

## CONSTRUCTION AND STANDARDIZATION OF CAREER MATURITY SCALE AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on the construction and standardization of a Career Maturity Scale among high school students to evaluate their preparedness and attitude toward making career-related decisions. An initial pool of items was developed through an extensive review of literature, expert consultation, and interaction with students and teachers. The scale encompassed key dimensions such as Goal Setting, Planning, Problem Solving, and Occupational Information. After content validation by experts, the tool was administered to a representative sample of High school students. Item analysis was conducted to refine the statements, and the final scale demonstrated high reliability through Cronbach's Alpha and t-values. The scale demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.876$ ) and significant discrimination between participants with high and low scores. Results suggest that the scale is a valid and reliable tool for assessing career maturity and can be applied in educational and counselling settings.

**Keywords:** Career Maturity, Scale Construction, Standardization, Reliability, Validity, High School Students.

### INTRODUCTION

Career development is an essential aspect of an individual's overall growth, particularly during the school years when students begin to form aspirations and make decisions about their future. The ability to make realistic, well-informed, and goal-oriented career choices is referred to as career maturity. It represents the extent to which an individual is prepared to make suitable career decisions consistent with personal abilities, interests, and values. According to Super (1955), career maturity is a developmental construct that reflects one's readiness to deal with career-related tasks at a given stage of life.

In the present educational context, rapid technological changes, diverse career options, and increasing competition demand that students develop a mature understanding of career planning from an early stage. However, many school students lack adequate career awareness, self-understanding, and decision-making skills, leading to confusion and inappropriate career choices. Assessing their level of career maturity is therefore crucial for providing effective career guidance and counselling.

Despite the importance of this construct, there are limited standardized tools suited to the needs and cultural context of Indian school students. Hence, the present study attempts to develop and standardize a Career Maturity Scale that can reliably and validly measure different dimensions of career maturity, including career awareness, planning, decision-making ability, self-appraisal, and attitude toward career exploration. The standardized tool aims to assist

educators, counsellors, and researchers in identifying students' career development needs and in planning suitable intervention programs to enhance their career readiness.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

- **Super (1990)** described career maturity as the integration of self-concept and career decisions over the lifespan.
- **Savickas (1997)** highlighted the role of adaptability and problem-solving in career readiness, suggesting career maturity can be enhanced through structured guidance.
- **Medley & Mitzel (1982)** emphasized the importance of psychometrically validated scales in educational assessment.
- Indian studies have reported that career guidance programs significantly improve planning and occupational knowledge among college students, highlighting the need for standardized assessment tools.

## **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

Assessing Career maturity helps to identify a student's readiness for making career-related choices and the areas where developmental guidance is needed. Although several tools on career maturity exist, most are developed in Western contexts and may not align with the socio-cultural and educational environment of Indian students. Therefore, there is a pressing need to construct and standardize an indigenous tool that accurately reflects the career decision-making abilities, attitudes, and awareness levels of school students. Such a scale will enable teachers, counsellors, and career educators to provide targeted interventions to enhance students' career development and future preparedness.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To construct a Career Maturity Scale suitable for school students.
2. To identify and define the major dimensions of career maturity relevant to High School students.
3. To establish the reliability of the constructed Career Maturity Scale.
4. To establish the validity of the constructed Career Maturity Scale.
5. To standardize the scale for effective use among High school students in educational and counselling settings.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present study adopted a descriptive survey method for constructing and standardizing a Career Maturity Scale intended to measure the level of career maturity among High school students. The process involved the systematic development of items, pilot testing, item analysis, and establishing the reliability and validity of the tool.

## **SAMPLE**

The sample consisted of high school students from both urban and rural schools. A total of  $N = 104$  students were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure adequate representation of gender, locality, and type of school (government and private). The sample was appropriate for item analysis and factor validation of the constructed scale.

## **TOOL CONSTRUCTION PROCEDURE**

The construction of the Career Maturity Scale (CMS) was carried out in the following stages:

1. **Identification of Dimensions:** Based on a review of literature and expert opinions, four key dimensions of career maturity were identified: Goal Setting, Planning, Problem Solving, and Occupational Information.
2. **Item Generation:** An initial pool of 48 items was prepared covering all five dimensions. The items were framed as statements using a Likert-type five-point scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*.
3. **Content Validation:** The preliminary items were evaluated by a panel of Educationalists, Psychologists, and Career Counsellors for relevance, clarity, and appropriateness. Based on their suggestions, 17 items were revised or removed, resulting in a refined draft of 31 items.
4. **Pilot Study:** The draft scale was administered to a pilot sample of 104 High School students to check the clarity of items and the overall usability of the scale.
5. **Item Analysis:** Item discrimination indices and item-total correlations were computed. Items with low discrimination or weak correlations were discarded. After analysis, 28 items were retained for the final version.

