

Career Aspirations of Young Adults and the Role of General Self-Efficacy in Shaping Career Related Decisions

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Abstract - Young adults' career aspirations are of crucial importance to determining their educational and career paths. General self-efficacy is one of the psychological factors that has been identified as a key determinant of confidence, resilience, and decision-making skills in career development. Few studies, however, have investigated the link between general self-efficacy and career goals of young adults in various educational and occupational settings. A descriptive and correlational research design was used in this study to analyze the relationship between general self-efficacy and career aspirations of young adults aged 18-30. A structured questionnaire, consisting of a General Self-Efficacy Scale and a Career Aspirations Scale was used to gather data from 100 respondents. The participants were selected using the convenience sampling technique. Data collected were analyzed descriptively, through Chi-square, correlation, and simple linear regression. The results indicated that 50% of the respondents had moderate self-efficacy, 30% had high self-efficacy, and 20% had low self-efficacy. With regard to career aspirations, 43% were shown to have moderate aspirations, whilst 37% were shown to have high aspirations. The result of Chi-square analysis showed that career aspiration was significantly associated with self-efficacy ($\chi^2=18.72$, $df=4$, $p=0.001$). A correlation analysis also revealed that the variables were significantly and positively correlated ($r=0.620$; $p<0.001$). In sum, the data indicate that youth who are high in self-efficacy are more likely to have clear career plans and more certain in making career choices and persistent in career pursuit. The results underscore the need for improving self-efficacy by providing education, mentoring, career guidance, and skill development programs to help young adults make informed career decisions and achieve long-term career success.

Keywords: Career Aspirations, General Self-Efficacy, Young Adults, Career Decision-Making, Career Development, Goal Setting, Professional Aspirations

I. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the period that follows from adolescence to adulthood brings about a point at which there is much change

in regards to social connections, work, and the psychological state of a person. Desire, perseverance, and self-efficacy are important factors in this respect because it have considerable long-term effects on the career paths of people. There is a necessity to obtain more information regarding the interactions of these elements to get a precise and accurate picture of the influences of these factors on the selection of and striving for career goals and career success (Condon & Holleque, 2013). The term, in line with Albert Bandura's self-efficacy, stands for one's conviction in the ability to arrange and effectuate behavior to achieve a certain goal. Self-efficacy is an important element, as it determines the frequency with which people act in a goal-directed manner and the efficiency of coping with problems and obstacles in the chosen career path (Cramm et al., 2013). The concept of perseverance implies an unshakable determination of a person to reach a goal regardless of any obstacles faced (Çakar, 2012). People's capacity to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals is significantly shaped by the interaction between self-efficacy and perseverance. Additionally, a person's career aspirations, which represent long-term goals, wants, and ambitions in terms of work, are crucial in determining both their professional and educational behaviors. The literature on how these constructs interact and affect young people's career paths is generally very lacking. Although individually, there is quite some work done on these constructs, very little is known about the interaction between them (Cramm et al., 2013).

At each stage of the life cycle, different aspects of the career would require attention for the development of a career. This makes the matter all the more complex, especially when a person moves out of academia and joins the world of work. Due to the fact that post-graduate students are in the stage where it is exploring their careers, research into them would be relevant and would help in identifying the various determinants of the different stages of career development. Other than individual job aspirations, self-efficacy is an

essential general factor in this process (De Caroli & Sagone, 2014). Factors affecting self-efficacy and professional aspiration are primarily investigated in this research, in addition to the effects of these two variables. The focus of this study was young adults between the ages of 18-30 years in the decision-making process of career choices. This sample consisted of undergraduate students, postgraduate students, professionals, and job-seekers who were at various levels in their career-exploration processes. Past research has found that career goals were related to achievement orientation, prestige, and information; self-efficacy towards career decision making was related to persistence, future orientation, and support from the institution. Career orientation, ability to tackle challenges, and the ability to acquire appropriate information from the respondents indicated their general self-efficacy. On top of that, it was concluded in this study that job aspiration is a better predictor of self-efficacy for career decisions than self-efficacy itself. There is also evidence suggesting that career decision self-efficacy in the case of younger persons doesn't differentiate by age, work experience, and gender. Yet it differentiates by age and life goals, with young people, who are concentrated on their career and high on self-efficacy:

- Set ambitious career goals.
- Take initiative in decision-making.
- Persist despite challenges.

