

Analysis on Occupational Preference, Career, Aspiration and Career Attitude Maturity of Middle & High School Students

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Abstract

This study analyzed teenagers' career preference, career aspirations and career attitude maturity in order to be of help in training for the right selection of careers that fit one's interest area, capability and competence level. The findings are as follows. When career preference, career aspirations and career attitude maturity were compared, there were no difference in the preference or aspirations, but career attitude maturity was higher among high school students ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, the correlation between career preference, career aspirations and career attitude maturity in both middle and high school students show that career preference, career aspirations and career attitude maturity all had a positive correlation. In conclusion, there is a need to develop various programs on career development and career experience so that teenagers can set appropriate goals establish values for careers and objectively evaluate themselves in accordance with their goals.

Keywords: Career Aspirations, Career Attitude Maturity, Career Preference, Middle & High School Students

1. Introduction

In the Article 45 of Korea's elementary and secondary education law, it states 'the purpose of high school is conducting a secondary education and basic professional education on the basis of education received from the middle school' and in the Article 48, paragraph 2, it states 'the curriculum and courses of high school should be defined to allow the selection of career according to individual needs, aptitude and ability of the students' and emphasizes the career education in the middle and high school education. As such, adolescence is a preparation stage of moving to the career world from schools and a reasonable career choice in this period is known as one of the most important developmental processes. Therefore, high school students in their career decision period needs to explore their thoughts and attitudes about the career in order to choose a suitable career and job¹.

In addition, in terms of career development, a middle school is the career exploration phase where their skills, understanding of the competencies, classification of industries and jobs, relationship between the modern society and jobs, education of career preparation, establishing potential future career plans, enrollment and career readiness, meaning and necessity of the job and preferred conditions for job selection, etc, should be understood and explored. However, compared to the youth of other countries, a career related experience in our country is the lowest among the OECD countries and the level of career and work attitude which can be examined through career readiness and determinacy was lower than other countries².

A job to a human can be described as the biggest energy and a social role having to invest most time as an adult after completing the formal education. Especially, humans are social beings that grow through the rela-

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tionship with other people. A job not only provides the opportunity of self-realization and economic incentives but broadens the network of social relations³.

When selecting such important career, its preference refers to a lot of attractiveness, interest and favorite tendency than choosing from various jobs. Adolescence is the period of career preparation among the developmental tasks, the type of preference during this period can be said to have a very significant meaning⁴.

Meanwhile, career aspiration means how much a person yearn and desire the success and achievement through the career which he has chosen⁵. These career aspirations can be very important from the notion that it encompasses all recognitions on the future and entire experience of individuals such as evaluation, behavior and attitude, etc, on the influence of their surrounding environments including home environment and other significance as well as evaluation and recognition on their own such as their ability, interest, values and motivation, etc. Such career aspirations are formed by interaction between personal characteristics, social and environmental factors with cognitive-psychological factors. Thus, career aspirations can be described as the most reasonable and realistic alternative for choosing the career alternatives, in other words, it is the product of suitability which means the unity of possibility, individual and environment⁶.

Making a reasonable judgment and selection based on the goal selection on career, establishing values on career and the capability to evaluate oneself objectively and furthermore, in order to achieve self-realization, a proper and mature attitude should be the basis. Therefore, the career attitude maturity can be a very important factor for career developmental tasks of youth, thus studying for the factors related to the career attitude maturity can be said to have great importance for providing proper help to the youth in preparing and choosing a reasonable career. Therefore, this study was attempted in order to provide help for the preparation of job selection suitable for interest, aptitude and ability based on their possibility by analyzing the occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of the youth who is our future.

2. Research Objects and Research Method

2.1 Research Objects

The subjects of this study were 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade middle school students and 1st and 2nd grade high school students who have participated in the career experience program conducted by the university in C region, where the participants were 257 people and the consent was obtained by the instructing teachers before the survey and the survey was conducted directly by the researchers. A total of 270 questionnaires were distributed and 257(95.1%) copies were collected for finally analysis excluding 13 insufficient copies.

2.2 Research Tool

The tool for occupational preference has used the examination questions of reference 7 modified by reference 8. The sub-regions of this tool can be divided into inner region, external region and incidental region. Inner regions are service, creativity and independence, satisfaction of needs, self-realization and leadership. External regions are profitability, respect, stability and prospects. Incidental regions are interpersonal relationship and diversity. The reliability of this paper was Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.853$.

