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# **Job Preference and Factors Influencing Job Choice Among Public University Students: A Cross-Sectional Study at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Today, most of the students at the university level are facing career-related problems in the form of either career indecision or the wrong decision. For university-level students' career preference is a crucial issue. Being successful in life depends on making the appropriate career decision. This study aims to identify the recent trends of job preferences and elements influencing job desire and how family, friends, and peer relationships affect students' preferences for choosing a career. A survey was carried out at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) with regular students of 4th year and Masters; with a sample size of 272. An interview schedule was used to carry out the survey. In order to acquire a better understanding and more knowledge about the research, some material was gathered through in-person interviews. Using stratified simple random sampling technique, respondents were chosen from four faculties of the University. The study revealed that there is no discernible difference between the genders in terms of preferred careers, but there is a difference in faculty and family status. BCS and first-class government jobs are the preferred career fields for 116 out of 272 students (42.6%). The respondents' hesitation to seek employment in the small- and medium-sized business and non-profit sectors was also discovered. The main drivers of these professional choices are that today's graduates place a high importance on monetary rewards, social status, and public acknowledgement, in addition to power and authority. Furthermore, the current BCS test system attracts students more due to job stability and transparency in the hiring process. The interest of young people in working in banks has recently increased due to the emergence of private and foreign banks. The primary factors luring these graduates into these industries are the excellent compensation packages. This study recommends that more market-driven, practical, and relevant courses should be developed by the university.

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**Key words:** Job Preference, Job Choice, Career Preference, Public University, Bangladesh.

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## **1.Introduction**

A person's profession preference is an example of a choice in life that can lead to the finest position he will ever be in. Students with talent travel from all around the nation to attend universities. They hold the nation's and society's hopes as well as the future of their own families. Furthermore, their job choices and contributions to society and the country will have a significant impact on their future prospects. The future that these students envision for themselves is clear. But it is vital for everybody to pick a profession that would enable them to attain their desired objectives. Actually, what we understand by "career" is the job or profession through which we earn our income. "Career preference" refers to the ability to select the profession in which you want to work. For university-level students' personal lives, career preference is also a crucial issue. These kids have a heavy burden on their shoulders, and one day, their earnings will help them support their families. Making the appropriate job decision, which will guarantee a stable future, is part of that obligation. Being successful in life depends on making the appropriate career decision, but it's not always simple. Many different elements can have an impact on a university student's decision to pursue a job.

One turns to his friends and family for advice when he is having trouble deciding on a career. He or she is perplexed since they are unable to make their own selections. Therefore, learning what fields our university students are most interested in pursuing as jobs is of major relevance. Numerous factors influence why students prefer and select careers in particular fields. After some time, individuals grow dissatisfied and leave their jobs. They then look for work in a different field that has nothing to do with their education or prior work experience. The goal of this study is to identify the variables influencing job preferences and how friends, family, and peers influence students' preferences for career choices.

### ***1.1 Review of Literature***

Choosing a career is one of the most difficult decisions someone will ever make. One of the main objectives of career counseling is to assist people in making career decisions and so enhance the quality of their outcomes. (Gati and Tal, 2008). A preference is the decision to choose something over other options, whereas a career is a broad course or progression made by someone who receives training in a certain occupation for the duration of their working life. It is the ability to decide what you want or what is best for you in terms of career options, sources of income, and learning and development chances. "Career preferences" are a person's choices and aspirations for their ideal career.

Many researchers have worked with the factors related to career choice. The educational institutions play a vital role in the choice of one's career. Like parents the impact of teachers is also noteworthy. Anana and Nique (2010) stressed on the importance of personal values in career choice. The nature of emotional, personality and lifestyle preferences (Gati et al., 2011) are also important elements for career choice. (Kabir and Sajib, 2014) also illustrated the impact of personality traits in career choice of some undergraduate business students of public and private universities in Bangladesh. Social Status and Gender stereotypes (Wilgosh, 2002) were also discussed by some of the scholars.