The relation between self-efficacy and career goals is important to understand for providing young people with fulfilling careers.

Self-Efficacy

The study conducted by Albert Bandura is responsible for the formulation of the psychological concept of self-efficacy. Humans live in systems that had not been understood before and were constantly ignored by people. The notion of the ability of people to influence events in their lives was what operated this system. It was Bandura who came up with the term self-efficacy (Claster & Blair, 2017). People develop these kinds of beliefs as children while facing different situations in life. Over time, these beliefs keep changing along with the acquisition of new skills and situations.

• Self-efficacy and Self-regulation

Self-efficacy is sometimes misinterpreted in terms of self-regulation because it has to do with self-control and the coordination of behavior toward reaching predetermined goals. Although it is distinct ideas, it has certain things in common. Self-efficacy is defined as "self-generated thoughts, emotions, and behaviors systematically aimed at influencing learning" and is more closely related to an individual's perceptual aspect. It is a concept that is personal (Chen & Solberg, 2018). In simpler terms, it means that self-efficacy is a tool for achieving one's aims, and more specifically, when learning. Self-efficacy, in turn, means feeling that one is capable of accomplishing.

• Self-efficacy and Motivation

Self-efficacy and motivation, although different from each other, are interconnected. Motivation depends on the urge to act, while self-efficacy depends on belief in oneself. It would be unusual for self-efficacy to exist along with motivation and vice versa (Ngui & Lay, 2017). In order to create a success cycle in one way or another, however, their connection can play an important role. When one is motivated to succeed, one will be able to realize his/her goal, gaining experience that raises the overall.

• Self-efficacy and Resilience

Although success is required to develop self-efficacy, an individual with a higher self-efficacy is still able to fail. But when success is not the only required trait, as well as requiring success, higher self-efficacy is much more likely to be able to succeed at continuing on without giving up. The required trait to be able to continue without giving up is resilience. Self-efficacy helps greatly in the development of resilience.

Albert Bandura's definition of self-efficacy is "The specific cognition an individual holds about their ability to execute an action plan in anticipated future situations". So essentially, self-efficacy is confidence in the person's ability to perform a given task (Jemini-Gashi et al., 2021). The self-efficacy principle asserts that it is no more or less important to have confidence in one's ability than to have the actual ability. Humans can perform any task that believe are capable of completing and have the opportunity to do so because of the principle of self-efficacy, which falls under the wider umbrella of social cognition theory.

The objectives of the study:

- To investigate and comprehend young adults' job ambitions, interests, and chosen career choices in light of shifting social and economic circumstances.
- To determine young people's general self-efficacy and how their ability to overcome obstacles affects their development on both a personal and professional level.
- To examine with a focus on how self-belief influences the capacity to make decisive, self-assured, and successful career decisions.
- To determine and investigate the numerous internal and external elements that affect young adults' job goals, including schooling, peer pressure, family influence, and socioeconomic background.
- To assess how general self-efficacy affects motivation, perseverance, flexibility, and the capacity to overcome challenges in reaching professional objectives.

The paper consists of five sections. Literature review and research gap identification were presented in Section 2. The study methods (research design, sample, instruments, and data analyses) are illustrated in Section 3. In Section 4, the

results and discussions are presented. The conclusion of the study is outlined in Section 5.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

General self-efficacy has been recognized as an important psychological construct that plays a major role in confidence, motivation, resilience, and career-related behavior. Studies have consistently reported that individuals with higher self-efficacy possess more confidence in their personal capability in pursuing goals and overcoming challenges. In this study, general self-efficacy contributed to the positive development and accomplishment-oriented behavior of young people (Hossain et al., 2024; Weber et al., 2013). Also, another article states that life satisfaction and psychological well-being increased with increases in general self-efficacy by bolstering individuals' belief in their abilities (Waaktaar & Torgersen, 2013; Kwon & Kim, 2024).

