
CAREER MATURITY LEVEL OF INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper designed to examine the Career Maturity (CM) level of Intermediate students and made a comparative analysis regarding their gender, subject, and type of college. This research was delimited to the 11th grade students of public and private colleges of district Khanewal. A sample consisting of 600 students was selected through stratified random sampling. Career Maturity Inventory-Revised (CMI-R) was used to gather the data. Descriptive (percentages) and inferential (T-test) statistics were applied for the analysis of the data. Results indicated that higher number of students have a low level of CM. The difference in the CM level was not significant among female and male students. However, significant difference between the CM level of science and arts students and private and public college students were found. Students of the science group and students at private colleges had a higher level of career maturity than arts and public college students. Educators and career counselors may find these findings useful for improving undergraduate's CM level and facilitating their transition from college to the workplace. Findings from this research imply the need of professional career counselors at school and college levels who can help students in deciding their subjects and career.

KEYWORDS

Career Maturity, Career Development, Intermediate Level, Career Adaptability

INTRODUCTION

Developing CM is a key aspect of career preparation in the 21st century and one of the main areas of career development guidance. CM is characterized by an individual's ability to deal with career-related tasks in a mature manner. In the 21st century, choosing a career from the vast array of careers is a difficult task, because each person must make a choice from a stream of possibilities. For students to prepare for their careers ahead of time (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; AlKhemeiri & Khalid, 2020), CM is essential, as it helps them adjust to rapid changes

that occur during industrial revolutions, particularly the competition between humans and technology. Students at the college level need vocational and educational guidance to make informed career decisions. Chuang et al. (2020) suggest that students who lack a clear career goal or undefined career goal-selection require proactive career-decision advice. Consequently, students who have a higher CM may find it easier to achieve their career goals. The study by Hamzah et al. (2021) found that efforts towards improving CM can significantly improve students' career adaptability.

In developing countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India students face difficulties in deciding a career due to lack of guidance and counseling facilities (Hassan, 2006). In selecting suitable career students need adequate career guidance and counseling. Career decision-making of an individual is escorted by the maturity of attitudes and abilities which provide the base to CM. These abilities and attitudes appear and develop during childhood but at the phase of adulthood they get to be synchronized and clear towards a characterized professional objective (Hassan, 2006). The choice of a career during late adolescence and early adulthood can be precise and clear to students (Wang et al., 2006). CM defines a person's capacity to cope with the situations in investigating, selecting, and proceeding with a chosen career (Salami, 2008). According to Teychenne et al. (2019) in order to improve graduate employability and career adaptability, CM should be incorporated into school, college, and university curriculums as a key integral skill, as many students lack a full understanding of the relevant career opportunities in their field. Also, generating more accurate self-assessments and gaining occupational information is essential to help students make career decisions and arrive at the best career choices in the future (Xin et al., 2020). Additionally, students who lack a clear career goal or who haven't selected a career goal should be provided with proactive career-decision advice (Chuang et al., 2020). It was proposed by Teychenne et al. (2019) that additional strategies need to be introduced to enhance students' CM skills, especially when seeking solutions to complex problems during their college years.

Intermediate level is an important stage in the process of CM when college going students are confronted with uninterrupted educational and career selection during their studies. Students cannot achieve their set objectives in the field or subject they are working or studying because the selection is not according to their interests and capacities. A career counselor can verify that students have complete information about the tasks connected with career selection and assisting students to build up the aptitudes essential with carrying out this procedure (Gordon & Steele, 2015). According to Peng (2001) almost fifty percent of students at the college stage suffer from stress while deciding their career and asked for help in career decision making. One-fourth of college going students pick their subjects, yet they stay unhappy and uncomfortable with the selected career (Salter, 2008). Their interests did not match the selected majors according to the wishes of their parents and most students select majors during the second year of intermediate level (Baig, 2012). Students can find good career options and motivations through extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, and social services (Helwig, 2004). CM and gender generate conflicting results, both male and female have perceptible different levels of CM. Male students were at the lower stage of CM as compared to female students (Sirohi, 2013; Lau et al., 2013; Yon et al., 2012). Whereas study conducted by Hassan (2006) had contrasting results where male score higher than female students. Salami (2003) did

not mention significant differences. Gender which had a great effect on CM functions in different ways in diverse situations and cultures.

