



Factors Influencing Career Decision Making

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ABSTRACT

A profession, occupation, trade, or vocation are all frequently referred to using the word "career." It shapes our future and this decision is one of the most crucial decisions a student or even a person can make. This study aims to find out the factors that influence a person's career decision making process. Here we will go through different factors that our participants highlight and then evaluate based on their answers how much or little or even no effect it has on them. Factors like Age, Gender & Class (Grade) are taken as baselines so that there is little to no influence of these factors on the dataset we collected from our participants.

Keywords: Career Decision, Influential Factors, Psychology

1. Introduction

A significant turning point in any student's life is choosing a career. Before making a choice, pupils must examine a number of aspects. A person's career decision has a long-lasting effect on them. It helps to anticipate and determine an individual's future level of income and the type of work they will do, and as a result, it leaves an imprint on their personality, demeanor, and attitude. Therefore, a person's destiny can be altered by one poor choice. Making a choice about a career is challenging for everyone. The economic health of a country is a larger-scale manifestation of this individual action. People that seem to be misfits in their workplace typically are less effective and efficient, which prevents them from achieving their goals. But before all of this, the fundamental question is: What is a career, exactly? Why is it necessary? There are two definitions of a career. A profession, occupation, trade, or vocation are all frequently referred to using the word "career." What you do for a living is defined by your job, which can range from occupations requiring substantial education and training to ones that can be performed with just a high school diploma and a willingness to learn. Working as a doctor, attorney, teacher, carpenter, veterinary assistant, electrician, cashier, instructor, or hairstylist is an example of a career. However, there is another way to define a career. Additionally, it relates to the advancement and actions one has made throughout their working years, particularly as they pertain to one particular vocation. It consists of the various positions one has had, the titles they have obtained, and the work they have produced over a considerable amount of time. When regarded in this light, a career covers everything connected to professional growth, such as the profession of choice and promotion. A single career may take a number of distinct directions. According to Onyejiaku (Jones & Larke, 2005), an occupation is a way of life that has the capacity to alter a person's personality, determine their social position, forecast their projected earnings, determine their membership in certain social groupings, etc. Given its complexity, it is then a point to ponder upon as to how career decisions are made (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017).

1.1. The choice of a career and its importance

The choice of occupation is only one aspect of a person's career, even if it serves as the foundation for how their career develops. A person spends the majority of their waking hours engaging in professional pursuits that are related to financial stability in order to survive. However, that profession starts to affect one's self-esteem and self-worth, as well as their social life and standing. It affects one's opinions and attitudes as well as friendships, lifestyle, and place of residence frequently. The choice of a career then encompasses all of the significant tasks that are crucially important during a person's life. Young people are under a lot of pressure to choose their careers so they can move on with their life, yet this decision is seldom given enough consideration. A career shouldn't just "happen", although according to Max Ulrich (Morgan 1980, p. 233), "Blind fate accounts for at least 60% of what happens in careers." Counselors are aware that a person's ability to perform in society and at work is influenced by their sense of self-worth and place in their family

(Ginsberg, 1971). The choice of a career and its importance for a person's overall life satisfaction have not received enough attention. In the education of individuals who offer career counseling, a stronger focus needs to be placed on the significance of the career selection. Knowledge, intelligence, thinking, and the ability to predict and assess events are all necessary for making good decisions. Making sensible decisions and not leaving the future to chance or fate allow people to have some influence over their circumstances. One might carefully select a course of action or take the path of least resistance blindly, but making wise decisions shouldn't be influenced by chance (Buskirk, 1976). If you choose to delay making a decision or allow luck to guide you, you have already made that decision. The process of making decisions, according to Cammaert (1979, p. 105), "is a long and searching evolution," and the results of our choices are not always under our control. According to Lowe (1968), compromise is frequently necessary to make a decision because not every circumstance will allow for all of the desirable outcomes (Klover, 1983).