For the scale of career aspiration, 'Career Aspiration Scale (CAS)' developed by reference 9 and adapted by reference 10 was used. This scale measures the degree of exerted leadership or desire for promotion in the field chosen by the subject, in other words, it measures the plans and goals of their career fields and consists of a total of 10 questions where the subjects will answer using the Likert 5-point scale (5 points for 'strongly agree', 4 points for 'agree', 3 points for 'neither agree nor disagree', 2 points for 'disagree' and 1 point for 'strongly disagree') and includes 6 positive questions and 4 negative questions (reverse translated questions). The range of the total score is 10 to 50 points where higher the points, it means higher the level of career aspirations. The reliability coefficient identified through the study targeting the high school students by reference 9 0.76 and the reliability coefficient identified through the study targeting the female college students by reference 10 was 0.74. The reliability in this paper was Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.773$.

In order to measure the career attitude maturity (career awareness maturity), the tool developed by reference 11 was modified, implemented and used. Lower variables of career awareness maturity are determinacy,

Table 1. General Characteristics of the subjects

Characteristics	Category	Middle School (N(%)) (n=105)	High School (N(%)) (n=152)
Sex	Male	9(8.6)	54(34.4)
	Female	96(91.4)	103(65.6)
Grade	1	11(10.4)	65(41.4)
	2	28(26.7)	92(58.6)
	3	66(62.9)	-
Score	High	11(10.4)	30(19.2)
	Middle	28(26.7)	104(66.2)
	Low	66(62.9)	23(14.6)
Economic status	High	11(10.4)	7(4.5)
	Middle	28(26.7)	146(93.0)
	Low	66(62.9)	4(2.5)
Religion	Protestant	27(25.7)	55(35.2)
	Catholic	11(10.5)	12(7.6)
	Buddhism	14(13.3)	12(7.6)
	Others	55(50.5)	78(49.6)
Father's job	Professional job	12(11.4)	20(12.7)
	Office work	20(19.0)	63(40.1)
	Sales/Service job	28(26.7)	29(18.5)
	Production	28(26.7)	23(14.6)
	Others	17(16.2)	22(14.0)
Mother's job	Professional	9(8.6)	16(10.2)
	office work	11(10.5)	45(28.7)
	Sales/Service job	38(36.2)	45(28.7)
	Production	5(4.7)	12(7.6)
	Housewife	28(26.6)	26(16.6)
	Others	14(13.4)	13(8.2)

certainty, finality, readiness and independence, and the reliability in this paper was Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.876$.

2.3 Data Analysis

The collected data have used descriptive statistics of SPSSWIN (ver. 18.0) program and statistical techniques of T-test, ANOVA and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient.

3. Research Findings

3.1 General Characteristics

The general characteristics of the subjects are shown in Table 1. For gender, 91.4% were middle school female students, but for high school 54% were male students and 65.6% were female students. For grades, 3rd grade middle school students accounted for 62.9% and 2nd grade high school students accounted for 58.6%. For scores, lower ranking middle school students accounted for 62.9% and middle ranking high school students accounted for 66.2%. For economic status, middle students who have

answered that they are a lower class accounted for 62.9% and the high school students who have answered that they are a middle class accounted for 93% which was the highest number. For religion, both middle and high school students who have answered 'have no religion and others' accounted for 50.5% and 49.6% followed by those who have answered Christianity accounted for the highest number (25.7%, 35.2%). For the occupation of the parents, 26.7% of fathers of middle school students were engaged in sales, service and production, 36.2% of mothers were engaged in sales and service, and 40.1% of fathers of high school students were engaged in office work and mothers had the highest number in office work, sales and service (28.7%).

Comparison results of occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of middle and high school students are shown in Table 2. Occupational preference and career aspiration had no difference but career attitude maturity was found to be higher among high school students ($p < 0.05$).