The influence of relationships is immense for the choice of career. Guardians, siblings, friends, relatives, teachers and peer groups can greatly influence career selection process. Many studies have been conducted in this regard. Parental occupation (Stone & Wang, 1990) influences children's career choice. Likewise, highly educated parents can guide children about their career decisions, (Jones & Larke, 2001). Parents' education and their occupation also motivate their children about what career to choose, Monica and Kate (2005). In the same way (Mickelson and Velasco, 1998) found that mothers had the most influential part in the selection of their daughters' career. The outcomes of studies conducted by (Allen & Katz, 1995) suggested that both monetary and non-monetary rewards strongly influence career selection process. On the other hand, (Eddy et al., 2008) were unable to identify influence of people in career decisions. Respondents denied the impact of family members on their career choice in a study conducted by (Suan, Mat and Im, 2012).

A study was conducted by Ahmed et al. (2022) to identify career preferences and factors influencing future career choices among undergraduate pharmacy students. A cross-sectional study was carried out at the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Khartoum. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from randomly selected participants. Out of 220 respondents, approximately 20% of participants reported a preference for moving abroad for work. Regarding factors influencing future career domain choice, participants ranked training in the workplace and curriculum content as the top faculty-related factors, while interaction with practicing pharmacists and salary were the major personal-related and job-related factors. This study emphasized the importance of understanding job preferences and the factors influencing career choice, and could be useful in ensuring a future balance between professional domains and meeting society's evolving expectations.

Another study was conducted by Hossain and Siddique (2012) to investigate the career preference of business graduates of private universities in Bangladesh. A total number of 256 final year business students, irrespective of gender in 15 private universities located in Dhaka city have been interviewed. Majority of the respondents' preferred field for future career development are banks and multinational companies. More than average of the total respondents plans to seek employment in their chosen field specially after obtaining the bachelor's degree. The major business courses that have been chosen by the business undergraduate students for specialization are finance and banking, human resource management, accounting and marketing. Financial benefit and social status were the major motivations for the business graduates' career preference. In case of major reasons of motivation, the male respondents are highly influenced by the financial benefit, social status and good opportunities in the chosen field. On the other hand, the female respondents identified financial benefit, social status and job security as their most influencing reasons behind career preference.

Numerous studies have been done on the many variables that affect how students choose their careers. However, there hasn't been a lot of study done on Bangladeshi faculty-based public university students. With this objective in mind the present study aims to explore the nature of career preferences and factors affecting career preferences among the public university students in Bangladesh.

### ***1.2 Objectives of the Study:***

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To know the current trends in job preferences among students at Begum Rokeya University.
2. To determine the factors impacting recent job decisions made by students at public universities.

### ***1.3 Hypothesis of the Study***

1. There is a relationship between job preference and gender of the respondent.
2. Job preference and faculty are related.
3. Job preference is dependent on family status.

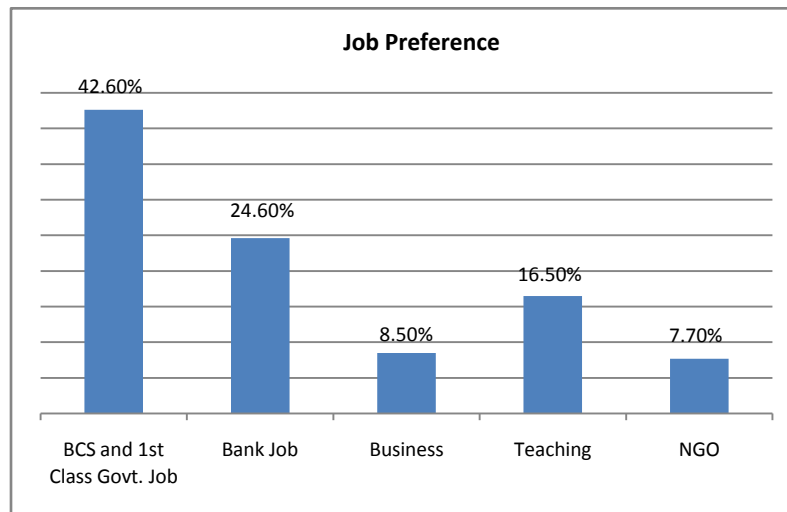
## 2.Methodology

This research used a qualitative approach with the assistance of quantitative analysis. The study employed the survey methodology. Survey research is defined as questioning individuals on a topic or topics and then describing their responses (Jackson, 2011, p-17). A survey was carried out at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) with regular students of 4<sup>th</sup> year and Masters; with a sample size of 272. An interview schedule was used to carry out the survey. In order to acquire a better understanding and more knowledge about the research, some material was gathered through in-person interviews. Using stratified simple random sampling technique, respondents were chosen from four faculties of the University.

