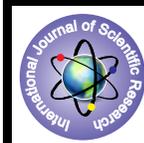


A Study on Factors That Influence Career Aspirations and Preferences Among Undergraduate Management Students



MANAGEMENT

KEYWORDS : career choice, career expectation and involvement, career success

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ABSTRACT

The Study tries to explore the factors having an impact on career choice of respondents, the influence of parents' qualification and occupation on students' career expectations, the level of career involvement among undergraduate management students and the factor perceived as career success by these students. Descriptive statistical tools and Henry Garret Ranking techniques are used for analysis of the obtained data and the results are presented.

INTRODUCTION:

Career choices and career aspirations are not novel terms and concepts. Much has been said and done on the concept of career preferences of individuals. As per social class theory (Armstrong, Howe & Weaver, 1977), the relationship between educational and career aspirations is a function of social class which implies that individuals in the lower class have higher aspirations than those in the higher social class. Social mobility test (Sewell, 1970; and Saleh, 1986) claims that career aspiration is an outcome of geographical factor where students from urban areas have stronger motivation to attain higher education and growth than students from rural areas. Past studies on this topic reveal that career aspirations are associated with parents' education and occupation, their encouragement, peer plans and personal interest.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Several studies show that new students all over the world are usually faced with the dilemma in making a career choice decision in their lives (Bandura et al. 2001; Cherian 1991; Issa and Nwalo 2008; Macgregor 2007; McMahan and Watson 2005; Watson et al. 2010). In most cases, the choice of careers, subjects, and courses of study and the subsequent career paths to follow are a nightmare for prospective undergraduate students (Issa and Nwalo 2008).

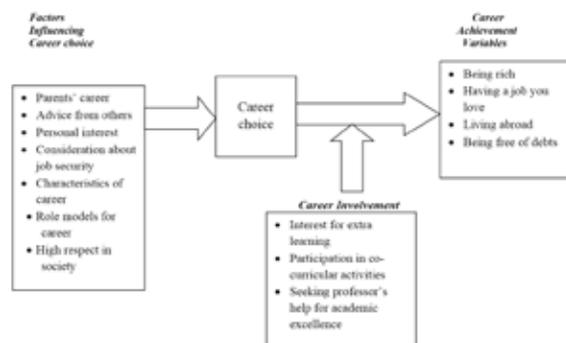
In their study of socio-demographic factors that anchor career choice among psychology students in South Africa, Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012) found that the participants who attended rural-situated public schools made delayed career decisions. The same study also found that participants were mainly influenced by parents, teachers and friends to choose psychology as a career. Mau and Bikos (2000) cited previous findings showing a positive association between a family's socio-economic status and aspirations. Youth from higher socio-economic statuses were more likely to be knowledgeable of and choose professional occupations (Sellers et al., 1999). In contrast, Brown and Barbosa (2001) found career aspirations of young females who came from low-income families were confined to experiences of their relatives and friends. Influential siblings are thought to play a key role in the career development of adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Ali, McWhirter, & Chronister, 2005).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To obtain the demographic profile of undergraduate management students and their parents' characteristics.
- To find out the most significant factor influencing a student's career choice.
- To identify the students' expectations out of their career in relation to their parents' educational qualification and occupation.
- To examine the students commitment towards their chosen career.

- To find out what a student perceives as success in his career.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research design: The present study followed a **descriptive design**, where efforts have been made to explore the factors influencing career choices, the students' involvement in the chosen career and their perception of career achievement

Sampling design:

Population: All the undergraduate management students of Hindusthan College of arts and science, Coimbatore (a strength of 300)

Sample size: The Sample size for the study was 60 respondents

Sampling technique: Purposive and Convenience sampling which are non-probability sampling methods are used.

Research Instrument and data collection methods: Data was collected by primary sources. Primary data was collected through structured undisguised questionnaire which was filled by the management students.

Analysis tools: Data collected was analyzed by using various descriptive statistical tools like frequency distribution, simple percentage analysis, mean and average. Also Henry Garret's ranking technique has been used for analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS:

Table No.1 Demographic Profile of respondents

S.No.	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
I	Gender		
	Male	48	79.68%
	Female	12	20.32%
	Total	60	100