In studies relating to career-related behaviors, career exploration, planning, and career choices, self-efficacy seems to be of paramount importance. This article found that the higher career self-efficacy, the lower career indecision, and the higher career choice confidence of youth (Jemini-Gashi et al., 2021). Additionally, career decision-making self-efficacy was a significant predictor of career exploration behavior and vocational transitions to work-life (Chen et al., 2021). This study additionally found that self-efficacy was a dominant predictor of effective career decision-making behavior and made individuals more confident when evaluated their choices and choosing their own career path (Mares et al., 2025).

Furthermore, self-efficacy has also been found to correlate positively with career aspirations and identity. In the present article, self-efficacy related to career search was found to mediate career identity development for youth in a supportive environment (Chen & Solberg, 2018). Self-efficacy of the general sort was found to be a reliable predictor of vocational aspirations and career-related decision-making (Hoppe & Fujishiro, 2015). The article, based on a meta-analysis, illustrates the substantial positive relation between career decision-making self-efficacy and career choice confidence and vocational planning (Choi et al., 2012).

It has been argued that the transition from education to employment is an important transitional phase in young people's development, where self-efficacy seems to be crucial. This article found that more self-efficacious young adults were more successful in transition to work and or higher education (Moirangthem, 2023; Andersén et al., 2018). Further, it provides support for the applicability of self-efficacy to coping with role transitions and changing career circumstances among young adults (Kot et al., 2022). Life skills self-efficacy has also been identified as a predictor of readiness for a career and professional development of emerging adults in another study (Wong et al., 2025).

Despite established associations of self-efficacy across different domains, namely education, psychology, and

vocation, little has been reported on the general self-efficacy and overall career aspiration of young people (Condon & Holleque, 2013). Few studies had examined general self-efficacy to career aspiration, but most research had found significant relations with career decision or occupational specific self-efficacy. This research would endeavor to meet this need by investigating general self-efficacy, work-related career decision-making, and career aspirations of young adults.

Research Gaps

Although a lot of work has been done on self-efficacy and career aspirations, there are some gaps in the literature. For example, the existing literature concentrates on domain specific self-efficacy such as academic or career self-efficacy, while the general effect of general self-efficacy on the entire career aspiration and career decisions remains inadequately studied. The existing studies are carried out in Western countries, and little is known about how social, cultural, and community factors contribute to the formation of self-efficacy and aspirations in other contexts. Correspondingly, even though some work has been done on the influence of family SES, education, and parenting behaviors on career aspirations, its effect on developing general self-efficacy is not well explained. Interesting also is that the impact of self-efficacy on gender differences in career aspirations is worth investigating, although much work has been done on gender differences in career aspirations. Last but not least, studies on how self-efficacy contributes to entrepreneurial aspirations in young people are also limited. All these factors will give a more comprehensive understanding of how to form the general career aspirations and career decisions in young people.

Hypotheses

Based on the idea of self-efficacy, the following theories are developed to investigate the connection between career goals and overall self-efficacy:

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no discernible relationship between young adults' overall self-efficacy and their career aspirations.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a strong correlation between young adults' career aspirations and their overall self-efficacy.

These hypotheses will be investigated through statistical procedures (e.g., correlation analysis) to test whether self-efficacy influences career-related decision-making and aspiration levels.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study analyzes the relationship between self-efficacy and career objectives among young people. The research design used is quantitative, which means the study can obtain quantifiable data from a particular population of interest at a certain point in time through standardized

surveys as a method of primary data collection. Analysis of the collected data showed that general self-efficacy influences career objectives in young adults.

Research Design

Such a research method falls under the framework, wherein he explains that the usage of surveys is relevant where there

is an interest in studying the relationship between variables and formulating generalizable results (Kot et al., 2022). Likewise, this particular research design meets the research guidelines, wherein he says that the usage of surveys is appropriate to study attitudes, opinions, and behaviour.

