

**DETERMINANTS OF CAREER
ASPIRATION AMONG STUDENTS IN
THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION**

**BY
YALINI EASVARALINGAM
(MATRIX NO: EGE97007)**

**SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND ADMINISTRATION,
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE IN MASTERS OF APPLIED STATISTICS**

(MAY, 2000)

Perpustakaan Universiti Malaya



A510350319

OK-

CLOSED STACKS

Abstract

This study is on the determinants of career aspirations of students in the process of transition. The study examines two components of career aspirations i.e., career preference, which is the idealistic component and career expectation, which is the realistic component.

The main purpose of this study is to find the determinants of career aspirations. The main factors that are expected to influence career aspirations are self concept factors, that is, factors that influence the way one perceives oneself. The self concept factors in this study are grouped into categories relating to the demographic characteristics of respondents, family characteristics, socio-economic status and academic related influence. The study determines which categories have the greatest influence on career aspirations and which have the least influence on career aspirations. The study also makes a comparison of the self concept variables influencing career preference and career expectation to highlight factors preventing an adolescent from pursuing his or her idealistic goals. A comparison is also made on the factors influencing the Form 5 and Form 6 sample. Other variables examined for its influence on career aspirations are perceived work values which are the attributes desired in a career. The influence of career preference on career expectation is also determined.

The data for this study was obtained from a survey conducted in 1989 on two samples of Form 5 and Form 6 students for the University of Malaya's tracer study on "Transition from School to Work" (Chew et al., 1995). The career preference and expectation for the Form 5 and Form 6 samples are converted on Trieman's (1977) Standard International Occupational Prestige (SIOP) scale to obtain the prestige level for each occupation.

The main method of for analysing career aspirations in this study is by using the multiple regression analysis. As the dependent variables are career preference and career expectation for the Form 5 and Form 6 samples, four multiple regression models are

constructed. From the multiple regression analysis, the variables having the most and least influence on career aspirations are determined. The factor analysis method is also used in this study to identify representative factors for perceived work values from a larger set of variables. These perceived work value factors are then subsequently used in the multiple regression analysis to detect whether work values have any influence on career aspirations. Other than the multiple regression analysis, exploratory data analysis consisting of graphical displays and confirmatory data analysis consisting of t tests and ANOVA tests are also used

The most important self concept variables influencing career aspirations for both samples are academic related variables such as prior academic achievement, the decision to further one's studies, the fact that the respondents are from the Science stream and the decision to further one's studies up to tertiary level (which influences only the Form 5 sample). All these variables have a positive influence on career aspirations.

The socio-economic status factor of parents' educational levels is also found to have a significant positive influence on career aspirations of both samples. The socio-economic status factors of parents' occupational status and parents' income have a positive influence on only career expectation.

In terms of demographic variables, females are found to have significantly higher career aspirations than males and this is mainly prominent in rural areas and for those from low socio-economic status. Indians are found to have higher career aspirations than other ethnic groups. There is no significant difference in the career aspiration of Chinese compared to *Bumiputera* respondents when similar academic achievements are considered.

The factors having the least influence on career aspirations are family characteristics such as birth order, family size and parental interest. Perceived work values also do not have much of an influence on career aspirations. There is not much difference between the factors influencing career preference and career expectation and between the factors influencing the Form 5 and Form 6 samples.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank my supervisors, Professor Dr. Shyamala Nagaraj and Associate Professor Dr. Goh Kim Leng for all their guidance throughout the duration of this research paper. Their ideas on ways to improve the statistical analysis and write up of the research paper made this research paper more interesting to do.

My sincere gratitude also goes to Professor Chew Seng Buan and Prof. Lee Kiong Hock, the Project Directors for the study on “Transition from School to Work”, for allowing me to use the data obtained from that survey.

This research paper is dedicated to my parents for all their love and support. My appreciation also goes out to my brother for allowing me to manipulate the one and only computer in the house while I pondered over the analysis and write up of this research project. Sacrificing his 'internet surfing time' and thus decreasing his knowledge on the latest in the world of football, is a great sacrifice indeed for him.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Objective Of The Study	2
1.2 Importance Of The Study.....	3
1.3 Socio-economic Situation.....	4
1.3.1 Education.....	4
1.3.2 Economic, Labour Force And Employment Situation.....	6
1.4 Organisation Of The Study.....	7
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Theories On The Developmental Process Of Occupational Aspiration And Choice	9
2.2.1 Developmental Stages.....	9
2.2.2 Self Concept.....	10
2.2.3 Increasing Vocational Realism.....	11
2.2.4 Application Of The Career Developmental Process Theories To This Study.....	11
2.3 Theories On Occupational Prestige Determination	13
2.3.1 Reasons For The Use Of Trieman's Structural Theory Of Prestige Determination	13
2.3.2 Trieman's (1977) World Wide Occupational Prestige Hierarchy	13
2.3.3 Application Of Occupational Prestige Determination To This Study.....	15
2.4 Self Concept Factors Influencing Career Aspirations	15
2.4.1 Gender.....	16
2.4.2 Locality.....	18
2.4.3 Ethnicity.....	20
2.4.4 Family Characteristics / Influence.....	20
2.4.5 Academic Related Influence.....	24
2.5 Discrepancy Between Career Preference And Career Expectation....	25
2.5.1 Application Of Discrepancy In Career Aspiration To This Study.....	26
2.6 Perceived Work Values.....	27
2.6.1 Application Of Perceived Work Values To This Study.....	27
2.7 Conclusion.....	28

