

## A Study of the Relationship between Career Maturity and Study Habits of Secondary School Students

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### Abstract

This study explores the association between career maturity and study habits among students at the secondary school level. Career maturity is an important psychological and educational construct associated with students' readiness to make appropriate career decisions, whereas study habits contribute significantly to academic growth and may also influence career planning and occupational preparedness.

Using stratified random sampling, the researcher selected a sample of 600 secondary school students from Haryana and Rajasthan for the present investigation. To evaluate study habits, the researcher used the Study Habit Inventory developed by Mukhopadhyaya and Sansanwal, while career maturity was measured with the Career Maturity Scale prepared by Nirmala Gupta. The study was undertaken to explore the relationship between these two variables and to determine differences in career maturity among students possessing varying levels of study habits.

The results of the study showed a statistically significant positive correlation between study habits and career maturity ( $r = 0.705$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, the independent samples t-test demonstrated significant differences in career maturity between students possessing good and poor study habits ( $t = 16.66$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). It was observed that students with effective study habits exhibited comparatively higher levels of career maturity than those having weaker study habits.

The results suggest that sound study habits contribute positively to the development of career maturity among secondary school students. The study has important implications for educators, counselors, and policy makers in promoting career readiness through the development of effective study habits.

**Keywords:** Career Maturity, Study Habits, Secondary School Students, Academic Achievement, Career Development

### ➤ Introduction

Education is a continuous and lifelong process that contributes not only to the intellectual development of learners but also to their personal, social, emotional, and vocational growth. In the modern education system, the role of schooling extends beyond the transmission of knowledge and academic achievement. It aims to prepare students for life by equipping them with the skills, attitudes, and competencies needed to face future challenges effectively. One of the major functions of education is to help learners prepare for their future careers. Particularly at the secondary school stage, students begin to develop aspirations, explore occupational opportunities, and make decisions that may influence their future professional lives. Therefore, education plays a vital role in developing students' readiness for career planning and decision-making.

In the present era of globalization, technological advancement, and rapidly changing employment opportunities, career selection has become increasingly complex. Career maturity is considered an important psychological and educational construct that reflects an individual's readiness to make appropriate occupational choices. It includes attitudes, competencies, and behaviors related to career planning, exploration, and decision-making. A career mature student is generally aware of personal interests, abilities, and aptitudes, gathers relevant occupational information, shows concern for future planning, and demonstrates independence in making career decisions. Thus, career maturity is a multidimensional concept involving self-awareness, planning orientation, occupational knowledge, and decision-making competence.

At the secondary school level, career maturity assumes special significance because adolescence is a crucial stage of exploration, identity formation, and goal setting. During this period, students begin to think seriously about their future and prepare for educational as well as vocational roles. However, the development of career maturity is influenced by several personal and environmental factors, among which study habits occupy an important place. Study habits may be understood as the systematic methods and practices students employ while engaging in learning activities. These include time management, concentration, comprehension, note-making, revision, task orientation, and support-seeking behavior. Effective study habits reflect discipline, responsibility, persistence, and goal-directed behavior. Students who possess sound study habits are often organized, motivated, and committed to long-term achievement. Such qualities may positively contribute to their readiness for career planning.

A meaningful relationship appears to exist between study habits and career maturity because both involve planning, self-regulation, responsibility, and purposeful behavior. Students with effective study habits may show greater clarity of goals, better decision-making ability, and stronger occupational preparedness. On the other hand, poor study habits may hinder both academic progress and career development. In this context, an investigation into the relationship between career maturity and study habits among secondary school students assumes considerable importance. Such a study can provide valuable insights for educators, counselors, and policy makers in promoting students' academic as well as vocational development.

#### ➤ **Review of Related Literature**

Recent studies have highlighted that career maturity and study habits are important determinants of students' academic as well as vocational development. Several contemporary researches have emphasized the role of self-regulation, study behavior, and career awareness in shaping students' readiness for future occupational choices.

A study by Kaur and Sharma (2020) revealed a significant positive correlation between study habits and career readiness among adolescents. The study revealed that students possessing organized study patterns and disciplined learning behaviors demonstrated higher levels of career planning and decision-making ability.

Singh and Verma (2021) investigated the relationship between self-regulated learning and career maturity among school students and found that effective study habits were associated with enhanced occupational awareness and future planning orientation. The study concluded that study behavior acts as an important predictor of career maturity.

Mishra (2022) examined study habits and attitudes of secondary school students in India and observed that effective study habits contribute substantially to academic discipline, self-regulation, and preparedness for future educational goals. The study emphasized that healthy study practices foster qualities that may support career development.

