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CAREER PREFERENCE OF GRADUATES IN TAMILNADU: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

Dr.M.Rathi Meena, Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Dr.Umayal Ramanathan College for Women, Karaikudi - 630004 (rathimeenu226@gmail.com)

Dr.G.Parimalarani, Professor, Department of Banking Management, Alagappa University, Karikudi-630004, Tamil Nadu Email (parimalaranig@alagappauniversity.ac.in)

Abstract

Choosing the right career is important for every individual. It is not only useful for themselves and society too. While selecting a career, there are various factors to be considered. Hence the choice of career is very important to have an empirical understanding of factors that influence a graduate's choice of a particular career. The main goal of the study is to find out the career preference of graduates and the underlying reasons for such career preferences. For that researcher collected 151 data by using the purposive sampling technique. The sample of the study consists of final year students and passed out graduates from all the majors including Arts, Science, Management and Engineering. The researcher used Google form online survey to collect the data through a well-structured questionnaire. The study concludes that Job security, Availability of jobs, Inspiration from teachers, and Personal interest (Challenging& interesting jobs) are significant factors that influence the graduate's career choice. In addition to the availability of job and challenging & interest on job plays a significant role in the career choice of graduates.

Keyword: Career, Preference, Choice, Job

Introduction

Every individual is unique from one another in terms of their power, skill, expertise, and dream as well as in their career. Career plays an important role in every individual's life not only to determine their level of income but also it affects their personality and perception of life. Career preference is a stage where graduates plan and prepare themselves for the role in which they would like to get into the desired job to improve the standard of living and personal dignity Dangoy& Madrigal (2020). Career decisions are one the most important and complex decisions every individual faces during their life. Kazi&Akhlq (2017) Career preference is an indicator and determinant of the individual's future level of income and nature of employment and as a result, it affects an individual's personality and outlook. Shimoni (2018) says that if the career preferences aren't aligned with the expectation the individual's efforts and resources will be wasted. Most of the graduates prefer a career that provides a steady base for earning a livelihood as well as improving their standard of living. Selecting the right professional can make the difference between enjoying and detesting the career in the future. Watson et.al (2010) specified that every graduate is undergoing the process of making a career choice is influenced by various factors such as their knowledge aptitudes and educational attainment.

The decision of choosing a career is very difficult for any graduates as they have to consider various factors before they choose a career and wrong decisions can change the fate of an individual. Okojide et.al (2018) states that it affects every aspect of life including the social, economic, mental, and physical lives. Salami (1999) found that many graduates made wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, peers pressure, advice from parents, teachers and friends, without adequate career counseling. The problem is computed as lack of awareness about available employment, lack of understanding suitable choice as per their need, ignoring the professional counselor's advice about suitable career choices are some of the problems visualized among the graduates. Choosing the right

profession leads to success and satisfaction and it is a prerequisite for self-actualization. Moreover, many graduates are influenced to make career preferences based on their parents' wishes.

In many countries, parents are spending a huge amount on their children's education. They believe that there is an interrelationship between education and employability. Better education leads to a better career and helps them to enter into the world of work. Hence the choice of career is very important to have an empirical understating of factors that influence a graduate's choice of a particular career. By taking this as background the present study was undertaken. The main goal of the study is to find out the career preference of graduates and the underlying reasons for such career preferences. The result of the study will be supportive for educators, graduates and policymakers, professional counselors to concentrate and provide a wide range of career information on all the available jobs to enable them to explore. The study will also help the Human Resource Managers as well as the employers to attract and retain the best employees, it also helps to know what graduates are looking for in a career and it will help them to mold their job advertisement.

Review of literature:

Hossain & Siddique (2012) specify that Career preference means self-selection of the industry by the individual based on their strength and weakness, contributing them highest probability for success.

Famolu (2020) says that choosing a career is a very complicated decision for every individual. Brown (2002) stated that an individual's career exhibit the ability and values of the person, estimating the skills required in the occupation.

Parents may also intentionally or unintentionally push a child toward their career path. Greenhaus & Callahan (1994) found five basic stages of a career Occupational choice and preparation of work, organizational entry, Early career, Mid-career and Late career. Kerka (2000) stated that career preference is influenced by students' characteristics, beliefs about themselves, culture, information technology, parents' income, and social network. Shahzad (2014) expressed that educational background plays the most important role in career selection and also he specify that most of the students chose their career by "choice" and some chose their career by "force".