3. METHODOLOGY.....	31
3.1 Introduction.....	31
3.2 Data Source.....	32
3.2.1 Survey.....	32
3.2.2 Additional Sources.....	33
3.3 Dependent Variables.....	33
3.3.1 Trieman's Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale.....	33
3.3.2 Categorisation Of Occupational Prestige	34
3.4 Independent Variables	36
3.5 Methodology Used In Bivariate Analysis	40
3.5.1 Exploratory Data Analysis.....	40
3.5.2 Confirmatory Data Analysis.....	41
3.6 Multiple Regression Analysis.....	45
3.6.1 Classical Assumptions Of Multiple Regression Model.....	45
3.6.2 Violation In The Above Assumptions.....	46
3.7 Strategy For Selection Of Self Concept Independent Variables	50
3.8 Diagnostics	52
3.8.1 Outliers.....	52
3.8.2 Single Case Diagnostics.....	52
3.9 Factor Analysis	53
3.9.1 Objective And Design.....	53
3.9.2 Assumptions.....	53
3.9.3 Selecting A Factor Method.....	54
3.9.4 Extracting And Interpretation Of Factors.....	54
3.9.5 Computation Of The Factor Scores.....	55
3.10 Computer Packages Used.....	55
 4. SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS.....	 56
4.1 Introduction.....	56
4.2 Demographic Variables	56
4.2.1 Gender.....	57
4.2.2 Ethnicity.....	57
4.2.3 Relationship Between Ethnicity And Locality.....	57
4.3. Family Characteristics.....	58
4.3.1 Living With Parents Or Guardian	59
4.3.2 Parental Interest	59
4.3.3 Family Size	60
4.3.4 Relationship Between Birth Order And Family Size Versus Parental Interest	61

4.4 Parents' Socio-economic Status	62
4.4.1 Father's And Mother's Highest Level Of Education	63
4.4.2 Parents' Occupation Status (in terms of occupational prestige).....	65
4.4.3 Parents' Occupational Sector	66
4.4.4 Income Of Parents	67
4.5 Academic Related Influence	68
4.5.1 Prior Academic Achievement.....	68
4.5.2 Stream Of Study.....	70
4.5.3 School-Leaving Decision Making.....	71
4.6 Perception On Gender Equality In Education	72
4.7 Perception On Gender Equality In Occupational Opportunities	73
4.8 Career Guidance	74
4.9 Career Aspirations	75
4.10 Conclusion.....	81
5. CORRELATES OF CAREER ASPIRATION	85
5.1 Introduction.....	85
5.2 Gender	86
5.2.1 Gender By Locality.....	87
5.2.2 Gender By Socio-economic Status.....	88
5.3 Ethnicity	90
5.3.1 Ethnicity By Locality.....	92
5.3.2 Ethnicity By Socio-economic Status	92
5.3.3 Ethnicity by Academic Achievement	94
5.4 Locality	95
5.5 Family Characteristics.....	97
5.5.1 Family Size (in terms of number of children.....	97
5.5.2 Birth Order.....	99
5.5.3 Parental Interest.....	100
5.6 Socio-economic Status.....	102
5.6.1 Father's Highest Level of Education.....	102
5.6.2 Mother's Highest Level of Education.....	104
5.6.3 Occupational Status Of Parents.....	107
5.6.4 Income of Parents.....	109
5.7 Academic Related Influence.....	111
5.7.1 Prior Academic Achievement.....	111
5.7.2 Stream of Study.....	113
5.7.3 School-leaving Decision Making.....	115
5.8 Conclusion.....	117
6. DETERMINANTS OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS	123
(MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS).....	
6.1 Introduction.....	123

