurturance	0.134	2.368*			
	Multiple R = .403,	R² = .162		R = .400	R² = .160		R = .376,	R² = .142	
			(Table)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Computational	Achievement	.063	2.278*	Achievement	.023	2.188*	Socio Economic Status	.076	2.720**
	Health Value	.128	2.633**	Need Nurturance	-.135	2.252*			
	Need Deference	.122	2.871**	Need Hetero sexuality	.223	2.137*			
	Multiple R .487,	R² .237		R .437	R² .191		R .441,	R² .194	
Business	Socio Economic Status	.067	2.348*	Socio Economic Status	.117	3.126**	Need Abasement	.101	2.167*
	Need Achievement	.122	2.368*	Need Affiliation	.171	2.221*			
	Need Order	.180	3.226**						
	Need Affiliation	.189	3.111**						
	Need Succorance	.138	2.259*						
	Need Dominance	.150	3.011**						
	Need Abasement	.167	3.173**						
	Need Change	.117	2.326*						
	Need Endurance	.193	2.517**						
	Need Hetero-sexuality	.263	2.737**						
	Need Aggression	.115	1.970*						
	Multiple R .456,	R² .208		R .472	R² .178		R .384,	R² .146	

72

(Table)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Executive	Achievement	.066	2.046*	Nil			Need Dominance	0.126	2.101*
	Hedonistic Value	.138	2.168*						
	Health Value	.128	2.250*						
Persuasive	Multiple Need Order	.140	R .424, 2.763**	R^2 .179	R .266	R^2 .071	R .438, Intelligence	R^2 .192 -.088	-2.141*
				Need Intraception	-.229	-2.843**			
				Need Dominance	-.162	-2.073	Socio Economic Status	-.064	-2.554*
				Need Change	-.128	-2.183			
				Need Hetro-sexuality	-.252	-2.227			
Linguistic	Multiple Intelligence	.088	R = .424, 2.007*	R^2=.180	R=.370 Nil	R^2=.137	R=.547,	R^2=.299 Nil	
	Need Order	.141	2.526*						
Humanita-rian	Multiple Intelligence	.110	R — .449, 2.555*	R^2—.202	R—.370 Need	R^2—.137	R—.431,	R^2—.186 Nil	
					-.184	-2.170			
	Need Order	.109	2.012*						
	Need Affiliation	.121	2.097*						
	Multiple		R = .453,	R^2=.205	R= .372	R^2=.139	R=.405,	R^2=.164	

Contd....

(Table)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Artistic	Hedonistic Value	.106	2.191*		Nil		Need Intraception	-0.113	1.992*
	Need Deference	.084	2.224*						
	Need Endurance	.092	1.970*						
	Multiple		R = .339,	R^2=.115	R= .367	R^2=.135	R=.324,	R^2=.105	
Musical	Need Change	.081	2.014*		Nil			Nil	
	Multiple		R — .339,	R^2—.115	R— .332	R^2—.111	R—.338,	R^2—.114	

* Significant at .05 level.
** Significant at .01 level.

Table showing Means, Rank Order of Means, Standard Deviations of Vocational Preferences of Adolescents.

Needs		Total group (N=600)	Rank	Arts group (N=200)	Rank	Commerce group (N=200)	Rank	Science Group (N=200)	Rank
Physical Science	Mean	7.222	III	4.490	VII	4.360	VIII	12.815	I
	S.D.	5.435		3.195		3.967		3.972	
Biological Sci.	Mean	5.425	VIII	3.455	IX	3.665	X	9.155	III
	S.D.	4.836		2.876		3.729		5.218	
Computational	Mean	6.729	VII	5.725	V	8.735	II	5.720	VIII
	S.D.	4.240		4.140		4.023		3.835	
Business	Mean	7.025	IV	6.075	VI	8.630	III	6.370	VII
	S.D.	4.353		4.194		4.808		3.520	
Executive	Mean	10.403	I	10.810	V	9.150	I	11.250	II
	S.D.	4.681		6.694		4.719		4.380	
Persuasive	Mean	7.098	IV	7.494	I	7.135	IV	6.695	VI
	S.D.	3.931		3.867		4.232		3.655	
Linguistic	Mean	7.230	II	7.475	III	6.830	VI	7.385	V
	S.D.	4.199		4.300		4.450		3.813	
Humanitarian	Mean	7.037	V	6.695	II	6.870	V	7.590	IV
	S.D.	4.247		4.226		4.444		3.999	
Artistic	Mean	4.867	IX	3.770	VIII	5.570	VII	5.305	IX
	S.D.	3.811		3.489		3.956		3.737	
Musical	Mean	4.025	X	2.700	X	4.235	IX	5.100	X
	S.D.	4.205		3.160		4.303		4.664	

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