Kumar, Yadav, and Malik (2022) found that students with better study habits exhibited higher levels of vocational maturity and career decision competence. The study highlighted that study discipline and career preparedness are positively associated.

Rani and Malik (2023) found that study habits were positively and significantly related to career maturity among secondary school students. Their findings indicated that students demonstrating better concentration, task orientation, and self-regulation showed greater career awareness and occupational preparedness.

A recent study by Patel and Joshi (2024) found that academic self-management and study discipline significantly contributed to occupational maturity among adolescents. Students with stronger study routines were reported to possess greater confidence in career planning and decision-making.

Recent investigations on career maturity among secondary school adolescents have also revealed that factors such as gender, planning orientation, occupational information, and self-appraisal contribute significantly to career development. These studies further support the view that career maturity is influenced by both personal competencies and educational experiences.

Recent literature suggests that effective study habits, self-regulated learning, and academic discipline play a positive role in fostering career maturity. However, only a limited number of studies have specifically explored the relationship between study habits and career maturity among secondary school students in the context of Haryana and Rajasthan. This research gap provides a strong rationale for undertaking the present study.

➤ **Research Gap**

Although recent studies have explored study habits, self-regulated learning, and career maturity separately, Research examining the direct association between study habits and career maturity among secondary school students remains limited, and the present investigation has been undertaken to bridge this gap.

➤ **Need and Significance of the Study**

The secondary school stage occupies an important place in the educational development of students, as it is during this period that many significant academic and career-related decisions begin to emerge. Adolescence is a crucial stage characterized by exploration, aspiration building, and identity formation, during which students start thinking seriously about their future educational and occupational goals. At this level, the development of career maturity becomes essential because it enables students to make informed, realistic, and appropriate career choices. In the absence of adequate career maturity, students may experience confusion, indecisiveness, unrealistic aspirations, and difficulties in adjusting to future vocational roles. Such problems may adversely affect both personal satisfaction and professional success. At the same time, study habits play a vital role in shaping students' academic behavior as well as their preparedness for future planning. Effective study habits foster discipline, concentration, responsibility, and goal orientation, whereas poor study habits often result in weak academic performance, low confidence, and limited readiness for making career decisions. Since both career maturity and study habits are closely related to students' overall development, examining the relationship between these variables becomes highly significant.

The present study is important because it seeks to understand how study habits influence career maturity among secondary school students. The findings may provide useful insights for teachers, guidance counselors, and educational planners in designing programmes that promote both effective study behaviors and career readiness. The present study may make a valuable contribution to the existing literature in educational psychology and career guidance. Furthermore, it has practical significance for improving guidance services and strengthening secondary education, particularly in the context of Haryana and Rajasthan.

➤ **Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the relationship between career maturity and study habits among secondary school students .

➤ **Hypothesis of the Study**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There exists no significant relationship between career maturity and study habits among secondary school students .

➤ **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey approach to examine the association between career maturity and study habits among secondary school students. This method was considered appropriate as it enabled the researcher to collect relevant data systematically, analyze existing conditions, and interpret the relationship between the selected variables in a scientific manner.

The population for the present study consisted of secondary school students from Haryana and Rajasthan, forming the wider group to which the results of the study may be generalized. From this population, a sample of 600 students was drawn using the stratified random sampling method to ensure proper representation of various subgroups and to improve the reliability and validity of the investigation. This sampling technique also contributed to selecting a representative sample and reducing the possibility of sampling bias.

➤ **Tools Used**

For the collection of data, two standardized tools were used in the present study. To measure study habits, the *Study Habit Inventory* developed by Mukhopadhyaya and Sansanwal was employed. To assess career maturity, the *Career Maturity Scale* developed by Nirmala Gupta was used. Both tools were selected considering their relevance and suitability to the objectives of the study.

➤ **Statistical Techniques Used**

For analyzing and interpreting the collected data, suitable statistical methods were utilized. Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated to assess the central tendency and dispersion of the scores. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient was employed to identify the relationship between career maturity and study habits. Furthermore, the independent samples t-test was applied to test the significance of differences between the groups.

