



A STUDY OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RELATION TO PEER PRESSURE

¹Nisha Sharma

Research Scholar

Department of Education

Meerut College, Meerut

²Dr. Rekha Rana

Professor

Department of Education

Meerut College, Meerut

ABSTRACT

In the modern competitive world, where professional success is closely linked to personal fulfillment and skill development, it is essential to explore and address the external pressures affecting students' decisions. By understanding this relationship, society can encourage students to pursue careers that reflect their individuality, talents, and aspirations while at the same time equipping them with the strength to resist negative peer influence. To examine the impact of the peer pressure, on career aspiration, the investigator employed the Normative Survey Research Method. Purposive Sampling Technique from the senior secondary schools of Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh. The Sample was constituted of 120 students of Central Board of Senior Secondary Education, Delhi. Classes 11th and 12th out of which 60 boys and 60 girls were selected for the study. Career Aspiration Scale by Sarita Anand (2013) and Peer Pressure Scale by Amandeep Kaur (2019) applied for data collection. Statistical techniques employed for the analysis of data Descriptive Statistics: Mean and Standard Deviation and inferential Statistics: t-test, Pearson Product-moment Correlation. Significant difference found between career aspirations of two groups of senior secondary school students having high and low scores on peer pressure. No significant difference found between career aspiration of male and female senior secondary school students. Significant difference found between student's peer pressure of male and female senior secondary school students. Positive relationship found between Career Aspirations and Peer Pressure of Senior Secondary School students' is rejected.

Key Words- Career Aspirations and Peer Pressure

INTRODUCTION

A study of career aspirations of senior secondary school students in relation to peer pressure is highly significant because this stage of education is considered a turning point in the life of every student. Senior

secondary years are the period when adolescents begin to develop clarity regarding their future career paths, higher studies, and life goals. However, this is also the age when peer influence is at its peak, as students spend a considerable amount of time with their friends and classmates, seeking acceptance and recognition within their peer groups. Career aspirations, which should ideally be based on individual interests, aptitude, and long-term potential, are often shaped or even altered under the effect of peer pressure.

Career aspirations during the senior secondary stage play a crucial role in shaping the future lives of students, as this is the time when they begin to take concrete decisions about their higher education and professional goals. However, these aspirations are often influenced not only by personal interests and abilities but also by external factors such as peer pressure. Peer groups serve as a significant socializing agent in adolescence, where the desire for acceptance, recognition, and belonging often impacts students' choices regarding careers. The need for this study arises from the fact that many students, instead of choosing careers aligned with their talents and interests, tend to follow the preferences of their peers, which may lead to dissatisfaction, underachievement, or misalignment between ability and profession in the long run. The importance of such a study lies in understanding how peer pressure shapes career decisions at this sensitive stage, enabling educators, parents, and policymakers to design appropriate guidance and counseling strategies that promote informed and independent career choices. Justifying the study, it is clear that in the contemporary competitive environment, where wrong choices can have long-lasting consequences, exploring the relationship between career aspirations and peer pressure is essential to ensure that students not only make suitable career decisions but also develop a strong sense of individuality, self-confidence, and resilience against undue external influence.

Need of the study

The need of the study on career aspirations of senior secondary school students in relation to peer pressure arises from the fact that this stage of education is one of the most crucial phases in an individual's life, where important career-related decisions are made. Adolescents often face confusion and uncertainty while selecting their future paths, and during this period, the influence of peers becomes particularly strong. Many students tend to adopt career choices that are popular among their friends or socially admired, without considering their own interests, abilities, and long-term goals. This tendency may result in wrong career decisions, lack of satisfaction, and underachievement in later life. Therefore, there is a pressing need to examine how peer pressure affects the career aspirations of students so that timely interventions, such as career counseling and guidance programs, can be introduced to help them make independent and informed decisions. Such a study is essential to ensure that students are able to align their career choices with their personal potential, rather than being swayed by external influences.

