# Study the Effect of Counselling on Career Aspirations and Self-Efficacy of Underachieving Senior Secondary Students of Rohtak District

Dr. Suman Lata, Assistant Professor
D.I.E.T. Madina, Rohtak (Haryana)

## Abstract

*Career counselling is an important means of supporting young people. Choosing a career, especially among a variety of alternatives, is a herculean task that is critical to one's life. This highlights the importance of guiding adolescents in their career planning and decision-making. The education system is responsible for supporting children in making sound career choices based on their abilities, aptitudes, interests, and other personality traits. Many studies have found that most secondary school dropouts in India made poor career choices due to unrealistic occupational goals. The aim of the study is to assess the influence of counselling on underachieving students' career goals and self-efficacy levels. Data were obtained from a sample of 140 class XI students of both genders drawn from several senior secondary schools in Rohtak. The data were collected using Ralf Schwarzer and Mattthias Jerusalem's self-constructed career aspiration tool and self-efficacy measure. The data were quantitatively analyzed using descriptive statistics and a t-test to determine the significance of the mean difference in self-efficacy and career goals between underachievers in the control and experimental groups.*

**Keywords:** *Career counselling, adolescents, vocational aspiration, self-efficacy and underachievers*

## Introduction

The goal of education is to tap into a child's inner potential and help them achieve their full potential. Education should aim to bring about changes in students' knowledge and improve their skills and attitudes so that they grow into individuals who can adapt to changes in society. It is the responsibility of society to provide every individual with a fair chance and opportunities to demonstrate their potential. Education should instil habits, character, attitudes and personal attributes in students so that they are completely prepared to meet life's challenges and changing economic conditions. Education is one of the most significant foundations of a nation; therefore, sound education must be provided for national development.

The school also plays a crucial role in forming the child's character, as well as providing them with opportunities for friendship and success. During this time, children go through a variety of changes, including growth, development, struggles, puberty, deciding between reliance and independence, making significant mistakes and realising them.

To develop properly, every child

requires affection, a sense of belonging and being needed, and respect as an individual. The sort of motivation a child receives, as well as the role of the family and the family's economic situation, all have an impact on their education and future success. It is vital to broaden educational opportunities for children since children born today have more potential than ever before, but for unknown reasons, many children fail to achieve success in life. These children are classified as underachievers.

Underachievers are young people who are not intellectually deficient, but who have average or even exceptional abilities. The failure of such children should be of great concern to a developing country like India, which cannot afford to lose human potential in the high ability range. Lewis (1941) said that at the age of the underachiever's educational age is 1 year below their physical ages. Gowan (1957) conducted an experiment in which he selected youngsters with an IQ of 130 or higher and classified them as underachievers in the middle third and severe underachievers in the bottom third.

## Underachievement

Underachievement is a major issue in India's education system. Despite the provision of a wide range of education, most people in different countries are not given the opportunity to reach their full potential. To fully develop a country, it is critical to ensure that all of its residents realise their full potential. To prevent underachievement, every country should take prompt measures to improve education and provide adequate resources. The primary goal of every educational system is to recognise and develop the potential of the child. Each child has unique potential.

Certain children, despite their potential, fail to develop fully and achieve the intended ultimate result at both physical and educational levels. Certain children, in addition to their academic performance, fail to realise their full potential compared to their peers. Because of this issue, many abilities remain undiscovered, and these talents are entirely wasted if not properly explored. The commission has also requested that the focus be on the key causes of children's underachievement, as well as the factors that hinder them from reaching their full potential. Some of the typical characteristics that contribute to underachievement include psychological issues, fluctuating moods, and increased stress in both students and teachers. However, the majority of the reasons for underachievement are linked to the child's social environment and surroundings. Underachievers feel the same way since they are not given adequate opportunities to demonstrate their skills and realise their potential.

## Career Aspirations

A person's orientation towards an ideal career aim under ideal circumstances is reflected in their career aspirations. More recently, career aspiration provides information about a person's interests and expectations that is not based on facts. The concept of career aspiration can be defined as a set of demands, goals, and behavioural

intentions that people express in a variety of occupational fields. The social concept of career desire has centred on an individual's intention to advance through a hierarchy of roles. An individual who does not aspire to advance up a hierarchy has generally been described as lacking ambition. The relative stability of the childhood environment, as well as parents' child-rearing practices, causes the child to develop the habit of aspiring realistically or unrealistically. By adulthood, the individual has formed sentiments of personal inadequacy or superiority based on his success or failure in accomplishing his goals over time.

## Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a construct that focuses on an individual's assessment of their ability to perform successfully in a given situation. Albert Bandura described the construct as 'people's evaluations about their skills to arrange and execute courses of action required to achieve specified types of performance. It is critical to realize that the notion refers to ideas about one's perceived ability or inability to execute a certain activity, not one's actual capabilities or performance. The rise of social cognitive theories, which view individuals as active agents in control of their own choices and behaviours, sparked early interest in self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) contributed significantly to these advancements by demonstrating how self-efficacy beliefs influence our choice of tasks, the amount of effort we put into them, and our perseverance in completing them. Bandura discovered four distinct sources for an individual's self-efficacy beliefs: (1) mastery experiences, (2) vicarious experiences, (3) verbal persuasion, and (4) physiological and affective conditions.

'Mastery experiences' refer to a person's recollection of and reflection on their own previous accomplishments in similar tasks, wheareas 'vicarious experiences' arise from observing or hearing about the accomplishments of others. 'Verbal persuasion' refers to the assessments or feedback provided by others, whilst 'physiological and affective states' refer to a person's interpretation of information obtained through their own senses.

## Counselling

There are many different experiences in life that people may struggle to deal with. Questions, choices and changes are all part of everyday life, and they are often easier to manage with the help of friends or family. Counseling is a practice designed to help people take more control of their daily lives. It is a process for discussing personal feelings and thoughts in confidence with someone who is an excellent listener. It is a technique in which clients are aided in resolving their own personal and interpersonal conflicts. Counsellors are educated to assist an individual with difficulties that cause anxiety, helping them to understand these difficulties and find solutions. Students of all ages and academic backgrounds are welcome to attend and receive assistance with a

variety of challenges. Personal counselling is provided to people to help them deal with a wide range of concerns, including stress, depression, marital problems and substance misuse. Counseling can usually be accessed quickly and at a low cost. The counsellor does not diagnose or label someone, but rather listens to the individual and works with them to find the best ways to understand and address their problems.

## Review of Related Studies

Karishma Wahengbam and Monu Lal Sharma (2024) conducted a study on the impact of self-efficacy on career aspirations among males and females. The study revealed that self-efficacy significantly influences career aspirations and highlighted notable gender differences in self-efficacy levels, which affect professional choices.

Zhou (2024) examined the relationship between perceived parental career expectations and adolescent career development. The study found that career-planning and goal-setting self-efficacy act as mediating factors, while parent–adolescent career congruence serves as a moderating factor. The findings highlight that higher congruence strengthens the impact of parental expectations on adolescents' career adaptability and decision-making.

Jamwal and Gupta (2025) explored the role of self-efficacy and outcome expectations in shaping career choices among students with disabilities. Using a systematic review of studies (2015–2024), the findings highlighted that self-efficacy and outcome expectations significantly influence career aspirations and decision-making. The study further emphasised the importance of tailored career counselling in enhancing students' confidence, improving career readiness, and supporting successful transitions to higher education and employment.

Savugathali, Mustafa, and Jusoh (2025) examined self-efficacy in career decision-making and outcome expectations among final-year students. The study found significant differences in self-efficacy across academic disciplines and highlighted its important role in influencing students' career decisions and expectations. The study examined students' self-efficacy in career decision-making and their outcome expectations among final-year university students in Malaysia. The findings revealed significant differences based on academic faculty, indicating that self-efficacy influences career decisions. The study highlighted the need for career guidance and counseling to enhance students' confidence and employability.

## Rationale for the Study

India is experiencing high levels of illiteracy, wastage and stagnation of human potential, as well as brain drain to wealthier countries. It cannot afford to allow underachievers to become social misfits. Children are not born underachievers; their learned behaviour is learnt. Direction has an important role in resolving the students' educational, personal, social, mental, and emotional

concerns. The goal of guidance and counselling services for younger children is to promote academic achievement, increase self-efficacy, self-image, and coping abilities, reduce dropouts, and encourage positive attitudes towards life. Guidance services support teachers in the classroom and enable educators to provide quality guidance to assist students in their holistic development. School teachers can implement both systematic and appropriate interventions in schools and communities to prevent students from dropping out due to underachievement. The study intends to determine whether guidance can enhance these students' sense of self-worth and career goals. The researcher provided guidance to underachievers in order to increase their self-efficacy and career goals, which are important indicators of success. This study may encourage administrators to consider appointing school counsellors to assist underachievers.

