



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-EFFICIENCY AND CAREER MATURITY AMONG ADOLESCENCE IN VIRUDHUNAGAR DISTRICT

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Abstract

Adolescence is a critical stage of human development during which individuals begin to explore educational and occupational opportunities while developing the competencies required for future career success. Among the various psychological factors influencing career development, self-efficacy and career maturity have gained considerable attention due to their significant role in shaping adolescents' career-related attitudes and decision-making abilities. The present study examines the relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity among adolescents in Virudhunagar District through a descriptive research design based entirely on secondary data. Information was collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, conference proceedings, government reports, and other authentic academic sources related to educational psychology, career development, and adolescent behavior. The collected literature was analyzed using descriptive content analysis to identify major themes and empirical evidence regarding the association between self-efficacy and career maturity. The findings indicate that adolescents with higher levels of self-efficacy exhibit greater confidence, career exploration, occupational awareness, decision-making competence, and career planning, which collectively contribute to higher career maturity. The review further highlights the importance of family support, school environment, career guidance services, and counseling interventions in strengthening adolescents' career readiness. The study concludes that enhancing self-efficacy through structured educational and counseling programmes can significantly improve career maturity and facilitate successful educational and occupational transitions. The findings provide valuable implications for educators, school counselors, parents, researchers, and policymakers in designing effective career development initiatives for adolescents.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Career Maturity, Adolescents, Career Development, Virudhunagar District

1. Introduction:

Adolescence is a pivotal developmental stage characterized by profound biological, psychological, cognitive, and social transformations that significantly influence an individual's educational and occupational future. During this period, adolescents begin to establish their identity, recognize their strengths and interests, and make important decisions regarding higher education and career pathways. In today's rapidly evolving knowledge economy, career success depends not only on academic achievement but also on psychological competencies that enable individuals to cope with uncertainty, adapt to changing occupational demands, and make informed career choices. Consequently, researchers and educational practitioners have increasingly emphasized the importance of psychological resources that facilitate successful career development among adolescents. Among these resources, self-efficacy and career maturity have emerged as critical determinants influencing career planning, occupational exploration, and decision-making processes. Self-efficacy enhances an individual's confidence in performing career-related tasks, whereas career maturity reflects the readiness to make realistic and appropriate educational and vocational decisions. Adolescents possessing stronger efficacy beliefs are generally more proactive in exploring career opportunities, overcoming obstacles, and committing themselves to long-term career goals. Understanding the relationship between these constructs is particularly important in the Indian educational context, where increasing academic competition and expanding career opportunities require students to make complex educational and occupational decisions at an early age. Therefore, examining the relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity among adolescents in Virudhunagar District provides valuable insights for strengthening career guidance interventions and promoting successful career development.

Adolescence and Career Development

Career development begins during adolescence, a developmental period in which individuals gradually acquire the cognitive maturity necessary for evaluating personal interests, abilities, values, and occupational aspirations. According to developmental psychologists, adolescence represents the stage during which career preferences become increasingly stable and educational choices begin to influence future occupational trajectories. Schools, families, peers, and social environments collectively shape adolescents' career aspirations by providing opportunities for learning, exploration, and decision-making. However, rapid technological advancements, globalization, and changing employment patterns have transformed the nature of career planning, making psychological preparedness equally important as academic competence. Adolescents who possess confidence, adaptability, and decision-making skills are better equipped to respond to the uncertainties of contemporary labor markets. Consequently, career development during adolescence has become a multidimensional process involving psychological, educational, and environmental influences.

Self-Efficacy and Adolescent Development

Self-efficacy, introduced by Bandura (1977), represents an individual's belief in their capability to successfully perform