Importance of the study

The importance of the study on career aspirations of senior secondary school students in relation to peer pressure lies in its ability to provide valuable insights into one of the most decisive factors influencing students' future success and satisfaction. Career aspirations formed at this stage serve as the foundation for higher education and professional life, and any deviation caused by external influences like peer pressure can have

long-lasting consequences. By understanding how peer groups shape or alter students' career preferences, this study highlights the role of social dynamics in decision-making during adolescence. Its findings can help parents, teachers, and school counselors identify the challenges students face in balancing personal interests with peer expectations, thereby allowing them to offer timely guidance and support. Moreover, in a competitive world where wrong career choices can lead to frustration, stress, and underachievement, the study becomes significant for designing effective career counseling programs that encourage students to pursue their true potential. Thus, this research is important not only for academic understanding but also for ensuring students' holistic development, individuality, and professional success.

Justification of the study

The justification of conducting a study on career aspirations of senior secondary school students in relation to peer pressure lies in the fact that adolescence is a highly sensitive and transitional phase where students are not only preparing for higher education but also laying the foundation of their future careers. At this stage, peer groups exert a strong influence on students' attitudes, behavior and decision-making, often leading them to choose career paths that may not align with their true interests, abilities, or long-term goals. In today's competitive and rapidly changing world, a wrong career choice made under peer pressure can result in dissatisfaction, lack of motivation, underperformance and even career failure in the future. Hence, this study is justified as it aims to explore the extent and nature of peer influence on students' aspirations, thereby providing useful insights to educators, parents and policymakers. The findings can contribute to the development of effective career guidance and counseling strategies that empower students to make independent and informed career choices. Ultimately, this research is essential to ensure that students build careers based on their potential and individuality, while also learning to handle external pressures in a constructive manner.

Statement of the problem

Inspired by all the considerations as mentioned above the investigator chose to take up the present problem entitled-

A Study of Career Aspirations of Senior Secondary School Students in Relation to Peer Pressure

Operational Definitions of the Variables

Career Aspiration

A career aspiration is a long-term professional hope, dream, or ambition, like becoming an industry expert or starting a business, that guides your career path and helps you set short-term goals and make important decisions. These aspirations are influenced by your values, skills, and desired lifestyle, and they provide a roadmap for your professional growth, helping you find purpose and remain motivated.

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure can influence a person to do something that is relatively harmless- or something that has more serious consequences. Giving in to the pressure to dress a certain way is one thing- going along with the crowd to drink or smoke is another. Peer pressure is a direct or indirect influence on peers, i.e., members of social groups with similar interests and experiences, or social statuses. Members of a peer group are more likely to influence a person's beliefs, values, religion and behavior.

Objectives of the present study

The study is designed to attain on the following objectives-

1. To find out the difference between career aspirations of two groups of senior secondary school students having high and low scores on peer pressure.
2. To find out the difference between career aspiration of male and female senior secondary school students.
3. To find out the difference between student's peer pressure of male and female senior secondary school students.
4. To study the relationship between Career Aspirations and Peer Pressure of Senior Secondary School students.

Hypotheses of the present study

Keeping in view the above objectives of the study the following hypotheses have been framed-

1. There is no significant difference between career aspirations of two groups of senior secondary school students having high and low scores on peer pressure.
2. There is no significant difference between career aspiration of male and female senior secondary school students.
3. There is no significant difference between student's peer pressure of male and female senior secondary school students.
4. There is no relationship between Career Aspirations and Peer Pressure of Senior Secondary School students.

Delimitations of the study

Present study was delimited to:

1. The present study is delimited to the senior secondary schools of Ghaziabad District.
2. The present study is delimited to the senior secondary school students.
3. The present study is delimited to the senior secondary school affiliated to CBSE.
4. The study is limited to variable viz. career aspiration, peer pressure.

