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JOURNAL ABSTRACTING AND INDEXING SERVICE
INTERNATIONAL ADVANCE JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING, SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT (IAJESM)
January-June 2023, Submitted in June 2023, iajesm2014@gmail.com, ISSN -2393-8048
Multidisciplinary Indexed/Peer Reviewed Journal. SJIF Impact Factor 2023 =6.753

Assessing the Impact of Vocational Education Programs on Career Aspirations and Interest Alignment in High School Students

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Abstract

Career dreams begin in school. Career choices can be made in puberty. Secondary school is when youngsters develops professional goals. This study assessed XI students' career goals. The study examines XI standard students' employment objectives and if they differ from population characteristics including locality, gender, style of management, and academic stream. Indian vocational high schools develop graduates for specific jobs. To improve vocational students' ASEAN Economic Community employability, English language courses must satisfy their needs. The goal of this study is to reveal the variety of educational experiences, work environments, reasons, goals, and viewpoints that influence the choices made by people who sign up for programmes that teach practical skills. These programmes, which include initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), have become pillars in the context of the uncertainty surrounding employment. Our aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which vocational training aligns with India's wider ambitions for the twenty-first century through an exploration of the experiences and viewpoints of those involved in these initiatives.

Keywords: Vocational Education, Career Aspirations, High School Students, PMKVY, ITI.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indian vocational high schools (VHSs) are becoming important for workforce development. This period is predicted to see 64% of India's population, or 1.42 billion, be productive. We expect 305.6 million people there in 2035.

The House Committee on Education and Labour defines vocational education as talent development, basic education skills, and work habits. Evans and Edwin say vocational education prepares students for a certain job or group of jobs. Thus, vocational education can be considered as a continuum, with training for specialised, well-defined vocations at one end and a more all-encompassing curriculum at the other to help young people succeed as citizens and workers. Vocational school graduates should think broadly and realise their potential. Labourers are trained at VHS. The focus on workforce readiness distinguishes vocational education from other forms of study.

Perception is establishing an impression. An individual's perception process begins with personal observation. People make assumptions based on how they view things. As he interprets it, it will reveal his ideas, feelings, and emotions. Understanding how students interpret English is important for their future employment. According to Feng, some academics believe student views are vital to language learning. If we can accommodate their preferred view of English, it will motivate students to study it and benefit their careers.

Aspirations are long-term, personal work goals that reflect a person's orientation and contain ambitions, dreams, and a career goal that should be achieved in the best possible circumstances. Adolescents may plan their career goals. VHS pupils are mostly teens. Now is the time to choose a career. By selecting their career goals, they may start planning and researching the necessary support. English helps them attain their job goals together with their trade skills. Warden and Lin found that English students want to advance their professions. In this study, students' academic course and career goals are very similar. Therefore, the author assumes that students' job goals are tied to their courses.

English language training in Indian VHSs remains problematic. The government uses EGP in AHS and VHS. They focus solely on language proficiency and generalise VHS and AHS

English needs. It goes against VHS's goal of job readiness. According to high school English instructors' preliminary research, the government and English teachers disagree on VHS students' English language needs. Government agencies perform EGP. English teachers believe VHS students need career-relevant English like ESP. Numerous researches on teaching English show that most VHS students would find English more interesting if they could relate it to their major and potential employment.

1.1 Career Aspirations

Transitioning from school to work is a major life change. Even if there are more schooling options, secondary school graduates are less likely to work right away. Magnet students set higher career objectives than low-income students. Low parental education, self-esteem, support, and single-parent families may lower employment goals. Many educational goals and reform agendas involve students' professional aspirations, but few studies have examined them. Policymakers and educators may help teenagers transition from school to higher education and career at the community and school levels by understanding their academic and professional objectives and destinations. Children with career goals are more motivated and successful. Many different factors affect professional ambitions.