## Statement of the Problem

Study the Effect of Counselling on Career Aspirations and Self-Efficacy of Underachieving Senior Secondary Students of Rohtak District.

## Operational Definition of Variables

**Counselling:** A process in which individuals learn about themselves, their interpersonal relationships and behaviour that advances their personal development.

**Underachievers:** Underachievers are those whose educational age is one year or more below their mental age. They represent a slower rate of learning than would be otherwise predicted by the level of intellectual function.

**Self-efficacy:** Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their own ability to complete tasks and achieve goals. It is a self-judgment of someone's capacity to carry out a job within a particular domain.

**Career Aspiration:** A career aspiration is a goal or aim of a person in accordance with their career choices.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To study the relationship between the career aspirations and self-efficacy of underachievers.
2. To study the effect of counselling intervention on self-efficacy of underachievers.
3. To study the effect of counseling treatment on career aspirations of underachievers.

## Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and career aspirations of underachievers.
2. There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test self-efficacy scores of the sample.
3. There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test career aspiration scores of the sample.

## Independent Variable

- Counselling

**Dependent Variable:**

- Self-efficacy
- Career aspiration

## Research Methodology

**Method:** An experimental research methodology (two group i.e. experimental and control groups) was used.

**Population:** The population of the present

study comprised pupils studying in Class XI of Rohtak District.

**Sample:** The sample comprised 140 pupils studying in class XI from the government senior secondary schools of Rohtak district.

**Sampling Technique:** The investigator randomly selected ten senior secondary schools of Rohtak district. From the chosen schools, Class XI students who were underachievers were selected by the researcher with the help of the counsellor using purposive sampling. The sample was chosen on the basis of scores obtained by pupils from achievement tests, an intelligence test and previous class performance.

## Formation of Experimental and Control Groups

A total of 140 underachieving students were identified through achievement tests, intelligence tests, and previous academic performance. These students were randomly assigned into two groups to ensure homogeneity and eliminate bias:

- Experimental Group (N = 71)
- Control Group (N = 69)

The randomisation process ensured that both groups were comparable in terms of intelligence level, academic achievement, and socio-economic background. The experimental group was exposed to a structured counselling intervention programme conducted over a period of 6–8 weeks. The programme included regular counselling sessions focusing on self-awareness, goal setting, career planning, motivation enhancement, and confidence building.

In contrast, the control group did not receive any counseling intervention during the same period and continued with their routine classroom activities.

Both groups were administered pre-tests prior to the intervention and post-tests after the completion of the counseling programme using standardised tools for measuring self-efficacy and career aspirations. The differences in scores between pre-test and post-test were analysed to determine the effectiveness of the counseling intervention.

## Tools Used for the Collection of Data

**Group Test of Intelligence (GIT):** The Group Test of Intelligence, developed and standardised by Ahuja (1971) to measure students' intelligence, was adapted with the help of a counsellor.

**Achievement Test:** Developed by the researcher to measure students' achievement. Both the Group Test of Intelligence and the Achievement Test were used to identify underachievers.

**Self-Efficacy Scale:** The Self-Efficacy Scale, developed and standardised by R. Schwarzer and M. Jerusalem to measure underachievers' self-efficacy, was adopted.

**Career Aspirations Scale:** Developed by the researcher to measure the career aspirations of the underachievers.

## Data Analysis

**Objective 1:** To study the relationship between career aspirations and self-efficacy of underachievers.

**Table showing Relationship between Self Efficacy and Career Aspiration of higher secondary school students**

| S. No | Variables | N | r |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Career Aspiration | 140 | 0.639 |
| 2 | Self-Efficacy | | |

Pearson's correlation test was applied to the career aspiration and self-efficacy scores, and the significance coefficient r was 0.639 at the 0.01 level of significance. This number exceeds the table value of 0.181 at the 0.01 level of significance required to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, the hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between career aspirations and self-efficacy of underachievers" was rejected. It was concluded that underachievers' self-efficacy had a significant association with their career aspirations.

