

## ***Socio-Economic Status as Predictor of Career Beliefs among Secondary School Students***

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### **Abstract**

“Career beliefs are conglomerate of attitudes, opinions, convictions that seem to cohere together to create mind-sets that underlie people’s orientation to the idea of a career” (Arulmani& Nag-Arulmani, 2004). “Socioeconomic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family’s economic and social position relative to others, based on income and education, and occupation” (Okioga, 2103). The Career Preparation Process Model (Arulmani& Nag-Arulmani, 2004) suggested that process of career decision making occurs within a specific socio-cognitive environment and within this, career beliefs and socio-economic status interacts and influence the career choice of the individual. Keeping this in view the current study will investigate socio-economic status as a predictor of career beliefs among secondary school students. The study included 720 secondary school students (360 boys and 360 girls). Career beliefs was measured using Career Beliefs Pattern Scale Version 3 by Arulmani (2012) and for measuring socio-economic status of secondary school status, the Socio Economic Status Scale by Raji (2016) was employed. The result reveals that there is a significant but negative correlation between socio-economic status and career beliefs. As the socio-economic status improves the negativity towards the process of career choice and beliefs decline. Furthermore, Male students have more negative career beliefs as compared to their counterparts. Socio-economic status significantly predicts the career beliefs of secondary school students.

**Key words:** Socio-Economic Status and Career Beliefs

### **Introduction**

Career choices are usually not influenced by personal potentials rather than by what everybody believes is a good career. Career Beliefs are deeply embedded convictions about the procedure of career decision-making. Even a superficial glimpse on the career choice process will elucidates that career myths and beliefs could strongly impact the career choice. There are plethora of forces which are acted together to enhance, divert or thwart the unfolding of the process of career development (Arulmani, 2005). Attempts of career psychology to understand and explain the relationship between social and environmental factors and human work-behavior has led the development of various theories and concepts in the West e.g. Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making, Social Cognitive Career Theory (Sachin, 2009). Studies by Arulmaniand Nag- Arulmani (2004) on the Indian population, give a conceptual framework to understand work behavior of people in India. The Career Preparation Process Model (Arulmani& Nag-Arulmani, 2004) describes career development as a “process that occurs within a particular social-cognitive environment. Within this environment, socio-economic status variables and

Career Beliefs interact with each other and have a unique influence on the sources of self-efficacy". All these factors impact the way career choices are made and career development tasks are resolved.

The term 'career beliefs' is originally used by Krumboltz (1994) to describe social cognition in relation to career and work. Career beliefs are deeply imbibed convictions about the career choice process. These are not based on any facts, these are just unreasoned convictions. Career beliefs were defined as the beliefs students held about the world of work (Krumboltz, 1991). "Career beliefs are defined as positive and negative thoughts or assumptions people hold about themselves, occupations, and the career development process (Peterson, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz, 1996)". "Career beliefs are conglomerate of attitudes, opinions, convictions that seem to cohere together to create mind-sets that underlie people's orientation to the idea of a career" (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). Career beliefs may act as a mediator between the attempts of career aspirants to deal with career choice process. Few illustrations of general career beliefs are: "Boys are better at mathematics and science than girls", or "Re-trenched people have a poor chance of getting another job", or "Immigrants are at a disadvantage in the job market". The influence of career beliefs on the career decision making process is critical and cardinal. During the career counseling if prevailing career beliefs remain unaddressed, then the career counseling rendered to the students is meaningless (Arulmani, 2012).

In Kuppaswami's view (1981), the attempts made to estimate the socio-economic status of an individual are based on three assumptions. These are:

- (i) There is a class structure in the society.
- (ii) Status position is mainly determined by a few commonly accepted characteristics.
- (iii) These characteristics can be scaled and combined by using statistics procedures.