Table 2. Degree of Occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity

Category	Middle School (N(%)) (n=105)	High school (N(%)) (n=152)	t	p
	M±SD	M±SD		
Occupational preference	3.86(0.39)	3.79(0.39)	1.267	.712
Career aspiration	3.35(0.42)	3.39(0.38)	-0.744	.388
Career attitude maturity	3.65(0.38)	3.85(0.54)	-3.459	.021

Table 3. Occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of middle school students (N=105)

Characteristics	Category	Occupational preference	t/F	Career aspiration	t/F	Career attitude maturity	t/F
Sex	Male	3.54(0.21)	-2.589*	3.23(0.37)	-0.928	3.42(0.24)	-1.837
	Female	3.89(0.39)		3.36(0.42)		3.67(0.39)	

Grade	1	3.83(0.62)	2.271	3.30(0.65)	1.440	3.70(0.10)	1.769
	2	3.84(0.39)		3.42(0.42)		3.67(0.43)	
	3	3.87(0.38)		3.45(0.40)		3.80(0.37)	
Score	High	4.13(0.49)	4.542*	3.55(0.41)	3.967*	3.80(0.31)	3.356*
	Middle	3.80(0.37)		3.40(0.45)		3.67(0.36)	
	Low	3.93(0.29)		3.31(0.31)		3.30(0.52)	
Economic status	High	4.00(0.12)	3.125*	3.81(0.31)	4.267*	4.14(0.37)	6.373*
	Middle	3.85(0.42)		3.34(0.41)		3.61(0.37)	
	Low	4.00(0.26)		3.35(0.42)		3.68(0.35)	
Religion	Protestant	4.30(0.39)	5.765*	3.48(0.48)	0.341	3.69(0.36)	0.170
	Catholic	4.20(0.27)		3.41(0.34)		3.59(0.67)	
	Buddhism	4.04(0.45)		3.47(0.19)		3.67(0.08)	
	Others	3.85(0.34)		3.34(0.44)		3.67(0.37)	
Father's job	Professional job	3.66(0.42)	3.061*	3.10(0.21)	2.912*	3.65(0.20)	0.778
	Office work	4.06(0.44)		3.28(0.33)		3.57(0.47)	
	Sales/Service job	3.94(0.50)		3.51(0.55)		3.70(0.48)	
	Production	3.73(0.24)		3.40(0.40)		3.71(0.36)	
	Others	3.77(0.14)		3.11(0.19)		3.62(0.26)	

Mother's job	Professional	3.81(0.39)	5.290*	3.85(0.57)	9.472**	3.80(0.60)	0.123
	office work	3.74(0.35)		3.12(0.34)		3.83(0.37)	
	Sales/Service job	3.79(0.32)		3.32(0.35)		3.55(0.42)	
	Production	3.71(0.31)		3.30(0.26)		3.44(0.48)	
	Housewife	4.23(0.31)		3.63(0.38)		3.78(0.34)	
	Others	4.05(0.64)		2.98(0.23)		3.57(0.13)	

*p<0.05, **p<0.001

The degree of occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of middle school students according to general characteristics are shown in Table 3. For occupational preference, it was shown to have a difference according to gender, scores, economic status, religion and occupation of parents. For career aspiration, it has shown a difference according to scores, economic status and occupation of parents and the career attitude maturity has shown a difference according to scores and economic status.

The degree of occupational preference, career aspirat-

ion and career attitude maturity of high school students according to general characteristics are shown in Table 4. For occupational preference, it was shown to have a difference according to gender, scores, economic status, religion and occupation of parents. For career aspiration, it has shown a difference according to gender, grades, scores, economic status and occupation of parents and the career attitude maturity has shown a difference according to grades, scores, economic status, religion and occupation of parents.

Table 4. Occupational preference, career aspiration, and career attitude maturity of high school students (N=152)

Characteristics	Category	Occupational preference	t/F	Career aspiration	t/F	Career attitude maturity	t/F
Sex	Male	3.93(0.41)	3.309*	3.56(0.42)	3.939**	4.09(0.46)	4.114
	Female	3.72(0.36)		3.30(0.33)		3.73(0.54)	
Grade	1	3.86(0.34)	1.887	3.54(0.39)	4.270**	4.01(0.45)	3.183*
	2	3.74(0.42)		3.28(0.34)		3.73(0.57)	

