



**A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE OF STUDENTS WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NATTIKA PANCHAYATH, THRISSUR DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

The basic objective of an education system is to impart knowledge and to help the youth to plan their future career. Career decision is an important decision that is to be made by a student from the stage of pursuing graduation. There are many factors that influence one's career decisions. The aim of present study is to identify the factors that influence the career choice of students and the significance of career counseling for career development. The study is a descriptive in nature. Target population was undergraduate and postgraduate students of Nattika Panchayat, Thrissur district. The sample was drawn using the convenience sampling technique. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire. For the analysis of data, statistical tools such as percentage analysis, chi-square test and weighted average score and ranking were used. The findings of the study reveal that personal factors were the most influential in making career choice, followed by family, peers, career counseling and other factors. The results also revealed that career counseling was considered significant for career development.

Keywords: Career choice, career counseling, career decision

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1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of education is to give young people proper knowledge to realistically plan for their future careers. Career plays an important role in the life of an individual. Career choice is an important aspect as it determines the blueprint, played by an individual in the future (Asad Afzal Humayon, 2018). Having a right career can provide satisfaction to a person. Career decision affects the life, work and accomplishments of a person throughout his/her entire lifetime (Napompech, 2011). One of the important decision-making processes that is crucial to every person is related to career selection (DeSimone et al., 2002). Making a wrong career decision can have tremendous impact on the life of a person, as this decision will pass on all over their life.

Career related decisions are complicated and have broad and long-term consequences that are not always obvious (Hiebert, 2019:13). Career decisions are unique to individuals. It depends on many factors. When we think about career choice, several things come into mind such as job-description, training and education required, career outlook and salary. However, there are many other factors that may influence one's decisions. External factors consist of economy, labour market etc., whereas internal factors include education, family background etc.

Unfortunately, not many students are able to make out a right career choice. Some students insist on studying courses where they clearly lack foundations in academic and attitude preparation (Koech, 2016). Choosing a career path is a crucial turning point in student's life, but many students are not able to express a right career choice (Gathigia, 2011). It was also noted that there are situations where students enrol in certain programs, just to find out later that they lack interest in this particular field. If a wrong choice has been made or a wrong methodology has been adopted, the result will be fatigue in work, feelings of regret, discomfort and complaints all of which can lead to a horrible life experience (Abdullah, 2007). According to Najmuddin (2005), the main reason behind the problem of student's poor career choice is that, they lose their rights to choose a subject that they are interested in. After finishing high school, students tend to grab whatever courses suit their education at the university level.

Therefore, it is very crucial to understand the factors that can influence the career decisions among students and examine how they are related to multidimensional notions of careers in the 21st century. Many researches have substantiated that career guidance and counseling can be of great help for

students to explore and identify various opportunities that can match with their skills, requirements and abilities. Career counseling can help the students to acquire and apply life-long skills through the development of academic, career, self-awareness and interpersonal communication skills. It has now become an integral part of education. In this context, the present study aims to identify the factors that influence the career decision among students and the significance of career counseling for career development.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify factors that influence career choice of students.
- To assess the significance of career counseling for career development

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Elsie Opiyo Newa (2021)** in the study “Factors Influencing Uptake of Career Counseling Services among University Students in Nairobi City Country, Kenya” established that uptake of career counseling services was low. The study recommended improvement of current services and introduction of career counseling programs in universities. The study also recommended initiation of giving publicity to key programs and recruitment of professional career counselor in universities.
- **Aisha H S (2020)** in the study “Guidance Curriculum for Student’s Career Development as a Better Option in Counseling Service Delivery” concluded that well equip school product with adequate career decision-making skills and adequate knowledge about self and existing educational as well as career opportunities can be obtained by adopting a guidance curriculum besides the regular curriculum.
- **Arif, Iqbal, Khalil (2019)** from their study “Factors Influencing Students’ Choices of Academic Career in Pakistan” identified the challenges that the students faces in matching the career choices with their abilities. The results showed that social and peer group factor is stronger than family factor whereas economic factor remains neutral.
- **E. Anggela & B. Astuti (2019)** based on their study on the topic “The Influence of Career Guidance Services Based on Life Skills on Career Planning for Students at State Vocational High School, Palembang” suggested that career guidance and counseling should be provided to students, especially career

guidance based on life skills, which will help the students to increase their ability to plan their careers. It also established that it could help the students to encounter the problems in school during the learning process.