1.2. The influential factors while making a career decision

The biggest conundrum and problem in a student's life is choosing a career. It involves the interaction of numerous, highly interwoven elements. It is a challenging task that requires a complicated decision-making process. A person's environment, talents, skills, and academic accomplishment have an impact on their profession decision, according to Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (2001). Making the wrong decision could result in failure and disappointment. According to research, a person's career choice is influenced by their homes, schools, and social environment. Men's work decisions are influenced by their financial situation since they must support their families, but women place more importance on social ideals and utility (Sax, 1994). Academic achievement, personal circumstances, and other factors have also been shown to influence profession choice (Ferry, 2006). Parents' educational attainment, occupation, and income are also cited as being crucial variables (Hearn 1984, 1988). Sadly, decisions about careers are often made without much consideration of the real world (Caplow, as cited in Bright, Pryor, & Harpham 2005). Students make important selections at a time when they might not be fully aware of their options or else, they are prevented from achieving their objectives by unavoidable circumstances. Counselors can help them make wise decisions by assisting them in this way. Making decisions requires careful consideration of your level of interest in a particular field. If a student is pressured into a career, he could perform poorly and have low self-esteem. According to Suutari (2003), numerous studies have shown a strong correlation between hobbies and profession choice. Additionally, it has been found that people who perform well academically are also better at evaluating themselves (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). A youngster who grows up with supportive parents and a peaceful home life is more likely to follow their rules. In this case, the parent's occupation is most likely to have an impact on the child's occupational aspirations. According to research, a student's environment, society, family, etc., have a significant impact on their job decision (Gim, 1992; Leong, 1995). Parents accidentally predetermine their children's careers and only steer them in that way. According to other studies, a child's career path is influenced by their parents' attitudes and the environment at home. Similarly, it has been demonstrated that a parent's educational background affects their child's profession choice (Grissmer, 2003; Ogunlade, 1973).

Peers and friends are crucial components of the socialization process, and it is widely acknowledged that they have a significant impact on how a person's life develops. They have an important role in influencing how individuals perceive the outside world, think about it, and make decisions about their futures. These relationships are also seen as a vital source of support at difficult times (Baron et al., 1992). Peers and friends look outside of their homes to explore and find opportunities that will make their orientation and self-expression more obvious, according to research and scholarship on the subject (Adler & Adler, 1998). Salvy, Haye, Bowker, and Hermans contend that peers are excellent sources of inspiration for one another. School is where many lifelong connections are made, and peers have been known to defend one another, sometimes even more so than siblings. They mentor one another in their personal life as well as with their academic career (Salvy et al.). One frequently observes students pursuing certain courses merely because their buddies are following suit. These kids may struggle to do well since they are not interested in the subject. Adolescents choose friends who exhibit traits or skills they value, which inspires them to succeed and behave in the same ways as their friends. Teenagers can think more imaginatively and are encouraged to work hard in school by their friends (Brown & Barbosa.). This is true, but an issue arises when the student's talent or interests do not totally align with those of his companion. Peer interactions have an impact on peers' career decisions. Peer interactions have been shown to affect students' career decisions in Kenya (Walaba & Kiboss, 2013) and Uganda (Okiror & Otabong, 2015). The students converse while exchanging career-related information. The social learning theory of Krumboltz, which emphasizes the value of students interacting with one another in their surroundings, is in accord with this. The way that students view themselves is greatly influenced by their relationships with their peers (Yi-Hui, 2006). Yi-Hui (2006) found in his research in China that student interactions with peers from other interests, races, and origins have the ability to encourage thought, knowledge, and beliefs, which may result in new ways of thinking about the world, other peers, and ultimately oneself.

1.3. Summarization

In summarizing the discussion, it can be said that family and friends have a significant influence on how people behave, how their personalities grow, how they choose careers, how they adapt, and how they behave both positively and negatively in the coming years. The most important part here to understand is that career decisions affect a person on a very deeper level which affects their lives for their rest of being, to make a decision that is wise for them can be a tough choice to make as there are a lot of factors affecting it. Some might be internal and some might be external, to find out what factors have the most to least effect is what this study is about.

2. Methodology

This section of the paper has been devised to explain & elaborate on how the study has been conducted. This would be divided into four different heading to make sure that each and every part of it is looked upon appropriately.

