



**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACHIEVEMENT ANXIETY AND CAREER
DECISION-MAKING SELF-EFFICACY AMONG YOUTH**

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Abstract

The study aims to examine the correlation between achievement anxiety and career self-efficacy among young individuals. In the current study, a sample of 100 people belonging to the age group of 15-24 were selected around Noida and Delhi. Results indicate a significant negative correlation between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy, supporting the hypothesis. The hypothesis suggests an inverse correlation, positing that higher levels of achievement anxiety correspond to lower levels of career decision-making self-efficacy. Data was collected from a sample of youth participants, and Pearson's

correlation coefficient was employed to analyze the relationship between the variables. The finding underscores the importance of considering both achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy in the career development process of youth. While statistically significant, the moderate strength of the correlation suggests the influence of additional factors on career decision-making self-efficacy. Potential explanations for the negative correlation include the perception of career decision-making as overwhelming for individuals experiencing high achievement anxiety and societal pressures regarding academic and career success. The study aligns with existing literature emphasizing the detrimental effects of low self-efficacy on career decision-making.

Keywords: *Achievement Anxiety, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy, Youth, Correlation, Career Development*

Introduction

In our fast-paced world, grasping how our thoughts influence the choices we make regarding our education and career paths is crucial. Simplifying complex ideas and using clear language are key to making this knowledge accessible to everyone. Among the multitude of factors influencing career decisions, two significant factors stand out; "achievement anxiety" and "career decision-making self-efficacy. The interplay between these factors holds considerable sway over the career trajectories and achievements of young individuals as they navigate the intricacies of modern society.

Achievement Anxiety

According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology (VandenBos, 2007), achievement anxiety is defined as “apprehension or fear experienced in situations involving evaluation or performance, particularly in academic or occupational settings, often accompanied by worry about possible failure or negative evaluation by others.” The feeling of a knot in your stomach before an important exam or task is what we commonly refer to as achievement anxiety, a fear of not measuring up. This experience is particularly common among young people, especially in school, where success feels paramount. The pressure to perform well can be intense, leading to increased stress levels that can significantly impact motivation and performance. Individuals often find themselves attaching their self-worth to their performance, triggering a range of physical and emotional symptoms such as rapid heartbeat, sweating, difficulty focusing, tense muscles, queasiness, dizziness, and disrupted sleep patterns. Moreover, this anxiety can lead to counterproductive behaviors like procrastination, avoidance, and striving for perfection, ultimately heightening the risk of facing the dreaded outcome: failure.

An illustrative scenario of achievement anxiety can be seen in a student preparing for a crucial exam they believe will shape their future success. Despite diligent preparation, they constantly battle thoughts of not measuring up, leading to increased stress levels and anxiety-driven actions. This fear becomes all-consuming, resulting in physical symptoms like increased heart rate, sweaty palms, difficulty concentrating, and even sleep disturbances. They may find themselves delaying study sessions or avoiding practice tests altogether for fear of confirming their perceived inadequacies. This cycle of anxiety-driven actions only serves to reinforce their fear of falling short of expectations, perpetuating a cycle of achievement anxiety.

Career Decision-Making Self Efficacy

Career decision-making self-efficacy is essential for individuals as it represents their beliefs in their ability to effectively engage in the process of making career-related decisions. In the context of career decision-making, self-efficacious individuals exhibit greater confidence in their capacity to explore career options, overcome obstacles, and make informed decisions aligned with their interests, values, and aspirations. Similarly, career self-efficacy, which refers to a person's confidence in their capacity to carry out activities and satisfy the expectations associated with their chosen job path, plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' career exploration, commitment, and satisfaction. These concepts, rooted in the Social Cognitive theory by Albert Bandura, emphasize that people's perceptions of their talent and ability are significantly influenced by their actions, persistence, and accomplishments.

High levels of career self-efficacy and career decision-making self-efficacy are linked to increased drive, resilience, and adaptability in achieving professional goals. Individuals with high career self-efficacy are more likely to confidently pursue their career objectives, effectively navigate obstacles, and adapt to changing work conditions. Similarly, those with high self-efficacy in making career decisions are better equipped to make confident and well-informed decisions regarding their career paths, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and success. These concepts significantly impact individuals' well-being and professional advancement, enabling them to excel in job interviews, effectively transition between careers, and confidently explore new opportunities for career growth and development.

Relationship between Achievement Anxiety and Career Self-efficacy

Achievement anxiety and career self-efficacy are two crucial factors influencing individuals' experiences and outcomes in professional development. While achievement

anxiety involves a fear of failing and the belief that one's value is dependent on performance, career self-efficacy reflects confidence in one's ability to carry out activities and meet the demands of one's chosen career path. These two concepts interact in complex ways, particularly among teenagers, influencing each other reciprocally. High levels of achievement anxiety can undermine one's confidence in making career decisions, leading to a cycle of avoidance, indecision, and increased suffering. Conversely, low self-efficacy in making job decisions can exacerbate anxiety related to career choices, leading to feelings of inadequacy and fear of making the wrong decisions.