The study was divided into three parts. Job preference choice of the participants is presented in Section 1. The factors affecting recent job decisions made by students are highlighted in Section 2 in many forms and themes. Hypothesis testing is presented in section 3. A total of 272 participants were chosen for the study, of which 136 participants were female and 136 participants were male. The respondents' were selected from 4 faculties. Data for the study were gathered using a structured questionnaire. Five males and five females out of a total of 10 data collectors were involved in the data collection. Data were collected from the students of arts faculty, social science faculty, business faculty and science. The survey has been conducted on March, 2022 and the time for conducting the survey was from 9 A.M to 4 P.M.

In conducting the research ethical issues have been maintained with due care. Participants took part in the survey voluntarily. Participants were free to opt in or out of the study at any point in time. Participants knew the purpose, benefits, risks, and funding behind the study before they agree to join. Researcher doesn't know the identities of the participants. Personally identifiable data is not collected. In addition to that participants were ensured about the confidentiality of the information and will only be used for research purpose. Physical, social, psychological and all other types of harm are kept to an absolute minimum. Researcher ensures that the work is free of plagiarism and the results accurately represent the data. Without utilizing any SPSS software, the data were statistically presented in a table. Cross-tabulation method is used for data analysis to make sense of data. Chi-square tests are performed manually.

### 2.1 Results



**Figure 1:** Job preference of the Begum Rokeya University students

*Source:* Survey data 2022

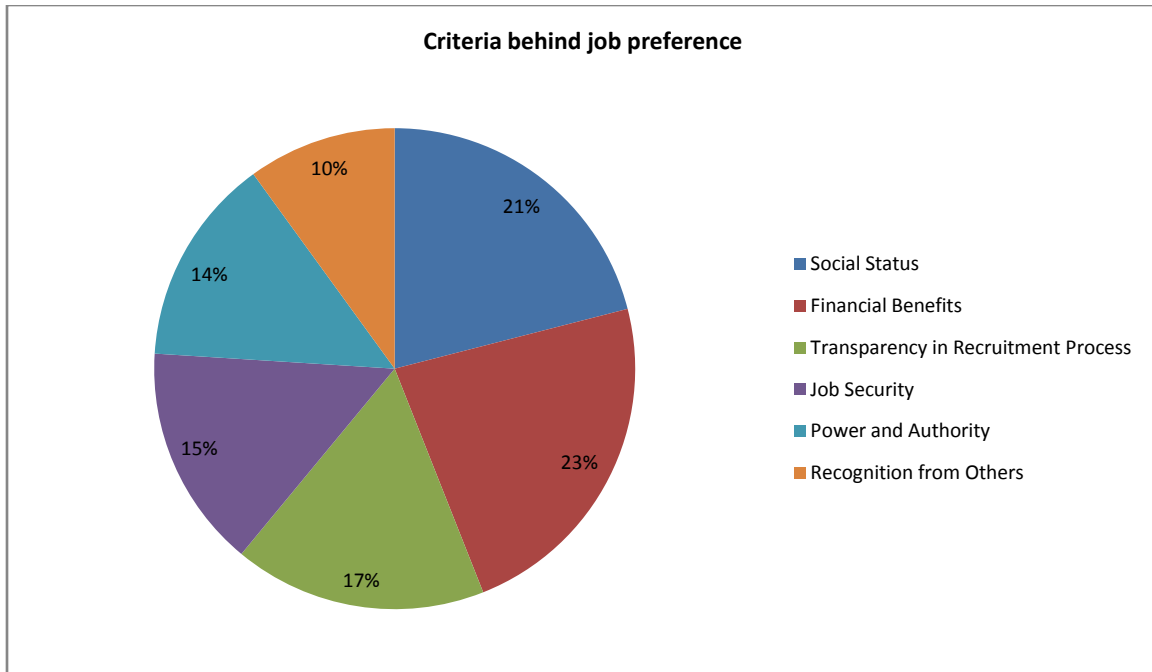


Figure 2: Criteria behind choosing any job options

Source: Survey data 2022

Table 1: Factors influencing job preference

Questions	Number	Percentage
<i>Educational qualification can influence job preference</i>		
Yes	177	65.1%
No	95	34.9%
<i>Educational qualification of parents can influence job preference</i>		
Yes	112	41.2%
No	160	58.8%
<i>Special competency in particular field can influence job choice</i>		
Yes	124	45.6%
No	82	30.1%
Can't Say	66	24.3%
<i>Relevancy of jobs with learned subjects can influence job preference</i>		