**Objective 2:** To study the effect of counselling intervention on self-efficacy of underachievers.

**Experimental Group: Table showing Significance of Mean Difference Between (pre and post-test) Self-Efficacy Scores of Experimental group**

| | Pre-test | Post-Test |
|---|---|---|
| N | 71 | 71 |
| X | 13.63 | 28.33 |
| Σ | 3.02 | 2.74 |
| T | | 38.16** |

**Control Group: Table showing Significance of Mean Difference Between (pre and post-test) Self-Efficacy Scores of control group**

| | Pre-test | Post-Test |
|---|---|---|
| N | 69 | 69 |
| X | 13.65 | 15.45 |
| Σ | 3.68 | 6.01 |
| T | | 0.66** |

The table clearly revealed that the Experimental Group's self-efficacy scores improved by 52.68 percentage points as a result of the introduction of the Counselling Intervention Model, as the mean scores before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the intervention were 13.63 and 28.33, respectively. The standard deviations for pre-test and post-test scores were 3.02 and 2.74, respectively. This class had a much higher percentage change between pre- and post-testing, indicating that the counselling treatments were effective and produced positive results in the sample population used for the research in terms of self-efficacy.

The Control Group's self-efficacy scores increased by 5.36 percent, with the mean scores before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the intervention being 13.65 and 15.45, respectively. The standard deviation for the pre-test results was 3.68. It demonstrated a very modest increase in self-efficacy from the pre-test to the post-test in the Control Group, indicating that there is a need for counselling because the Control Group's scores have not improved significantly. As a result, the hypothesis "there is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test self-efficacy scores of the sample" was rejected.

**Objective 3:** To study the effect of counselling treatment on career aspirations of underachievers.

**Experimental Group: Table showing Significance of Mean Difference Between (pre and post-test) Career Aspiration Scores of Experimental group**

| | Pre-test | Post test |
|---|---|---|
| N | 71 | 71 |
| X | 4.44 | 22.34 |
| Σ | 9.07 | 7.01 |
| T | | 14.31** |

**Control Group: Table showing Significance of Mean Difference Between (pre and post-test) Career Aspiration Scores of control group**

| | Pre-test | Post test |
|---|---|---|
| N | 69 | 69 |
| X | 5.74 | 4.44 |
| Σ | 9.24 | 8.49 |
| T | | 0.09** |

The table clearly demonstrated that the Experimental Group's career aspirations grew by 66.79% as a result of the introduction of counselling intervention, as the mean scores of the Experimental Group before (pre-test) and after (post-test) were found to be 4.44 and 22.34. The standard deviations before and after the test were 9.07 and 7.01, respectively. This group had a considerably larger percentage change between pre- and post-testing, indicating that the counselling intervention were effective and produced positive results in the sample used in the study.

The Control Group's career aspirations were reduced by 12.75%, with the mean score before (pre) and after (post) the intervention being 5.74 and 4.44, respectively. The standard deviations before and after the test were 9.51 and 8.49, respectively. It exhibited a small reduction in career aspiration levels in the pre-test and post-test results among the Control Group, indicating the need for counselling because conditions in the Control Group did not improve much. The mean scores of the pre-test and post-test between the Control and Experimental Groups clearly demonstrated the significance of the percentage change in both groups.

Therefore, the hypothesis “there is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test career aspiration scores of the sample” was rejected.

## Findings of the Study

1. It was revealed that there was a significant association between career aspirations and self-efficacy in underachievers.
2. The study found that there was no significant decline in career aspiration levels among the Control Group as a result of the pre-test and post-test impacts, indicating that there is a need for counselling in both groups.
3. The study found an insignificant increase in career desire levels in the Control Group's pretest and post-test findings, indicating that counselling was required for both groups.
4. Counselling improved the self-efficacy of this sample of students because there was a significant mean difference between pre-test and post-test self-efficacy scores of Experimental Group, whereas in the case of the Control Group, there was only a slight increase in mean pre- and post-test self-efficacy scores in the outcomes. School counselling interventions had a significant impact on both students' careers and their personal development.

## Conclusion

Economic hardship is a common occurrence in emerging countries such as India, where rapid social and financial changes, anxiety, political uncertainty and a limited range of occupations are available to citizens. As a result, career guidance is an important means of supporting young people. Choosing a profession, especially among several options, is a challenging task that is crucial to one's life. This emphasises the need to guide adolescents in planning their careers and amking career decisions. The school system has the responsibility of

assisting adolescents in making informed career choices that are appropriate for their abilities, aptitudes, interests and other personality characteristics. Numerous studies have found that most secondary school leavers in India made poor career choices as a result of unrealistic career goals. It has been established that students choose careers largely because of the remuneration, status, prestige and distinction associated with them.