- **Ranjana Bhatia (2019)** in the research topic “A Study of Factors Affecting Career Choice” revealed that parental career, peers and some more other factors influences the student’s choice of defence services as career. The study mainly recommended training of students’ parents and teachers for enhancement of student’s career choice. This study also suggested a guidance workshop for career choice to assist the students in choosing the right career.
- **Asma, Abeeda (2017)** in their study on the topic “Factors Affecting Students’ Career Choice” revealed that parents were most influential in students’ career choice followed by influence from peers, gender, print media, financial reasons, interest and others.
- **A.R.Kimaro (2016)** in the study “The Effects of Gender Stereotyping on Career Choice among Secondary School Students in Tanzania” revealed that gender stereotyping had a significant influence on career choice among secondary school students. The study also found that parents, teachers, career role models and books were the main sources of career information.
- **Rababah, A (2016)** in her study “Factors Influencing the Students Choice of Accounting as a Major: The case of X University in United Arab Emirates” revealed that the family members and peers have an influence on the student’s choice of major. Personal interests, gender, career opportunities and job availabilities are some of the factors that affect the student’s decision-making with regard to their career choice.
- **JeofreyMtemeri (2017)** in their study “Factors Influencing the Choice of Career Pathways among High School Students in Midlands Province, Zimbabwe” established that family, schools and peers have a bearing on student’s career choice. However, the study also showed that that gender was found to be less influential as reflected by the response of majority of the participants.
- **S.Iqbal (2017)** in his research on “A Study of Factors Affecting the Career Counseling of Students regarding the Choice of Field” indicated that financial problem was the background that motivated the students in choosing a

particular field of study. The study recommended that government should launch the programs to support the poor students so they may choose their field of study beyond the financial problems.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature. Data has been collected from primary source using structured questionnaire. Secondary data were also collected from books, journals, web sites and articles. Primary data were collected from a sample of 120 respondents drawn from Under Graduate and Post Graduate students of Nattika panchayath of Thrissur District, Kerala. The samples were drawn using the convenience sampling technique. For the analysis of data, statistical tools such as percentage analysis, chi-square test and weighted average score and ranking were used.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 5.1 Demographic profile of respondent

A Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	37	31
Female	83	69
Total	120	100
B Educational Qualification		
Under Graduates	78	65
Post Graduates	42	35
Total	120	100
C Annual Family Income		
Below 50,000	47	39
50,000-1,00,000	35	29
1,00,000-2,00,000	15	13
Above 200,000	23	19
Total	120	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

Analysis of demographic profile of respondents is given in Table 5.1 Out of 120 respondents, 37 (31%) were male and 83 (69%) were female. 65% of the respondents were under graduate students and 39% of the respondents has an annual family income below 50,000.

Table 5.2 Personal Interest in Choosing the Stream

Chose the Stream on Personal Interest	No Respondents	Percentage
Yes	103	86
No	17	14
Total	120	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

The above table shows that 86% of the respondents choose the stream on their own interest while 14% choose their stream of study not as per their interest.

Table 5.3 Career Goal

Have A Clear Career Goal	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	88	73
No	32	27
Total	120	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

Table 5.3 shows that 73% of the respondents have a clear career goal, whereas the remaining 27% do not have a career goal.

Table 5.4 Family Influence on Career Choice

No.	Statements	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total Score	Mean	Rank
		No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W			
1	Career choice depends on parental choice	8	40	31	124	37	111	19	38	25	25	338	2.816	3
2	Career choice depends on family income	22	110	37	148	30	90	22	44	9	9	401	3.341	2
3	Care for family influences career choice	15	75	45	180	41	123	10	20	9	9	407	3.391	1
4	Family member with same profession influences career choice	10	50	28	112	31	93	26	52	25	25	332	2.766	4

(SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, W-Weightage)

Interpretation:

The table 5.4 shows various family factors that influence the career choice of students. The mean score for each statement is found and is ranked accordingly. From the ranking of the statements, it can be interpreted that care for family is most influential in students' career choice, whereas family member with same profession is less influential in the career choice of students.

Table 5.5 Gender Factors Influence on Career Choice

No.	STATEMENTS	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total Score	Mean	Rank
		No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W			
1	There are careers suitable separately for men and women	13	65	30	120	32	96	28	56	17	17	354	2.95	2
2	Male students have higher career ambition than female students	5	25	13	52	18	54	46	92	38	38	261	2.175	4
3	Persons of same gender have influenced me in taking career decision	11	55	21	84	31	93	32	64	25	25	321	2.675	3
4	Boys and girls are socialized to choose the careers that are gender sensitive	12	60	31	124	35	105	28	56	14	14	359	2.991	1

(SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, W-Weightage)

Interpretation:

Table 5.5 shows various gender factors influencing the career choice. Generally, majority of the respondents responded that gender was less influential in their career choice. From the ranking of the statements, it can be interpreted that, majority of them agreed that boys and girls are socialized to choose the careers that are gender sensitive. Whereas, majority of them disagreed that males have higher career ambitions than females.