2.1. Research design

This study is to investigate the relationship between peers, friends, and family in the process of making career decisions and also, to look into how students' career choices are affected by demographic factors such as gender, academic discipline, social group, parental pressure, parental education background, parental income, media, and grades. It is quantitative in nature with explanation and narrative of the provided data. Thus, the study was carried out in India at the high school level. Data was collected with the means of a questionnaire.

2.2. Objective

To investigate the influence of demographic variables (gender, academic discipline, parental pressure, peer group, parental education background, social group etc.) on a student's career choice.

2.3. Sampling procedure

Three hundred and forty students of age between 15-18 years were chosen as a sample from government aided and private schools, respectively. Students from these two institutions were chosen to serve as representatives from a variety of areas, including the humanities, science, and business. The first age criteria for selecting the participant were a high school student. The reason for not choosing a college student or a middle school student was to get results from that age category where there is high stability as well as a wide variety of interest exploration. College students have already decided the path of career which will lead to a biased result whereas a middle school student is still confused and not aware of his/her capability and requirements.

2.4. Data collection & analysis

The information was ultimately gathered via a standardized questionnaire that was personally sent and checked for a response simultaneously. It was a quantitative study. The reason for deploying this kind of study was that it doesn't require any sort of manipulation of the environment. It gives the result in a natural setting where the event has naturally occurred and hence the results come out as very realistic. Some of the disadvantages of questionnaire study is that a good internet connection is needed if it is sent digitally. Secondly, fluency in English was needed.

After a thorough review of literature, the questionnaire with 50 statements in total was developed. It was divided into five categories, and graded on a Likert scale. Family influence, school influence, gender influence, and peer influence on career choice were the main categories. It was then given to a collaborator for content validity.

In order to learn more about the participant's background, the researcher also created some demographic questions, including ones about gender, the institution's name, the mothers' and fathers' educational backgrounds, their occupations, and their income levels. The participants were given proper instructions on the first page of the questionnaire for smooth flow. They were asked to declare their preferences for various questions such as family influence and social influence. The participants were asked to choose the option which most accurately represents them. At last, the data was finally shown with the help of graphical representation against each factor in the form of a percentage and a thorough explanation.

3. Result

All the information that we collected has helped us get a better understanding of the study we are performing in this paper. For a better understanding of these results that we acquired through the questionnaire we have created graphs that help us visually aid the analyzing process.

Starting with the most basic of the charts is the age bar style graph which has 4 bars depicting the percentage of responses coming from that particular age group and the x-axis containing the age in years with the y-axis containing the number for responses by students (Fig. 1).

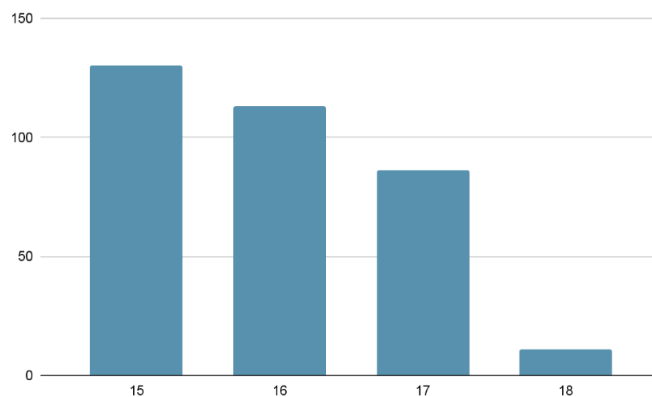


Fig. 1 - age group of students

Gender is one of the most influential factors that help us understand the role it plays in one's career decision making process. In the pie chart below (Fig. 2) there are three different types of genders that are male, female and prefer not to say.

