



Factors Affecting Career Decision Making of Students: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Colleges in District Muzaffargarh

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ABSTRACT

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Career selection is one of major important choices which students make in determining future plans as well as the path of an individual according to its own needs and their condition. The present research was conducted to identify the role of College in career decision making of intermediate level students in Muzaffargarh city Punjab Pakistan. The comparative study was conducted in three different colleges. The sample size was 200 which included male students only. The factors impacting the career decision making of students were observed, compared and analyzed across three colleges. Interview schedule was used for data collection from respondents who were selected with the help of simple random sampling within the target population. The career decision making of students is influenced by several factors like social environment, teacher-student relation, and economic conditions.



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INTRODUCTION

Career can be understood as the path of an individual for achievement of life goals which can be personal, economic, educational and social. Career decision can be understood as the selection of specific career and its path of an individual according to its own needs and their condition. Career selection is one of many important choices which students make in determining future plans. This decision impacts them throughout their lives. Delauzun (2016).

Decision-making is defined as a process of problem solving strategy in which people of all ages and cultures repetitively have to make a choice between two or more alternatives. It does not matter how big or small or how deeply effective the decision is. The purpose should be the focus. The decisions individuals make create significance in different ways: individually, culturally, socially, regionally, and globally. Almost all developed nations have focused on education for rapid development. Pakistan is a developing country and education is our key to development (Gati, 2010).

Society is created by the individuals; educational institutes prepare better individuals for achieving better society. Under the 18th constitutional amendment, education has been devolved to the provinces which are responsible for the award of education up to intermediate level. At the national level, 5.8 thousand higher secondary schools / inter colleges with 123.2 thousand teachers were functional in 2017-18. The overall enrolment of students in higher secondary education witnessed an increase of 5.8 percent in 2017-18. The enrolment registered during 2017-18 was 1.7 million as compared to 1.6 million in 2016-17. For 2018-19, it was projected to increase to 1.8 million. (Kumar, 2006).

The youth of any country is considered a very important part of society which has to play an important role in the development of a society. When there are such a large number of youth enrolments in colleges, we are still lagging behind most of the developing countries. We do not have enough professionals in certain fields. It is an important question why we are still not developing and have a higher unemployment rate. We are not able to contribute to the development of the world and our country. Less development results in poor quality of life and in increased rate of social problems and those problems in turn act as a catalyst for multiple negative social behaviours and norms. This impacts a country's international image and creates nationwide restlessness as well as dissatisfaction (González 2010).

Coates (2005) say anthropological research was conducted to understand the situation and aims of youth at college level. Because at this level, students are choosing which path to follow for a specific professional field. The central concepts of anthropology are played out daily in the crucibles of schools and learning contexts of communities. It is important to understand career choices keeping in view the cultural context of that specific area because cultural environment plays a significant role in the career position the student attains in many ways. The environment is a factor that nurtures decisions in career choice.

Zelloth (2009) affirms that students have dreams, some of them turn into aims and some of them just change due to available resources and several other factors. There is a huge expectations-disappointment gap in developing countries and Pakistan is one of them. The example of Ukraine can be taken where some national experts underlined the fact that the current choices of young people often do not meet labour market needs. Pakistan is facing the same situation and is struggling with it at the same time.

Zafar (2011) emphasized that representation of certain career goals have a significant impact on career choices. Individuals update their beliefs for various major specific outcomes in response to the information received in appropriate ways. For example, individuals who receive positive information about their academic performance revise down their beliefs about the number of hours per week that they expect to spend on coursework, and revise their beliefs upward if the information is very negative. Avery, Howell & Page (2014) are of the opinion that postsecondary attainment rates of young people who come from low-income households and, regardless of income, whose parents have no college experience are low across the board. Exacerbating the financial constraints is the reality that low-income students and those whose