Table 5.6 Peer Influence on Career Choice

No.	STATEMENTS	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total Score	Mean	Rank
		No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W			
1	Career education comes from other students	10	50	47	188	38	114	16	32	9	9	393	3.275	1
2	My friends have influenced me to choose a career	12	60	41	164	31	93	25	50	11	11	378	3.15	3
3	I choose a career that is similar to my friends	8	40	26	104	29	87	38	76	19	19	326	2.716	4
4	My friends give comprehensive and proper advice on careers	12	60	40	160	42	126	13	26	13	13	385	3.208	2

(SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, W-Weightage)

Interpretation:

Table 5.6 shows the peer influence on career choice of students. From the responses, it is clear that peers do influence the career choice of students. From the analysis, it is clear that most of the students agreed that career education do come from other students. However, majority disagreed to the statement that they chose career similar to their friends.

Table 5.7 Personal Factors Influencing Career Choice

No.	STATEMENTS	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total Score	Mean	Rank
		No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W			
1	Motivation by role model	16	80	39	156	35	105	19	38	11	11	390	3.25	4
2	Name and fame	15	75	45	180	34	102	18	36	8	8	401	3.341	3
3	Self-satisfaction and personal interest	52	260	47	188	10	30	4	8	7	7	493	4.108	1
4	Social service	18	90	50	200	32	96	12	24	8	8	418	3.483	2

(SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, W-Weightage)

Interpretation:

Table 5.7 shows the personal factors that influence the career choice. From the analysis, it can be interpreted that self-satisfaction and personal interest is the most important personal factor influencing the career choice, followed by social service, name and fame respectively. Motivation by role model was less influential in making career choice

Table 5.8 Other Factors Influencing Career Choice

No.	STATEMENTS	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total Score	Mean	Rank
		No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W			
1	Career related discussion programs influences career choice	27	135	59	236	20	60	5	10	9	9	450	3.75	2
2	Information from internet helps to choose a particular career	24	120	71	284	15	45	6	12	4	4	465	3.875	1
3	Present scenario of the society influences career choice	16	80	72	288	24	72	1	2	7	7	449	3.742	3
4	Financial assistance from different agencies encourage to choose a particular career	18	90	48	192	35	105	13	26	6	6	419	3.492	5
5	Teachers/educational institutions influences to choose a career	22	110	51	204	28	84	11	22	8	8	428	3.567	4

(SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, W-Weightage)

Interpretation:

Table 5.8 shows other factors that may influence the career choice of students. From the analysis, it is concluded that information from internet helped students in choosing their career followed by other factors such as career related discussion programs, present scenario of the society and influence of teachers and educational institutions. Financial assistance from different agencies was less influential in making a career choice.

Table 5.9 Uptake of Career Counseling

Gone For Career Counseling	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	45	38
No	75	62
Total	120	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

The above table shows that majority of the respondents, i.e., 62% of them have not gone for career counseling. Whereas, 38% of the respondents have gone for career counseling.

Table 5.10 Most Influential Factor in Career Choice

Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Family	30	25
Gender	0	0
Peers	11	9
Personal	67	56
Career Counseling	8	7
Others	4	3
Total	120	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

From the above table, it is clear that the most influential factor in choosing the career is personal factors (56%), followed by family (25%), peers (9%), career counseling (7%) and other factors (3%). Gender was not influential in career choice of any of the students.

Table 5.11 Effect of Career Counseling on Career Development

No.	STATEMENTS	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total Score	Mean	Rank
		No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W	No.	W			
1	Career counseling is required for appropriate career development	22	110	57	228	30	90	4	8	7	7	443	3.692	4
2	Career counseling helps in understanding student's personal values	20	100	60	240	28	84	8	16	4	4	444	3.7	3
3	Career counseling helps students to clarify their career goals	24	120	64	256	25	75	0	0	7	7	458	3.816	1
4	Career counseling helps in assessing student's skills and abilities	16	80	63	252	31	93	6	12	4	4	441	3.675	5
5	Career counseling helps in job searching and development	18	90	67	268	26	78	2	4	7	7	447	3.725	2

(SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, W-Weightage)

Interpretation:

Table 5.11 shows the effect of career counseling on career choice. The ranking for each statement was done based on mean score. From the analysis it can be interpreted that majority of the respondents agreed that career counseling helps to clarify career goals and also helps in job searching and development.