Yes	76	27.9%
No	130	47.8%
Can't Say	66	24.3%
<i>Do you believe that career choice depends on the influences of teachers?</i>		
Yes	186	68.4 %
No	60	22.1%
Can't Say	26	9.5%
<i>Do you think trend influence job preference?</i>		
Yes	97	35.7 %
No	101	37.1%
Can't Say	74	27.2%
Self desire and Expectation of family are the determinants of career preference		
Agree	112	41.2%
Disagree	87	32%
Neutral	73	26.8%
<i>Inspiration from family, friends or relatives can influence job preference</i>		
Yes	192	70.6%
No	80	29.4%

*Source: Survey data 2022*

Figure 1 shows that while 24.6% of students desire to pursue a career in banking because of the excellent remuneration package, 42.6% of participants prefer to seek a job as a BCS cadre or 1st class government official. The graph demonstrates how little interest they have in the commercial and nonprofit sectors. Female students, on the other hand, express interest in teaching careers because it is relatively simple to balance a family and a career in this field.

The parameters for choosing a job preference were questioned of the respondents. 23% of respondents named financial rewards as the primary consideration, while 21% highlighted social standing. Due to the transparency of the hiring process, BCS and government jobs have recently risen to the top of the list for students. Furthermore, 14% of people chose careers that include authority and influence.

Participants' educational backgrounds have an impact on their preferred careers, according to 65.1% of them. 34.9%, on the other side, disputed the assertion. Parents' educational backgrounds may also have an impact on work preferences. Students, particularly female ones, are most influenced by their mothers. Because 47.8% of students don't see a connection between their education and their jobs, they place little value on the relevance of their education in terms of how it will affect their careers. Teachers can also affect career choice, according to 68.4% of the sample, while 35.7% of the sample said trends that can also affect work selection. Currently, BCS cadre service jobs are the most desired employment sectors in Bangladesh, especially for students attending public universities. Most students (70.6%) get their job inspiration from

family, friends, or other close relatives. In this instance, they noted how family expectations and one's own desires play a role in choosing a particular employment.

## 2.2 Test of Hypothesis

To test the hypothesis researcher conducted chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test and to show the correlation or to test the significance of chi-square result researcher used Tschuprow's t test.

### a. Hypothesis (1)

$H_0$  = There is no relationship between job preference and gender of the respondent.

$H_1$  = There is a relationship between job preference and gender of the respondent.

**Table 2:** Relationship between job preference and gender of the respondent

Job Preference	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
BCS/1 <sup>st</sup> Class Job	62	54	116
Bank Job	39	28	67
Business	15	8	23
Teaching	10	35	45
NGO	10	11	21
<b>Total</b>	136	136	272

*Source: Survey data 2022*

At 4 degrees of freedom (df) and 5% level of significance our computed chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value (18.42) is bigger than table value (9.48).

$C. V > T. V$

$18.42 > 9.48$

We, therefore, reject null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept alternative one ( $H_1$ ). It means there is a relationship between job preference and gender of the respondent. From the significant test of chi-square result (18.42) by using tschuprow's t test formula, we get t value equal to 0.13. It means there is a negligible correlation between the job preference and gender of the university students

### b. Hypothesis (2)

$H_0$  = Job preference and faculty are not related.

$H_1$  = Job preference and faculty are related.

**Table 3:** Relationship between job preference and faculty

Job Preference	Faculty				Total
	Social Science	Arts	Business	Science	
BCS/1 <sup>st</sup> Class Job	57	18	15	26	116
Bank Job	15	9	28	15	67
Business	6	5	7	5	23
Teaching	12	11	9	13	45
NGO	6	5	5	5	21
<b>Total</b>	96	48	64	64	272

*Source: Survey data 2022*

At 12 degrees of freedom (df) and 5% level of significance our computed chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value (30.4) is bigger than table value (21.02).