Wüst & Šimić (2017) Studied differences in career preference of German and Croatian students and he found that there is a significant difference among the two countries. The German students choose their career where there is high income and better job security and Croatian students' most important aspect that influences to prefer the career are stimulating tasks and working conditions. Chisty et.al (2007) identified from their study that most of the business graduates prefer a job in the financial field, manufacturing field and telecommunication field are the prime job hubs in Bangladesh. Murgauri (2011) describes that a person's career choice is influenced by various factors such as personal and cultural values, family background, career expectations, and career guidance. (Felton, et al., 1994; Paolillo & Estes, 1992, Hewitt 2010, Sibson 2011) stated that previous studies have grouped the factor as internal factors and external factors. Internal factors consist of attitude, aptitude, personal interest, education, family background, etc and external factors comprise market acceptability, job opportunities, salary career progression, etc influence the career selections of graduates. Moy & Lee (2002) examined the significant job attributes affecting the undergraduate's career preference have been divided into three categories such as job itself, compensation, and work environment. Meddour et.al (2016) grouped that factor into four categories self-efficacy, family, personal interest, Economic consideration. Agarwala (2008) verified that graduates prefer their careers based on their skills, competencies, and abilities, (Browne 1997) in certain cases, it is verified that gender plays a significant role in business graduates.

Several studies found the various factor that influences the graduate's career preference theoretically and empirically. The various factor includes gender (Browne 1997), education, social status, self-esteem, parent education Adya & Kaiser (2005), teacher Abbasi & Sarwat (2014), etc. Many of the studies

covered specified job professional groups such as accounting, tourism, Management, etc. There is no data about the factor that influence the career choice of graduates from the entire field. Hence this study is the gateway for upcoming graduates to select the right career.

Theoretical framework

The extensive review helps the researcher to develop and understand the actual scenario of career preferences of graduates and to identify the sources that are considered influential in selecting the career. Mostari&Roy (2018) in any demographic region, job security refers to the assurance of a lifetime employment opportunity for the graduates. Wildman &Torres (2002) while deciding on their career paths graduates prefer to select career paths that provide them with high job security and high-end salary.

Hossain&Siddique (2012) financial benefit is one of the major motivations for the business graduates in career preference. Hsiao&Nova (2016) stated that salary is one of the important factors that influence the accounting graduate on their career preference process. Wong (2019) attractive salary is a major trend among Generation Y's career choices. But the study Lautenschläger&Haase (2010) revealed that the chance of higher income was ranked less by German undergraduate students.

Wadhva (1978) in his study specified that management graduates, highest preference was for working for the organization were the opportunities for fast career development at the personal level. Richardson (2009) Opportunity for career development provides positive experiences and obtaining positive perception of industry among graduates while choosing their career. Pekkaya&Çolak(2013) when it comes to selecting a career, "Career Opportunities" has been identified as the most important factor for BEÜ FEAS students.

Sarwar&Azmat (2013) Prestige is the actual recognition of one's honor or esteem by others or it is also how individual rates a particular career decision. Amoor&Aliyu (2014) Graduates of business schools avoid jobs of low prestige, such as secretarial positions. Interestingly the study by Lautenschläger & Haase (2010) finding exposed that social recognition was not important for the individual. Abrahams (2015) stated that in the United States, the most important factors for university students who preferred accounting as their profession were recognized as the availability of jobs and earning potential. Koech (2016) highlighted that graduates agreed that economic stability, availability of job opportunities, career growth and job satisfaction influenced their career choice decision. Desforges&Abouchaar (2003) specified that people in the family like father, mother and elder siblings are a great source of aspiration for the children in their career preference. Nyamwange (2016)opined that various population groups influence the graduate's career choice decision. Most graduates are influenced by extrinsic influences which are parents, peers, friends, relatives, role models and teachers.McQuerrey(2007) states that many children choose the career of their parent's professions.

Obiunu&Ebunu (2010) specified that parents, teachers, friends, and mentors are the important agents for career development. Meddour et. al(2016) study underlined that parents play an influenced role in graduate's career choice in Indonesia.

Abbasi&Sarwat (2014) researcher show that teachers have a strong influence on graduates' career choices. Ilgen (2003) people with a personal and strong interest in a specific field turn out to be successful professionals. Arthur (1996) outcome study reveals that graduates who select a career of their interest earn higher incomes. Mostari&Roy (2018) Safety, comfort in the job and a hygienic work environment motivate the individual to set their mind for a specific job and enhance the desire to attain in the job. Dockery&Barns (2005) The career preferences of nursing graduates depend on the intrinsic characteristics of the individual, where "interesting work" was ranked as the highest influence factor.