## Educational Implications

1. Teachers can organise numerous self-awareness programmes to help students understand different aspects of their personalities and make the best vocational decisions.
2. Teachers can organize a variety of co-curricular activities with clearly achievable goals in order to boost students' self-efficacy.
3. Teachers should assist students in setting achievement objectives and then assist them in achieving those goals.
4. Teacher educators can organize career guidance workshops in schools to provide thorough information about numerous career alternatives.
5. Counsellors, in addition to teachers, may design and deliver classroom guidance activities aimed at determining self-efficacy in relation to work by involving students in class discussions and experiential activities to identify their current interests and self-efficacy in various occupations.
6. School counsellors can assist students in choosing the suitable profession based on suitable aptitude testing.
7. There are career guidance centres in schools and colleges, but their effectiveness is limited due to a lack of experienced personnel and funding. As a result, appropriate funding should be provided for career guidance centres in schools and universities.

## Scope for Further Research

1. This study could be replicated with a larger sample of senior secondary students from both private and government schools.
2. The study could be replicated with a larger sample of senior secondary students from both urban and rural institutions.
3. The study could also be conducted with postgraduate and graduate students from other universities.
4. Future research could include similar-aged groups from other socioeconomic backgrounds.
5. The current study was limited to examining the effect of guidance and counselling on academic underachievers. Similar studies can be undertaken to examine the impact of guidance and counselling on certain groups of children, such as slow learners, the learners with intellectual disabilities, learners with physical disabilities and other disabilities, as well as bright and creative learners.

## Delimitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to class XI students only.
2. The sample in this study is restricted

to Rohtak district only.

3. The sample was limited to 140 students.
4. The current study was limited to examining the effect of counselling on academic underachievers.

## References

Bhatnagar, A. (2012). Effect of individual Counseling on the achievement of bright underachievers. Journal of Indian Educational Review, (NCERT), New Delhi pp. 10-18.

Debasmita, Paul, (2013). Occupational aspiration of youth in colleges: A sociological analysis of present and future position of youth in Siliguri city, International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research, Vol.2 (1), January (2013). pp 118-123.

Devi, P.N. (2003). Effectiveness of group counseling: Adjustment among women college students. Journal of Indian Educational Psychology, Vol.21,(2), 67-77.

Hasan, B., (2006). Career Maturity of Indian Adolescents as a Function of Self-Concept, Vocational Aspiration and Gender, Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology, February 2006, Vol. 32, No.2, 127-134

Jamwal, AnuRadha, and Swati Gupta. 2025. "Exploring Career Paths: The Role of Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectations in Shaping Career Choices for Students With Disabilities". Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies 51 (2):442-52.

Kerr Barbara and Erb Cheryl (1991). Career Counseling with Academically Talented Students: Effects of a Value-Based Intervention. Journal of Counseling Psychology, Vol. 38, No. 3, (1991), 309-314.

Kodad and Kazi, (2014). Emerging area of Counseling in Schools in India, International Research Journal of Social Sciences ISSN 2319–3565 Vol. 3(3), 44-47,

Ogbonnia Chukwu-Etu, (2009). Underachieving learners: Can they learn at all. ARECLS, 2009, Vol. 6, (pp. 84-102)

Parveen Amina, (2003). Effect of individual counseling on the achievement of underachievers. M.Phil., Edu., University of Kashmir, J&K

Savugathali, A. F., Mustafa, M. B., & Jusoh, A. J. (2025). Self-efficacy in career decision making and outcome expectation among final year students. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 15(1), pp. 40-49.

Wahengbam, K. & Sharma, M.L. (2024). Impact of Self-Efficacy on Career Aspirations Among Males and Females an In-Depth Analysis of Gender Differences in the Professional Development of Males and Females. International Journal of Indian Psychology, 12(2), 397-410.

Zhou, N. (2024). Perceived parental career expectation and adolescent career development: The mediating role of adolescent career-planning and goal-setting self-efficacy and the moderating role of perceived parent–adolescent career congruence. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 71(6), 621–632.

***