

Risk Taking Behaviour and Career Choice among Youth Aspiring to be an Officer in Indian Armed Force

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ABSTRACT

Due to profusion of opportunities, varied trends of job market and perceived risk associated with career as Officer in Indian Armed force has made it unpopular and unattractive among many adolescents. Rapid economic growth and changing social norms in the society have certainly divided adolescents into aspirants and non-aspirants for this career choice. Career in armed force is characterised by its dynamic nature and pride associated with it. A study was carried out to investigate as whether risk taking behaviour has a role in aspiring to become armed force officer. Studies in past has revealed many factors affecting a career preference such as educational qualification, aptitude, intellect, father's occupation, interest and many more. In this study risk taking behaviour has been investigated between aspirants and non-aspirants. The result showed that aspirants have more risk taking behaviour than non-aspirants especially in fire and military services areas which demands more risk taking orientation.

Keywords: Behaviour, Career Choice, Youth, Indian Armed Force.

The aspiration of career is generally reflected by the stream of subject chosen by an individual after class tenth, which enables one to choose only bunch of careers after attainment of qualification or degree. The issue of career choice has been studied in past at length highlighting various factors affecting it. Each individual undergoing the process of making a career choice is influenced by such factors as the context in which they live, their personal aptitude, educational attainment, father's occupation, intellect and ability (Bandura et. al. 2001; Watson et. al. 2010; Pascual,N.T. 2014)

Making career choice in Indian armed force as an officer is one of the career in the multitude of option available which is unpopular and unattractive among many, despite that some found this career as their life time dream aspiration. Considering rapid changes in socio-economic aspects, job opportunities, fluctuating personal and institutional trends, publicity and dynamism in the

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Risk Taking Behaviour and Career Choice among Youth Aspiring to be an Officer in Indian Armed Force

Indian society, generally a bipolar choice for this career has been observed i.e. either aspirants or non-aspirants at all. This career choice is either aspired because of honour and pride associated with it or role of something else also play into it? It is either non-aspired because of mental and physical hardships involved or role of something else also play into it? Many aspect of personality can make an individual aspired or non-aspired to this career. Hence, a study with an objective was undertaken to determine the difference in risk taking behaviour in relation to aspiration towards the armed force career. A study by Rita, B & Thilagavathy, T (2015) on 800 graduate students found that risk taking behaviour was average among them.

Risk is product of the probability of an event occurring that may be viewed desirable or undesirable, and subjective or objective assessment of the expected or unexpected consequences from the event occurring, how much and in what way an outcome provides utility in terms of physically, socially, culturally or individually. Hence, risk is part of every Endeavour. It can be depicted as in following equation:

$$\text{Risk} = \text{Probability of an event} \times \text{Consequence} \times \text{Utility}$$

The genetic determinant (Zuckerman 1994a), gender differences (Weber, Blais, and Betz, 2002), and role of nurture (Booth & Nolen, 2008), in risk taking behaviour had been studied in detail. Some Indian studies had also been undertaken to explore the risk taking behaviour such as a study conducted on 250 male higher secondary students from Manipuri district, it was found that biographical factors (caste, locale and family type) do not affect the risk taking behaviour (Gupta & Chauhan, 2015). Similar results were reported by the study of Pandian & Ramachandran (2011).

Hypothesis

1. There will be no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in risk taking behaviour.
2. There will be no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in hill area of risk taking behaviour.
3. There will be no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in space area of risk taking behaviour.
4. There will be no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in sea area of risk taking behaviour.
5. There will be no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in commercial trade area of risk taking behaviour.
6. There will be no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in police and intelligence service area of risk taking behaviour.
7. There will be no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in fire area of risk taking behaviour.

Risk Taking Behaviour and Career Choice among Youth Aspiring to be an Officer in Indian Armed Force

8. There will be no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in professional trade area of risk taking behaviour.
9. There will be no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in military services area of risk taking behaviour.

METHOD

Sample

A sample of 108 subjects ranging between age of 18 to 22 years had taken the risk taking behaviour questionnaire. Fifty eight subjects were Indian Armed Force aspirants and fifty subjects were non-aspirants to join Indian Armed Force. Both groups of subject were from urban and middle socio-economic status. The aspirant subjects were who aspired to be an armed forces officer reported to services selection board to Bhopal centre and non-aspirants were also from Bhopal who were not at all or not willing in future to aspire for career as an officer in Indian armed force. We can differentiate between them as reported applicants and non willing applicants to this career. Both groups have been equated in terms of sex, age, socio-economic status, demographic and academic qualification.

Measure

Risk taking questionnaire (RTQ) developed by Sinha, V. & Arora, P.N. (1983) was used. This questionnaire has been designed to measure the extent of 'risk' taken by a particular individual in his personal as well as in his social life. Eight areas of risk were included in the test, which were considered to be the most important and affiliated of risk for Indian life. These areas were

- a) Hills.
- b) Space.
- c) Sea.
- d) Commercial trades.
- e) Police and intelligence service.
- f) Fire.
- g) Professional trades.
- h) Military service.