Parents, guardians, and teachers/counsellors often give teens career advice and job information as they approach adulthood. In addition, early occupational frameworks shape middle and high school career advancement. Students' self-efficacy beliefs and how they affect their job goals must be evaluated during career development. Whether youngsters believe they can attain their job ambitions may affect their career choices. Students' assessments of their adult accomplishment must be considered by educators. Career dreams begin in school. Early intervention is important since research shows gender inequalities in occupational goals in adolescence.

1.2 Research Objectives:

To look into what motivates students to enrol in vocational training programmes (PMKVY, ITI) and how these factors affect how they see the relationship between skill training and career objectives.

To find out how students felt about the facilities, infrastructure, and trainers in the PMKVY and ITI training programmes they selected, as well as how these evaluations affected their overall training experiences.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

3. Maitra and Mani (2017), who report the
4. improvement in earnings of the treatment group postintervention. Our results are also in line
5. with Bellakhal and Mahjoub (2015) and Bettinger and Soliz (2016) that the vocational
6. graduates earn higher than their academic counterparts. There is a strong correlation
7. between labor productivity and wages which implies that skilled labor has prospects of
8. higher earnings than the unskilled workforce.

Jackson (2018) stated that most studies find an association between school spending and student performance after controlling for family background and geography. This difficulty arises from the misconception that school spending is a function of neighbourhood prosperity and family background, as well as unobserved student attributes that predict academic achievement and school spending. Richer families or those who value a high education may register their children in schools that charge more, which would upwardly bias the estimate because such youngsters are likely better equipped academically and more determined.

Caraballo et al. (2016)gave their thoughts on the National Plan for School Buildings, which increased school numbers. Capital expenditures have made up more than 80% of the Ministry's budget since 2013, due to the extended school day, which is expected to cost more per student, and teacher salary increases. The Ministry spends 60% on salaries and pensions for teaching and non-teaching staff, 15% on infrastructure investment, 8% on capital expenses, 8% on school breakfast, and 8% on administrative and administration.

Roser and Ortiz-Ospina (2016) Education spending does not explain cross-national learning outcomes, although it positively correlates with mean years of schooling and mean PISA score cross-sectionally. The OECD found that nations that prioritised teacher quality over class sizes beat those that prioritised PISA test performance, suggesting that resource allocation is most important. Based on a different empirical definition, Vegas and Coffin find that educational investment improves PISA performance only in systems that spend less than $8,000 US per student.

Nurgiyantoro et al. (2015) Testing the validity of both the content and the concept should be carried out by an individual who is knowledgeable in the relevant discipline. The expert examined the questions to see whether or not they were pertinent to the goal of the questionnaires, as well as the probable language, kind, and sequence of the questions. In order to determine whether or not the instruments were reliable, the researcher utilised the Pearson Product-moment method.

(Kaushik, 2014) The success of vocational training has been limited to industrial training colleges, mostly in engineering trades. Private schools offer classes, but many lacks official recognition. High secondary dropout rates, low private sector and industrial participation, too few vocational institutes, and a shortage of trained teachers are major issues. However, a lack of trained teachers and new industry coverage makes vocationalization across grades difficult. Supply and demand are mismatched because the educational system does not meet industry needs.

Hanushek and Rivkin (2007)A 10% increase in teacher salary reduced high school dropout rates by 3–4%. Even with low teacher competition approval rates, wage incentives may not always result in a more skilled teacher workforce because Dominican Republic wage increases have been widely given without carefully considering individual teachers' achievement and impact. Hanushek and Rivkin say salary increases only affect educational effectiveness when related to student success.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample Selection

The survey, focused on Uttar Pradesh, India, was carefully prepared and implemented with participants from various vocational training centres. This district is unique in study because it has never been studied. Two PMKVY and two ITI centres were shortlisted for diversity. The study included 200 people from these centres. They were divided by programme: 130 from PMKVY and 70 from ITIs. Having a women's branch of the ITI and courses that attract women preserved gender inclusivity.