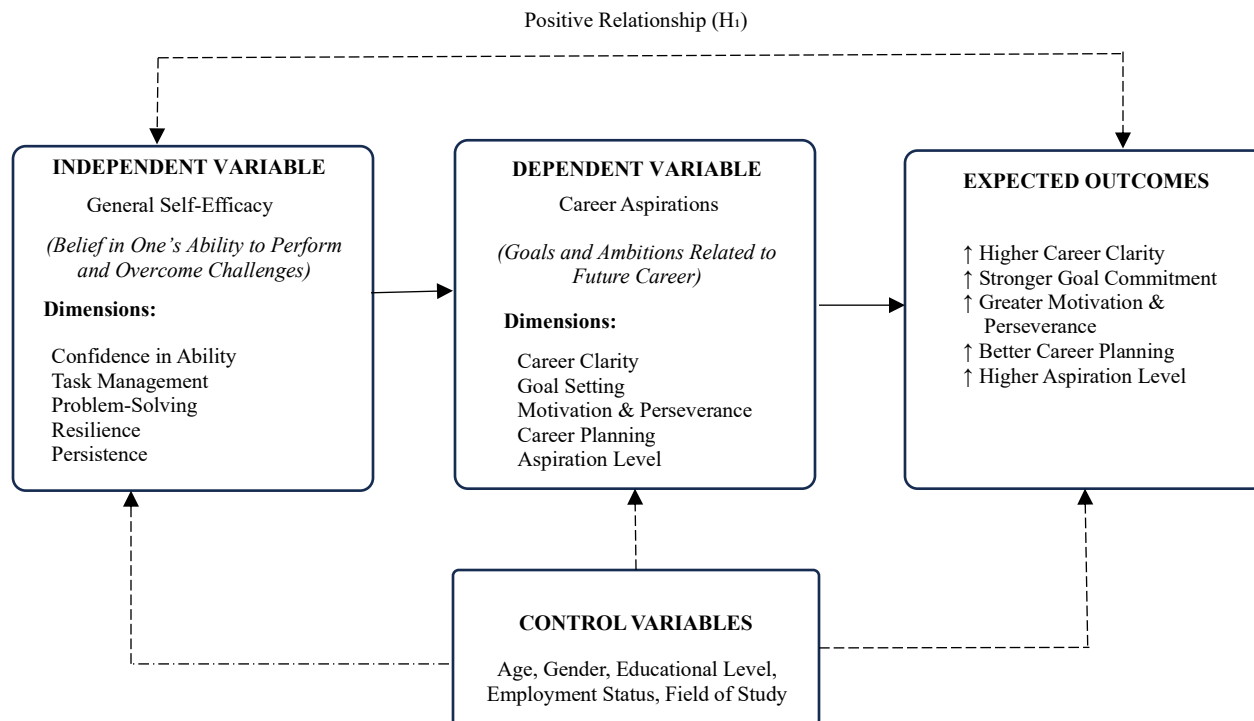


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework Illustrating the Relationship Between General Self-Efficacy and Career Aspirations Among Young Adults

In fig. 1 indicates the assumed relationship between General Self-Efficacy and young adults' career aspirations. In this study General Self-Efficacy was regarded as the independent variable; it consists of belief in own abilities, persistence and problem-solving ability and motivation and career aspirations was considered to be the dependent variable that consists of career clarity, career goal setting and career planning behavior. In essence, when young adults possess a higher general self-efficacy, also have higher career aspirations and positively developed career-related decision-making behavior. The context is the demographic variables like age, sex, educational qualification, working status, and study domain. This study is guided by Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory.

Population and Sample

The identification of the target population and determining the sample for use in the research is one of the key aspects of research, which influences the validity of the results generated by the research. In this instance, the objective of the research was to determine the relationship between the career ambitions of young adults and self-efficacy.