Table 5.12 Satisfaction Level of Career Choice Made

Satisfaction Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	32	27
Satisfied	70	58
Dissatisfied	12	10
Highly Dissatisfied	6	5
Total	120	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

The above table shows that majority of the respondents, i.e., 58% are satisfied with the career choice they have made. 27% of the respondents are highly satisfied, 10% of them are dissatisfied, whereas 5% of the respondents are highly dissatisfied with the career choice they have made.

5.13 Testing the Association between Gender and Satisfaction of Career Choice Using Chi-Square Test

H0: There is no association between gender type and satisfaction level of career choice of students.

H1: There is association between gender type and satisfaction level of career choice of students.

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
9	9.9	-0.9	0.81	0.08
23	22.1	0.9	0.81	0.04
15	21.6	-6.6	43.56	2.02
55	48.4	6.6	43.56	0.9
7	3.7	3.3	10.89	2.94
5	8.3	-3.3	10.89	1.31
6	1.9	4.1	16.81	8.85
0	4.1	-4.1	16.81	4.1
Calculated Value				20.24

The calculated value of Chi-square is 20.24. The table value at 5% significance level at degree of freedom 3 is 7.815. Since the calculated value is more than table value null hypothesis is rejected.

There is association between gender type and satisfaction level of career choice of students.

6. FINDINGS

- Among the respondents, 69% were female and 31% were male.
- 39 % of the respondents has an annual family income below 50,000; 29% has annual income of 50,000-1,00,000; 13% has annual income of 1,00,000-2,00,000 and remaining 19% belonged to an income group of above 2,00,000.

- Majority of the respondents were Under Graduate students (65%) and the remaining 35% were Post Graduate students.
- Majority of the respondents chose their stream on personal interest (86%), whereas for remaining 14%, stream chosen was not according to their interest.
- Majority of the respondents had a clear career goal (73%), while the remaining 27% do not have one.
- While considering the family factors, majority agreed that care for family is most influential in choosing the career, whereas family member with same profession was less influential in making career choice.
- While considering gender factors influencing career choice, majority agreed that boys and girls were socialized to choose certain careers that are gender sensitive. Whereas majority of them disagreed that boys have higher career ambitions than girls.
- While considering peer influence on career choice, most of the students agreed that career education comes from other students, whereas majority disagreed that their career choice was similar to that of their friends.
- Among the personal factors, majority agreed that self-satisfaction and personal interest is the most important personal factor influencing career choice. However, motivation by role model was less influential in making career choice.
- Majority agreed that information from internet had an influence in their career choice, whereas financial assistance from different agencies was less influential in making a career choice.
- Among the respondent's majority of them have not gone for a career counseling (62%). Whereas 38% has gone for career counseling.
- Majority of the respondents agreed that career counseling helps to clarify career goals and helps in job searching and development.
- The most influential factor in career choice was personal factors (56%), followed by family (25%), peers (9%), career counseling (7%) and other factors (3%).
- Majority of the respondents were satisfied with the career choice they have made (58%), 27% respondents were highly satisfied, 10% of them are dissatisfied, whereas 5% of the respondents were highly dissatisfied.

7. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, following suggestions were made:

- Educational institutions should develop and implement career programmes such as career days & career orientation that will enable students develop their abilities and career paths in order to satisfy their personal aspirations in life.
- University programmes should be tailored towards the choice of the students and the society that enables the students to be acquainted with the need of profession.
- Focus group discussions for different subject areas such as science, commerce and arts can be arranged.
- The educational institutions should arrange career trips or field trips to increase the students' exposure.
- Parents and their advice play an important role in student's life in opting for their career. Based on this there is a need of career counseling seminars for students as well as their parents.
- Peer career counseling and peer education on career guidance must be done.

8. CONCLUSION

The current study investigated the factors that influence the career choice among Under Graduate and Post Graduate students of Nattika Panchayath in Thrissur district. The study focused on family, gender, peers, personal and other factors influencing the career choice along with the influence of career counseling on career development. The findings of the study established that personal factors were the most influential in making career choice, followed by family, peers, career counseling and other factors. However, gender as a factor was not influential in making career choice, as reflected by the response of all the participants. It was also noted that career counseling is very significant for career development but the uptake of career counseling was low.

In the view of importance of this topic and its inference on the future success of the students in their career, further studies can be conducted to identify the factors that are influential in a student's career choice; and use the findings in the students counseling and support centres to guide the students about their career choice criteria and options.

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