parents have little education are frequently ill-prepared academically to succeed in college. This in turn impacts their career because they do not have sufficient skills and educational capabilities to compete in the job market. Keeping current globalization in view, our students have to compete worldwide professionally.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study was held with an aim to identify the role of college on career decision making of students along with the relationship of other stakeholders, the parents and the student himself. The population of the study was based on three colleges located in Muzaffargarh city in Punjab, Pakistan. The study was based on quantitative method. The data was collected from 200 respondents with the help of simple random sampling. The 100 respondents were selected from Government Post Graduate College and 50 respondents were chosen from Government College of Commerce. Other 50 respondents were taken from Punjab Group of Colleges (Muzaffargarh branch). Interview schedule was used as a tool for data collection from three different college students. The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS V20.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SR. No.	Variables		Categories		Frequency
			GPGCM	GCCM	PCM
1	Age (years)				
		15-18	72 (72%)	39 (78%)	47 (94%)
		19-21	28 (28%)	11 (22%)	3 (6%)
2	Employment status				
		Unemployed	74 (74%)	46 (92%)	50 (100%)
		Employed	26 (26%)	4 (8%)	0 (0%)
3	Subjects				
		Arts	50 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
		F.Sc.	30 (30%)	0 (0%)	38 (76%)
		ICS	20 (20%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
		DBA	0 (0%)	20 (40%)	0 (0%)
		I.com	0 (0%)	30 (60%)	10 (20%)

4	Knowledge about career counselling				
		Yes	9 (9%)	12 (24%)	23 (46%)
		No	91 (91%)	38 (76%)	27 (54%)
5	College provided awareness regarding career choice				
		Yes	5 (5%)	1 (2%)	8 (16%)
		No	95(95%)	49 (98%)	42 (84%)
6	Selected subject group of choice				
		Yes	77 (77%)	46 (92%)	44 (88%)
		No	23 (23%)	4 (8%)	6 (12%)
7	Satisfied with the chosen subject group				
		Yes	92 (92%)	49 (98%)	43 (86%)
		No	8 (8%)	1 (2%)	7 (14%)
8	Reason for choosing a profession				
		Good salary	8 (8%)	12 (24%)	5 (10%)
		Authority	31 (31%)	12 (24%)	15 (30%)
		freedom of work	10 (10%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)
		Good reputation	51 (51%)	23 (46%)	28 (56%)

9	Anyone in family having the same profession				
		Yes	26 (26%)	5 (10%)	21 (42%)
		No	74 (74%)	45 (90%)	29 (58%)
10	Financial ability for future studies				
		Yes	33 (33%)	15 (30%)	34 (68%)
		No	67 (67%)	35 (70%)	16 (32%)
11	Parents agree with career choice				
		Yes	98 (98%)	34 (68%)	42 (84%)
		No	2 (2%)	16 (32%)	8 (16%)
12	Parents visit college				
		Yes	12 (12%)	36 (72%)	42 (84%)
		No	88 (88%)	14 (28%)	8 (16%)
13	Relatives studying same subject group				
		Yes	25 (25%)	14 (28%)	33 (66%)
		No	75 (75%)	36 (72%)	17 (34%)
14	Friends studying same subjects group				
		Yes	73 (73%)	35 (70%)	33 (66%)
		No	27 (27%)	15 (30%)	17 (34%)
15	Source of information for				

	career				
		Teachers	34 (34%)	16 (32%)	16 (28%)
		Family & relatives	52 (54%)	24 (48%)	24 (48%)
		Friends	8 (8%)	3 (6%)	3 (12%)
		Other	6 (6%)	7 (14%)	7 (18%)
16	Career choice discussion with their teachers				
		Yes	29 (29%)	37 (74%)	31 (62%)
		No	71 (71%)	13 (26%)	19 (38%)

Note: % in brackets, GPGCM: Government Post Graduate College Muzaffargarh, GCCM: Government College of Commerce Muzaffargarh, PCM: Punjab College Muzaffargarh, N = 200 (GPGCM 100, GCCM 50, PCM50)

Findings revealed the ratio of students age 15-18 was higher. College is the institute which has the responsibility to teach and train young individuals of society. The resemblance in data from three different colleges indicated that each of three colleges had to handle boys of the same age groups. This age group is classified as adolescents. A study showed the most adolescents with lifestyle issues fell in the age group of 16–18 years. Adolescents need to be treated as a distinct segment of our population and it is important to realize and address their health and lifestyle problems. The colleges are the institutes which have the responsibility to guide them in their career decision making process.