3.2 Data Sources

Primary and secondary data were used to enhance study. The District Statistical Book provided pertinent demographic data for the study, concentrating on Uttar Pradesh. Internet secondary data has been used to improve the research background and investigate relevant literature and statistics. The research topics and objectives can be examined holistically with this dataset.

3.3 Data Collection

An online survey was used as the main technique of data collecting. It was created with the express purpose of gaining an understanding of students' motivations, educational backgrounds, career aspirations, and opinions about the calibre of training programmes. Participants' responses to the survey were electronically collected from all of the selected centres, guaranteeing thorough and representative data gathering.

3.4 Data Analysis

Creating visual representations like pie charts and bar charts as well as processing data using Microsoft Excel were part of the data analysis process. The context and comprehension of the research findings were further enhanced by the inclusion of field notes and photos. To provide a thorough overview of vocational training programmes, the study analyses participants in PMKVY and ITI through a cross-sectional approach. The goal of the analysis

is to identify patterns, trends, and insights into the variables influencing students' choices, expectations for their careers, and perceptions of these programmes.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender: Uttar Pradesh's 200 respondents were 60% female and 40% male, a reasonable gender ratio. Age: 59% of participants are 14–20. Additionally, 35% of respondents are 21–25. Social Background Category: 62% of respondents are OBC and 25% are SC. Education: Most (59%) are intermediate grads, with 1.5% below high school. The fact that 28% of respondents have bachelor's degrees shows that vocational training is not just for those with less than 50% education. Before Course: Work Status One of the most surprising findings was that 74% of respondents were students before enrolling in vocational training. The fact that 21% of respondents were unemployed emphasises the necessity of vocational training in combating unemployment.

Table 1: Respondents' Socioeconomic Indicators

Socio-Economic Indicators of Respondents		
	Count s N=200	**Percentage (%)**
Gender		
Female	120	60 %
Male	80	40%
Age		
14-20	118	59%
21-25	60	35.02%
26-30	12	3.25%
31-35	7	1.11%
36 and above	3	0.60%
Category		
General	22	11%
OBC	124	62%
SC	50	25%
EWS	4	2%
Education		
Less than High school	3	1.5
High school	18	9
Intermediate	118	59
Bachelor's Degree	56	28
Master's Degree	5	2.5
Employment Status before joining the course		
Employed full-time	4	2
Employed part-time	2	1
Unemployed	42	21
Self-Employed	4	2
Student	148	74

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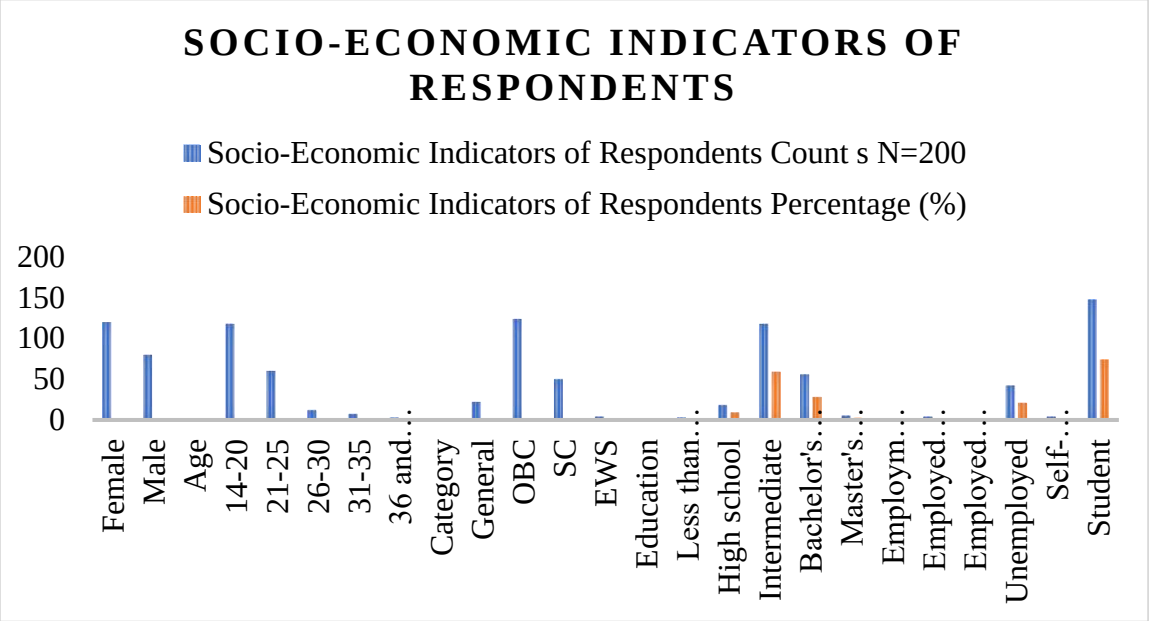