Student's level of CM is influenced by the kind of establishment and the kind of subjects. Students studying in private educational institutions had higher CM as compared to the students at public institutes (Dhillon & Kaur, 2005; Sirohi, 2013). According to Thompson and Lindeman (as cited in Patton & Lokan, 2001) ninth and tenth graders who study general programs were less career mature than students of occupational and practical courses. At the college level, students in career particular proficient projects have a more elevated amount of CM when compared with the students in sociology, social sciences, and humanities (Lokan & Biggs, 1982). Besides that, a significant and positive relationship was identified between career maturity and career adaptability. As a result, educators and counselors should focus on the development of students' CM to train and enhance their career adaptability. Accordingly, students with a high level of CM have a better chance of adapting to the learning environment. They are also more positive about the future of their education and employment (Rahim et al., 2021). However, there are no proper career counseling facilities available for the students at schools and colleges in Pakistan. There is a gap in literature about the CM level of intermediate students in Pakistan which can help in designing career counseling and career guidance programs. This research paper aimed to fill this gap by finding out the CM level of intermediate students in Pakistan and to examine the difference among demographic variables (gender, subject, and college) of intermediate students on the measure of CM. Study findings highlighted the importance of CM for better career selection, it elaborates the significance of CM which supports students in suitable career selection.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The foundation of development is education and everyone aware of its critical importance, in this contemporary world existence of any nation without an advanced quality education is impossible. A nation's success and failure depend on the provision of quality education because it serves as a tool that makes an individual's dreams come true. In Pakistan provision of quality education is the responsibility of the state (Malik, 2007). The state is trying to provide access for every citizen to education, however, could not guarantee its quality because of inadequate expertise and resources. Due to the low standards of education in community institutes parents opted for private institutes for better and advanced education. In Pakistan, the contribution of the private sector in education in 2001 was 21% and in 2005 the proportion of the public sector diminished to 67%. The collaboration with the private sector will help in achieving educational goals because the government of Pakistan cannot achieve the targets of Education for All (EFA) without the help of the private sector (Malik, 2007).

Career

A career is a developmental concept that consists of the combination of a person's work series and experiences of life and how a person knows them concerning their work (Greenhaus et al., 2000; Sharf, 2002). Career and work are two different concepts career is a lifestyle concept that includes homework done by anyone before entering the professional planet, it gives monetary security and various open doors to advance in the professional field. A regular job/work is generally for the most part an approach to get monetary benefits (Hamm, 2010; Niles & Harris,

2013). Students in less developed countries especially in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and Nigeria are forced to choose a career when they do not have sufficient knowledge to select a field. Supper (1990) indicates that the duration of the college is a time of crystallization in which individuals place broad and uncertain career objectives. Programs of transition are carried out at colleges, but it is a fact that these transition programs are not able to accomplish the needs of the postsecondary institutions.

External variables like personality, environment, opportunity, parent's sentiments, peer pressure, and financial pressures influence career decision making (Borchert, 2002). Because of these outer influences, students pick their careers as opposed to their capabilities and wishes. The environment directly affects the students while they are selecting their majors; their residential environment helps them to identify their abilities and interests. Parents have an immense influence on their children in making career related choices as students are constantly being asked to join their family profession (Borchert, 2002). Forcefully selected career results in meager educational performance, depression, dissatisfaction, and leaving colleges during studies. In the process of picking a career a person's individuality assumes a fundamental part because the selected career should be according to the personality of the individuals. Someone who desires to go into the business needs to have extroverted behavior, while the one who possesses good self-understanding will formulate clever and appropriate career choices (Borchert, 2002). Career indecision is a well-known risk to the student's performance, self-awareness, and academic progress, it can cause hopelessness, frustration, and panic in students (Hartley, 2009). For the right and timely career choice, one can learn decision-making skills, yet a person must create systems that fit with an individual's own effective style of activity. According to Betz (2004) indecisiveness in career selection is mainly because of low CM. Individuals with rational decision-making can exhibit the skill to attain self-knowledge, occupational information, and able to increase career aims and procedures (Rahim et al., 2021).

Career Development

Career development consists of an individual's career outline formation, and way of taking decisions since it is a constant procedure of getting information and enhancing aptitude that will facilitate a person to establish career plans (Niles & Harris, 2013). Career success might be classified as objective career achievements such as salaries and working conditions (external success), and subjective career achievement measured concerning a man's comprehension of career actualization success (internal success) (Kuijpers et al., 2006). People who have subjective career success experience more satisfaction because it satisfies their inner self.