TABLE I DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (N = 100)

S. No	Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Age Group	18–21 years	40	40%
		22–25 years	35	35%
		26–30 years	25	25%
		Total	100	100%
2	Gender	Male	48	48%
		Female	50	50%
		Others	2	2%
		Total	100	100%
3	Educational Level	Undergraduate	55	55%
		Postgraduate	35	35%
		Others	10	10%
		Total	100	100%
4	Field of Study	Arts	20	20%
		Science	25	25%
		Commerce	30	30%
		Engineering/ Professional Courses	25	25%
		Total	100	100%
5	Employment Status	Student	60	60%
		Employed	25	25%
		Unemployed	15	15%
		Total	100	100%
6	Family Income	Below ₹20,000	30	30%
		₹20,000 – ₹50,000	45	45%
		Above ₹50,000	25	25%
		Total	100	100%

In table I shows the results and analysis of data collected from 100 participants aimed at investigating the professional aspirations of young adults and the effects of self-efficacy on career choice decisions. The influence of self-efficacy on career aspiration was also investigated using a linear regression analysis. The data have been analyzed after being presented in tables, followed by interpretation. The demographic data results show that the highest proportion of respondents is aged between 18-21 years (40%), showing that the sample mostly consists of young adults in their early career stages. Nearly half the respondents were male (48%) and nearly half were female (50%), with a small fraction belonging to other gender classifications (2%). Most of the participants (55%) were undergraduates, while 60% of them were students. This means that the participants consist of young adults who are currently making decisions about their careers. Regarding income, most of the participants (45%) belong to the middle-income group.

Population of the Study

Individuals aged between 18-30 are part of the target audience for this research. Such an age bracket is very significant because it is a critical stage in one's life, where important decisions are made regarding education, careers, and personal life. At such a stage, people identify different options within the job market.

Rationale for Selecting the Population

The choice of young people between the ages of 18-30 is supported by a number of reasons. The first one concerns the fact that this age range is associated with an intense process of career planning and career intentions that are well-developed or developing. Another factor that makes this age range appropriate is the fact that self-efficacy beliefs are evaluated through various life situations experienced at this age range, such as education, internships, and work experience. In addition to the above, this age range includes young people who are diverse in terms of education and economic background.

Sample of the Study

This study used 100 adults with an age range of 18-30 years old. Convenient sampling methods were used to get the sample based on accessibility and availability. This size was enough to describe statistics, correlation, chi-square test, and regression.

Sampling Technique

The convenience sampling technique becomes a useful approach due to the simplicity of its implementation in the social sciences when there is a need for speed and a lack of resources. It may have constraints related to the representativeness of the sample; nonetheless, heterogeneity within the sample can be obtained by incorporating individuals from various occupations and income levels.

Characteristics of the Sample

The sample may include:

- College and university students
- Working professionals in early career stages
- Job seekers or unemployed individuals within the specified age group

Involving people of different backgrounds helps the study obtain different perspectives concerning their career ambitions and self-efficacy. This is because, whereas students may have a more hypothetical approach towards career ambitions, adults may show more realistic expectations owing to their previous experience. Being an adult means having the ability to be independent, have exposure to the diversity of life, and construct self-concepts. This is also a stage where there are many uncertainties and challenges with respect to the decision-making process for the career choice, education, employment, and skill development. The people under this age bracket face a lot of variables that include peer, social, and family pressure, among others.

Importance of Sample Size

The reliability of the research largely hinges on the sample size employed. Although a larger sample size ensures higher statistical power and confidence in the results, a smaller sample size could prove to be a challenge in determining whether there are any significant relationships among the variables under study. When a larger sample size (for example, 100 participants) is used to better understand goals, more advanced methods like regression analysis and factor analysis can be used.

Research Instrument

The data were gathered by using a survey that is composed of 3 parts. The first part of the survey is a personal information section and includes data about the age, sex, education, job, and household income of each respondent. The second part measured General Self-Efficacy through a standardized measuring tool. It has ten statements about the confidence of respondents in handling stress or negative events and achieving goals. The respondent chose a value from the 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The third part of the survey measured career aspirations using statements about career planning, goal setting, commitment to a career, future occupations, and expectations about work with the same 5-point Likert scale. A higher score on this part shows greater career aspirations.