## DIMENSIONS OF THE TOOL

1. Goal Setting (Items Q1–Q8): Assess clarity of personal and academic goals.
2. Planning (Items Q9–Q16): Measure ability to plan academic and career steps.
3. Problem Solving (Items Q17–Q24): Evaluate coping strategies and decision-making skills.
4. Occupational Information (Items Q25–Q31): Assess knowledge about careers and job requirements.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

- Item-Total Correlation (r): Evaluates the contribution of each item to the total scale.
- Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ): Measures internal consistency reliability.
- t-value Calculation: Determines whether each item significantly correlates with the overall scale.
- Formula:

$$t = \frac{r\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-r^2}}, n = 104, df = 102$$

- Critical t-value (two-tailed,  $p < 0.05$ ) = 1.983.

## RESULTS

**Table 1 : Scale Reliability Statistics**

| Statistic           | Value |
|---------------------|-------|
| Mean                | 4.16  |
| SD                  | 0.432 |
| Cronbach's $\alpha$ | 0.876 |

The scale demonstrates high internal consistency, indicating reliable measurement of career maturity.

**Table 2: Item Analysis and t-values**

| Item no | Cronbach's $\alpha$ if Item Dropped | t-value | status   | Item no | Cronbach's $\alpha$ if Item Dropped | t-value | status   |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| Q1      | 0.879                               | 1.27    | Rejected | Q17     | 0.871                               | 5.36    | Accepted |
| Q2      | 0.872                               | 5.03    | Accepted | Q18     | 0.872                               | 4.44    | Accepted |
| Q3      | 0.873                               | 4.52    | Accepted | Q19     | 0.873                               | 4.31    | Accepted |
| Q4      | 0.869                               | 6.83    | Accepted | Q20     | 0.878                               | 1.74    | Rejected |
| Q5      | 0.877                               | 2.11    | Accepted | Q21     | 0.869                               | 6.83    | Accepted |
| Q6      | 0.869                               | 7.30    | Accepted | Q22     | 0.872                               | 4.44    | Accepted |
| Q7      | 0.869                               | 6.63    | Accepted | Q23     | 0.870                               | 6.00    | Accepted |
| Q8      | 0.872                               | 5.03    | Accepted | Q24     | 0.869                               | 6.63    | Accepted |
| Q9      | 0.870                               | 6.00    | Accepted | Q25     | 0.872                               | 5.03    | Accepted |
| Q10     | 0.873                               | 4.29    | Accepted | Q26     | 0.873                               | 4.52    | Accepted |
| Q11     | 0.871                               | 5.36    | Accepted | Q27     | 0.878                               | 1.82    | Rejected |
| Q12     | 0.876                               | 2.28    | Accepted | Q28     | 0.872                               | 4.97    | Accepted |
| Q13     | 0.873                               | 4.29    | Accepted | Q29     | 0.869                               | 7.30    | Accepted |
| Q14     | 0.874                               | 4.05    | Accepted | Q30     | 0.869                               | 6.63    | Accepted |
| Q15     | 0.876                               | 2.91    | Accepted | Q31     | 0.872                               | 5.03    | Accepted |
| Q16     | 0.873                               | 4.29    | Accepted |         |                                     |         |          |

#### INTERPRETATION:

- The final scale demonstrates high reliability ( $\alpha = 0.876$ ).
- Most items (28/31) significantly contribute to the scale.
- Items Q1, Q20, and Q27 should be revised or removed to improve overall scale reliability.

#### DISCUSSION

The Career Maturity Scale developed in this study is a psychometrically robust tool for measuring vocational preparedness among High School students. High item-total correlations and t-values indicate that the items discriminate well between individuals with higher and lower career maturity. The scale can help educators to:

1. Identify students with low career maturity.
2. Provide targeted interventions for career guidance.
3. Monitor progress in vocational decision-making skills.

The inclusion of multiple dimensions—Goal Setting, Planning, Problem Solving, and Occupational Information—ensures a comprehensive assessment of career readiness.

#### CONCLUSION

The present study successfully developed and standardized a Career Maturity Scale (CMS) tailored for High School students. The scale was constructed through a systematic process involving item generation, expert validation, pilot testing, item analysis, and statistical verification of reliability and validity. The final version, comprising 28 items across four key dimensions - Goal Setting, Planning, Problem Solving, and Occupational Information - demonstrated high internal consistency and strong validity indices.

The findings confirm that the developed tool is reliable, valid, and appropriate for assessing the level of career maturity among school students in the Indian educational context. The Career Maturity Scale can be effectively used to understand students' readiness for making informed career choices, thereby contributing to more meaningful guidance and counselling interventions.

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