

Factors Influencing Career Selection among Post Graduate Students in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract:

Almost everyone will eventually have to deal with the challenge of the occupational choice problem. However, choosing study programmes is when students are most likely to run into this issue. Many people, especially students, hold the view that choosing a course of study is very crucial in finding their ideal future employment; it is evident from various research studies across the globe, that there are so many factors which actually influence the career choice decisions of students. The present study is an attempt to explore the Factors influencing career choice decisions of Post Graduate students in Andhra Pradesh.

38 attributes which influence the career choice were found via literature review and expert opinions which were ranked on a scale of one to five (likert scale). The study used 384 respondents through random sampling method. The data was subjected to factor analysis and generated six factor grouping. The paper concludes with the most influenced factor for career choice and implications for further research.

Keywords: Career choice, PG Students.

Introduction

Career selection is a critical decision-making process that individuals undertake to select their profession or field of work. This decision is crucial for postgraduate students who are about to enter the workforce. According to Sturges et al. (2003), a PG degree teaches students a number of critical skills. One of the major achievements in a student's academic career is often finishing their degree. Students must decide whether to pursue further education or hunt for job, which may be a difficult decision. A graduate degree no longer suffices to compete in today's fierce market. To differentiate yourself from the competition, you must have specific knowledge. After earning a degree one can pick from a variety of postgraduate programmes.

A person's employment decision is likely to be impacted by a number of variables, such as cultural and personal values, family history, and expectations for their profession, among others. Studies have been done in many cultural contexts to ascertain the variety of elements that influenced students in choosing their careers (Ozkale et al., 2004, O'zbilgin et al., 2005).

However, a literature review suggests that no empirical study has been conducted among PG students in India in order to understand their subjective view of factors influencing their career choice. According to Webster's Dictionary (1998), "choice" denotes "selecting or isolating from two or more items that which is preferred." Making a "career choice"

entails selecting one profession over another. Therefore, for "career choice" to occur, two prerequisites must be met: (1) the availability of various job possibilities; and (2) a personal preference on the part of the individual between these career options (Ozbilgin et al., 2005).

The main purpose of the study was to explore the factors that influenced the choice of career of students' pursuing a Post Graduate degree.

The amount of job options/alternatives that are accessible to a person at any one moment is determined by both personal (education, family background, attitudes, etc.) and external circumstances (labour market, status of the economy, etc.). Therefore, career choice is not unrestrained. Instead, societal influences (Swanson and Gore, 2000), personal and cultural beliefs, significant connections, and structural issues, such as limitations experienced by women in specific occupations, such as management, frequently limit job choices. According to Ozbilgin et al. (2005), the majority of job choice research has focused on predicting profession choice behaviours based on personality or demographic factors. Studies that have attempted to pinpoint characteristics that influence profession choice have generally centred on people's aptitudes, interests, opportunities, etc.

Literature review

The elements that affect profession choice have seldom been studied. According to earlier research (Ginzberg, 1951; Super, 1957; O'Connor and Kinnane, 1961; Paolillo and Estes, 1982; Felton et al., 1994), there are a variety of factors that effect students' career decisions. Carpenter and Foster (1977) and Beyon et al three-dimension's framework is the classification that is utilised most frequently in job choice research (1998).

The three components are: (1) intrinsic (job interest, personally fulfilling employment); (2) extrinsic (job availability, well-paying occupations); and (3) interpersonal (parental and significant other influence).

There is some data to support the idea that social, economic, and political developments have an impact on young people's career decisions. Bai (1998) discovered that university students who prioritised their own interests over those of society and evaluated money and power as the main job-seeking drivers had their values altered by the market economy. It has been discovered that the relative effect of several factors on students' job decisions varies between cultures (Ozbilgin et al., 2005). The majority of job choice research has focused on professions like accounting and healthcare (Carpenter and Strawser, 1970; Paolillo and Estes, 1982; Gul et al., 1989; Bundy and Norris, 1992; Morrison, 2004). A few studies (Simmering and Wilcox, 1995; Moy and Lee, 2002; O'zbilgin et al., 2005) are the exception.

The career choice of PG students and the factors influencing the choice have been rarely addressed. The subject matter is worth exploring since PG degree has raised to professional status. There is no data available about the factors that influence the career choice of students in India.