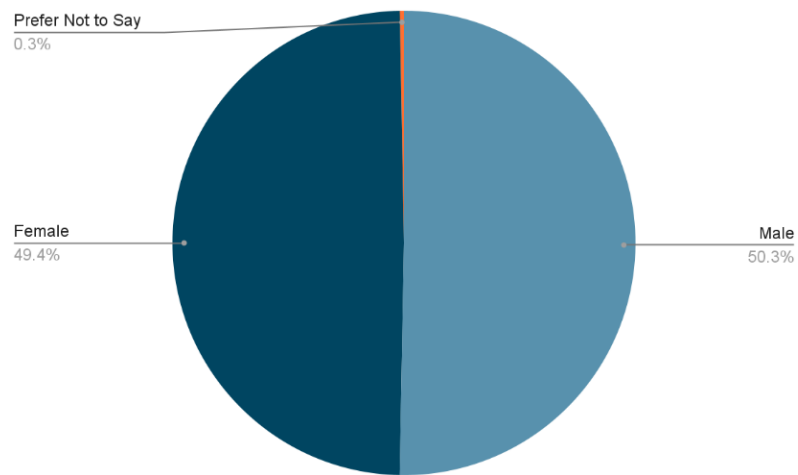


Fig. 2 - gender of students

Grade of the students help us get an in-depth view from which mindset might the student be taking a decision that may change or affect it. We can see the grades 10th, 11th and 12th being nearly equally divided in the pie chart below (Fig. 3).

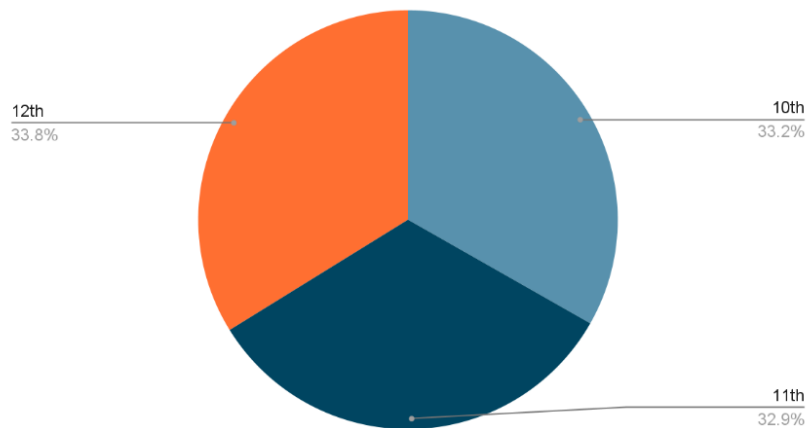


Fig. 3 - grade of students

Family influence on career choice is one of the major determinants of a student making his/her career choice. The Multi-Bar graph below helps us understand exactly how our responders feel about the topic (Fig. 4). Note here is that the actual questions have been removed because the questions are lengthy in wording, if any question needs to be found then please check the original questionnaire provided at the end of the paper.

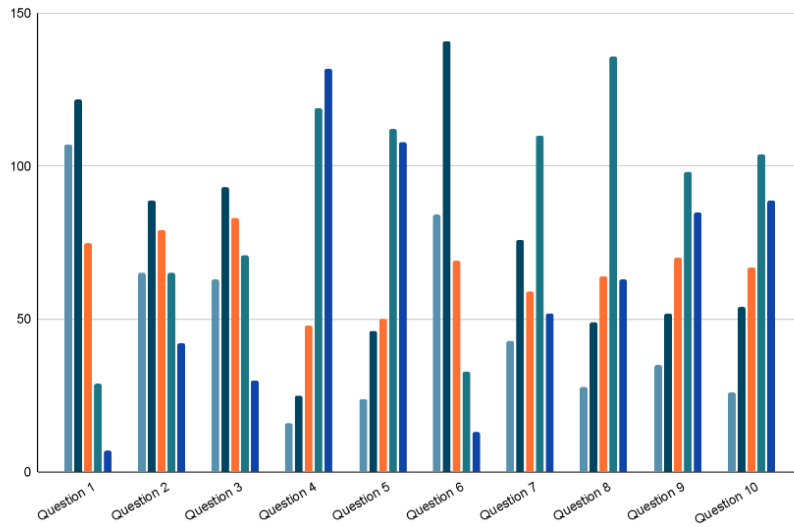


Fig. 4 - Family influence on career choice

Another big family influence is the profession that most of the people are in their family. Indirectly this factor changes or affects the decision-making process of the participant (Fig. 5).

