

## Career Choice In Relation To Various Demographical Variables of Secondary School Students.

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### Abstract

*Career choice is an exploratory course in every student's life which introduces students to a broad range of career opportunities. Students have to consider various factors before arriving at a decision. Some students know exactly what course to pursue while others do not know which one will get them there. As a matter of fact, due to the availability of large number of courses offered to students, most of them find themselves switching majors. The importance of choosing and selecting a particular degree as well as courses available is a vital and crucial part for every student as it is the building block of future success. Students need to be having extensive information about the path they will be taking to help them prepare for their career path. However there are some factors that draw their influence on children at the time of making choice for opting career. An inappropriate career choice directs all individual efforts and resources into a wrong direction. A model for career choice should be proposed through which teachers, advisers, counselors and parents use in determining career. This paper shed light on various factors that influence the career selection choice of the student at secondary school level and create a possible alignment between their preferences and the institution's curriculum and offerings.*

**Key words:** *Career Choice, Gender, Media, Parental influence.*

### INTRODUCTION

Career choice is one of the biggest dilemma and challenge in any student's life. It involves interplay of many factors which are intricately intertwined. Career choice is a critical aspect of an individual's life. Career chosen determines the role pattern need to be played by the individual in the society in the future (Patton and McMahon, 2014). Every student at a certain juncture in their life has to make a choice regarding their career. The influence of career choice has a lasting impact on an individual. It serves to be a predictor and determinant of their prospective level of income, nature of work and consequently leaves a mark on the personality, behavior and outlook of an individual. One major challenge student's face is to match their career choices with their abilities and academic performance (Korir and Wafula, 2012). According to (Eick,2002) understanding the reasons that lead to the choice of career is important because that decision establishes expectations for one's future and may affect one's satisfaction with the career. Thus one wrong decision can change the fate of an individual. It is difficult for everyone to make a decision regarding their career. Career selection is one of many important choices students will make in determining future plans. This decision will impact them throughout their lives. The essence of who the student is will revolve around what the student wants to do with their life-long work. Thus, it is difficult for everyone to make a decision regarding their career. Every student

carries the unique history of their past and this determines how they view the world. That history created, in part by the student's environment, personality, and opportunity, will determine how students make career choices. Today, one has not only to make due career planning but also exhaustive career research before making a career choice so as to adjust with the evolving socio-economic conditions (Wattles, 2009). Career choice is influenced by multiple factors including personality, interests, self concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and financial (Kerka, 2000). State that each individual undertaking the process is influenced by several factors including the context in which they live in, their personal aptitudes, social contacts and educational attainment (Bandura et al., 2001). (Hewitt, 2010) posit that factors influencing career choice can either be intrinsic, extrinsic or both. Hewitt further states that most people are influenced by careers that their parents favour, others follow careers that their educational choices have opened for them, some choose to follow their passion regardless of how much or little it will make them while others choose the careers that give high income. There is a need to provide the adolescent with a clear, comprehensible and widely-recognised climbing-frame for lifelong career development (Walters, Watts, & Flederman, 2009). Ginzberg (1951) discusses various steps in behavior change and the thought process of a person while choosing his/her career. He argues that till the age of 11 individuals live in fantasy world regarding their career selection. At this stage they frequently change career selection without analyzing the skills sets, educational background, training requirements and economic factors they possessed. He further claims that youngsters between 12 to 18 years are tentative about career selection. The third and final stage is the called realization of career selection, where individual begin to focus logically and pragmatically about career and indulge in exploration and crystallization about career. Lindholm (2004) argues career counselor's diagnosis and individual active role during assessment process and clarity of self-concept are important factors in career selection.