Government Post Graduate College showed a higher ratio of employed students because the students belonged to the nearby rural areas of Muzaffargarh city and this was the only public sector college near them. The employed students of Government Post Graduate College included those who worked as laboratory assistants in private clinics, as assistants in lawyers' chamber at District Courts Muzaffargarh as well as those who worked in fields, which are taken on annual bases, along with their father or brother. Comparatively, the Commerce College had only 8% students who were employed. Field survey interviews showed that students in this college were mostly from Muzaffargarh city. Some of them worked in different shops and some worked as assistants to tailors. It became clear that these students were doing work because of their low economic conditions. The reasons for selection of commerce college was low fee and easy course, as per they heard about it. Results of Punjab College showed, there was not a single student employed. This had several reasons. Firstly, the economic conditions of the families of students were good enough to support their studies in a private college as compared to those families who had their sons studying in public sector colleges. Secondly, the college imposed strict regulations to make attendance of students more than 90%. Thirdly, families of these students wanted them to focus only on studies so that they could

score good marks and continue higher education. They did not want their sons to work because the needs of their sons were fulfilled by their parents. Students from lower-income families have the greatest need for college counseling, yet have the least access to counselors. (Page, Avery & Howell 2014).

A large number of students were found studying Arts and Humanities in Government Post Graduate College. Whereas, arts and humanities were absent in Punjab College. The respondents in Punjab College were of the view; there are no scope and job opportunities for students learning arts and humanities. On the contrary, there was no admission option for arts in Punjab College. This shows how permanent this mind set was in that college's environment. Comparatively in Government Post Graduate College, a higher number of students chose arts and humanities. Students thought that these subjects were easy and marks-yielding. Several interviews with teachers also confirmed that students opt for those subjects that could give them a high percentage regardless of their future aim and objectives.

The public sector colleges had huge gaps between ratios of yes or no while in case of Punjab College, it was comparatively less. Qualitative findings showed that the teachers in Punjab College informally discussed about career selection and about career counseling system in classes. Families of students often discussed career choices. The students studying in public sector colleges were unaware because no one had told them they even had no idea that there is a career counselor in their college. Teachers thought that these students were not mature enough to understand this.

The students were unaware about their career's selection ways and means. Comparing Government Post Graduate College and Government College of Commerce, we can see that more than 95% respondents were of the view that college had never done any such thing which can help them in their career selection. In case of Punjab College, it was 84%. That the college had never organized any activity or seminar or any kind of lectures officially which could help in their career selection. Qualitative findings of the research showed that college administration was busy in getting more students enrolled and to get maximum positions in the Board Examinations. Colleges try to maintain lectures and schedule tests which would help them in their marketing.

When it comes to the choice of subjects, we can see that in two colleges except Government Post Graduate College, the ratio of selection of subjects by choice was more than 85% while the Government Post Graduate College had slightly lower ratio. This happened mainly because most of the students in that college were interested in getting a higher secondary certificate so that they could become eligible for the admission in higher level or for any type of job rather than keeping their interests in mind. We can clearly see that the satisfaction level among the students of public sector colleges was more than 90% as compared to the Punjab College. According to the findings of the researcher, the level of satisfaction of a student depended upon his expectations from the institute and its teachings. The students of public sector colleges were satisfied because things were easy for them as expected rather than the students of Punjab College having 14% answered as No, which was also a minimal, but its ratio was higher compared to the other two colleges.

The results clearly explained that the option of good reputation had the highest percentage among the other three options; this explained the social effect on the career section of a student. At this stage, there is mainly family involved in the career decision making of the student as well as students select those professions which can give the good social image and respect in society to them and ultimately to their family.

The results of public sector colleges were compared with the results of Punjab College, a totally different situation was observed as 68% respondents agreed that their parents can provide funds for the further studies. The findings revealed that this increased determination and confidence in the respondent. When they moved in their community they tended to have a clearer vision of their goals and they were found not to consider any other career options as they knew that they would achieve it as compared to the students studying in public sector colleges. They were unsure of their career because they had to face economic problems often.

Some parents have point of view that they should allow their son to make his own choices because at this age students are mature to select their own decisions because they are thinking, their son would develop their interest in his studies which lead to a higher level of success. The results of Government Post Graduate College Muzaffargarh turned out to be true after findings which supported the evidence that parents did not visit college to check the progress report of their sons. Only 2 respondent's parents had contact with the teacher which was because of their earlier social relation. While the results from other two colleges show the opinion of students having a greater percentage of parents visiting in college, no frequent visits were found after qualitative inquiry.