Figure 1: Respondents' Socioeconomic Indicators

Interestingly, 32% of ITI candidates have vocational training. ITI candidates (48%), surprisingly, combine academics with skill development. Most ITI applicants (78%), think vocational and academic training are equally beneficial to job chances. Interestingly, 67% of ITI candidates think vocational training offers better job prospects than academic ones. Surprisingly, only 3% disagree. About 15% of candidates rate the programme "Very Good," indicating a pleasant experience. Interestingly, 15% grade the programme "Average," indicating room for improvement. Notably, 35% rate the programme "Very Poor." The study found that 26% of ITI applicants have soft skills, a key employability factor. These essential abilities are unknown to 60%. 42% of ITI candidates desire to work anywhere in Uttar Pradesh, 32% in their district. Fortunately, 64% of ITI applicants think their school will help them obtain work after graduation. 26% of ITI candidates grade infrastructure "Very Poor," and 32% facilities. 22% of ITI candidates rank trainers "Very Good," 32% "Very Poor."

Table 2: ITI Analysis Based On Data From The Respondent

ITI Parameter	Option	N=70	Percentage
Have You Ever Had Any Formal Training?	Yes	32	30%
	No	38	60%
Pursuing this course in addition to regular academic work	Yes	34	48%
	No	36	52%
What presents more favourable professional prospects?	Vocational Training	7	10%
	Regular Academics	9	12%
	Both are equally beneficial	54	78%
When it comes to careers, skill training is superior than traditional academics.	Yes	48	67%
	No	2	3%
	Maybe	20	30%
Rate the level of instruction that is being enrolled in.	5 (Very Good)	10	15%
	4 (Good)	14	20%
	3 (Average)	10	15%
	2 (Poor)	10	15%

	1 (Very Poor)	26	35%
Do you know what soft skills are?	Yes	18	26%
	No	42	60%
	Maybe	10	14%
Ideal Place of Employment	Another Country	3	4%
	Anywhere in India	15	22%
	Anywhere in UP	29	42%
	Within District	23	32%
Once the course is over, the training centre will position you.	Yes	45	64%
	No	3	4%
	Maybe	22	32%
Rate: Training Centre's infrastructure state	5 (Very Good)	11	16%
	4 (Good)	15	21%
	3 (Average)	11	16%
	2 (Poor)	15	21%
	1 (Very Poor)	18	26%
Rate-The training centre's amenities, such as drinking water and sanitary facilities	5 (Very Good)	13	18%
	4 (Good)	15	22%
	3 (Average)	12	16%
	2 (Poor)	8	12%
	1 (Very Poor)	22	32%
Rate: Your course's trainer	5 (Very Good)	20	28%
	4 (Good)	11	16%
	3 (Average)	11	16%
	2 (Poor)	7	10%
	1 (Very Poor)	21	30%