"Socioeconomic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income and education, and occupation" (Okioga, 2103). Michael (2004) suggested that while analyzing socio-economic status of a family, the household income, qualification and profession of the earners are examined, in addition an individual income versus combined income is considered while their own attributes are assessed. Lareau (2003) indicates that socio-economic status is can be bifurcated into three different categories such as high, middle, and low. A family or an individual can fall in any one category. While placing an individual or family into any one of the aforesaid categories, all of the three factors such as income, profession, qualification can be assessed.

Lower and higher socio-economic status families give less importance on career planning as compared to middle class families. Middle class families keep career planning at pinnacle (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani (1996, 1998); Lightbody, Nicholson, Siann and Walsh (1997) revealed that Asians career choices are heavily influenced by the beliefs about the respectability of a particular career then those of British origin. Career beliefs of students belongs to higher socio-economic status indicates that students have long term plans about their future and

preparing proactively for its execution. Students belongs to lower socio-economic status tend to have a short term view and the content of their career beliefs does not seem to reflect systematic long term planning (Chandra, 1997). Among middle and higher socio-economic status families in India, career beliefs about respectability and prestige attached to a career plays a significant role on their career choices (Desai & Whiteside, 2000); children’s whose parents are wither illiterate or unemployed are having higher level of negative career beliefs (Arulmani, Laar & Easton, 2001); all three types of career beliefs i.e. control and self direction, persistence and proficiency beliefs are affected by socioeconomic status (Arulmani, Laar & Easton, 2003); Performance of the sample on the Proficiency Beliefs Scale indicates that the lower socio-economic group believes that it is not essential to acquire the required skills and qualification to be prepared for joining the field of work. As an aftermath, this group may choose to enter the job market as unskilled laborers (Arulmani, 2007). Negativity in career beliefs decreased as Social-economic Status improves (Arulmani, 2010).

**Methodology**

Descriptive survey method was employed for the current study. The data was collected from 720 secondary school students studying in government, private and government aided schools of Jalandhar district of Punjab.

**Instruments**

Career beliefs was measured using Career Beliefs Pattern Scale Version 3 by Arulmani (2012). The scale is based on the eight factors namely Control and Self Direction Beliefs, Culture and Common Practice, fatalism, gender, persistence beliefs, prestige and social status, proficiency beliefs and self worth. For measuring socio-economic status of secondary school status, the Socio Economic Status Scale by Raji (2016) was employed.

**Results**

**Descriptive analysis**

The mean, S.D., Sk and Ku of the variables under study i.e. career beliefs and socio-economic status has been given in table 1

**Table 1: A summary of descriptive statistics of career beliefs and socio-economic status**

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Sk	Ku	Remarks
Career Beliefs	126.64	31.30	0.11	0.014	High Average -vty
Socio Economic Status	77.81	17.04	0.36	-0.167	Middle SES

*Note: The higher the score the greater is the negativity of career beliefs*

Table 1 shows that the value of mean and S.D. for career beliefs was 126.64 and 31.30 respectively. High scores depicts higher negativity in their career beliefs. Mean found to be high average negative as per the norms. It means that the majority of secondary school students have high average negative career beliefs. This demonstrates that the secondary school students are having more than average negative thoughts about their career preparations and career development. Sk is found to be 0.11 which is positive and reveals that the data is positively

skewed. Ku is 0.014 which is lesser than 0.263 ku for normal curve and shows that the curve is leptokurtic.

Furthermore, table 1 indicates that mean value on socio-economic status is 77.81 and S.D. is 17.04. According to the norms, the mean score on socio-economic status indicates that a major chunk of secondary school students belongs to the middle socio-economic strata of society. Sk is 0.36 which is positive and showed that the data is positively skewed. Ku is -0.167 which is lesser than 0.263 ku for normal curve and exhibits that the curve is leptokurtic.