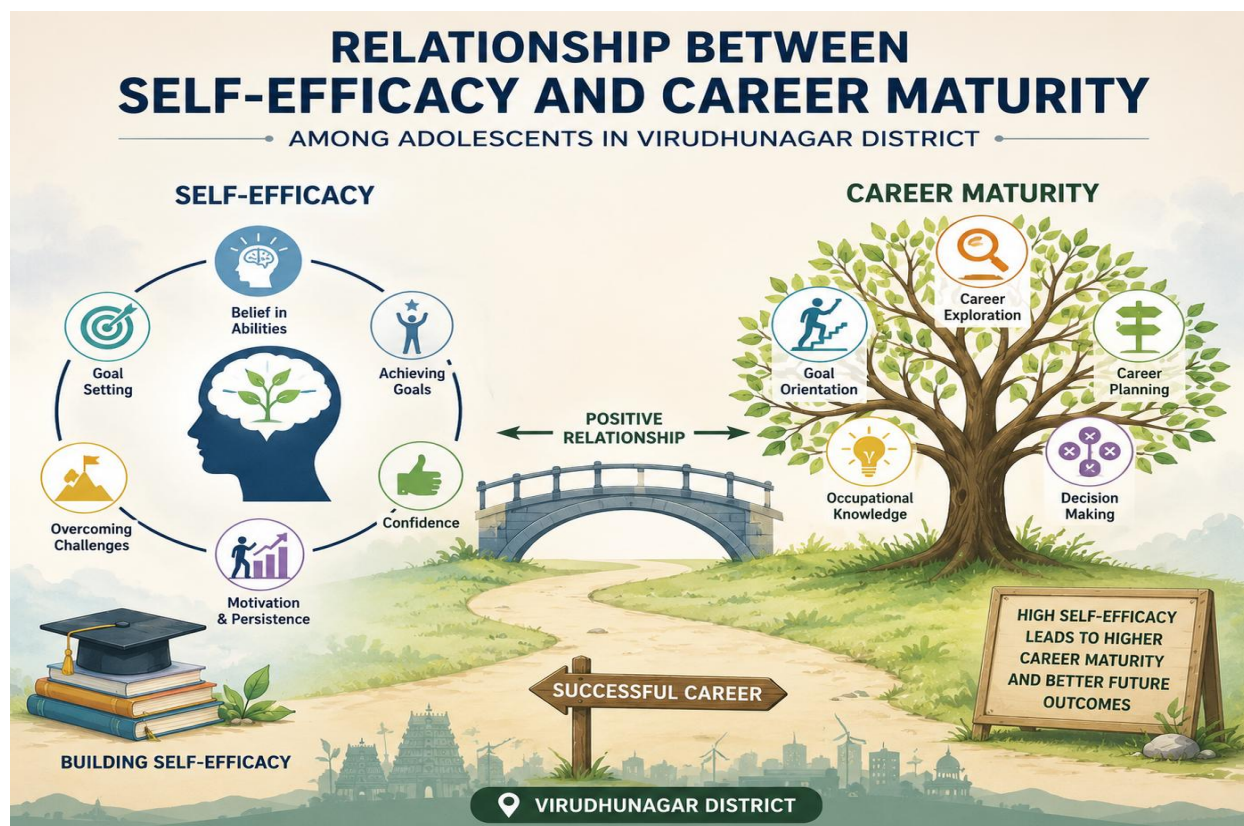
actions required to achieve desired outcomes. Within educational and career contexts, self-efficacy influences motivation, persistence, resilience, and problem-solving behavior. Adolescents with stronger efficacy beliefs perceive challenges as opportunities for learning rather than obstacles, enabling them to participate actively in career exploration activities, seek occupational information, and establish realistic educational goals. Self-efficacy also enhances students' willingness to overcome academic difficulties and remain committed to long-term aspirations. Conversely, adolescents with low self-efficacy often experience uncertainty, avoidance of challenging situations, and reduced confidence while making career decisions. Therefore, self-efficacy functions as an important psychological resource that promotes adaptive career behaviors and successful educational transitions.

Career Maturity among Adolescents

Career maturity refers to the readiness of an individual to make appropriate educational and occupational decisions consistent with their developmental stage. Super's theory of career development conceptualizes career maturity as the ability to understand personal characteristics, evaluate occupational alternatives, gather career-related information, and make informed career choices. Adolescents with higher career maturity demonstrate greater clarity regarding career goals, stronger decision-making competencies, and increased willingness to engage in career planning activities. They are capable of integrating personal interests, abilities, and occupational information while selecting suitable educational pathways. In contrast, adolescents with limited career maturity frequently experience confusion, indecisiveness, and unrealistic occupational expectations, which may adversely affect their educational progress and future employability.

Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Career Maturity

The relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity has received increasing scholarly attention because both constructs significantly influence adolescents' educational and occupational development. Social Cognitive Career Theory suggests that self-efficacy serves as a fundamental mechanism through which individuals develop career interests, establish occupational goals, and make effective career decisions. Adolescents possessing high levels of self-efficacy generally exhibit greater confidence while exploring career alternatives, evaluating educational opportunities, and overcoming career-related barriers. These behaviors contribute directly to the development of career maturity by strengthening career planning, occupational knowledge, decision-making competence, and career adaptability. Previous empirical studies conducted across different educational settings consistently report a positive association between self-efficacy and career maturity, suggesting that adolescents who believe in their capabilities are more prepared to make realistic and informed career decisions. Nevertheless, the strength of this relationship may vary across cultural, educational, and socioeconomic contexts, necessitating further investigation in specific regional settings.



Research Gap and Need for the Study

Although previous studies have extensively examined self-efficacy and career maturity independently, relatively limited research has investigated their relationship among school-going adolescents in district-level educational contexts in India. Existing evidence predominantly originates from metropolitan cities, higher education institutions, or international settings, thereby limiting its applicability to adolescents studying in semi-urban and rural districts. Virudhunagar District presents unique educational and socioeconomic characteristics that may influence adolescents' psychological development and career decision-making processes. Furthermore, rapid changes in educational policies, technological advancement, and labor market dynamics necessitate updated empirical evidence regarding factors influencing career readiness among adolescents. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by examining the

relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity among adolescents in Virudhunagar District, thereby contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical career counseling interventions.

2. Review of Literature

- **Duru (2022)** investigated the relationships among career maturity, career decision-making self-efficacy, and career decision-making difficulties among 665 Turkish high school students. Using correlation and regression analyses, the study reported that students with higher career decision-making self-efficacy demonstrated significantly greater career maturity and experienced fewer career decision-making difficulties. The study concluded that self-efficacy is a significant psychological predictor of successful career development during adolescence.
- **Jeon (2022)** examined the relationship between adolescents' part-time job motivation, career decision-making self-efficacy, and career maturity among 9,666 Korean high school students using multiple regression analysis. The study found that career decision-making self-efficacy significantly enhanced career maturity, particularly among students whose work motivation was related to personal growth rather than financial necessity. The findings emphasized that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in strengthening adolescents' career preparedness and decision-making abilities.
- **Li et al. (2024)** explored the mediating effects of self-efficacy and study engagement on career maturity among Chinese nursing students. The findings indicated that self-efficacy significantly mediated the relationship between professional identity and career maturity, while study engagement further strengthened this association. The study highlighted self-efficacy as a fundamental psychological mechanism for improving career maturity and career commitment.
- **Öztemel and colleagues (2024)** investigated the mediating role of career and talent development self-efficacy in the relationship between parental career support and adolescent–parent career congruence among 652 middle school students. Structural equation modeling revealed that self-efficacy partially mediated the relationship, indicating that supportive parental involvement enhances adolescents' career confidence and career adjustment. The findings reinforced the central role of self-efficacy within Social Cognitive Career Theory.
- **Restuti et al. (2024)** conducted a systematic literature review examining the role of self-efficacy in career maturity among students with disabilities. The review synthesized empirical evidence and concluded that self-efficacy consistently emerged as one of the strongest predictors of career maturity by improving career planning, decision-making confidence, and career adaptability. The authors recommended interventions that strengthen efficacy beliefs to facilitate successful career transitions.
- **Shafira et al. (2024)** performed a systematic literature review of instruments used to measure career decision self-efficacy among high school students. The review identified the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale–Short Form (CDSSES-SF) as the most reliable and widely validated instrument across different countries and educational settings. The study emphasized that accurate measurement of self-efficacy is essential for understanding adolescents' career decision-making processes and career readiness.
- **Sharma (2024)** conducted a systematic review of research on career maturity among secondary school adolescents by synthesizing findings from previous empirical studies. The review highlighted that career maturity is influenced by psychological factors such as self-efficacy, self-concept, parental support, and school guidance services. The study recommended strengthening career counseling programmes to improve adolescents' readiness for educational and occupational decision-making.
- **Sukmadiningsih et al. (2025)** reviewed contemporary research on career readiness among adolescents using the PRISMA systematic review approach. The review concluded that career readiness is influenced by several internal factors, including self-efficacy, metacognitive ability, growth mindset, and goal orientation, together with external support from schools and families. The study emphasized that evidence-based career guidance interventions can substantially improve adolescents' career preparedness.
- **Yiming et al. (2024)** examined the relationship between self-efficacy, career development, and subjective well-being among 1,381 physical education students. Using mediation analysis, the researchers found that higher self-efficacy significantly promoted career exploration and career adaptability through enhanced positive emotions and life satisfaction. The study demonstrated that self-efficacy contributes directly and indirectly to career development outcomes among young adults.
- **Zhang et al. (2024)** investigated the influence of self-efficacy on career maturity among 950 undergraduate students by examining the mediating role of creativity tendency and the moderating effect of achievement motivation. The results demonstrated that self-efficacy positively predicted career maturity both directly and indirectly through creativity, while achievement motivation strengthened these relationships. The study confirmed that self-efficacy remains one of the strongest predictors of career maturity across educational contexts.

3. Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopted a **descriptive research design** based entirely on **secondary data** to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity among adolescents in Virudhunagar District. Descriptive research is appropriate for systematically reviewing and synthesizing existing empirical evidence, theoretical perspectives, and published literature to understand the association between the selected variables. Rather than collecting primary data through surveys or interviews, the study relied on previously published research and authentic documentary sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Nature of the Study

The study is qualitative and descriptive in nature, focusing on the conceptual and empirical relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity among adolescents. It analyzes existing findings reported in national and international studies to identify patterns, trends, and theoretical explanations regarding adolescent career development.

Sources of Data

The study is based exclusively on **secondary data** collected from reliable and authentic sources. The data were gathered from:

- Peer-reviewed research articles published in Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar.
- Books on educational psychology, developmental psychology, and career development.
- National and international journals related to education, psychology, and career counseling.
- Reports published by organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, OECD, NCERT, UGC, and the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
- Theses, dissertations, conference proceedings, and institutional publications.
- Official websites of educational institutions and government agencies providing information on adolescent education and career guidance.

These sources were selected to ensure the credibility, relevance, and reliability of the information used in the study.

Data Collection Procedure

Secondary information was collected through a systematic review of published literature using electronic academic databases and digital repositories. Keywords such as *self-efficacy*, *career maturity*, *adolescents*, *career development*, *career decision-making*, and *career counseling* were used to identify relevant studies. Preference was given to recent publications (2020–2025) to ensure that the findings reflected contemporary developments in adolescent career research. The collected literature was carefully screened based on relevance, methodological quality, and alignment with the objectives of the study.

Method of Analysis

The collected information was analyzed using **descriptive content analysis**. The analysis involved organizing the literature into thematic categories, comparing findings across different studies, identifying similarities and differences, and synthesizing the evidence related to self-efficacy and career maturity. The review also examined theoretical perspectives, determinants of self-efficacy, dimensions of career maturity, and the reported relationship between these constructs. The synthesized findings were presented systematically to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on understanding the relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity among adolescents by reviewing existing scholarly literature. Although the title refers to **Virudhunagar District**, the study primarily uses secondary evidence from national and international research to explain the concepts and their relevance to adolescents in this regional context. The findings provide a theoretical foundation that can support future empirical investigations and career guidance initiatives in educational institutions.

Limitations of the Study

The study is based solely on secondary data and therefore depends on the accuracy and scope of previously published research. Since no primary data were collected directly from adolescents in Virudhunagar District, the findings are interpretative rather than empirical. Moreover, differences in research settings, sample characteristics, and methodologies among the reviewed studies may limit the generalizability of the conclusions. Despite these limitations, the study provides a comprehensive synthesis of current knowledge and offers valuable insights into the relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity among adolescents.

Findings

Based on the comprehensive review of secondary literature, the following major findings were identified:

1. Self-efficacy is a significant predictor of career maturity among adolescents, as students with higher confidence in their abilities demonstrate greater readiness for career planning and decision-making.
2. Adolescents possessing strong self-efficacy beliefs actively participate in career exploration activities, seek occupational information, and exhibit greater confidence in selecting appropriate educational and career pathways.
3. Career maturity develops progressively through career awareness, occupational knowledge, decision-making competence, career planning, and goal orientation, all of which are positively influenced by self-efficacy.
4. The review indicates that adolescents with low self-efficacy often experience career indecision, uncertainty, lack of confidence, and limited career exploration, resulting in lower levels of career maturity.
5. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) consistently explain that self-efficacy influences career interests, career aspirations, educational choices, and occupational outcomes through cognitive and motivational mechanisms.
6. Family support, teacher encouragement, school environment, peer influence, and career guidance services significantly contribute to the development of both self-efficacy and career maturity among adolescents.
7. Career guidance and counseling programmes implemented in schools have been found to improve adolescents' confidence, occupational awareness, and readiness for career decision-making.
8. Rapid technological advancements, digital learning environments, and changing labor market demands have increased the importance of psychological competencies such as self-efficacy in career development.
9. Recent empirical studies consistently report a positive and statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity across different educational and cultural contexts.