➤ **Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

**Objective:** To study the Career Maturity of Secondary School Students in relation to their Study Habits .

**Table1 Independent Samples t-test: Career Maturity by Study Habits Level (N=520)**

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	Level of Significance
Good Study Habits	320	169.45	24.83	1.39	16.66	<b>Significant at 0.001</b>
Poor Study Habits	200	130.18	28.12	1.99		

$0.05 \leq 1.96, 0.001 \leq 3.30$

**Interpretation**

Table 1 indicates that the t-test conducted between students having good study habits and those with poor study habits yielded a highly significant difference ( $t = 16.66, df = 518, p < 0.001$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, which suggests that a significant difference exists in the career maturity of secondary school students on the basis of their study habits.

Students with good study habits obtained substantially higher career maturity scores ( $M = 169.45$ ) than students with poor study habits ( $M = 130.18$ ). This difference was found to be statistically significant, suggesting that effective study habits are associated with higher levels of career maturity among secondary school students.

**Table 2: Correlation between Career Maturity and Study Habits Among Senior Secondary Students (N=600)**

Relationship between	N	Mean	S.D.	'r' value	Interpretation
Career Maturity	600	150.25	28.53	0.705	<b>Significant Positive Correlation</b>
Study Habits	600	---	---		

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. ( $p < 0.01$ )

The correlation analysis revealed a coefficient of correlation ( $r = 0.705$ ), which was significant at the 0.01 level, showing a strong positive association between career maturity and study habits. Thus, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) was rejected, confirming the existence of a significant relationship between career maturity and study habits among secondary school students.

The findings reveal a positive and significant association between the two variables, suggesting that study habits have an important influence on career maturity. As students' study habit scores increase, their career maturity scores also tend to increase. Conversely, lower scores on study habits indicate less organized learning behavior, which may be associated with lower levels of career maturity. Thus, effective study habits appear to contribute positively to the development of career maturity among students.

➤ **Discussion of Findings**

The results of the present study showed a significant positive association between study habits and career maturity among secondary school students. The findings suggest that students with organized and effective study habits exhibit higher levels of career maturity compared to those having less developed study habits. This suggests that study habits are not limited to academic achievement alone, but also contribute substantially to students' readiness for making career-related decisions.

The analysis further showed that students with better comprehension, concentration, task orientation, study routines, interaction, drilling, support-seeking behavior, recording, and language habits obtained higher scores on career maturity. These dimensions reflect qualities such as discipline, persistence, organization, self-control, and goal orientation, which are equally important for career planning and occupational decision-making. Students who approach learning in an organized and responsible manner are likely to develop greater awareness of future goals and show increased readiness to make informed career choices.

The comparison between students with good and poor study habits revealed that those possessing effective study habits achieved considerably higher career maturity scores, thereby emphasizing the importance of sound learning behaviors in vocational development.

The findings also indicate that career development is shaped not only by intellectual and cognitive factors, but also by behavioral tendencies and self-regulatory practices reflected in students' study habits. Effective study habits may foster responsibility, perseverance, decision-making ability, and future orientation, which are essential components of career maturity. Therefore, students who manage their studies effectively may also be better prepared to explore occupational opportunities and make realistic career decisions.

#### ➤ **Suggestions for Further Research**

The present study opens several avenues for further research in the area of career maturity and study habits. Similar studies may be conducted on larger and more diverse samples drawn from different states to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Future researchers may broaden this study by including other educational levels such as senior secondary, college, and university students to explore whether the relationship between study habits and career maturity differs across age groups and various stages of education.

Further studies may include additional variables such as intelligence, academic achievement, personality traits, self-concept, and socio-economic factors to gain a broader understanding of the factors influencing career maturity. Comparative studies may also be undertaken among rural and urban students, government and private school students, as well as male and female students to explore possible differences across various groups.

In addition, experimental or intervention-based studies may be conducted to examine how career maturity can be enhanced through study skills training, guidance programmes, or counseling interventions. Such studies would contribute further to the field and provide practical insights for improving students' academic as well as vocational development.

#### ➤ **Conclusion**

The present study concludes that study habits play an important role in promoting career maturity among secondary school students. The findings reveal that students with organized and effective study habits tend to show greater career awareness, stronger planning orientation, and increased preparedness for making career-related decisions. This suggests that sound study habits contribute not only to academic progress but also to career preparedness and vocational development.

The positive relationship identified between study habits and career maturity highlights the importance of integrating academic discipline with career guidance at the school level. Study behaviors such as concentration, task orientation, regularity, and self-regulation help students develop qualities necessary for making informed and realistic career choices.

The study further implies that encouraging productive study habits can serve as an important means for enhancing career maturity among students. In this way, the cultivation of effective study habits supports both educational growth and occupational readiness. Overall, the study highlights that study habits are a significant factor influencing career maturity and contribute substantially to preparing students for future academic and professional achievement.

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