The impact of connections on career choice:

Although relationships are a crucial aspect of how people operate, interest in how relationships and occupations are interwoven has just recently grown (Blustein et al., 2004; Schultheiss, 2003; Phillips et al., 2001; Schultheisset al., 2001). The majority of study in the field has been on how networks and connections support career mobility and progress. Relationships have been neglected while choosing a career. Research efforts should be focused on determining the kinds of relationships that matter and why they are important when choosing a career. The current study specifically attempts to investigate the relative significance of various connections (mother, father, relatives, coworkers, etc.) in Indian PG students' career choices.

Individualism and collectivism, as well as the variables and connections that effect career choice:

The way that individuals think and act is significantly influenced by culture, whereas "values" are "wide dispositions to choose particular condition of affairs over others" (Hofstede, 1980). Cultural values are likely to have an effect on the variables and connections that influence students' career-related decisions. Studies have concentrated on the cultural

aspect of individualism-collectivism (I/C) as a significant predictor that influences students from countries that vary along the I/C dimension in terms of their career "option." In these studies (Auyeung and Sands, 1997; Ozbilgin et al., 2005), cultural differences in variables influencing profession choice were investigated. The I/C dimension, originally quantified experimentally by Hofstede (1980), defines how people interact to one another and to society and measures how emotionally and intellectually tethered they are to a certain network of people. The USA, the UK, and Australia cluster toward the individualist end of the dimension, whereas Asian countries like Japan, Taiwan, and India cluster toward the collectivist end, according to Hofstede's empirical index for the dimension. Individualism is the propensity for people to prioritise their own interests above all else, to see themselves as "independent" of groups, and to give greater weight to independence and autonomous action. The tendency of people to see themselves as "interdependent" and as a part of a broader group, as well as to defend the interests of group members, is known as "collectivism." As a result, preferences for social factors in choosing a vocation may vary between individualistic and collectivistic societies. There is a dearth of research on how peers, co workers, mentors, bosses, etc., affect career decisions differently. According to recent study (Benet-Martinez and Karakitapoglu-Aygu n, 2003; Kwan et al., 1997), there is a positive correlation between individualism and peer relatedness as well as collectivism and familial relatedness.

Methodology

Data

Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire. The respondents have given direct responses through Google sheets. They rated each variable based on the agreement level on likert scale of one to five (1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree).

Variables of the research

Variables of the research were items/attributes influencing the students' career choice. These career choices are the variables that could be a part of individual's career choice making process or that could direct an individual's career decisions. 38 variables were identified for the present study through literature review and experts opinions.

Sample population

The research participants are the students who are pursuing PG degree in Andhra Pradesh. The participants are selected disregard to their discipline they are enrolled in or their age. The findings of the research can be generalized to an average PG student studying in Andhra Pradesh highlighting their career choice-influencing factors.

Research instrument

Likert scale of rating one to five, where one indicates strongly disagree and five indicated strongly agree is considered for the present study. The closed ended questions would evaluate the potential influence enforced by these factors on choice with a 1-5 likert scale.

Sample size and sampling technique:

As the population size is unknown, the researcher has used the formula:

$$\text{Unlimited population: } n = \frac{z^2 \times \hat{p} (1-\hat{p})}{e^2}$$

Where

z is the z score

e is the margin of error

p̂ is the population proportion

Here at 95% of the confidence interval we get z-score of 1.96. With a sample proportion of 0.06 and margin of error of 0.05 we get 384 as the sample size for the present study.

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times \hat{p} (1 - \hat{p})}{\epsilon^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384.16$$

Sampling Technique

For the present study, exploratory factor analysis technique is used and factors were explored from the variables identified.

Results of the study

1. Factor analysis:

Factor analysis for variables of career choice:

To determine whether the factoring approach is adequate, sample adequacy measure KMO and Bartlett's test is used.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.950
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8488.595
	Df	703
	Sig.	.000

0.5 measure of KMO test are preferable. From the above table when the data is subjected to factor analysis, KMO value is 0.950 which is the best value.

Table 2: Total variance and Eigen values

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	16.607	43.701	43.701	16.607	43.701	43.701	7.116	18.727	18.727
2	2.286	6.017	49.718	2.286	6.017	49.718	3.728	9.812	28.539
3	1.953	5.139	54.857	1.953	5.139	54.857	3.519	9.262	37.800
4	1.205	3.171	58.028	1.205	3.171	58.028	3.377	8.888	46.688
5	1.026	2.699	60.727	1.026	2.699	60.727	3.189	8.392	55.080
6	1.013	2.666	63.393	1.013	2.666	63.393	3.159	8.313	63.393

38 items were grouped into 6 factors, through exploratory factor analysis.