#### **Various Demographic variables influencing career choice:**

**Parents' Influence as Factor in Children Career Selection:** Parents serve as a major influence in their children's career development and career decision- making. Parents want their children to find happiness and success in life. Research indicates that when children feel supported and loved by their parents, they have more confidence in their own ability to search careers and to choose a career that would be interesting and exciting. This is important because studies show that adolescents who feel competent regarding career decision-making, tend to make more satisfying career choices later in life. (Keller 2004). Every individual wishes to adopt a profession of his/her own preference; choosing a future career is the right of every human being. Unfortunately, not everyone is afforded this freedom of choice. Children are forced, either by their parents or their financial conditions, to pursue a feasible line of work, one that is more fruitful at an early stage or will preserve or increase respect among family. Below are some reasons which highlight how parents draw their influence or what compels children to opt for particular career:

- Right from birth it is parents that provide care, nourish and serve as a model for their young ones. If our parents have successful careers and live a good comfortable life, it is likely that rather than trying to pursue any other career, most of the parents force their

children to follow their footsteps and pick up from where they have left off. Even if our parents have not been successful in their careers, it is their life which serves as a lesson to us, encouraging us not to make the same mistakes which they have made in their careers.

- Parent's expectation does serve as a major influence when an individual chooses a career. What parents do not realize that they should allow their children to have dreams and visions of their own. Parent's expectations often become a major burden for their children. Those individuals who are unable to fulfill their parents expectations often go through life feeling both depressed and inadequate.
- Many parents especially some conservative ones, will never let their children follow their own heart when it comes to picking a career. They will make it a point to try and force the child to pick a line which they approve of. In the last 10 years, there are many new courses and career possibilities which have come up, which many parents might not even be aware of. It is for this reason that even if the line is very promising the parents are very disapproving of such careers. A parents attitude does influence a person's career pick, especially since all of us want to make our parents feel proud.
- Based upon the kind of education which parents provide to their children influence somehow their career choice. If parents provide their children with a poor education, then it is unlikely that the person concerned will have a promising career. Parents want their children to do well in their career as well as in life, make it a point to give their children a good education. The school you go to and the friends you make at school do play a major role when it comes to helping you make a career choice.
- Parents do have a major influence when it comes to the career which their children pick, this is in terms of the fact that if parents instill their children with many positive skills and qualities, then that automatically enables their child to pick a promising career line. If an individual knows that he is lacking in skill and ability he will naturally opt for a less glamorous job option which he knows will suit his own personality and upbringing. For example, if a parent trains the child from a very young age to argue in a sensible and logical manner, it is likely that the child will grow up with the quality of reasoning and debating.

**Gender Influence on Career Choice:** Whether we would agree to it or not, gender too has a major influence on our career choice. Around the world there are various gender stereotypes at play and from a very young age we are encouraged and even trained to adhere to these gender stereotypes whether we like it or not. Girls are always advised by elders to take up such subject which would help them to equalise both personal and professional life. For that nursing and teaching are considered best for females, as they have to ultimately take care of their homes and children. Because of this, teaching has always been seen a profession most suitable for girls. Teaching also becomes favorite profession by some family because of its timing. Teachers come back by afternoon and can take care of their household and perform all chores. Thus, it is the only profession which goes highly amongst the prospective groom's family if their would be daughter in law is a teacher. These notions just creating more and more gender biases. These thoughts are killing the dreams and aspirations of girls. Girls are multi talented and much more capable but just because they have to got married and bear children; they should take up this profession if at all

they want to work after marriage. Teaching is certainly a good profession but girls should be given more choices. They can do much more than that.