The risk taking questionnaire consists of 40 items (five items for each area). It takes about 30 minutes on an average to complete it. The answering of RTQ is based on a Five Point scale. The candidate was asked only to tick the category liked by him. The candidate was asked to "Tick 'very much' category, if he/she like very much the thing, mentioned in the particular item." In the same way tick out in the "much moderate 'less', and very less categories as one think fitness to oneself about the statement given in the item. In RTQ, the five leaning categories i.e. very much, much, moderate, less and very less carry the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 scores respectively. The sum of the scores in all the eight areas gives the total extent of risk-tendency in an individual. The RTQ is capable to sort out the risk-taking tendency in any one particular area. The maximum possible score in the tool was 200 and the minimum scores were 40 only. The reliability coefficient of the

Risk Taking Behaviour and Career Choice among Youth Aspiring to be an Officer in Indian Armed Force

questionnaire was found 0.79 for 14-20 years old urban male adolescents. The area wise reliability was also computed as following;

Reliability coefficients	Areas of risk taking questionnaire (urban male adolescents : 14 – 20 years old)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
r	.39	.58	.75	.75	.79	.56	.49	.63
p	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01

Procedure

Subjects who have appeared before services selection board at Bhopal centre were briefed about the study and consent was sought. Thereafter they were requested to complete the risk taking questionnaire in group testing. A checklist of career choice including armed force career was administered to the school students of Bhopal. The subject who does not opt armed force career option in the checklist form part in the second group i.e. non-aspirants to armed force career. After briefing them about the objective of the study and reassuring individually about fulfilling the criteria, risk taking questionnaire was individually administered to them. Subjects of both groups were assured about confidentiality of responses.

RESULT

The table 1 reveals that t value 2.54 for 103 df, the .05 level was 1.98 and .01 level was 2.63, since t value reached more than .05 level but less than .01 level, therefore the obtained mean difference was found significant at .05 level but not at .01 level. Thus null hypothesis was rejected implying that there was a significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in risk taking behaviour. The mean score of aspirants (161.21) was found higher than non-aspirants (153.8). The spread of scores from mean was more in non-aspirants (16.32) than aspirants (13.9).

Table 1

Risk Taking Behaviour	Career choice (Indian Armed Force)	N	Mean	S.D.	t	df	Level of significance	Null Hypothesis
Total	Aspirants	58	161.21	13.9	2.54	103	.05 Significant	Rejected
	Non-Aspirants	50	153.8	16.32				

Risk Taking Behaviour and Career Choice among Youth Aspiring to be an Officer in Indian Armed Force

From table 2, t test values for 103 df, the .05 level was 1.98 and .01 level was 2.63. The null hypotheses as stated that there was no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in 'fire and military services' areas of risk taking behaviour were rejected. The null hypotheses for the areas of risk taking behaviour namely, hills, space, sea, commercial trades, police intelligence services and professional trades (except fire and military services areas) were accepted, implying that there was no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants in 'hills, space, sea, commercial trades, police intelligence services and professional trades' areas of risk taking behaviour.

Table 2

S.No.	Areas of Risk Taking Behaviour	Aspirants (N = 50)		Non-Aspirants (N=58)		t value	df	Level of Significance	Null Hypothesis
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.				
1	Hills	19.63	3.42	19.22	2.65	0.7	103	.05 / NS	Accepted
2	Space	20.01	3.00	19.28	3.27	1.22	103	.05 / NS	Accepted
3	Sea	20.58	2.24	19.92	2.42	1.48	103	.05 / NS	Accepted
4	Commercial Trades	16.34	3.39	16.16	3.45	0.28	03	.05 / NS	Accepted
5	Police and Intelligence Service	20.70	2.62	19.64	3.77	1.72	103	.05 / NS	Accepted
6	Fire	20.43	2.33	19.44	2.76	2.02	103	.05 / Significant	Rejected
7	Professional Trades	20.60	2.63	19.40	3.90	1.90	103	.05 / NS	Accepted
8	Military Service	22.87	2.35	20.74	4.15	3.34	103	.01 / Significant	Rejected

NS – not significant

CONCLUSION

In this study we had aimed to investigate the role of risk taking behaviour in aspiring career to become an officer in Indian armed force. On the basis of results the three null hypotheses were rejected. Thus there was significant difference between two groups (Indian armed force career aspirants and non-aspirants) on risk taking behaviour both in total as well as its areas of risk taking behaviour, namely fire and military services. The mean of aspirants were found higher on risk taking behaviour both in total as well as 'fire and military services' areas of risk taking behaviour than non-aspirants. For remaining areas of risk taking behaviour namely, hills, space, sea, commercial trades, police intelligence services and professional trades, there were no significant difference between career choice as Indian Armed Force aspirants and non-aspirants.

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