Review of related studies

Career Aspirations and Peer Pressure

Sharma, Richa and Arora, Anita (2025) study titled ‘**To Compare the Level of Aspiration with Career Preference of Students at Senior Secondary Level.**’ We are generally aware that a student's career determines their academic success. However, there are many additional things that influence their success. Such as a teacher's intellectual and influential instruction, classroom interactions, the competitive environment among classmates, and the organizational climates of schools and universities. A student with high intellect is regarded as an excellent student, who is anxious about reaching his objective has a successful life. The level of aspiration is crucial psychological element that influences people's success. It creates the ideal environment or foundation for one's success in life. A high level of aspiration motivates a person to pursue his objective. Therefore, planners must attempt to ascertain which career pupils are interested in before offering schooling for a certain career. Studied with sample of 600 senior secondary students participated in this, which examined several facets of professional desire utilizing a basic random sampling approach and a level of aspiration and career preference as a tool. Students at higher secondary schools had their degrees of career aspiration and career preferences, examined in this research. Level of aspiration is the term used to describe a career choice, ideal employment, or professional objective.

Chaudhary Neela (2022) study titled ‘**A Correlation Study of Career Preference and Peer Pressure of Students at High School Level**’ highlights the critical phase of adolescence in shaping future career paths.’ During this period, students make significant decisions about their education and future, often influenced by peer dynamics. Chaudhary study involved 600 female students from higher secondary schools in five districts: Bilaspur, Ambikapur, Jashpur, Janjgir, and Korba. The research employed standardized tools, including the Career Preference Scale by Dr. Vivek Bhargava and Rajshree Bhargava, and the Peer Pressure Scale, to assess the relationship between career preferences and peer pressure. The results revealed substantial differences in career preferences between urban and rural girls, with peer pressure having a positive influence on the career choices of female students. Additionally, the findings indicated that while teachers had a minimal impact on career aspirations, parental influence was significantly strong, and peer influence varied between male and female students. The study emphasized the importance of career workshops to help students make informed decisions, reducing undue external influences from peers.

Hassan, Abdulha Adeyinka (2024) study titled ‘**The Influence of Peer Pressure on Career Aspirations among In-School Adolescent in Kwara State.**’ The significance of career decision-making among senior high school students cannot be overemphasized. Students at this level are adolescents who are moving from this stage of development into adulthood. The study investigated the influence of peer pressure on career aspirations among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria. It has been observed that students usually imitate themselves in their way of life, especially during the transition from upper basic education to the senior secondary stage, which determines their choice of profession. A quantitative research approach was used, and a survey research design was adopted for the study. A self-designed questionnaire was used, and an internal consistency of 0.87 for the instrument was obtained. The collected data was analyzed using Pearson's Product

Moment Correlation and a t-test to test the formulated hypotheses. Two research hypotheses were raised and tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis one ($r\text{-cal} = .204$, $P\text{-value} < 0.05$) and hypothesis two ($t\text{-value} = 3.159$, $P\text{-value} < 0.05$) were rejected. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and career aspirations among in-school adolescents in Kwara State. Also, gender has a significant impact on career aspirations among in-school adolescents in Kwara State. It was recommended that educational institutions in Kwara State consider implementing peer support programs aimed at fostering positive peer influence. These programs can provide a platform for students to discuss their career aspirations, share experiences, and receive guidance from their peers.

Maxwell Kontor Owusu's (2021) research titled 'Career Aspiration of Students: The Influence of Peers, Teachers, and Parents' the impact of peers, teachers, and parents on career aspirations was explored among public Senior High School students in Ghana.' The study, which involved 196 students, 30 teachers, and 50 parents, utilized a descriptive survey design. Stratified and random sampling techniques were used, and data was analyzed through both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that while peers and parents had a significant influence on students' career decisions, teachers had a lesser impact. The research suggested the importance of collaboration between school authorities and counseling units to organize workshops and career guidance programs to help students navigate peer and parental influences effectively.

Method adopted for the study

To examine the impact of the peer pressure, on career aspiration, the investigator employed the Normative Survey Research Method. This method is particularly suited for research aimed at identifying the typical or prevailing conditions and practices at a given time.

