



Impact of gender on self-esteem, career maturity and academic background among under graduate students

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Abstract

This paper mainly tries to find out if there is any gender wise difference in regard to self-esteem, career maturity and academic background among the students at under graduate level. Stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting the sample comprising of 600 under graduate students from 13 colleges affiliated to University of Calcutta. Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) developed By Singh and Srivastava (2010), Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) developed by Joshi and Chauhan (2015) and self-made Interview Schedule for measuring the academic background of the students were used for collecting data. Data were analyzed by using Mean, Standard Deviation (S.D.) and t-test. The findings of the study revealed that comparatively male students scored significantly higher than the female students in regard to self-esteem. However, in regard to career maturity and academic background no significant difference was found between male and female students of under graduate level.

Keywords: self-esteem, career maturity, academic background, gender, under graduate students

Introduction

Work is a means of subsistence, a source of psychological and social identity, a source of self-fulfilment and self-realization. Selection of work/ job/ career is thus a very crucial decision in an individual's life and is generally dependent on various factors like academic achievement, self-esteem, career maturity and so on. Academic achievement means the academic performance of the student all throughout his/her academic career. It means the total knowledge and skills obtained by a student in various subjects taught at school, college and university level. Self-concept refers to the general idea that people have about their own self and self-esteem refers to a person's evaluation and feelings about his/her own capabilities. Career maturity can be defined as the degree to which individuals are prepared to make fine educational or vocational decisions. It not only depends on their judgement of themselves and of the world of work but also their ability to make decisions and a positive attitude towards making proper career decisions. Parental education, occupation, income and even parent-child relation, all affects career maturity of an individual. Only a right decision in regard to career choice can bring about individual as well as social and economic development. On the other hand only when an individual is overall contented and happy he/she can contribute for the betterment himself/herself and of the society at large. Self-esteem is related to the process of becoming a self-actualizing person. All people have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based sense of self-regard or self-respect and they need esteem from themselves and from others (Maslow, 1954). Career maturity denotes the degree to which individuals are prepared to make educational or vocational decisions reflecting on the consistency of career choices in relation to their personal capabilities and

employment opportunities and effectiveness in dealing with the problems which may arise in due course of time (Crites, 1978). The aggregation of marks obtained by the students in all the previous final examinations i.e. tenth, twelfth grade and University examinations (conducted by different boards/councils and Universities) as applicable has been considered as the academic background of the under graduate students. Momin and Chetry (2016) ^[14] in their study noted significant differences in scores between male and female participants where male participants were found to have scored higher in regard to career maturity. Sandhu (2013) found positive significant relationship between career maturity and academic achievement. Ogbenor (2012) investigated academic achievement of mature and regular students and found it to be positively related to career maturity. Sheikholeslami *et al.* (2010) study showed that there is a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among students. Kaur (1999) ^[10] studied the academic achievement of under graduate students and found that good academic scores had a positive effect on their career maturity. Weisskirch (1999) ^[18] studied career maturity of adolescents and observed that significant relationship exists between career maturity and self-clarity and achievement of identity status. Tomiyasu (1997) found significant relationship between self-efficacy and decision-making behavior in regard to career among under graduates.

While reviewing the related research it was found that though some studies have been conducted in abroad, hardly any study has been conducted in the area of self-esteem, career maturity and academic background particularly in West Bengal. The present study is therefore important and quiet relevant in the present day

context and it focuses mainly on the impact of gender on self-esteem, career maturity and academic background among under graduate students.

Objective of the study

The objective of the study is to find out the impact of gender on the development of self-esteem, career maturity and academic background among the under graduate students.

Hypotheses of the study

The following null hypotheses were formulated based on the research objective.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the level of self-esteem among male and female students.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in regard to career maturity among male and female students.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in regard to academic

Background among male and female students.

Method of the study

Stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting the sample comprising of 600 under graduate students of the age group ranging between 17-25 years from 13 colleges affiliated to the University of Calcutta. Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) developed by Singh and Srivastava (2010), Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) developed by Joshi and Chauhan (2015) and a self-made interview schedule prepared for measuring the academic background were used for the study. The collected data were analyzed by using mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and t-test.

Findings of the study

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the level of self-esteem among male and female students.

Table 1: 'T-Test' showing educational stream wise mean difference in self-esteem score of under graduate students

Gender	N	Mean	M difference	SD	SE _M	df	t value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Significance level
Male	260	69.35	2.443	10.857	.673	598	3.039	.002	S** (at 0.01 level)
Female	340	66.90		8.829	.479				
Total	600								

**S: Significant

Interpretation

The analysis of the data presented in the table-1 revealed that in case of 260 male students and 340 female students the Standard Deviation (SD) and mean scores were found to be 10.857 and 69.35 (for male students) and 8.829 and 66.90 (for female students) respectively. Here, the calculated t-value i.e. 3.039 is higher than the critical value of 2.59 at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the result is quiet significant at 0.01 level of significance and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be

interpreted that the level of self-esteem is relatively higher among male students than among female students. Both the test result as well as the informal discussion between the researcher and the students revealed that in regard to self-esteem most of the male students were found to be more serious, confident and focussed about their study and future plans in life than the female students.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in regard to career maturity among male and female students.