Operational Definition of Variables

Self-efficacy in general: This refers to an individual's belief about their ability to organize and implement the steps necessary to cope with anticipated situations. The scores on

the General Self-Efficacy Scale were divided into three ranges:

- Low Self-Efficacy: Scores below 25
- Moderate Self-Efficacy: Scores between 25 and 40
- High Self-Efficacy: Scores above 40

Career aspirations: Career aspirations are the extent to which people pursue career ambitions and commitment toward their career growth and advancement. Individual career aspirations were scaled as:

- Low Career Aspiration
- Moderate Career Aspiration
- High Career Aspiration

According to the total score of the career aspiration questionnaire, based on classification by percentile.

Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire was checked for its reliability using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. General Self-Efficacy Scale had good internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha was 0.87). Career Aspirations Scale Cronbach's Alpha was 0.84. Both had Cronbach's Alpha greater than the desired value of 0.70, and thus it can be considered to be reliable.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The statistical analysis was conducted using the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26.0. This was to analyze the responses obtained from 100 young people, aged 18-30, by means of a self-report structured questionnaire, namely the General Self-Efficacy Scale (10 items) and the Career Aspirations Scale. Data were screened for completion, coding accuracy, and missing responses, and all incomplete data sets were excluded. Scores for self-efficacy were obtained by summation and then categorized into low, medium, and high levels. Scores for career aspirations were obtained in the same way and were similarly categorized into 3 levels of aspirations. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square analysis, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression with alpha level set at .05. In the linear regression, career aspirations were the dependent variable, and general self-efficacy was the predictor independent variable. Internal consistency of both measures was tested using Cronbach's alpha. Table II demonstrates the level of general self-efficacy.

TABLE II LEVEL OF GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY (N = 100)

S. No	Level of Self-Efficacy	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Low	20	20%
2	Medium	50	50%
3	High	30	30%
	Total	100	100%

It implies that the majority of the youth have moderate confidence levels in relation to handling the issues surrounding their careers.

TABLE III RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY AND CAREER ASPIRATIONS (CHI-SQUARE TEST)

Self-Efficacy Level	Low Career Aspiration	Medium Career Aspiration	High Career Aspiration	Total
Low	10	8	2	20
Medium	8	25	17	50
High	2	10	18	30
Total	20	43	37	100

The correlation between career aspiration and self-efficacy is shown in table III. The higher the level of self-efficacy, the higher the level of career aspiration of respondents tended to be. While respondents with low level of self-efficacy mainly displayed low and medium level of career aspirations.

TABLE IV CHI-SQUARE TEST RESULTS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY AND CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Statistics	Value
Chi-Square Value (χ^2)	18.72
Degrees of Freedom (df)	4
p-value	0.001

In table IV shows the chi-square test results. Therefore, it can be inferred that self-efficacy has strong implications for career development decision-making. It is expected that high self-efficacy people will tend to pursue a career-oriented role, while those people who possess lower self-efficacy will tend not to have an interest in career development and goal setting.

A theoretical Chi-Square (χ^2) distribution curve is pictured here with 4 degrees of freedom $df = 4$ showing the statistical relation between young adults' General Self-Efficacy scores and career aspirations, see fig. 2. The red dotted vertical line shows the test statistic observed ($\chi^2 = 18.72$) as a value located deep within the critical right-hand tail of the curve. The shaded region past the vertical red line illustrates a highly significant p-value (0.001) and illustrates how significant an individual's career drive is in relation to their perceived self-efficacy, which is highly statistically likely to be more than an occurrence by chance.