Population of the study

The Population, of the present study was constituted of all the students of senior secondary schools situated in the Ghaziabad District in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Sample of the study and sampling technique

From the underlined population a representative sample was drawn by using a Purposive Sampling Technique from the senior secondary schools of Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh. The Sample was constituted of 120 students of Central Board of Senior Secondary Education, Delhi. Classes 11th and 12th out of which 60 boys and 60 girls were selected for the study. To execute the procedure of random sampling, first of all a list of schools of Ghaziabad district was prepared.

Variables of the study

Independent Variables: Following independent variables have been incorporated present study:

1. Career Aspiration

Dependent Variables: The only dependent variables in the present study are:

1. Peer Pressure

Tools used for the study

In order to collect data for the present research, following tools have been administered-

- Career Aspiration Scale by Sarita Anand (2013)
- Peer Pressure Scale by Amandeep Kaur (2019)

Statistical techniques employed for the analysis of data

- Descriptive Statistics: Mean and Standard Deviation
- Inferential Statistics: t-test, Pearson Product-moment Correlation.

Objective: 1- Result pertaining to the difference between career aspirations of two groups of senior secondary school students having high and low scores on peer pressure is given in the table below:

TABLE -1

Mean Standard Deviation and t value of career aspirations of two groups of senior secondary school students having high and low scores on peer pressure

Variable	Group	N	Mean Scores	S.D	t-value	Level of Significance
Career aspirations	High peer pressure	60	37.54	4.55	10.46	Significant at 0.01
	Low peer pressure	60	29.22	4.15		

Significant at 0.01 Level

It is evident from the table that mean scores of senior secondary school students having high and low scores on peer pressure are 37.54 and 29.22 standard deviation 4.55 and 4.15 respectively. The t- ratio came out from the above two groups is 33.09, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It clearly states that there is significant difference between career aspirations of two groups of senior secondary school students having high and low scores on peer pressure. Further, the mean scores of students having high scores on peer pressure is greater than the students having low scores on peer pressure indicating that students having high scores on peer pressure were more career aspirant than students having low scores on peer pressure. Thus, the hypothesis framed earlier, 'There is no significant difference between career aspirations of two groups of senior secondary school students having high and low scores on peer pressure' stands rejected. Rather it can be interpreted that senior secondary students having low scores on peer pressure have low career aspiration as compared to their counterparts having high scores.

Objective: 2- Result pertaining to the difference between career aspiration of male and female senior secondary school students is given in the table below:

TABLE-2

Mean Standard Deviation and t value of career aspirations of male and female senior secondary school students

Variable	Group	N	Mean Scores	S.D	t-value	Level of Significance
Career aspirations	Male	60	25.12	4.89	0.57	Not Significant
	Female	60	24.62	4.71		

It is apparent from the Table-2 that the mean scores of career aspirations of male and female senior secondary school students are 25.12 and 24.62 with S.D.'s 4.89 and 4.71 respectively. The t- ratio came out from the above two groups is 0.57, which is not significant at any level of significance. Though the mean score (25.12) of male senior secondary school students is slightly higher than that of female senior secondary school students (24.62). Hence, there exists no significant difference between male and female senior secondary school students in terms of career aspirations. Thus the hypothesis framed earlier, "There is no significant difference between career aspirations of male and female senior secondary school students stands rejected.

Objective: 3- Result pertaining to the difference between peer pressure of male and female senior secondary school students is given in the table below:

TABLE- 3

Mean Standard Deviation and t value of peer pressure of male and female senior secondary school students

Variable	Group	N	Mean Scores	S.D	t-value	Level of Significance
Peer pressure	Male	60	19.25	3.23	2.61	Significant at 0.01
	female	60	17.66	3.43		

Significant at 0.01 Level

It is apparent from the Table-3 that the mean scores of peer pressure of male and female senior secondary school students are 19.25 and 17.66 with S.D.'s 3.23 and 3.43 respectively. The t- ratio came out from the above two groups is 2.61, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Though the mean score (19.25) of male senior secondary school students is slightly higher than that of female senior secondary school students (17.66). Hence, there exists significant difference between male and female senior secondary school students in terms of peer pressure. Thus the hypothesis framed earlier, "There is no significant difference between peer pressure of male and female senior secondary school students stands rejected.