II	Area		
	City	30	49.8%
	Sub-urban	21	34.86%
	Rural	09	15.34%
	Total	60	100
III	Father's Educational qualification		
	Less than high school	11	18.26%
	High school	20	33.2%
	Higher Secondary	11	18.26%
	Under graduation	13	21.58%
	Post graduation	04	6.64%
	None of these	01	2.06%
	Total	60	100
IV	Mother's Educational qualification		
	Less than high school	09	14.94%
	High school	23	38.18%
	Higher Secondary	14	23.24%
	Under graduation	10	16.6%
	Post graduation	03	4.98%
	None of these	01	2.06%
	Total	60	100
V	Father's Occupation		
	Self Employed	12	19.92%
	Monthly employee	15	24.9%
	Daily Wage	07	11.62%
	Business	19	31.94%
	A professional	07	11.62%
	Total	60	100
VI	Mother's Occupation		
	Self Employed	03	4.98%
	Monthly employee	10	16.6%
	Daily Wage	04	6.64%
	Business	02	3.32%
	A professional	03	4.98%
	A Home Maker	38	63.48%
	Total	60	100

Table No.2 Factors influencing choice of a career

S. No	Factors	Frequency				Total
		Ex-tremely 4	To some extent 3	Not much 2	Not at all 1	
1	Personal interest	37	14	04	05	60
2	Advice from others (Parents, relatives etc.,)	16	16	10	18	60
3	Considerations about job security	13	21	22	04	60
4	Characteristics of the course/ career	20	27	11	02	60
5	High respect from the society	29	17	10	04	60
6	Role models in the field	21	13	13	13	60

The table no.2 reveals that personal interest has extremely influenced choice of career among respondents. Advice from others has influenced one fourth of the respondents extremely and another one fourth of them to some extent in opting a career. Considerations about job security did not influence career choice of many and one third of the respondents were extremely considerate about the characteristics of the course/career. A close to half the respondents considered 'high respect from the society' an important factor while deciding on career choice. Role models in the chosen field have also extremely influenced the career choice of one third of the respondents.

Table No.3 Mean Scores for Career Expectations Construct in relation to Parents' characteristics

S.No.	Father's Qualification	Mean Scores	S.No	Mother's Qualification	Mean Scores
1	Less than high school	21.27	1	Less than high school	22.5
2	High school	22.75	2	High school	23.08
3	Higher Secondary	24	3	Higher Secondary	23.78
4	Under graduation	24.07	4	Under graduation	24.1
5	Post graduation	24.75	5	Post graduation	24.6
6	None of these	21	6	None of these	20

S.No.	Father's Occupation	Mean Scores	S.No.	Mother's Occupation	Mean Scores
1	Self Employed	23.25	1	Self Employed	23
2	Monthly employee	24.26	2	Monthly employee	24
3	Daily Wage	22.625	3	Daily Wage	21.5
4	Business	22.85	4	Business	23.5
5	A professional	23.8	5	A professional	23.3
			6	A Home Maker	23.44

From the table no.3, it is inferred that highest mean scores for career expectations construct were noticed among respondents whose parents were well qualified and occupational status of parents has an impact on the mean scores for career expectations among respondents. Respondents whose father's occupation and mother's occupation were monthly employees had the highest career expectation score.

Table No.4 Career Involvement Scores with Frequencies

S.No.	Labels for average Scores	Average Scores for career involvement construct	Frequency
1.	Least Involvement	1-5	07
2.		6-10	23
3.		11-15	23
4.	Highest Involvement	16-20	07
		Total	60

Considering the average scores for career involvement construct, exactly half of the respondents had scores less than 10 and the rest had scores higher than 10. Majority of the respondents possessed moderate levels of career involvement.

Table No.5 Factors considered as career achievement (Henry Garret's ranking technique)

Ranks Scale		I	II	III	IV	V	Total	Mean scores	Rank
S. no.	Factors	75	60	50	39	24			
1	Being rich enough not to work	F 4 fx 300	2 120	10 500	20 780	24 576	2276	37.93	V
2	Owning an own car and house	F 7 fx 525	19 1140	19 950	14 546	01 24	3185	53.08	II
3	Having a job I love	F 29 fx 2175	18 1080	05 250	06 234	02 48	3787	63.11	I
4	Living abroad	F 10 fx 750	08 480	14 700	11 429	17 408	2767	46.11	IV
5	Being free of debt	F 10 fx 750	13 780	12 300	09 351	16 384	2865	47.75	III
Total		60	60	60	60	60			

F=No. of respondents Fx=Score

The above table reveals the factors that the respondents considered as career achievement. 'Having a Job I love' was ranked as the first factor of career achievement followed by 'Owning a car and house' and 'Being free of debt' in the second and third places. 'Living abroad' and 'being rich enough not to work' were only the last two factors of career achievement as per the respondents' perception.

CONCLUSION:

From the study it could be concluded that most of the respondents were from city and majority of the respondents' parents' qualification was high school. The most significant factors influencing career choice were personal interest and the respect the career will fetch from the society. Students of well qualified parents had higher career expectations. Respondents whose parents were monthly employees had higher career expectation scores. The level of career involvement among these undergraduate management students was found to be moderate. Having a job that they love is considered to be career success by most of the respondents.

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