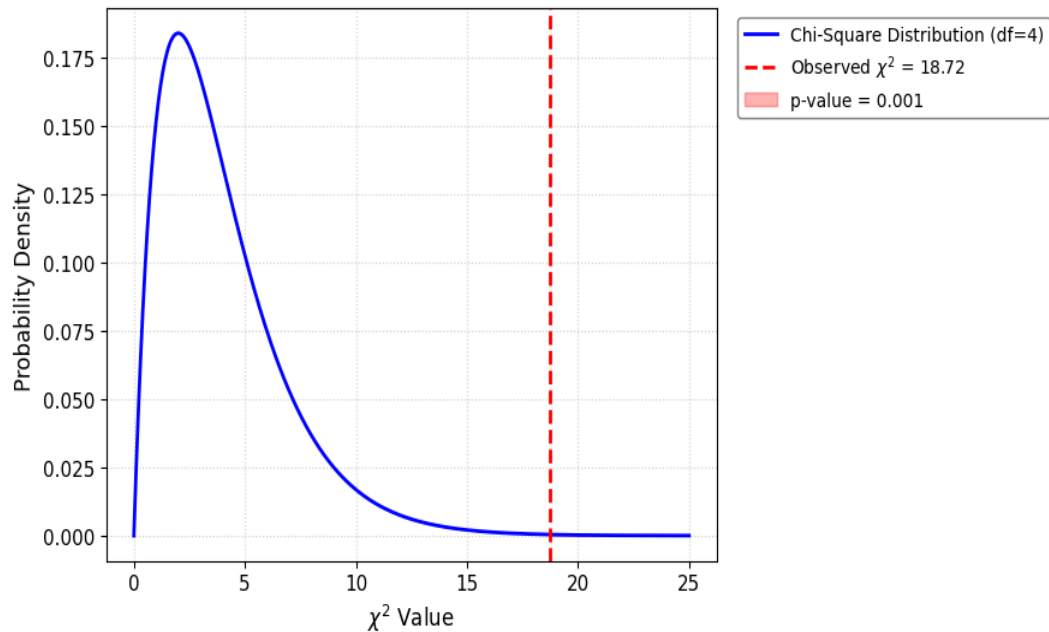


Fig. 2 Chi-Square Distribution and Test of Independence for Self-Efficacy vs. Career Aspirations

TABLE V SUMMARY OF DESCRIPTIVE AND INFERENTIAL STATISTICS (N = 100)

S. No	Analysis Type	Variables	Category / Statistic	Value	Percentage / Sig.
1	Frequency Analysis	Self-Efficacy	Low	20	20.0%
			Medium	50	50.0%
			High	30	30.0%
			Total	100	100.0%
2	Frequency Analysis	Career Aspirations	Low	20	20.0%
			Medium	43	43.0%
			High	37	37.0%
			Total	100	100.0%
	Crosstabulation	Self-Efficacy × Career Aspirations	Low–Low	10	—
			Low–Medium	8	—
			Low–High	2	—
			Medium–Low	8	—
			Medium–Medium	25	—
			Medium–High	17	—
			High–Low	2	—
			High–Medium	10	—
			High–High	18	—
			Total	100	—
4	Chi-Square Test	Relationship between variables	Pearson Chi-Square (χ^2)	18.720	p = 0.001
			Degrees of Freedom (df)	4	—
			Significance	—	Significant
5	Correlation	Self-Efficacy & Career Aspirations	Correlation Coefficient (r)	0.620	p < 0.001
			Relationship Type	—	Positive

Self-efficacy is found to be a significant predictor of career aspiration. Standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.620$, $p < 0.001$) represents that high level of self-efficacy are found to have high level of career aspiration. The sign of the coefficient is positive, meaning that when self-efficacy increases, career aspiration increases. Results (Table V) show that most participants had moderate scores on self-efficacy (50%) and moderate aspirations on career related issues (43%). This can be interpreted as young people are average

in confidence of their skills and having moderately good career aspirations. In relation to decision-making, young adults use in choosing careers, self-efficacy is also very influential. In relation to career choice, self-efficacious young adults are better able to outline the career path and commit to more ambitious career goals over an extended duration than low-efficacy subjects who are indecisive and vulnerable to the views of others. The findings of this study support Bandura's self-efficacy theory in suggesting that if an

individual feels efficacious concerning their career choice, it correlates positively with an individual's commitment and desire to pursue a career.