Objective: 4- The result pertaining to the relationship between career aspirations and peer pressure of senior secondary school students is given in the table below:

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was applied in order to investigate the relationship between the scores of career aspirations and peer pressure of senior secondary school students. The corresponding results have been highlighted in Table-4.

TABLE- 4

Co-efficient of correlation between career aspirations and peer pressure of senior secondary school students

Variable	N	Coefficient of correlation	p	Level of Significance
Career Aspirations	60	+ 0.429	P< .001	Significant at 0.05
Peer Pressure	60			

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4 depicts that co-efficient of correlation between career aspirations and peer pressure of senior secondary school students is +0.429 which is significant at 0.05 level of confidence. So, the null hypothesis, i.e., "There is no significant relationship between career aspirations and peer pressure of senior secondary school students" is rejected. Hence, there exists a significant positive correlation between these variables. It indicates that career aspirations and peer pressure of senior secondary school students are positively correlated with each other. Results of the Pearson correlation indicated that there is a significant large positive relationship between X and Y, ($r(118) = .429, p < .001$).

Findings of the study

1. 'There is no significant difference between career aspirations of two groups of senior secondary school students having high and low scores on peer pressure' stands rejected. It is evident that both groups of students have a high difference.
2. 'There is no significant difference between career aspiration of male and female senior secondary school students' stands accepted. It is evident that both groups of students have no difference.
3. 'There is no significant difference between student's peer pressure of male and female senior secondary school students' stands rejected. It is evident that both groups of students have a difference.
4. 'There is no relationship between Career Aspirations and Peer Pressure of Senior Secondary School students' is rejected. Hence, there exists a significant positive correlation between these variables.

References

- Advanced Learner's English Dictionary (2006). 5th Edition. UK: Harper Collins
- Agrawala, T. (2008). Factors influencing career choice of management students in India. Career Development International, 13(4), 362-376.

- Amandeep (2017) 'Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Parenting Style of Early Adolescents'. Journal of Research in Education and Society, 1(1), 183-186
- Buch. M.B. (1983) 'A survey of Research in Education'.
- Burns, A. & Darling, N. (2002) 'Peer pressure is not peer influence;. The Education Digest, 68, 4-6.
- Chaudhary Neela (2022) 'A Correlation Study of Career Preference and Peer Pressure of Students at High School Level' highlights the critical phase of adolescence in shaping future career paths.' International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Configuration, Volume-2, Issue-3, Pp-1-6
- Hassan, Abdulha Adeyinka (2024) 'The Influence of Peer Pressure on Career Aspirations among In-School Adolescent in Kwara State.' An Indonesian Journal of Educational Research and Review, ISSN 2621-8984 (Online), ISSN: 2621-4792 (Print) Volume-7, Issue-2
- Kim, M.S. & Yun, S.Y. (2015). A Study on the Nursing Student with Academic Self-efficacy, Motivation and Career Aspiration. Indian Journal of Science and Technology, 8(S1), 226–230
- Maxwell Kontor Owusu's (2021) 'Career Aspiration of Students: The Influence of Peers, Teachers, and Parents' the impact of peers, teachers, and parents on career aspirations was explored among public Senior High School students in Ghana.' Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 31, 267-277
- Sharma, Richa and Arora, Anita (2025) 'To Compare the Level of Aspiration with Career Preference of Students at Senior Secondary Level.' The International Journal of Indian Psychology, ISSN-2348-5396 (Online), ISSN: 2349-3429 (Print) Volume-13, Issue-1