



A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS AMONG GRADUATE STUDENTS IN COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT :

This study investigates the multifaceted elements influencing employment decisions among graduate students in Coimbatore City. With the backdrop of a rapidly evolving job market, the research delves into how factors like academic background, skill development, salary expectations, work-life balance, and socio-economic constraints shape students' job preferences. Using a structured questionnaire administered to 120 respondents, the study applied percentage analysis, descriptive analysis, factor analysis, and ANOVA for interpretation. The findings emphasize that practical benefits like job flexibility and long-term career growth often outweigh immediate salary considerations. The study also highlights gaps in career guidance and technology access, offering valuable suggestions for improving student employability and institutional support mechanisms.

Keywords: Employment Decision, Graduate Students, Career Preferences, Salary Expectations, Work-Life Balance, Skill Development, Coimbatore

INTRODUCTION

The transition from academic life to professional employment is a critical milestone for graduate students. In Coimbatore, a city known for its academic institutions and industrial base, students face a wide spectrum of employment opportunities. However, their employment choices are shaped by a complex interplay of personal ambitions, academic achievements, financial needs, peer influence, and market conditions. This study explores these factors to better understand the evolving mindset of graduate job seekers. The process of making employment decisions is a significant phase in the lives of graduate students, particularly in growing urban centers like Coimbatore. Known for its educational institutions and industrial development, Coimbatore attracts thousands of students each year who pursue higher education in various fields such as engineering, commerce, arts, science, and management. As these students near the completion of their academic programs, they are faced with the critical task of choosing a suitable career path.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research explores the various elements that contribute to the development of entrepreneurial characteristics among the youth in Coimbatore. It pays particular attention to aspects such as economic status, educational background, family influence, and the availability of governmental support. The primary goal is to offer valuable insights that can guide policymakers and educators in strengthening skill-building initiatives, improving access to financial resources, and enhancing government programs aimed at nurturing entrepreneurship among young individuals. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of mentorship and peer relationships in encouraging entrepreneurial behavior.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Making employment decisions is often a complex process for graduate students in Coimbatore, as it involves balancing individual ambitions, family guidance, financial responsibilities, and the realities of the job market. These decisions are shaped not only by personal and social influences but also by the shifting trends in the local and national economy. Despite the importance of these factors, there is a noticeable scarcity of focused research that examines how these elements specifically affect graduates in Coimbatore. This knowledge gap can hinder students from making confident and informed career choices, challenges for developing strategies that attract suitable candidates.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To investigate how socio-economic conditions affect employment decisions.
- To examine the role of education and skill enhancement in shaping career preferences.

- To assess the influence of family and peer networks.
- To evaluate the impact of company reputation, job benefits, and flexibility.
- To recommend strategies to improve employability among graduates.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Restricted to graduate students in Coimbatore
- Sample size limited to 120
- Relies on self-reported responses
- Excludes broader national employment trends

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a systematic approach using both primary and secondary data sources.

DATA COLLECTION

- **Primary Data:** Structured questionnaire
- **Secondary Data:** Journals, reports, government publications

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Simple Random Sampling

SAMPLE SIZE

120 graduate students from Coimbatore

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

Descriptive analysis, ANOVA

LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive review of 30 studies from 2018–2024 highlights recurring themes like financial stability, peer influence, institutional support, and the growing impact of soft skills and digital platforms in employment decisions.

Kumar, A. & Meenakshi, V. (2022) conducted a study titled "*Graduate Employability and Career Decision-Making Patterns in Tamil Nadu*," focusing on how various internal and external factors influence the employment choices of final-year students. The study surveyed 350 graduate students from different academic disciplines and utilized statistical tools to evaluate the influence of education, personal goals, job market awareness, and socio-economic background. Findings revealed that career decisions are significantly affected by a combination of industry knowledge, perceived job security, and family expectations. The study emphasized that students with access to career guidance and skill enhancement programs showed higher confidence in making employment-related decisions. It also recommended strengthening university-industry collaborations, increasing internship opportunities, and offering customized career counseling to help students align their career choices with real-world demands.