6.2 Self Concept Variables And Interaction Terms.....	124
6.2.1 Influence Of Self Concept Variables On Career Aspiration.....	131
6.3 Normality Of Distribution.....	136
6.4 Multicollinearity.....	137
6.5 Significant Self Concept and Interaction Variables.....	141
6.6. Heteroscedasticity.....	143
6.7 Diagnostics.....	146
6.7.1 Outliers.....	146
6.7.2 Other Influential Observations.....	147
6.8 Career Preference As A Determinant Of Career Expectation.....	150
6.9 Perceived Work Values.....	150
6.9.1 Examining for Sufficient Correlation and Sampling Adequacy.....	150
6.9.2 Extraction Of Factors And Assignment of Factor Scores....	152
6.9.3 Interpretation Of Factors.....	152
6.10 Interpretation Of The Results.....	161
6.10.1 Demographic Variables.....	161
6.10.2 Family Characteristics.....	162
6.10.3 Socio-economic Status.....	163
6.10.4 Academic Related Influence.....	164
6.10.5 Career Preference As An Independent Variable.....	165
6.10.6 Perceived Work Values.....	166
6.11 Comparison Between Career Preference and Career Expectation....	167
6.12 Comparison between the Form 5 and Form 6 samples.....	168
6.13 Explanatory Power Of The Models.....	169
6.14 Conclusion.....	170

7.0 CONCLUSION 175

7.1 Summary Of The Study.....	175
7.2 Main Self Concept Variables Influencing Career Aspirations.....	176
7.2.1 Academic Related Variables.....	176
7.2.2 Socio-economic Status.....	179
7.2.3. Demographic Factors.....	179
7.3 Least Important Self Concept Variables Influencing Career Aspirations.....	181
7.3.1 Demographic Variables.....	182
7.3.2 Family Characteristics.....	182
7.4 The Influence of Work Values On Career Aspirations.....	184
7.5. Career Preference And Its Influence On Career Aspirations.....	184
7.6 Comparison Between Career Preference And Career Expectation....	184
7.7 Comparison Between The Form 5 And Form 6 Sample.....	185
7.8 Discussion.....	185
7.9 Limitations Of The Study.....	187
7.10 Suggestions For Future Research.....	188

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	Page
Table 1.1: Types And Number Of Higher Learning Institutions For 1989.....	5
Table 1.2: Employment By Occupational Group, 1980 And 1990.....	7
Table 2.1: Review Of The Self Concept And Work Value Factors Influencing Career Aspirations.....	29
Table 2.2: Review On Career Aspirations.....	30
Table 3.1: Description of Variables Considered for Data Analysis.....	38
Table 4.1: Distribution Of The Respondents by Ethnicity, Gender And Locality.....	58
Table 4.2: The Distribution Of The Sum Of Responses To Questions On Parental Interest.....	60
Table 4.3: Mean Number Of Children By Ethnicity And Locality.....	61
Table 4.4: Relationship Between Birth Order And Family Size With Parental Interest...	62
Table 4.5: Father's Highest Level Of Education.....	64
Table 4.6: Mother's Highest Level Of Education.....	64
Table 4.7: Mean Occupational Prestige Of Parents.....	65
Table 4.8: Occupational Sector Of Respondent's Parents.....	67
Table 4.9: Income Of Respondent's Parent.....	68
Table 4.10: <i>SRP</i> and <i>SPM</i> Mean Aggregate By Ethnicity, Locality And Gender.....	69
Table 4.11: Distribution Of The Respondent's Stream Of Study By Gender, Ethnicity And Locality.....	70
Table 4.12: Academic Achievement of Respondents from Different Streams of Study...	70
Table 4.13: School Leaving Decision of Respondents by Parents' Income.....	71
Table 4.14: Academic Achievement Of Respondents With Different School Leaving Plans.....	72
Table 4.15: Perception On Gender Equality In Education.....	73
Table 4.16: Perception On Gender Equality In Occupational Opportunities.....	74
Table 4.17: Career Guidance Received By Respondents.....	75

