

# Interrelationships among Communicative English Perception, Career Aspiration, and Self-Efficacy: A Correlational Study of Undergraduate Students in West Bengal

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the interrelationships among perception towards communicative English (PCE), career aspiration (CA), and self-efficacy (SE) among undergraduate students in West Bengal, India. Drawing on a sample of 639 students (186 male, 453 female) from 16 colleges across four districts, the research employed validated scales for PCE (44 items,  $\alpha = 0.887$ ), CA (37 items,  $\alpha = 0.919$ ), and SE (44 items,  $\alpha = 0.915$ ). Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among all three variables: PCE and CA ( $r = 0.503$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), PCE and SE ( $r = 0.492$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and CA and SE ( $r = 0.721$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). One-way ANOVA demonstrated significant effects of CA levels ( $F = 42.090$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and SE levels ( $F = 37.318$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) on PCE. Post-hoc comparisons showed significant differences between higher, middle, and lower levels of CA, while for SE, significant differences emerged between lower and middle, and lower and higher levels, but not between middle and higher levels. Regression analysis revealed that CA and SE jointly explained 35.5% of variance in PCE ( $R^2 = 0.355$ ,  $F = 63.634$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with CA ( $\beta = 0.265$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) showing stronger predictive power than SE ( $\beta = 0.153$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ). These findings demonstrate that students' perceptions of communicative English are significantly associated with their career aspirations and self-efficacy beliefs, with career aspirations emerging as the stronger predictor. The results underscore the need for integrated educational interventions addressing language perceptions, career development, and confidence building simultaneously.

**Keywords:** Communicative English, Career Aspiration, Self-Efficacy, Correlation, Regression Analysis, Undergraduate Students

## 1. Introduction

In the contemporary globalized educational landscape, communicative English proficiency, career aspirations, and self-efficacy represent three interconnected domains crucial for undergraduate students' academic success and professional preparedness. Communicative English—the ability to use English effectively for real-life communication—has become increasingly essential for accessing higher education resources, participating in global academic discourse, and securing employment opportunities (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Crystal, 2003). Career aspirations—individuals' desired professional goals and achievements—motivate academic engagement and guide educational choices (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Self-efficacy—beliefs in one's capability to organize and execute required actions—influences motivation, persistence, and performance across academic and career domains (Bandura, 1997).

While substantial research has examined these constructs individually, few studies have investigated their interrelationships holistically, particularly in the Indian context. Understanding how students' perceptions of communicative English relate to their career aspirations and self-efficacy beliefs is essential for designing integrated educational interventions that address multiple developmental needs simultaneously. Students who perceive communicative English positively may develop stronger career aspirations, recognizing language proficiency as a pathway to professional

opportunities. Conversely, students with strong self-efficacy may approach English learning with greater confidence and persistence, leading to more positive perceptions. Career aspirations and self-efficacy may mutually reinforce each other, with confident students setting higher goals and aspirational goals motivating confidence development.

This study addresses the research gap by systematically examining the interrelationships among perception towards communicative English (PCE), career aspiration (CA), and self-efficacy (SE) among undergraduate students in West Bengal, India.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the interrelationships among the three constructs. According to this theory, human functioning results from reciprocal interactions among personal factors (including cognitive and affective variables), behavioural patterns, and environmental influences. Self-efficacy beliefs—a key personal factor—influence behaviour (including language learning efforts and career exploration) and are simultaneously shaped by behavioural outcomes and environmental feedback.

Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) extends this framework specifically to career development, proposing that self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals interact to shape career-related interests, choices, and performances. Within SCCT, self-efficacy influences outcome expectations (beliefs about consequences of actions) and goal mechanisms (intentions to engage in particular activities), which in turn shape career aspirations and choices.

### **2.2 Empirical Evidence**

Research has documented positive relationships between language proficiency and self-efficacy. Wang and Sun's (2020) meta-analysis found moderate positive correlations between self-efficacy and language proficiency across diverse contexts, with effect sizes varying by cultural and educational factors. Ahamad and Abdullah (2019) reported significant relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and English language proficiency among Malaysian university students.

Studies have also linked language proficiency to career aspirations. Abbas et al. (2021) found that English proficiency was perceived as critical for global employment opportunities among Pakistani academics. Akther (2022) documented English's role in facilitating international education, global job prospects, and cross-cultural communication.