Career Maturity (CM)

In the development of an individual's career variables such as interest, abilities, attributes, and maturity play a vital role. CM is extensively related to different factors of career development, for example, making decisions related to career and career inclination (Salami, 2003). The idea of CM started by Super (1955) in "*Career Pattern Study*" initially known as "*vocational maturity*". Super's work in CM begins formulating at the start of the 1950s and has been generally reconsidered, enhanced and plenty of research instruments have been developed (Brown & Lent, 2005). CM is the extent of ability to which a person has the power to solitarily choose the career, for super CM is an "*individual's readiness to deal with the developmental*

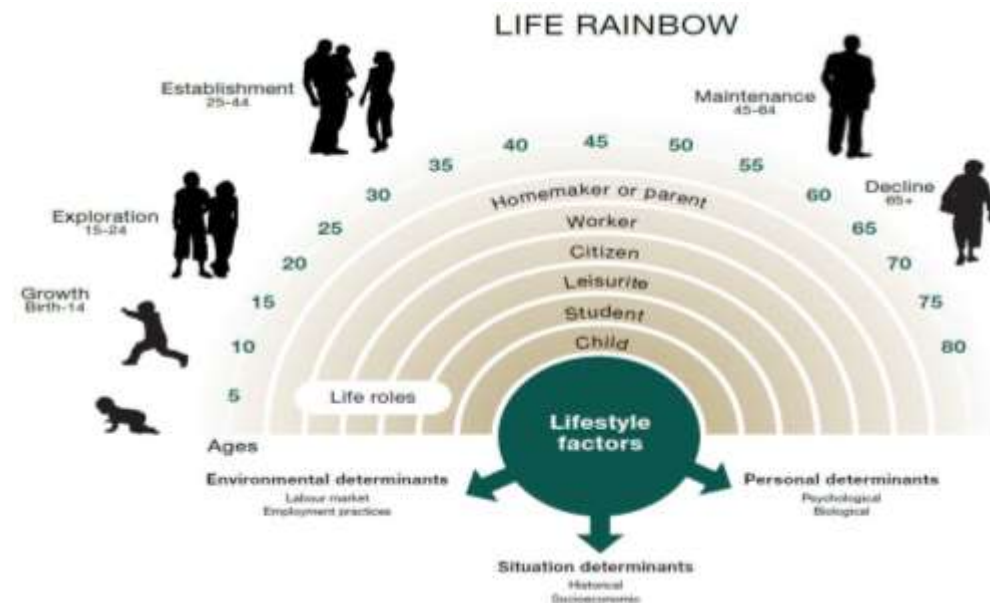
tasks for that time of development" (Super, 1990). From the two aspects of CM, the cognitive dimension is an independent understanding of the need to choose a career and identify a preferred career. The attitudinal aspect refers to an individual's viewpoint and stance regarding making a suitable occupational settlement (Crites, 1978). An individual's CM is a cluster of their attributes [intellectual, physical, and social]. It depends on the environmental needs at any stage of life, and the individual must adjust according to the needs. Typically, parental financial status, mental limit, abilities, training, character, professional development, and existing open doors choose the way of a man's vocation (Lau et al., 2013). CM consists of five aspects:

1. Acquiring self-information and then transforming it to self-knowledge.
2. Mounting skills of decision making and enact these strengths.
3. Accumulating information related to career and molding it into practical working knowledge.
4. Assimilation of knowledge of self and working world knowledge.
5. In designing the career execute the attained knowledge (Coertse & Schepers, 2004).

Career Development Theory of Super

Super (1969, 1980, 1990) advocated that the choice of a career and its progress is primarily an exercise of developing and acting on one's self-notion. According to Super, a student has already made choices while moving into college or practical life after completion of school. CM is the peak of a person's career, and there will be several peaks or no peaks at all in whole life. Throughout life, an individual transit through divergent vocational phases and Super (1957) defined a person's life stages as a life rainbow.