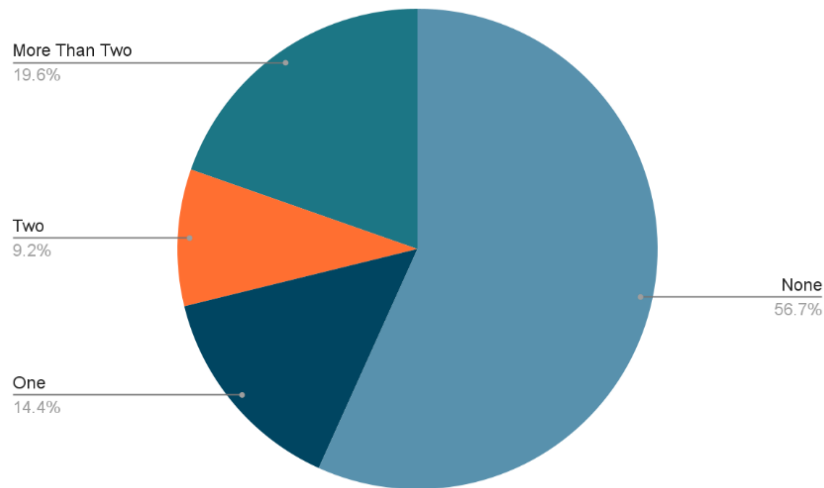


Fig. 5 - Relatives in similar profession

School is where the learning happens for a child and when the child is mature enough to make a decision for their career the school can have a lasting impact on his/her decisions which are depicted below (Fig. 6).

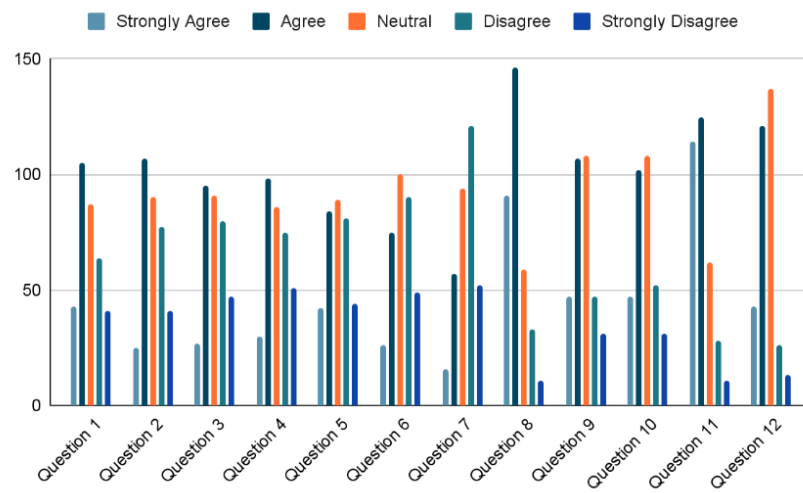


Fig. 6 - School influence on participants

Gender as we said is one of the key factors but how did our participants react and relate to it being a career decision making factor is depicted below (Fig. 7).

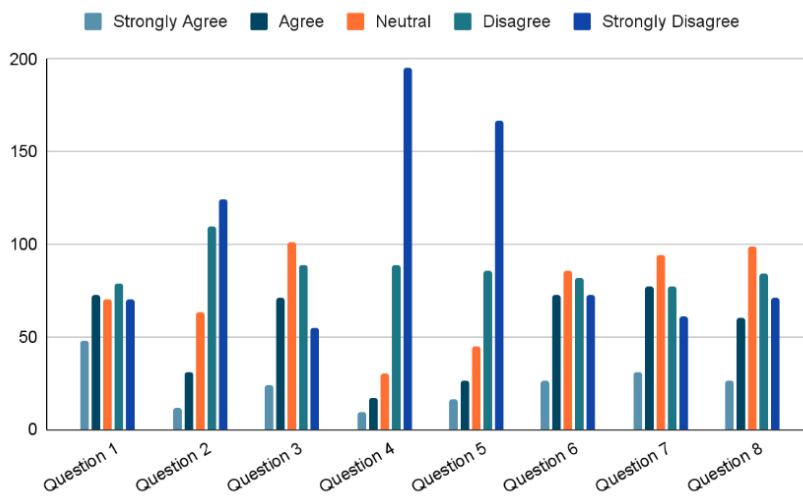


Fig. 7 - Gender influence on participants

Peers or as we call them friends are a huge determinant in deciding what kind of career a person might choose. Finding this is beneficial for the study which is depicted below (Fig. 8).