$C. V > T. V$

$30.4 > 21.02$

We, therefore, reject null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept alternative one ( $H_1$ ). It means job preference and faculty are related. From the significant test of chi-square result (30.4) by using tschuprow's t test formula, we get t value equal to 0.10. Therefore, it can be said that job preference and

faculty are negligibly correlated.

### c. Hypothesis (3)

$H_0$  = Job preference is not dependent on family status.

$H_1$  = Job preference is dependent on family status.

**Table 4:** Relationship between job preference and family status.

Job Preference	Family Status			Total
	Lower Class	Middle Class	Upper Class	
BCS/1 <sup>st</sup> Class Job	41	43	32	116
Bank Job	17	21	29	67
Business	5	5	13	23
Teaching	11	20	14	45
NGO	8	7	6	21
<b>Total</b>	82	96	94	272

*Source: Survey data 2022*

At 8 degrees of freedom (df) and 5% level of significance our computed chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value (12.42) is smaller than table value (15.5).

$C. V < T. V$

$12.42 < 15.5$

We, therefore, reject alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). And accept null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). It means Job preference is not dependent on family status.

### 3. Discussion

The findings show that there is no discernible difference between the genders in terms of preferred careers, but there is a difference in faculty and family status. BCS and first-class government jobs are the preferred career fields for 116 out of 272 students (42.6%). The respondents' hesitation to seek employment in the small- and medium-sized business and non-profit sectors was also discovered. The main drivers of these professional choices are that today's graduates place a high importance on monetary rewards, social status, and public acknowledgement, in addition to power and authority. Furthermore, the current BCS test system attracts students more due to job stability and transparency in the hiring process. The interest of young people in working in banks has recently increased due to the emergence of private and foreign banks. The primary factors luring these graduates into these industries are the excellent compensation packages, the job security and potential for career progress, and most importantly, the expanding work prospects.

Female students express interest in teaching careers because it is relatively simple to balance a family and a career in this field. Participants' educational backgrounds have an impact on their preferred careers. Parents' educational backgrounds may also have an impact on work preferences. Students, particularly female ones, are most influenced by their mothers. Teachers can also affect career choice, according to 68.4% of the sample. Most students (70.6%) get their job inspiration from family, friends, or other close relatives. In this instance, they noted how family expectations and one's own desires play a role in choosing a particular employment.

The empirical results reported herein should be considered in the light of some limitations. When conducting a study, it is important to have a sufficient sample size in order to draw valid conclusions. Due to time and resource limitations, the sample size in this situation was small. As a result, it was extremely challenging to find meaningful links in the data. The smaller sample size was creating problems for statistical tests as well as generalization of the results. After completing analysis of the research findings, it has been realized that other public university students' opinion should be included in the study. I was under time and financial pressure as well as having to submit this work by a certain date to a journal. Because of this, I had to work with a small sample size; but, if funding are available, additional research might be done by choosing a larger sample. Future research could also use a mixed method approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic and create a balance between job market and learned course contents.

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Bangladesh may have cheaper education expenditures than other countries, but educational institutions there still need to do a better job of motivating students to engage in research and creative thinking as well as to advance their technical knowledge and innovation. The demand for all of these elements is rising in our educational system, which is why students who are dissatisfied with it opt to study abroad. They have pretty much decided what they will study and what kind of work they will conduct. Students today are well aware of their potential for advancement and the variety of options available to them for the future.

However, the researcher has proposed the following recommendations:

- In order to make decisions about their education and careers, students need sufficient information and advice.
- The university may create more courses that are focused on the market, relevant to the workplace, and practical, and it can organize frequent workshops and seminars in conjunction with various experts from various corporate disciplines. These pupils will be able to fill in any deficiencies before they actually leave the classroom in this cutthroat job market.

Effective planning is required for the academic and even non-academic programs for the graduates targeting towards developing their academic, technical and communication skills.

Public universities should maintain a collaborative relationship with reputed industries, multi-national companies and corporate business houses, primarily to run students' internship program. This will immensely benefit the students, in relating their theoretical knowledge to the practical field. Moreover, practical knowledge acquired through internship gives an edge to public university graduates in the job market.

Students should explore their options to work abroad but at the same time they should focus on their career advancement and not only salary issues.

Parents should also play their role of guiding students about all options available for them and there should not be any pressure on them while taking the decision to select a career.

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