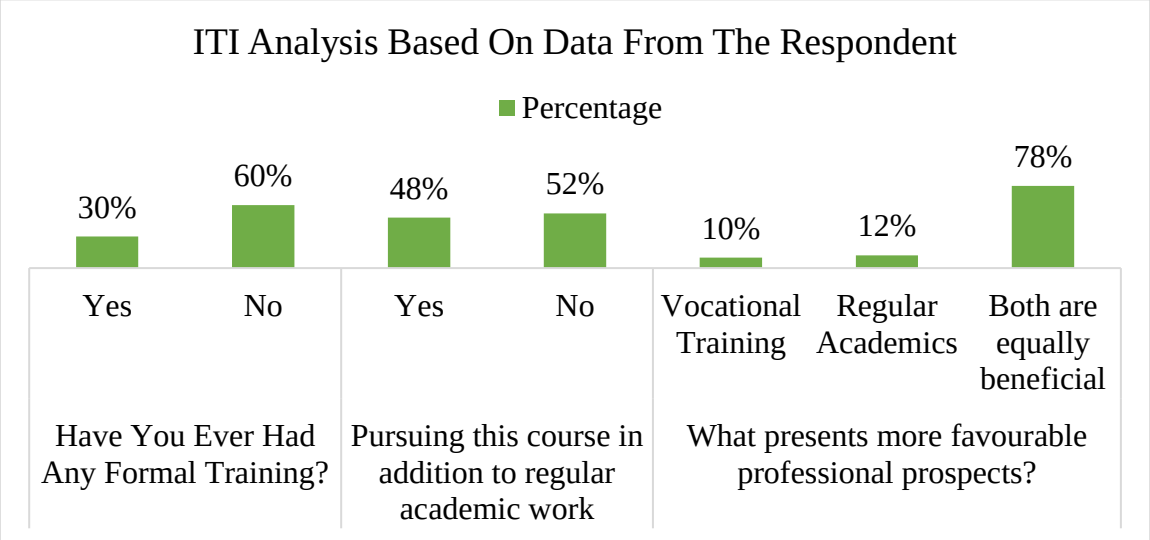

Figure 2: ITI Analysis Based On Data From The Respondent

30% of PMKVY applicants are vocationally trained. 55% of PMKVY members take academic and skill development courses. Most PMKVY candidates—72%—think academics and vocational training offer equal job prospects. A significant 68% of PMKVY candidates feel vocational training offers greater future prospects than academics. Only 6% disagree, showing candidates' strong support for vocational training's professional benefits. About 54% of respondents rate the programme "Very Good," indicating a pleasant experience.

Table 3: PMKVY Analysis From Respondent Data

Questions	Option	N=130	Percentage
Have You Ever Had Any Formal Training?	Yes	39	30 %
	No	91	70 %
Pursuing this course in addition to regular academic work	Yes	71	55 %
	No	59	45 %
What presents more favourable professional prospects?	Vocational Training	13	10 %
	Regular Academics	23	18 %
	Both are equally beneficial	94	72 %
When it comes to careers, skill training is superior than traditional academics.	Yes	88	68 %
	No	8	6 %
	Maybe	34	26 %
Rate the level of instruction that is being enrolled in.	5 (Very Good)	70	54 %
	4 (Good)	32	22 %
	3 (Average)	8	6 %
	2 (Poor)	10	8 %
	1 (Very Poor)	10	8 %
Do you know what soft skills are?	Yes	91	70 %
	No	15	12 %
	Maybe	24	18 %
Ideal Place of Employment	Another Country	3	2 %