In Commerce College, parents had almost no visits in a year; this point was greatly emphasized by the principle of the college during his interview with the researcher. In the monthly parent-teachers meeting of Punjab College, infrequent visits of parents were found true by the researcher. Hence the total opposite was observed in Government College of Commerce as well as in Punjab College. This clearly showed that there was a huge gap and lack of connection between parents and teachers.

The impact was of subject selection by the relatives on respondents' subject selection. Almost, 75% respondents of Government Post Graduate College and 72% of respondents of Government College of Commerce had selected different subjects than their relatives. The reasons were different socio-economic conditions, different social, sub cultural environments and increased effect of peer groups. When these results were compared with the results obtained from Punjab College, a totally different situation was observed as 66% respondents agreed to study the same subjects as their relatives. The previous results suggested that respondents of Punjab College had more influenced of family than any other factor in their career decision making.

More than 70% respondents had selected the same subjects as their friends. It explains the effect of peer groups on the career selection of respondents. Referring to results discussed above, it was concluded that respondents had received more impact from their peer group on career choice as compared to their relatives. A study shows that friends had statistically significant influence on students' career choice intentions. It also shows that the students are more likely to choose a career when their friends support and encourage them. The slightly low percentage, 66% Punjab College also had similar results. The findings revealed that adolescents were less influenced by peers if they had close and involving relationships with their parents but the ability of peers to influence the behaviours and attitudes towards career selection.

The results of the study suggested there was an evidence of peer influence on career behaviours in a range of contexts, operating in a range of ways. The findings from all three colleges, the quality of relationship between respondents and their peers, as well as the type of peers they associate with their career choice. The result found that a higher percentage of respondents got information from their family members and close relatives regarding their career choice. In case of Government Post Graduate College, the respondents said that they

discussed their goals with their family, but due to lack of information, the family members were unable to convey enough information to them. As a result, the respondents were not aware of the further steps leading to their career. In case of Commerce College, the similar situation was observed while in case of Punjab College, parents had information up to certain extent which was obtained from their colleagues at work or senior officers as most of the parents were residing in the urban areas of Muzaffargarh city. They were jobbers and businessmen. Due to this, there were greater chances of their interaction with people of different fields of works.

The results from Government Post Graduate College indicated that there was a gap between teachers and students, Almost 71% students denied they had discussed their career selection with their teachers. Students found it irrelevant to discuss their career with their teachers as their main purpose in college. The results from Commerce College were found opposite. Approximately, 74% respondents agreed they had discussed their career with their teachers. According to them, their teachers had good ideas about their field as well as 26% respondents replied 'No' in their option. Similar results were obtained from Punjab College as 62% respondents agreed that they had discussed their career with their teachers. The only difference found quantitatively was between the respondents of Punjab College and Commerce College. The respondents from Punjab College had a friendly relationship with their teachers. There were fewer gaps between teachers and students therefore students found it easy to discuss their career with their teachers. The other 38% respondents did not discuss their career with teachers. They said that they had all the information and guiding sources other than teachers.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

Choice of career is impacted by multiple factors. Selecting a career without proper information and sufficient resources is equally harmful for students as random and wrong career choice. The efforts of students go in vain, resources are wasted and society does not get a professional in their regarding field. Financial goals associated with specific career are also not fulfilled. This study revealed that multiple factors were impacting a student's career choice. Three selected different colleges were having different subcultures. Vision and ideas were mainly influenced by the challenges that students were facing. Students studying in public sector college were selecting professions as per their financial strength. Students in private sector college were mainly impressed or guided by their family. However, the common factor that was found among all colleges was that the students were unaware of the proper professional guidance. The students change their career choice regarding their resource and amount of information they received. At this age, students are motivated and become more confident if they know more about a specific profession. Information about a career includes its status in society, earnings, the steps towards that profession and financial expense. It is important that policies should be devised after research at grass root level so they have impacts from which desired results can be obtained. Government should release an annual, bi-annual and five-year forecast which should show how many professionals would be required in specific fields. At the same time, the government should encourage students to choose those fields and for that scholarship should be awarded. Universities should encourage the admissions in those subjects which are highlighted in government forecasts. This will help reduce saturation in certain professional fields. Simultaneously, it will provide professionals where they are needed.

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