Table 3: Rotated component matrix

Rotated Component Matrix ^a						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Parents				.714		
2.Relatives and in-laws				.620		.472
3.Teachers						.718
4.Experts						.635

5.Friends				.608		
6.Academic ability				.563		
7.Interest in the field					.695	
8.Personality					.743	
9.Outcome and efficacy					.683	
10.Job location	.430	.446	.317			
11.Earnings			.570		.310	.268
12.Working conditions		.579		.365	.339	
13.Nature of job		.680		.386		
14.Safety and security	.691			.289	.284	
15.Opportunity for foreign assignments			.575	.246	.271	
16.Working hours		.519	.272			.408
17.Promotion channel		.583	.238	.240		
18.Perquisites and benefits			.542	.231	.492	
19.Spouse	.244			.537	.284	
20.Opportunity for higher education			.600	.230		
21.Job Satisfaction		.219	.725	.258		
22.Challenging nature of job			.715	.284		
23.Family economic condition				.532		.404
24.Demand for a particular job in job market		.589	.326			.280
25.Growth prospects		.325	.574	.289	.223	
26.Siblings influence	.237	.206	.257	.694		
27.Seniors influence			.278		.246	.712
28.Option for job switching	.306	.388	.386		.383	.204
29.Retirement benefits	.501					
30.Holidays(number of leaves)	.259	.233	.674			
31.Distance from home town.		.624				.269
32.Social media	.272	.326	.233			.559
33.Aspiration for leadership roles.	.446		.587			
34.Preference towards reputed organizations	.446		.624			
35.Physical conditions	.603					
36.Health hazards	.580					
37.Option for networking.	.307		.713			
38.Welfare measures provided .	.425					
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						
a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.						

Table 4: Factor extraction

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	FACTOR 1: Safety and security						
	14.Safety and security	.691					
	29.Retirement benefits	.501					
	35.Physical conditions	.603					
	36.Health hazards	.580					
	38. Welfare measures provided.	.425					
2	FACTOR 2: Job characteristics						
	10.Job location		.446				

	12.Working conditions		.579				
	13.Nature of job		.680				
	16.Working hours		.519				
	17.Promotion channel		.583				
	22.Challenging nature of job		.715				
	28.Option for job switching		.388				
	31.Distance from home town.		.624				
	24.Demand for a particular job in job market		.589				
3	FACTOR 3: Growth opportunities and benefits						
	15.Opportunity for foreign assignments			.575			
	20.Opportunity for higher education			.600			
	22.Challenging nature of job			.715			
	33. Aspiration for leadership roles.			.587			
	34.Preference towards reputed organizations			.624			
	37.Option for networking			.713			
	25.Growth prospects			.574			
	30.Holidays(number of leaves)			.674			
	21.Job Satisfaction			.725			
	18.Perquisites and benefits			.542			
	11.Earnings			.570			
4	FACTOR 4: Friends and Family						
	1.Parents				.714		
	2.Relatives and in-laws				.620		
	5.Friends				.608		
	19.Spouse				.537		
	23.Family economic condition				.532		
	26.Siblings influence				.694		
5	FACTOR 5: Personality						
	7.Interest in the field					.695	
	8.Personality					.743	
	9.Outcome and efficacy					.683	
6	FACTOR 6: Teachers and peer group						
	3.Teachers					.718	
	4.Experts					.635	
	27.Seniors influence					.712	

Factor analysis result is present in the table above. Factor “safety and security” appeared to be the most important factor in career choice decisions of the students followed by “job characteristics”, “growth opportunities and benefits”, “family and friends”, “personality” and “teachers and peer group”

Factors influencing the career choice of the PG students are grouped into 6 factors where safety and security is considered to be the most influencing factor. Cumulative per cent appeared to be 63.393 for all the groups extracted. The results of the study are in favour of safety and security factor, i.e students tend to choose their career which provides safety and security (Safety and security, Retirement benefits, Physical conditions, Health hazards, Welfare measures provided.)

Conclusion

Students place their career decision on a variety of factors. This study provides an outlook of most influencing factor for career choice in PG students. These all influences are not mere influences they shape the future of the society since

career choice decision even of a single individual is very important for a society. Among the found 6 factors students prefer security and safety for their career decisions.

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