Simple Linear Regression was used to identify how strongly self-efficacy predicts the young adults' career aspirations. Given that self-efficacy is the only variable in the predictor model, linear regression was an appropriate method of analysis.

TABLE VI REGRESSION ANALYSIS BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY AND CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Variable	B Value	Standard Error	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.215	0.312	—	3.89	0.000
Self-Efficacy	0.684	0.098	0.620	6.97	0.000

In table VI shows the self-efficacy vs career aspirations regression. It used simple linear regression to see if self-efficacy was a predictor of career aspirations among the youth. The result indicated that self-efficacy was a significant predictor of career aspirations among the youth, standardized ($\beta = 0.620$ ($p < 0.001$), meaning that the strength and correlation between both self-efficacy and career aspiration is large, and as the degree of self-efficacy goes up, the degree of career aspiration increases.

In summary of the findings of the frequency analysis, the chi-square test, the correlation, and simple linear regression, self-efficacy plays a major role in the career aspirations of young adults. Self-efficacy contributes positively to self-confidence for career planning, commitment toward career goals, and resilience to encounter difficulties in career pursuits. The results are all statistically significant in a positive direction and have supported Bandura's self-efficacy theory.

Hypothesis Testing

The following theories were taken into consideration in order to examine the connection between career goals and overall self-efficacy (based on the Chi-Square Test):

- H_0 (Null Hypothesis): Career aspirations and self-efficacy do not significantly correlate.
- H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): Career goals and self-efficacy are significantly correlated.

From the results of the chi-square test, the calculated chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 18.72$) with 4 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance gives the p-value of 0.001. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, as it proposes that there is no association between self-efficacy and career objectives. Therefore, because the correlation could not be considered a random event, it is clear that there is a statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and career goals. Hence, it can be concluded that general self-efficacy influences young people's job aspirations very significantly, and that the higher the level of general

self-efficacy, the higher the level of job aspiration. The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between young adults' job goals and general self-efficacy. The results of the chi-square value and p-value have been calculated as 18.72 and 0.001, respectively, which indicates that there is no random connection between the two variables. For low self-efficacy individuals, it's clearly evident that will have lower occupational aspirations, whereas for high self-efficacy individuals, it may help them attain their career goals with greater enthusiasm.

Findings

These results illustrate that for young adults, reinforcing self-efficacy is crucial for both well-informed career decisions and professional development over time. Individuals high in self-efficacy, it would seem, are better able to evaluate career options with confidence, make realistic career aspirations, and persevere through career obstacles. These results recommend that educational, career counseling, and training organizations create and use programs that bolster self-confidence, career planning skills, and decision-making adaptation.

V. CONCLUSION

This study explored the relationship between general self-efficacy and career aspirations of young adults (18-30 years old). This study adopted Bandura's theory of "self-efficacy" to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and decision making, goal setting, and career aspirations. The findings indicate that self-efficacy is a significant psychological characteristic in relation to the career development of young adults. The results obtained revealed that the majority (50%) of respondents had a moderate level of self-efficacy, while 30% had a high level and 20% had a low level. For career aspiration level, moderate (43%) and high (37%) were the highest among the respondents who indicated their aspiration towards a career in generally positive terms. However, the results of the chi-square analysis showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and career aspirations ($\chi^2 = 18.72$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$) thus the null hypothesis was rejected. Self-efficacy was correlated with career aspirations ($r = 0.620$, $p < 0.001$) and higher scores of self-efficacy were positively associated with higher scores of career aspirations and higher self-efficacy regarding the achievement of career goals. These results indicates that young adults with higher self-belief have clear career goals and persistence to overcome career related obstacles, make rational career related decision making. The finding highlights that career counselors, educational institutions, and policy makers should create opportunities that enhance the sense of self-efficacy in young people through mentoring programs, skill building, real life experiences, career guidance etc. Future researches could use large and diverse sample sizes, use probability sampling methods, and explore the role of factors such as family, socio economic status, career adaptability, and culture. Longitudinal research can

also help to gain deeper insights into the relationship between self-efficacy and career aspirations and experiences over a longer time horizon.

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