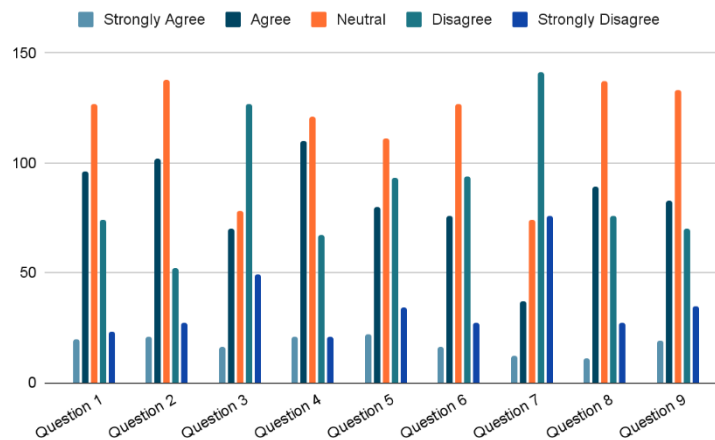


Fig. 8 - Peer influence on participants

All the information now compiled in graphical form helps us discuss and analyze the data in a much more efficient manner. This is done in the next part of the paper in full extent.

4. Discussion & Analysis

All the data that we gathered paved the way for us to understand the results. As we started to discuss and then analyze the data, we saw that the major participants of the study were between the ages of 15 years to 17 years (Refer Fig. 1). Therefore, we have a participant list of majorly Class 10 and 11 with a few of them being in Class 12. We here would conclude this point as to say that all the participants were in the age group where they can either make their career decisions or can be influenced to make one (which we will see later in the paper).

With almost half each demographic of females to males having 49.4% and 50.3% respectively and the 0.3% prefer not to say we here have a very apt gender division between the participants, therefore helping us make sure that gender doesn't play a major role in the decision-making process of the participant (Refer Fig. 2).

The trend of almost equal division pans out here too with class 10 having 33.2%, class 11 having 32.9% and class 12 having 33.8% shows us that all the participants here are in classes in which they can either make the decision for their career or can be influenced to make one (Refer Fig. 3).

All the three factors above age, gender and class will help us understand the data we collected from the participants and hold them as metrics to make sure that the study is not biased in any way.

Starting off with family influence we see a trend that showed us that family influence was a very minor factor in a child's career decision making process (Refer Fig. 4). This makes us believe that the participants have decided to make career choices on their own without minor to no influence from their family members. This shows a positive side of the study that we hoped to find while conducting this research. Most of the participants also tell us that none of their relatives work in the same profession which they want to pursue with a few participants opting for a yes, they do (Refer Fig. 5).

School is where students learn and this is the place that can influence us the most. Our participants pointed out that the school took effort to help students take a career path that they desire. Therefore, we seem to see an influence that the school has on its students. We suggest that schools, if they are taking the responsibility of helping students make their career choices, should take proper measures and appropriate steps to ensure accurate information is passed on to the students (Refer Fig. 6).

Gender as a factor we thought would be influential for our participants but we see that our participants are not considering gender as a factor while making their career decisions. Males as well as females here are seen indicating towards the fact that gender should not be a barrier while making career choices (Refer Fig. 7).

Friends are what we seek when we need advice for anything in our lives before going to anyone. Here we see the same trend that peers are influential while our participants are making their career choices. Therefore, we suggest that if you are a friend who is giving advice or a friend who is seeking advice be cautious of misinformation as well as give out accurate information to your peers (Refer Fig. 8).

Here, we would like to conclude this study making a simple statement that you as a person when making a career decision should be aware of the factors listed above in this study and make a choice that most appropriately represents you as an individual.

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chase my dreams. My little brother deserves my wholehearted thanks as well. To all my friends, thank you for your understanding and encouragement in my many, many moments of crisis. Your friendship makes my life a wonderful experience. I cannot list all the names here, but you are always on my mind. Without them, this day would not have been possible. This thesis is only a beginning of my journey.

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