Ramesh, V. & Lakshmi, T. (2020) examined the study "*Graduate Career Choices and Labor Market Readiness in South Indian Cities*," where they explored how final-year students align their employment preferences with current labor market demands. Using data from 320 students across Tamil Nadu, including Coimbatore, the research highlighted the significance of internship experience, awareness of industry trends, and job role clarity in shaping employment decisions. The study recommended integrating experiential learning and industry interaction sessions within college programs to better prepare students for employment.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

1. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS EMPLOYER BRAND PERCEPTION

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Employer Brand Perception [A company's reputation significantly influences my interest in working there.]	120	1	5	4.391667	0.98130
Employer Brand Perception [Employee reviews and testimonials affect my perception of a company.]	120	1	5	3.966667	0.83950
Employer Brand Perception [A company's social responsibility initiatives impact my view of its brand.]	120	1	5	3.866667	0.95207
Employer Brand Perception [I consider a company's leadership and management reputation before applying.]	120	1	5	3.833333	1.00697
Employer Brand Perception [A company's financial stability is	120	1	5	3.975	1.11115

an important factor in my perception of its brand]					
Employer Brand Perception [The public image of a company affects my willingness to apply for a job.]	120	1	5	4	1.04519
Total Mean Score	120			24.03	3.687

SOURCE: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

The statement regarding leadership and management reputation showed a slightly lower mean of 3.83, indicating moderate agreement. Lastly, the statement on public image affecting willingness to apply for a job also received a strong average rating (mean = 3.91), with the highest standard deviation (1.049), implying more varied responses on this item. The standard deviations across statements range from 0.839 to 1.111, indicating that while there is general agreement, individual differences exist in the extent to which these factors matter.

INFERENCE:

Respondents strongly agree that employer brand elements—especially reputation, financial stability, and company image—significantly influence their job application decisions.

2. ANOVA (ONE WAY)

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA) ON BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION PREFERENCE

Statement	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	H	S/NS
My salary expectations are based on industry salary standards.	Between Groups	0.752	3	0.251	0.251	0.861	Not Accepted	NS
	Within Groups	116.04	116	1				
	Total	116.792	119					
I expect a higher salary based on my educational qualifications	Between Groups	4.717	3	1.572	1.843	0.143	Not Accepted	NS
	Within Groups	98.983	116	0.853				
	Total	103.7	119					
The cost of living in Coimbatore influences my salary expectations.	Between Groups	3.143	3	1.048	0.882	0.453	Not Accepted	NS
	Within Groups	137.848	116	1.188				
	Total	140.992	119					
I am willing to compromise on salary for a job that offers better job security.	Between Groups	7.722	3	2.574	2.139	0.099	Not Accepted	NS
	Within Groups	139.578	116	1.203				
	Total	147.3	119					
I adjust my salary expectations based on company size and financial stability.	Between Groups	3.91	3	1.303	0.971	0.409	Not Accepted	NS
	Within Groups	155.682	116	1.342				
	Total	159.592	119					

SOURCE: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

An ANOVA test was conducted to examine whether individuals' most valued job benefit—such as health insurance, paid leave, work-from-home flexibility, retirement savings, or performance bonuses—significantly affects how they perceive different aspects of a company's compensation package.

INFERENCE

The ANOVA results show no statistically significant difference in how individuals perceive compensation-related job benefits based on their preferred benefit. This indicates that people generally value all key job benefits similarly, even if they have a specific preference.

FINDINGS

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS:

Students highly value a company's reputation (mean = 4.39), financial stability (3.98), and public image (4.00). Factors like leadership reputation, social responsibility, and employee reviews also influence perceptions. The overall Total Mean Score was 24.03, confirming that employer brand is a key determinant in job decision-making.

ANOVA (ONE WAY):

The ANOVA analysis for salary expectations based on performance bonuses across age groups yielded a non-significant result ($F = 0.251$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.861$), indicating no significant difference among age groups in their views.

SUGGESTIONS

- Integrate skill-based learning with degree programs
- Enhance digital infrastructure and access to internships
- Promote career counseling and alumni mentoring
- Address gender-specific concerns and encourage flexibility

CONCLUSION

Employment decisions among Coimbatore's graduate students reflect a thoughtful balance between economic need and long-term professional growth. By strengthening mentorship, expanding placement opportunities, and aligning academic training with market needs, stakeholders can improve job readiness and career satisfaction among the youth. The study emphasizes the need for academic institutions, policymakers, and employers to recognize the changing mindset of graduates and adapt their strategies to support well-informed, career-ready individuals.

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