Table 2: 'T-Test' Showing Gender Wise Mean Difference in Career Maturity Score of Under Graduate Students

Gender	N	Mean	M difference	SD	SE _M	df	t value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Significance level
Male	260	14.31	.081	3.151	.195	598	.317	.751	NS* (at 0.05 level)
Female	340	14.23		3.070	.167				
Total	600								

*NS: Not significant

Interpretation

From the data presented in the table-2 it was found that 260 male students had 14.31 and 3.151 as mean score and Standard Deviation (SD) respectively in regard to career maturity and for the 340 female students it was 14.23 and 3.070 respectively. Here the calculated t-value i.e. 0.317 is found to be lower than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be stated that the result is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that mean scores did not differ significantly at 0.05 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and as a result, the given difference in sample

means being insignificant and can only be attributed to some chance factors or sampling fluctuations. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the level of career maturity between male and female under graduate students. Both mathematical test result as well as informal discussion with the students revealed the fact that male and female students are equally aware and conscious about their career choice.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in regard to academic background among male and female students.

Table 3: 'T-Test' showing gender wise mean difference in academic background score of under graduate students

Gender	N	Mean	M difference	SD	SE _M	df	t value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Significance level
Male	260	189.77	2.831	31.745	1.969	598	1.133	.258	NS* (at 0.05 level)
Female	340	186.94		29.193	1.583				
Total	600								

*NS: Not significant

Interpretation

From the data presented in the table-3 it was found that 260 male students had 189.77 and 31.745 as mean score and Standard Deviation (SD) of academic background respectively and for the 340 female students it was 186.94 and 29.193 respectively. Here the calculated t-value i.e. 1.133 is lower than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 levels of significance. Therefore, the result is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. That indicates means did not differ significantly at 0.05 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and as a result, the given difference in sample means being insignificant can only be attributed to some chance factors or sampling fluctuations. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the academic background between male and female under graduate students. Both mathematical test result as well as informal discussion with the students also revealed that in regard to academic background not much difference was noted among male students and female under graduate students.

Conclusion

Baumister (1996)^[3] and Sar Abadani Tafreshi (2006)^[17] in their studies self-esteem and gender among students found that there is a significant difference in self-esteem between male and female students. In order to find out whether gender wise there is any difference in the level of self-esteem, t-test was applied (table no: 1). Brusoki *et al.* (1993), Rojewski *et al.* (1995), Barker (2003)^[2], Dybwad (2008)^[7], Giruad (2011)^[9], Saini (2012), Chauhan (2015) and Ansari (2016) in their research found that male students were better than their female counterparts in regard to career maturity. To find out whether gender wise there is any difference in the level of career maturity and academic background, t- test was applied (table no: 2 and 3). Test result reveals that gender wise there is no difference in career maturity and academic background. Data reveals the fact that irrespective of gender those students who had relatively strong academic background were also found to be scoring high in the level of career maturity i.e. good students are more aware, serious and focussed regarding their career choice.

Though both male and female students were found to be equally aware and conscious about their career choice yet discussion with them revealed that male students were more confident than their female counterparts in pursuing a career according to their choice as many female students expressed doubt regarding how far they will be allowed to pursue a career according to their choice after their marriage. Informal discussion of the researcher with the under graduate students both male and female also revealed certain important facts like almost everyone agreed that parents now a days are quite aware of the importance of education in the life of an individual and therefore makes no gender discrimination in regard to admitting there wards to schools /colleges to pursue their studies, provides them with books, tuition and other necessary requisites. Thus, it is absolutely true that the present scenario has changed significantly from the past at least in this regard yet, it is also true that in majority of the Indian family still today right from the childhood days boys are taught that when they will grow up they have to pursue a career and stand on their own feet and become economically independent so that they can look after their family. But in case of girls after completing their studies even if they start pursuing a career yet they are taught that marriage is more important and

after getting married their prime focus must be to look after her family and if they are allowed (by the in-laws and husband) then only they can pursue their career. Thus, in spite of having requisite academic qualifications and career maturity yet due to various other social as well as economic factors still prevailing in our society gender does matter in case of selecting as well as pursuing a career according to one's choice. In fact, girls/women in our society are still mostly deprived of the decision making power mostly in regard to earning, investing, saving as well as spending according to their own wish/ will. Strangely enough even today the general notion of the society is that male members of the family are more competent to handle all major monetary or finance related issues. All these ideas and beliefs definitely have strong impact on the confidence level of the individual. This fact also gets reflected in the findings of the study where it was noted that self-esteem was found to be higher among male than female.

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