Score	High	4.02(0.43)	5.682*	3.57(0.42)	5.974*	4.01(0.43)	3.386*
	Middle	3.76(0.36)		3.40(0.36)		3.85(0.51)	
	Low	3.67(0.41)		3.20(0.36)		3.48(0.73)	
Economic status	High	4.14(0.53)	3.115*	3.84(0.28)	3.423*	4.01(0.53)	3.596*
	Middle	3.78(0.37)		3.38(0.38)		3.87(0.51)	
	Low	3.57(0.53)		3.42(0.22)		3.16(1.09)	
Religion	Protestant	3.98(0.38)	3.195*	3.55(0.40)	3.226*	3.96(0.50)	3.969*
	Catholic	3.92(0.54)		3.54(0.55)		3.91(0.57)	
	Buddhism	3.68(0.54)		3.35(0.45)		3.75(0.89)	
	Others	3.57(0.39)		3.14(0.33)		3.32(0.50)	
Father's job	Professional job	3.96(0.32)	2.451*	3.54(0.46)	3.930*	4.10(0.47)	4.403*
	Office work	3.79(0.41)		3.41(0.37)		3.90(0.50)	
	Sales/ Service job	3.77(0.36)		3.26(0.37)		3.74(0.43)	
	Production	3.73(0.37)		3.51(0.30)		3.87(0.59)	
	Others	3.54(0.34)		3.10(0.41)		3.36(0.72)	
Mother's job	Professional	3.82(0.29)	0.354	3.48(0.17)	0.248	3.80(0.53)	2.581*
	office work	3.76(0.35)		3.33(0.44)		3.88(0.43)	
	Sales/ Service job	3.78(0.39)		3.40(0.33)		3.80(0.54)	
	Production	3.82(0.38)		3.33(0.40)		3.86(0.59)	
	Housewife	3.86(0.46)		3.43(0.49)		3.95(0.57)	
	Others	3.66(0.60)		3.34(0.29)		3.14(0.85)	

*p<0.05, **p<0.001

The correlation of occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of entire students are shown in Table 5. It was shown that occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity had a positive correlation.

4. Evaluation and Conclusion

One's teenage year is an important time when one prepares for one's future career. Therefore it is of great importance to study the variables associated with career attitude

Table 5. Correlation among Occupational preference, career aspiration, and career attitude maturity

Variables	Occupational preference	career aspiration	career attitude maturity
Occupational preference	1		
career aspiration	0.421**	1	
career attitude maturity	0.322**	0.222*	1

*p<0.05, **p<0.001

Table 6. Correlation among Occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of middle school students

Variables	Occupational preference	career aspiration	career attitude maturity
Occupational preference	1		
career aspiration	0.479**	1	
career attitude maturity	0.432**	0.314**	1

**p<0.0011

The correlation of occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of middle school students are shown in Table 6. It was shown that occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity had a positive correlation.

The correlation of occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of high school students are shown in Table 7. It was shown that occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity had a positive correlation.

maturity in order to provide them with appropriate help. As such, this study analyzed teenagers' career preference, career aspirations and career attitude maturity in order to be of help in training for the right selection of careers that fit one's interest area, capability and competence level. The findings are as follows. By comparing the occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of middle and high school students, occupational preference and career aspiration had no difference but high school students had higher career attitude maturity.

Table 7. Correlation among Occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of high school students

Variables	Occupational preference	career aspiration	career attitude maturity
Occupational preference	1		
career aspiration	0.448**	1	
career attitude maturity	0.375**	0.285**	1

**p<0.0011

Occupational preference of middle school students according to general characteristics had a difference according to gender, scores, economic status, religion and occupation of parents. Personal career aspirations provides the direction of career to choose and determines the future behavior, in other words, it shows achievement expectations, recognition and plans for study and job. In this study, career aspiration had a difference according to scores, economic status and occupation of parents, and career attitude maturity had a difference according to scores and economic status. This was also shown in the study of reference⁷ targeting the middle school students where the career values and occupational preference had a difference according to gender.

Occupational preference of high school students according to general characteristics had a difference according to the gender, scores, economic status, religion and occupation of parents. This was also shown in the 'study on the occupational preference of youth' by reference¹² where gender and economic status was major variables and demographic variables were shown to cause an influence. Career aspiration had a difference according to gender, grades, scores, economic status and occupation of father, and career attitude maturity had a difference according to grades, scores, economic status, religion and occupation of parents.

It was shown that occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of all students had a positive correlation. This has the same context as the study of Hwang and reference¹³ where the positive correlation was strongly shown on the career attitude maturity for all male and female students during the autonomous academic motivation.

It was shown that occupational preference, career aspiration and career attitude maturity of all middle and high

school students had a positive correlation. When seeing that there was a significant positive correlation between career aspiration and career attitude maturity based on the study results of reference¹⁴, it can be seen that career aspiration has a significant impact on the career attitude maturity. Based on such results, the youth should choose their future career according to given voluntary motivation and should be educated thoughtfully of how much they yearn and desire the success and achievement through the selected courses. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare a wide variety of career education and opportunities to experience in order to raise the ability to objectively evaluate oneself, establish values on the career and to set appropriate goals.

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