**Differential Analysis**

**Table 2: Comparison of Boys and Girls on Career Beliefs and Socio-Economic Status**

Variables	Boys			Girls			t-ratio
	Mean	S.D.	SE <sub>M</sub>	Mean	S.D.	SE <sub>M</sub>	
<b>Career Beliefs Pattern Scale</b>	<b>134.63</b>	<b>30.41</b>	<b>1.603</b>	<b>118.66</b>	<b>30.151</b>	<b>1.589</b>	<b>7.07**</b>
<b>Socio Economic Status</b>	<b>76.61</b>	<b>18.39</b>	<b>.9697</b>	<b>76.00</b>	<b>15.380</b>	<b>.81063</b>	<b>2.85**</b>

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level \* Significant at 0.05 level

It is lucid from the table 2 that calculated t-value for the career beliefs of secondary school students is 7.07 which is significant at 0.01 level of significances. It can further be explained that boys studying in secondary schools are having negative career beliefs as compared to their counterparts. It suggests boys had more negative beliefs about their career preparations and career development than girls.

On the variable of socio-economic status a significant difference was observed between boys and girls (t-ratio= 2.85) at 0.01 level. Also the mean scores of boys (79.61) were higher than mean scores of girls (76.00). It revealed that the families of boys had higher socio-economic status as compared to families of girls.

**Regression**

**Table 3 Correlations Table of Socio-Economic Status with Career Beliefs**

Variable	CB	SES
<b>CB</b>	1	
<b>SES</b>	-0.258**	1

\* Significant at the 0.05 Level

\*\*Significant at the 0.01 Level

Where stands for CB: Career Beliefs, SES: Socio-Economic Status

Table 3 reveals that the calculated value of correlation of career beliefs and socio-economic status is significant but negative. This indicates that as the socio-economic status of the family is improved the negativity towards the career preparations and career development of secondary school students decline.

**Table 4 Model SUMMARY TABLE**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.258 <sup>a</sup>	.066	.065	30.25
a. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-Economic Status				
b. Dependent Variable: Career Beliefs				

From the model summary table 4, the value of regression coefficient R square was found to be .066, which means that 06.6% of variability in career beliefs is explained by socio-economic status.

**Table 4 ANOVA Summary Table**

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1.	Regression	46792.30	1	46792.30	51.10	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	657446.67	718	915.66		
	Total	704238.98	719			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-Economic Status						
b. Dependent Variable: Career Beliefs						

The ANOVA table above tells whether the R value of .258 is statistically significant or not. It is clear from the ANOVA table that the regression model is statistically significant (F = 51.10) with p value = 0.000 which indicated that overall, the model applied is statistically and significant and can predict the dependent variable (Career beliefs).

**Table 5 Coefficients Table**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std.Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	89.809	5.275		17.026	.000
	Socio-Economic Status	.473	.066	.258	7.149	.000

Table 5 shows the regression coefficients which represent the mean change in response variable (IDV) for one unit change in predictor variable. The std.  $\beta$  value (.258) indicates the

correlation between career beliefs and socio-economic status which is found to be significant ( $p = .000$ ). This indicates that career beliefs score would increase by .47 for every unit increase in socio-economic status (i.e. one unit increase in socio-economic status will lead to .47 increase in career beliefs). Further, the unstandardized coefficient  $\beta$  value indicates that socio-economic status is making a statistically significant and unique contribution towards predicting career beliefs -outcome variable, ( $p = .000$ , less than 0.05 and 0.0).

The regression equation for relation between socio-economic status and career beliefs of students can be written as; career beliefs (Y) = 89.809 + (.473)  $\times$  socio-economic status (X).

Thus, there is enough evidence that the slope of population regression line is not zero at 0.01 level of significance, hence socio-economic status is a significant predictor of career beliefs of secondary school students.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis, a significant difference is found between boys and girls on their career beliefs. Boys have more negative career beliefs as compared to girls and they are negative towards the process of career preparations. A significant but negative relationship is found between both the variable. As the socio-economic status of the students improves the negativity towards career beliefs decreases. Individuals belonging to lower socio-economic status are having higher negative thoughts towards career preparation in comparison to middle and higher. Socio-economic status significantly predicts the career beliefs.

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