The relationship between career aspirations and self-efficacy is well-established in career development literature. Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994) posits self-efficacy as a primary determinant of career aspirations. Research consistently demonstrates that individuals with stronger self-efficacy set higher career goals and persist longer in pursuing them (Nwokolo & Christiana, 2021; Komarraju et al., 2014).

However, integrated studies examining all three constructs simultaneously remain scarce, particularly in the Indian context.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Participants**

The study employed a descriptive correlational design with 639 undergraduate students from 16 colleges across four districts of West Bengal (Nadia, North 24 Parganas, Purba Bardhaman, and Hooghly). The sample included 186 male and 453 female students, aged 21-23 years, from Arts (n=513) and Science (n=126) streams, representing rural (n=184) and urban (n=455) areas.

### **3.2 Instruments**

**Perception towards Communicative English (PCE) Scale:** A 44-item validated scale ( $\alpha = 0.887$ ) comprising four dimensions: Cognitive Perception (17 items), Affective Perception (13 items),

Behavioural Perception (9 items), and Confidence in English Communication (5 items). Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale.

**Career Aspiration (CA) Scale:** A 37-item validated scale ( $\alpha = 0.919$ ) comprising three dimensions: Achievement and Leadership Aspiration (14 items), Educational and Professional Growth Aspiration (13 items), and Financial and Prestige Aspiration (10 items). Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale.

**Self-Efficacy (SE) Scale:** A 44-item validated scale ( $\alpha = 0.915$ ) comprising three dimensions: Personal Competence and Confidence (16 items), Persistence and Resilience (15 items), and Adaptability and Problem Solving (13 items). Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Pearson product-moment correlation examined relationships among PCE, CA, and SE. One-way ANOVA assessed effects of CA and SE levels on PCE, with Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons. Multiple regression analysis evaluated the combined and independent contributions of CA and SE to predicting PCE. Assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were verified prior to analysis.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

Mean scores were: PCE ( $M = 134.52$ ,  $SD = 37.37$ ), CA ( $M = 116.79$ ,  $SD = 28.70$ ), and SE ( $M = 114.69$ ,  $SD = 31.68$ ). All variables showed approximately normal distributions with skewness and kurtosis within acceptable ranges.

### **4.2 Correlational Analysis**

**PCE and CA:** A significant positive correlation emerged between PCE and CA ( $r = 0.503$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating moderate relationship strength. Students with more positive perceptions of communicative English tended to report higher career aspirations.

**PCE and SE:** A significant positive correlation emerged between PCE and SE ( $r = 0.492$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), also indicating moderate relationship strength. Students with more positive perceptions of communicative English tended to report stronger self-efficacy beliefs.

**CA and SE:** A strong positive correlation emerged between CA and SE ( $r = 0.721$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating substantial relationship strength. Students with higher career aspirations tended to report considerably stronger self-efficacy beliefs.

All correlations were statistically significant at the 0.01 level, leading to rejection of null hypotheses of no relationship.

### **4.3 Effect of Career Aspiration Levels on PCE**

One-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in PCE scores across CA levels ( $F = 42.090$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed:

- Higher CA (138-188) vs. Middle CA (96-137): Mean difference = 18.67 ( $p < 0.001$ )
- Higher CA vs. Lower CA (46-95): Mean difference = 33.24 ( $p < 0.001$ )
- Middle CA vs. Lower CA: Mean difference = 14.57 ( $p < 0.001$ )

All pairwise comparisons were statistically significant, indicating that PCE scores increased systematically with CA levels.

### **4.4 Effect of Self-Efficacy Levels on PCE**

One-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in PCE scores across SE levels ( $F = 37.318$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed:

- Higher SE (138-217) vs. Middle SE (116-137): Mean difference = 8.65 ( $p = 0.284$ , non-significant)
- Higher SE vs. Lower SE (44-115): Mean difference = 27.75 ( $p < 0.001$ )
- Middle SE vs. Lower SE: Mean difference = 19.10 ( $p < 0.001$ )

Significant differences emerged between lower SE and both middle and higher SE groups, but not between middle and higher SE groups.