10. The review identified a limited number of studies focusing on adolescents in district-level educational settings in India, particularly in Virudhunagar District, indicating the need for context-specific research.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are proposed:

1. Schools should establish structured career guidance and counseling cells to assist adolescents in understanding their interests, abilities, and career opportunities.
2. Educational institutions should organize self-efficacy enhancement programmes, including personality development, leadership training, communication skills, and confidence-building workshops.
3. Career awareness programmes, career fairs, industry interactions, and vocational guidance sessions should be conducted regularly to improve adolescents' career maturity.
4. Teachers should integrate career education into classroom activities by encouraging goal setting, problem-solving, and decision-making skills among students.
5. Parents should actively participate in adolescents' career planning by providing emotional support, motivation, and realistic guidance without imposing career choices.
6. School counselors should identify students with low self-efficacy and provide individualized counseling interventions to strengthen their confidence and career readiness.
7. Government and educational authorities should develop district-level career counseling initiatives, particularly in rural and semi-urban schools where access to professional guidance remains limited.
8. Digital career guidance platforms, aptitude assessment tools, and online counseling services should be promoted to improve access to career information.
9. Life skills education focusing on resilience, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and self-confidence should be incorporated into the school curriculum.
10. Collaborative efforts among schools, parents, higher education institutions, industries, and policymakers are essential for creating a supportive ecosystem that enhances adolescents' self-efficacy and career maturity.

Future Scope of the Study

The present study opens several avenues for future research:

1. Future studies may adopt primary data collection methods using questionnaires, interviews, or mixed-method approaches to validate the relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity among adolescents.
2. Comparative studies can be conducted between urban and rural adolescents to examine differences in self-efficacy and career maturity.
3. Future research may investigate the mediating or moderating effects of variables such as emotional intelligence, resilience, academic motivation, career adaptability, parental support, and socioeconomic status.
4. Longitudinal studies may be undertaken to examine how self-efficacy influences career maturity over different stages of adolescence.
5. Similar studies can be extended to adolescents in other districts, states, or countries to compare regional and cultural differences in career development.
6. Future research may evaluate the effectiveness of career guidance interventions, mentorship programmes, and psychological training in improving adolescents' self-efficacy and career maturity.
7. Researchers may explore the role of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, online career counseling, and virtual career assessment platforms in strengthening career readiness among adolescents.
8. Studies may also examine gender differences in self-efficacy and career maturity to develop more inclusive career development strategies.
9. Future investigations can incorporate advanced statistical techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), mediation analysis, moderation analysis, and multigroup analysis to understand the complex relationships among psychological variables.

Conclusion

Career development during adolescence is a critical process that shapes an individual's educational, professional, and personal future. The present study, based on a comprehensive review of secondary literature, highlights that self-efficacy and career maturity are closely interconnected psychological constructs that significantly influence adolescents' career readiness. Adolescents who possess stronger beliefs in their abilities are more likely to engage in career exploration, set realistic career goals, acquire occupational knowledge, and make informed educational and vocational decisions. The literature consistently demonstrates that self-efficacy acts as a driving force that enhances motivation, persistence, adaptability, and confidence, thereby contributing to higher levels of career maturity.

The review also emphasizes the important roles of family support, school environment, career guidance services, teachers, and counselors in fostering adolescents' psychological readiness for career decision-making. Although substantial international evidence supports the positive relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity, limited research has been conducted in district-level educational contexts such as Virudhunagar District. This highlights the need for region-specific empirical studies and targeted educational interventions. Strengthening self-efficacy through systematic career education, counseling programmes, and supportive learning environments can significantly enhance adolescents' career maturity and prepare them to successfully navigate the challenges of an increasingly dynamic and competitive world of work. The study therefore contributes to the existing body of knowledge and provides valuable implications for educators, researchers, counselors, and policymakers committed to promoting effective career development among adolescents.

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