	Anywhere in India	44	34 %
	Anywhere in UP	57	44 %
	Within District	26	20 %
Once the course is over, the training centre will position you.	Yes	99	76 %
	No	3	2 %
	Maybe	28	22 %
Rate: Training Centre's infrastructure state	5 (Very Good)	70	55 %
	4 (Good)	25	19 %
	3 (Average)	10	8 %
	2 (Poor)	13	10 %
	1 (Very Poor)	10	8 %
Rate-The training centre's amenities, such as drinking water and sanitary facilities	5 (Very Good)	90	62 %
	4 (Good)	22	16 %
	3 (Average)	6	4 %
	2 (Poor)	13	10 %
	1 (Very Poor)	11	8 %
Rate: Your course's trainer	5 (Very Good)	75	60 %
	4 (Good)	25	16 %
	3 (Average)	11	9 %
	2 (Poor)	6	5 %
	1 (Very Poor)	13	10 %

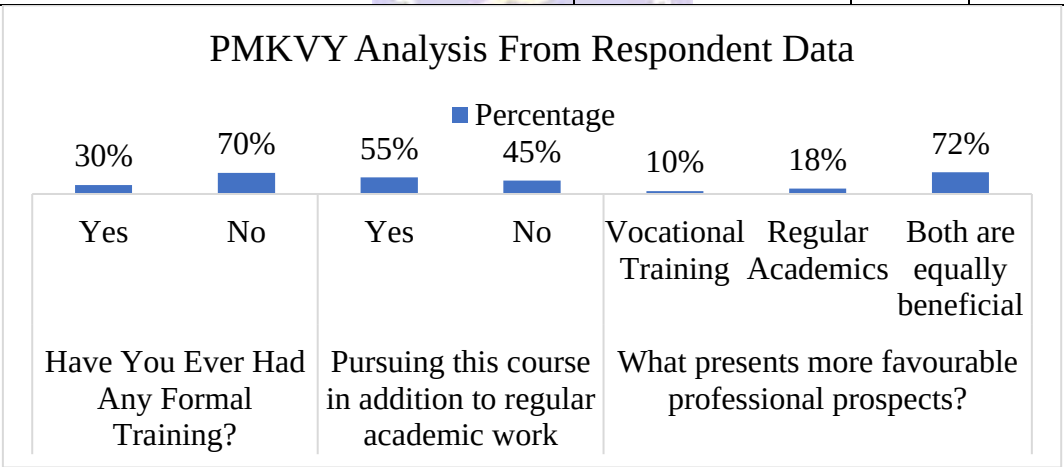

Figure 3: PMKVY Analysis From Respondent Data

About 8% rate the show "Very Poor." Soft skills are essential to employment, and 70% of PMKVY candidates have them. These vital abilities are unknown to 12%. 44% of PMKVY candidates desire to work anywhere in Uttar Pradesh, 20% in their district. Impressively, 76% believe the skill training institute will help them obtain jobs, meeting programme aims. For instance, 62% score facilities "Very Good," while 19% rate infrastructure "Good," suggesting improvement and investment. PMKVY candidates differ on trade, course, and job trainers. 60% say trainers are "Very Good," 10% "Very Poor."

5 CONCLUSION

The majority of students attending VHS did not have mature professional goals for the course of study that they were in the process of pursuing at school. For this reason, it is essential for teachers of vocational high school students to give students with career counselling, increase

students' career goals, and provide an understanding of the significance of having professional aspirations. This is especially crucial for students who are not yet developed enough to have mature job aspirations. India, as well as providing guidance to pupils in schools to determine their professional goals and the ways in which they can approach their lives after graduation. The topic of vocational training in India is investigated in depth in this article. It was discovered that everyone, regardless of their gender or background, is welcome to participate in these programmes. People of all ages, particularly younger people, are interested in participating in these programmes in order to advance their professions. In addition, the dissertation discovered that individuals have a variety of goals for themselves after completing the programme, ranging from obtaining jobs to launching their own enterprises. In order to improve the quality of these programmes, we need to exercise greater oversight over them and instruct them in soft skills such as communication. Additionally, as the New Education Policy recommends, it is a good idea to combine traditional academics with vocational training. In the grand scheme of things, this dissertation sheds light on the ways in which vocational training might serve to empower individuals in India. This document is a roadmap that will help you improve these programmes even further in the future.

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