Table 4.18: Descriptive Statistics For Career Aspirations.....	76
Table 4.19: t Values Comparing The Mean Prestige Point of Career Preference and Career Expectation To Trieman's (1977) Mean Score.....	77
Table 4.20: Paired t Values For The Difference Between Career Preference And Career Expectation.....	77
Table 4.21: Career Preference And Career Expectation By Sectors.....	80
Table 4.22: Career Aspirations By Sector and By Prestige Points.....	81
Table 5.1: Mean Career Aspirations of Males and Females.....	87
Table 5.2: Mean Career Aspiration For Gender By Locality.....	88
Table 5.3: Mean Career Aspiration For Gender By Socio-economic Status.....	89
Table 5.4: Mean Career Aspirations Of Different Ethnic Groups.....	91
Table 5.5: Mean Career Aspiration For The Difference Ethnic Groups By Locality.....	92
Table 5.6: Mean Career Aspiration Of The Difference Ethnic Groups By Socio- economic Status.....	93
Table 5.7: Mean Career Aspiration Of The Difference Ethnic Groups By socio- economic status.....	94
Table 5.8: Mean Career Aspiration For Ethnicity By Academic Achievement.....	95
Table 5.9: Mean Career Aspirations Of Respondents From Different Localities.....	97
Table 5.10: Mean Career Aspirations Of The Different Categories Of Family Size.....	98
Table 5.11: Mean Career Aspirations Of The Different Birth Order Categories.....	100
Table 5.12: Mean Career Aspiration For The Different Categories Of Parental Interest..	102
Table 5.13: Mean Career Aspirations For The Different Categories Of Father's Educational Level.....	104
Table 5.14: Mean Career Aspirations For The Different Categories Of Mother's Highest Educational Level.....	106
Table 5.15 : Mean Career Aspirations For The Different Categories Of Parents' Occupational Status.....	108
Table 5.16: Mean Career Aspirations For The Categories Of Parents' Income.....	111

Table 5.17: Mean Career Aspirations For The Categories Of Prior Academic Achievement.....	113
Table 5.18: Mean Career Aspirations For The Categories Of Stream Of Study.....	114
Table 5.19: Mean Career Aspirations For The Categories Of School-Leaving Decision Making.....	116
Table 6.1: Description And Expected Influence Of Self Concept Variables.....	125
Table 6.2: Coefficients Of Self Concept And Interaction Variables With Form 5 Career Preference As The Dependent Variable.....	127
Table 6.3: Coefficients Of Self Concept And Interaction Variables With Form 5 Career Expectation As The Dependent Variable.....	128
Table 6.4: Coefficients Of Self Concept And Interaction Variables With Form 6 Career Preference As The Dependent Variable.....	129
Table 6.5: Coefficients Of Self Concept And Interaction Variables With Form 6 Career Expectation As The Dependent Variable.....	130
Table 6.6: Coefficients For Models Including Both Father's And Mother's Education Level And Including Either One Of The Variables.....	139
Table 6.7: Models Showing All Significant Self Concept Variables With Reduced Multicollinearity Effect.....	142
Table 6.8: Results Of Park Test And Spearman's Rank Correlation Test.....	145
Table 6.9: All Significant Self concept And Interaction Variables After Removing Outliers.....	148
Table 6.10: Threshold Levels Of DFBETA.....	148
Table 6.11: Results Of Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure Of Sampling Adequacy And Bartlett's Test Of Sphericity.....	151
Table 6.12a: Perceived Work Value Factors For Job Satisfaction And Loadings Of Each Variable On The Factors.....	156
Table 6.12b: Total Variance Explained.....	156
Table 6.13a: Perceived Work Value Factors For Job Satisfaction And Loadings Of Each Variable On The Factors.....	157
Table 6.13b: Total Variance Explained.....	157
Table 6.14a: Perceived Work Value Factors As Motivators And Barricades To Working In Rural Areas And Loadings Of Each Variable On The Factors..	158

Table 6.14b: Total Variance Explained.....	158
Table 6.15: Results Of The Final Regression Models.....	159- 160
Table 6.16: Explanatory Power Of The Independent Variables Of Each Model In Describing The Variation in Career Aspiration.....	169
Table 6.17: Relative Importance Of The Independent Variables.....	174

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	Page
Figure 4.1: Distribution Of Career Preference And Career Expectation.....	78
Figure 5.1: Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By Gender.....	86
Figure 5.2 : Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By Ethnicity.....	90
Figure 5.3 : Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By Locality.....	95 - 96
Figure 5.4: Box Plots For Distribution of Career Aspiration By Family Size.....	97
Figure 5.5: Box Plots For Distribution Of Mean Career Aspiration By Birth Order.....	99
Figure 5.6: Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By Parental Interest.....	101
Figure 5.7: Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By Father's Highest Level Of Education.....	102
Figure 5.8: Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By Mother's Highest Level Of Education.....	104 - 105
Figure 5.9: Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By Occupational Status Of Parents.....	107
Figure 5.10: Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By Income Of Parents....	109
Figure 5.11: Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By Prior Academic Achievement.....	111
Figure 5.12: Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By Stream Of Study.....	113
Figure 5.13: Box Plots For Distribution Of Career Aspiration By School -Leaving Decision Making.....	115
Figure 6.1: Histogram and Normal Probability Plots For Distribution In Career Aspiration.....	136 - 137
Figure 6.2: Plots of the Estimated Residual Squared Against The Predicted Values.....	143
Figure 6.3: Plots of the Estimated Residual Squared Versus Academic Achievement....	144