#### **4.5 Regression Analysis**

Multiple regression analysis examined the combined and independent contributions of CA and SE to predicting PCE. The regression model was significant ( $F = 63.634$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with CA and SE jointly explaining 35.5% of variance in PCE ( $R^2 = 0.355$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.355$ ).

Unstandardized coefficients revealed:

- $PCE = 66.170 + 0.265(CA) + 0.153(SE) + 5.023$

Standardized coefficients showed that CA ( $\beta = 0.265$ ,  $t = 3.211$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) had stronger predictive power than SE ( $\beta = 0.153$ ,  $t = 1.860$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), though both contributed significantly.

### **5. Discussion**

#### **5.1 Interrelationships among Constructs**

The significant positive correlations among all three constructs support theoretical predictions from Social Cognitive Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory. The moderate PCE-CA correlation ( $r = 0.503$ ) suggests that students' perceptions of communicative English meaningfully relate to their career aspirations, consistent with research documenting English proficiency as a gateway to employment opportunities (Abbas et al., 2021; Akther, 2022).

The moderate PCE-SE correlation ( $r = 0.492$ ) aligns with meta-analytic findings linking language proficiency to self-efficacy (Wang & Sun, 2020). This relationship likely operates bidirectionally: positive perceptions and successful English experiences build self-efficacy, while confident students approach English learning with greater persistence and engagement.

The strong CA-SE correlation ( $r = 0.721$ ) provides robust support for Social Cognitive Career Theory's central proposition that self-efficacy beliefs substantially influence career aspirations (Lent et al., 1994). This finding suggests that confidence in one's capabilities is closely tied to the goals one sets for professional achievement.

#### **5.2 Differential Effects of CA and SE on PCE**

The systematic increase in PCE across CA levels (all pairwise comparisons significant) indicates that career aspirations relate consistently to communicative English perceptions. Students with higher career goals may recognize more clearly the instrumental value of English proficiency, leading to more positive perceptions. Alternatively, positive English perceptions may enable students to envision and pursue higher career aspirations.

The non-significant difference between middle and higher SE groups in PCE suggests a threshold effect: once students achieve moderate self-efficacy, further increases may not translate directly into improved English perceptions. This finding implies that interventions targeting the lowest self-efficacy students may yield greatest returns for improving English perceptions.

#### **5.3 Predictive Model**

The regression model's explanation of 35.5% variance in PCE indicates substantial predictive power while acknowledging that other factors—including prior English achievement, instructional quality, and socio-cultural variables—also influence English perceptions. CA's stronger predictive power ( $\beta = 0.265$ ) compared to SE ( $\beta = 0.153$ ) suggests that career considerations may be particularly salient

in shaping students' English perceptions at the undergraduate level, when career decisions become increasingly imminent.

## **6. Implications**

**For Educational Practice:** The interconnectedness of PCE, CA, and SE suggests that interventions targeting any single construct may positively influence others. Language programmes should explicitly connect English learning to career opportunities, enhancing both perceptions and aspirations. Career counselling should address self-efficacy development alongside goal setting. Confidence-building activities should emphasize English communication as a domain for mastery experiences.

**For Curriculum Design:** Undergraduate curricula should integrate language development, career exploration, and confidence-building activities. English courses could incorporate career-related content and assignments. Career development programmes could include language proficiency components. Co-curricular activities should provide opportunities for successful English communication experiences that build self-efficacy.

**For Counselling Services:** Students with low English perceptions, weak career aspirations, or poor self-efficacy should be identified early and provided integrated support addressing all three domains simultaneously, leveraging their interconnections for maximum impact.

**For Policy Development:** Educational policies should recognize the interdependence of language proficiency, career development, and psychological factors, supporting comprehensive rather than fragmented interventions.

## **7. Limitations and Future Research**

The cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences about directionality among variables. Longitudinal research tracking changes over time could illuminate developmental sequences and causal pathways. Additionally, the study's focus on West Bengal limits generalizability; comparative research across Indian states would be valuable.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study demonstrates significant interrelationships among perception towards communicative English, career aspiration, and self-efficacy among undergraduate students in West Bengal. The findings support theoretical predictions from Social Cognitive Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory while providing empirical evidence for integrated educational interventions addressing these interconnected domains. Strengthening any of these three constructs may positively influence the others, suggesting synergistic approaches to student development.

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