- **Media as Factor in Students' Career Selection:** Mass Media especially television, newspapers and social media websites, is frequently been used by youth to seek information regarding various professions, job market and knowledge about the world around them. Television is one of the important sources of occupational information for youth because it regularly portrays work-related activities of fictional characters. Trujillo and Ekdom (1987) argued that Television plays vital role in teaching us about occupations that are socially valued in America (p. 369).
- **Socio – Economic conditions:** Parents' have also restricted children to select the careers of their choices. Our individual family situations and demands do influence our children career choices in a number of ways, one of the major ways in which it does so is pertaining to the large size of family. If, for example, you have four kids and you are a single working parent, it is unlikely that you will be able to provide that facilities which you as a parent can provide, having small family size. Things like this do influence our career choices whether consciously or unconsciously. Our family situation in general, does play a major role as far as our career related choices are concerned. For many individuals across the globe, they are made to pick a field, simply on the basis of how much money they need to make two ends meet on the family front. It often happens that many individuals who desire to choose unconventional career fields like photography, dancing, singing, painting or even writing might be unable to follow their dreams because they know that such career lines do not always pay well. At such a time they rather focus their energies choosing a field which will enable them to provide for their family. Ushure (2014) indicated that limited finances available to students will affect them negatively in their preferences of profession selection. Their desires to become specialist in renowned fields like engineering, doctorate etc. would be restricted by the availability of finances to them. He also argued that in some cases even the children who belong to low status. families' ends up entering in high status professions despite their high cost. This is because their parents want them to enjoy those aspects of life that they have missed out due to their insufficient wealth. Poverty and income constraints hinder their way of career success so these opportunities in various forms help them in shaping their career path.
- **Personal choice** (skills and Abilities) – Considering your skills and abilities and how they may fit a particular occupation comes out of one of the earliest career development fields, [Trait-Factor](#) theories, and is still used today. These theories recommend creating occupational profiles for specific jobs as well as identifying individual differences, matching individuals to occupations based on these differences. You can identify activities you enjoy and those in which you have a level of competency though a formal assessment. As the interest in the subject is found as the dominant factor, which is area of specialization, they should be guided and prevent from selecting the wrong profession. A career plan would help students to feel contented in their job, which will directly leads to satisfaction.
- **Culture** – Racial and ethnic background, as well as the culture of an individual's regional area, local community, may impact career decisions. Our culture often shapes our values

and expectations as they relate to many parts of our lives, including jobs and careers. Multicultural career counseling has emerged as a specialized field to take these influences into consideration when counseling clients and students. We can't attribute the predominant characteristics of a culture to any one of its individuals, but having an awareness of the values and expectations of our culture may help us understand how we make our career choices.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A career decision is undoubtedly the most crucial choice in any students' life as the new and emerging careers and existing prestigious preferences pose a challenge in making these decisions more complicated. Moreover, it requires a balance between the freedom given to the students to make an independent decision, and counseling on behalf of the parents and teachers, to share their insight and experience. Exerting pressure and dictatorial attitude may demotivate the students and also lower their performance. The types of jobs that might be relevant to their interests, skills or aspirations should be discussed in a democratic way to avoid problems. Students should choose the career which is according to their ability, capabilities and of their interest. In this decision, the school should help the student by making centre's of counseling for students. Both parents and teachers can motivate children so that they become part of that very particular event. Thus students easily understand which career is best for them. Student aptitude and interest should never be undermined in choosing a career path.
- It is highly recommended that parents should not force their children to adopt the career of their (parents) choice, and if there are serious reasons like financial constraints, then proper counseling should be practiced at initial stages to avoid unfavorable incidents.
- Support is needed from professional instructors and reputed institutes to lead and orient the students on the latest emerging trends, new areas of interest and its impact, to channelize the students' interest in the proper direction and make multiple interest areas available to them for making better career choices. It is also important to consider the personality type and intrinsic factors of the student while advising them on their career choice preferences because their future performance and success is directly impacted by these factors, and mismatch of the career choice with the personality could be fateful and can lead to disastrous consequences.
- It is also recommended career awareness or career exploration should begin as early as possible because it helps decision making and offer insight into children interests, needs and values and gives a pathway in choosing right kind of career. In this way what is hidden or special talent in child can properly channelized.

### **CONCLUSION**

Making a career choice is a defining stage in every student's life. Students have to consider several factors before arriving at a decision. The study reveals that role of parents, teachers and school counselors is essential when it comes to career choices. It also reveals that the youth is impressionable, and gets impressed by media when it comes to choosing a career. This study shows that parent's profession, mass media, gender and socio-economic conditions play important role in the selection of the career and unleash the untapped talent of students. It validates that parent's profession has strong and direct influence on student's career choice. Similarly,

economic condition has also strong association with career selection of students. Moreover, mass media has also draw an impressionable influence on career selection of students both directly and indirectly. In addition, all factors including parent's profession, mass media, gender and personal choice have mutual influence on career choice of students as well. Therefore, this study concludes that the factors like parent's profession, mass media, gender and socio-economic conditions not only influence the student's career choices individually but collectively as well.

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