Figure 1: Life Rainbow



Source: careers.nz, 2012

1. At the stage of Growth (Birth to 14years), individuals originate concepts about self, attitudes, aptitudes, and interests.
2. At the Exploration stage (15-24 years) individuals analyze themselves and investigate the world around them (Zunker, 2002).
3. Establishment stage (25-44 years) a person concentrating on diverse career choices and professional preferences. People begin establishing themselves.
4. During the Maintenance stage (45-64 years) one woos to outstrip the working situation. It is a reconciliation stage for a person.
5. The stage of Decline (65+ years) is the pre-retirement period. Individual's more interest is in maintaining the position (Clawson, 2008).

The second stage of Supers' life rainbow theory the Exploration stage was the focus of the study. Students at intermediate level belongs to the age group of 15-24 years. This is the stage where they analyze themselves and explore different things to decide their future.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. What is the CM level of intermediate students?
2. What is the difference between CM level of intermediate students?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the CM level of male and female intermediate students.
2. There is no significant difference between the CM level of arts and science intermediate students.
3. There is no significant difference between the CM level of public and intermediate private college students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper was designed under the positivistic paradigm. Under the quantitative approach, it was descriptive research in which a survey was used to collect data about the CM of intermediate students.

Population and Sample

Population for the study to whom the researcher can generalize the results comprises of all intermediate students from public and private college of district Khanewal (Creswell, 2003). The total number of students in 22 colleges [13 public & 09 private] was 9683 and 600 students were selected as a sample through stratified random sampling. Three hundred (300) students from public colleges [150 boys and 150 girls] and 300 from private colleges [150 boys and 150 girls] were selected as sample.

Instrumentation

An adapted Career Maturity Inventory-Revised (CMI-R) was used to measure the level of CM. Due to the relevance of the content for adults in postsecondary education, it was chosen for this study (Busacca & Taber, 2002). The CMI-R is composed of two components, an attitude scale and a competency test. It was modified as a five-point Lickert scale ranging from strongly agree

(5) to strongly disagree (1). Originally the inventory was developed by Crites and Savickas in 1995. The reliability of the survey questionnaire was established to ensure its recognition and acceptance. The reliability was established to make it free from any biasness and to guarantee accurate estimation of outcomes because a reliable instrument should be free of bias to avoid inaccurate estimates of outcomes (Sikorski & Noble, 2013). The alpha coefficient value of the modified instrument was .782 which indicated acceptable and strong internal consistency of the survey questionnaire (Taber, 2018; Field, 2009). Items 12, 15, 17, 21, 28, 38 were reverse scored.

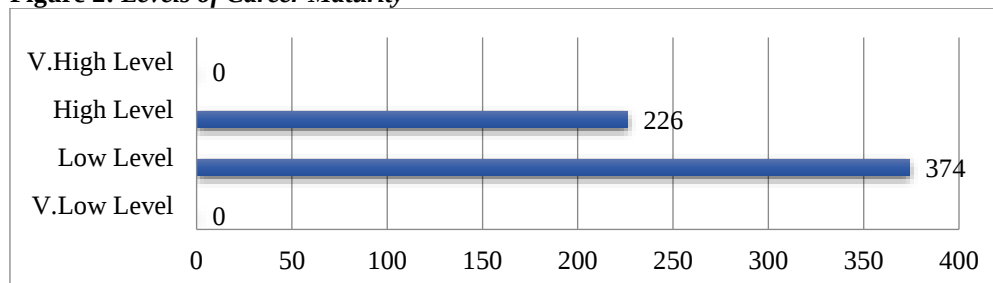
Ethical Considerations

The researcher got individual consent from the selected sample to participate in the study since the consent to participate or not to participate is a basic standard of conducting ethical research (Roberts & Allen, 2015). A letter that contains the information about the study was given to the participants, to make an informed decision about participation in the study (Clark & McCann, 2005).

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The researcher collected the data through personal visits to the colleges. Descriptive [percentages] and inferential [T-test] statistics were used to draw results and conclusions from collected data. The analysis showed the difference in the CM level of intermediate students. Gender, subject, and college wise differences were found in the study. The overall level of career maturity was also explored.

Figure 2: Levels of Career Maturity



Students' level of CM was divided into four levels from very low level to a very high level. From the total of 600 students 374 (62.3%) had low CM, while 226 which is (37.7%) of the total sample had a high level of CM. No student had a very high and very low level of CM.

Table 1: Comparison of Male and Female students' CM

Gender	N	Mean	t. value	Df	p. value
Male	276	117.68	302	550	.763
Female	276	118.32			

Comparison of male and female students' CM reflected that no significant difference exists in

their career maturity level ($p=.763>.05$). Female respondents showed a relatively high level of CM as compared to the males ($x =118.32>117.68$). The difference in the CM level is not statistically significant.