However, developing self-efficacy in one's work can help alleviate anxiety related to success. By building self-assurance in their skills, individuals can face obstacles with empowerment rather than dread. They are more likely to adopt a growth mindset, seeing failures as opportunities for learning and growth. While there is a complex and dynamic link between career self-efficacy and achievement anxiety, individuals can navigate their career pathways with resilience, confidence, and a sense of control over their professional destinies by understanding the interactions between these variables and employing techniques to foster career self-efficacy and manage achievement anxiety.

Rationale of the Study

The study aims to investigate the complex relationship between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy among youth. Given the crucial developmental stage of adolescence and emerging adulthood, characterized by heightened identity formation and decision-making, understanding how these psychological factors interact and change throughout this period is essential. By exploring the underlying mechanisms, mediators, and consequences associated with this relationship, the study seeks to contribute to a

comprehensive understanding of the psychological factors influencing youths' career paths. Moreover, the study aims to provide insights that can inform the development of focused interventions and support networks aimed at promoting positive career development and resilience among young individuals.

Research Gap

There is still a significant knowledge vacuum about the complex mechanisms and moderating variables underlying the association between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy in young people, despite a wealth of studies on the subject. While several research has looked at the relationship between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy, few studies have explored the potential reciprocal relationship between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy, nor have they considered how other psychological factors may influence this relationship. Past research has shown that individuals experiencing high levels of achievement anxiety may struggle with decision-making and may have lower levels of career decision-making self-efficacy. Furthermore, little research has been conducted on how personal traits such as social support or self-worth might moderate the relationship between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing comprehensive interventions and support plans tailored to the specific needs of young adults navigating their career paths.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose is to study the relationship between relationship between achievement

anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy among youth.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant negative relationship between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy among youth.

Sample

In this study, a sample of 100 people belonging to the age group of 15-24 were selected around Noida and Delhi.

Measures

The following scales were used to measure achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy among young adults. The measures used were reliable and valid.

- **Westside Test Anxiety Scale (WTAS):** The scale as developed by Richard Driscoll (2007) is designed to identify students with anxiety impairments who could benefit from an anxiety-reduction intervention. The scale consists of 10 items with a 5 pointer Likert scale response ranging from “extremely or always true,” “highly or usually true,” “moderately or sometimes true,” “slightly or seldom true,” or “not at all or never true.”
- **Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Short Form Scale (CDSE) :** The scale as developed by Taylor and Betz (1983) is used to evaluate an individual's confidence in their ability to effectively carry out the tasks essential for making important career choices. The CDSE is offered in two versions: a longer 50-item form and a shorter 25-item form. The scale consists

of 10 pointer Likert Scale.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through Offline, face to face mode. Each participant was thanked for their cooperation. Standardizes psychological tests were administered to the participants.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

RESULTS

Table 1

N, Mean and Standard Deviation

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Achievement	100	2.58	8.54
Anxiety			
Career Decision	100	149.7	36.6
Making Self			
Efficacy			

Table 2*Correlation between Achievement Anxiety and Career Self efficacy*

	Career Self-efficacy		Achievement Anxiety	
Career Self-efficacy	1	1	-.241	
Achievement Anxiety	-.241		1	

Discussion of Results

The study aimed to explore the relationship between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy among youth. The hypothesis predicted a negative correlation between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy, suggesting that higher levels of achievement anxiety would be associated with lower levels of confidence in making effective career decisions. The findings revealed a Pearson's correlation coefficient of -0.241, indicating a negative correlation between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy among the sample of youth participants.

The negative correlation coefficient supports the hypothesis, suggesting that higher levels of achievement anxiety are indeed associated with lower levels of career decision-making self-efficacy among youth (Reardon et al., 2020). This finding implies that individuals experiencing higher levels of anxiety related to academic or career achievements may perceive themselves as less capable of making effective career decisions (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2013). These individuals may experience doubts, fears, and uncertainties regarding their abilities to choose and pursue suitable career paths, emphasizing the significance of considering both achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy as significant factors in the career development process of youth. While statistically significant, it's a moderate correlation, suggesting other factors also influence career decision-making self-efficacy.

Conclusion

The study aimed to explore how achievement anxiety relates to young people's confidence in making career decisions. The hypothesis suggested an inverse relationship between achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy, indicating that higher anxiety

levels would be associated with lower confidence in career decision-making. A sample of 100 young adults were taken. The research findings, represented by a negative Pearson's correlation coefficient of -0.241, supported this hypothesis, revealing a negative association between career decision-making self-efficacy and achievement anxiety among the youth sample.

This negative correlation highlights the importance of considering both achievement anxiety and career decision-making self-efficacy as critical factors in the career development of young people. While statistically significant, the moderate strength of this relationship suggests the need to interpret its practical implications cautiously. Individuals experiencing high levels of achievement anxiety may find it challenging to make career decisions, influenced by societal and cultural pressures regarding success and autonomy in decision-making.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. Firstly, its cross-sectional design prevents causal inferences about the directionality of the relationship observed. Secondly, the use of self-report measures introduces potential biases. Moreover, the relatively small sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future longitudinal research with larger, more diverse samples could provide a deeper understanding of how achievement anxiety affects career decision-making self-efficacy among youth. Nonetheless, this study underscores the importance of addressing anxiety-related concerns in career counseling to facilitate informed and confident career decision-making among young people, ultimately promoting their well-being and success in the workforce.

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