Table 2: Comparison of Public and Private College students' CM level

Colleges	N	Mean	t. value	Df	p. value
Public	300	116.24	3.381	550	.001
Private	252	119.75			

While comparing the CM level of students from public and private colleges it was emanated that the CM level of students from private colleges was significantly different ($p=.001<.05$) from public college students. Private college respondents showed a high level of CM as compared to public college students ($x =119.75>116.24$). The difference in the CM level is statistically significant.

Table 3: Comparison of Science and Arts students' CM level

Subjects	N	Mean	t. value	Df	p. value
Science	276	121.09	6.432	550	.000
Arts	276	114.61			

Comparison of science and arts students' CM level reflected that a significant difference exists in the CM level of science and arts students ($p=.000<.05$). Science respondents showed a relatively high level of CM as compared to the arts respondents ($x =121.09>114.61$). The difference in the level of CM is statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

Choosing a career is a gigantic task for a person since we are socially conditioned to value our careers very highly and to blend our egos into our work. It is hard for many individuals to feel satisfied and glad when their careers are not going well, regardless of the possibility that everything else is working "Okay". But if a person's career is flourishing while the rest of his life is only so-so, he may still be generally happy and content. There are exceptions, but this is a general pattern and choosing a career according to the personality and interests is necessary to lead a successful and satisfying life.

Results indicated a low level of CM among intermediate students. Students need career counseling/career education due to low CM. The poor education system, lack of career counseling facilities, and carelessness from the students are the causes of low CM among students. Bakar (1998) stated that undergraduates and graduates require career guidance to make a sound career selection. The lesser the opportunities to get information about career planning, the greater are the chances of continuous change of profession.

Female and male students are not significantly at different levels of CM, although female

students displayed a higher CM when contrasted with the male students. Studies conducted by (Sirohi, 2013; Lau et al., 2013; Yon et al., 2012) supported the results and found a higher level of career maturity among female students. In contrast Hassan (2006) found higher male scores.

Studies conducted by Dhillon and Kaur (2005) and Sirohi (2013) had supported the results of the study that private students possess higher CM than public college students. This happens because private college, students are appropriately urged to different activities alongside the scholarly pressure and the private colleges present more functional based educational modules close to the erudite information. Along these lines nature of the private schools can make attention to professional advancement among the students to set them up fit for the World of Occupation. On the other hand, either the government colleges lack such practical based educational programs, or the students are not sufficiently supported towards the co-curricular exercises, therefore, they show a low level of professional development. Moreover, students in arts and science groups had diverse CM. Science group students were more career mature than arts group students. The results were supported by the research conducted by Lokan and Biggs in (1982).

Career Maturity is a highly neglected and less concerned area in career development and career selection across Pakistan. Results demonstrated the overall low level of CM among intermediate students. Although it is found that science students and students from private colleges were more career mature due to better services and facilities than the arts and public college students. However, students were not enough mature to make an appropriate career choice. They display a low level of CM because of poor facilities of career counseling in their institutions. Furthermore, students were not properly guided while deciding upon their majors in college. It was concluded from the results that intermediate students in Pakistan did not have facilities of career counseling/guidance in their colleges. They were not trained to make mature career decisions. To prepare students for their careers, higher education should prioritize developing their career competencies, choosing career goals, and planning their careers. Furthermore, interventions should be designed based on everyone's competencies and capabilities (Janib et al., 2021).

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has extensive educational implications for parents, teachers, and policy makers. To utilize appropriate human resource development and preserve state resources, the government of Pakistan should establish career counseling institutions to provide proper guidance to the youth. Professional school and college counsellors should provide collaborative support and training to parents and teachers on career guidance. This is a great help in saving youth from spoiling their careers since, their education, skills, and position within the school community, are in a unique position to assess the needs of adults. Professionally trained career counselor in school and public college can provide career counseling to indecisive students about their future careers. Career counselors can help parents and teachers in creating opportunities that would nurture interests in vocational subject matter and produce environments that would nurture the discovery of aptitudes for vocational/career content. Keeping in view the importance of career maturity a similar kind of research may be conducted at the school level. Moreover, effects of other variables on students' CM such as age, socioeconomic status, and parent's education also

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