From the above review, the researcher identified several factors that are considered for the study. The principal factors of influence included Job security, Salary, Prestige / Social Status, Job flexibility,

Working hours, Place of work, Good career opportunities in the field, Personal development, Parent's influence on career decision, Challenging and interesting job, Childhood aspirations, Immediate needs of a family, Inspired by Tutor, Availability of Job, Association with other in the field and Inspired by family or friends or relatives. Hence the researchers framed the following hypothesis

Research Aim:

The main objective of the study is

1. To identify the Career preference of the graduates.
2. To evaluate the major factor influencing the career choice of graduates
3. The role of gender in influencing career choice among the students

Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature. To attain the aim of the study, the researcher collected the data by using the purposive sampling technique. The sample of the study consists of final year students and passed out graduates from all the majors including Arts, Science, Management and Engineering. The researcher used Google form online survey to collect the data through a well-structured questionnaire. The well structure questionnaire was designed with the help of previous literature and then it was distributed through the graduate's E-mail id and respective class what's up the group. The closed-ended questions are captured personal details and attitude scales. Students were asked to indicate their career preferences and the important reasons behind their preferences. From that researcher got 156 respondents, after deleting the incomplete responses and missing data were deleted, resulting in a sample size is 151. After a thorough review of the literature, the questionnaire consists of 15 items. All the items were measured by using a Likert scale with a value 1 = strongly Disagree to 5 strongly agree. The first part of the questionnaire consists of demographic questions related to the respondent's background such as gender, education qualification, and stream. The Second part of the questionnaire consists of preference towards industry and reasons behind the career choice. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Cronbach's coefficient alphas were computed to determine the internal consistency reliability of the instrument used in the study. The Cronbach's Alpha value is .855 which means that all the variables can be accepted. Descriptive statistics were used to reveal the result in the form of frequencies and percentages. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of independent variable

Data Analysis

Table.1 Demographic Characteristic of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	66	44
Female	85	56
Graduates Educational Level		
Undergraduate	83	55
Postgraduate	68	45
Educational Qualification of Undergraduate		
BA	13	9
B.com	28	19
BBA	21	14
BE	54	36
B.Sc	30	20

Others	5	3
Educational Qualification of Post graduate		
MA	2	1
M.com	3	2
MBA	60	40
ME	2	1
M.Sc	12	8
Others	2	1
Nature of college		
Government	56	37
Government Aided	47	31
Private	48	31
Subject stream		
Arts	34	23
Commerce	48	32
Science	29	19
Engineering	40	27
Total	151	100

Sources: Primary data

Demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1, from the data it clear that 44% respondents are male, majority 56% of respondents are female. 55% of respondents are under graduate and 45% of respondents are post graduates. 36% of respondents are engineering graduates, 28% of respondents completed their graduation in Bachelor of commerce. 20% respondents are from B.sc stream. Majority of 60% of the respondents completed their post-graduation and belong to MBA. In that 37 respondents completed their studies in Government institution and remaining 31% from Government aided and another 31% from Private institution. Out of 151 respondents 32% of respondents are from commerce stream, 27% respondents are from Engineering stream, 23% of respondents are from Arts steam and remaining 19% of respondents are from Science stream.

Table 2: Graduates Career Preferences

Career Preferences	Frequency	Percent
Banking & Finance	70	46
Manufacturing	1	1
Retail	5	3
Education	7	5
Construction and Building Material	3	2
Technology	6	4
Government Services	10	7
Entrepreneur	18	12
Logistics	3	2
Engineering	19	13
Others	9	6
Total	151	100

Source: Primary data

The main aim of the study is to identifying the career preference, the graduates were asked to specify the field where they want to employ. Majority 46% of the graduates prefer to enter into banking and insurance sector. This result is similar finding of the study Mostari&Roy (2018), Hossain&Siddique (2012).

Table 3 Gender difference in career preference of graduates

H1: There is significant association between graduates career preference and gender

Career Preference	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Banking & Finance	19	51	70
Manufacturing	1	0	1
Retail	0	5	5
Education	1	6	7
Construction and Building Material	3	0	3
Technology	4	2	6
Government Services	4	6	10
Entrepreneur	12	6	18
Logistics	3	0	3
Engineering	13	6	19
Others	6	3	9
Total	66	85	151

Source: Primary data

Table 3 depicts the gender influence to choose the profession. It is clear from the above table that female respondents had more likely than male respondents to choose a banking career. This result supports the Hossain&Siddique (2012).

Table 4 Chi-Square Tests - association between graduates career preference and gender

	Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.0092	10	.000
Likelihood Ratio	40.1683	10	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.4713	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	151		

Source: Primary data

Calculated value (35.009) is greater than table value (29. 58) at degrees of freedom 10 in the 0.000 level of significance in the chi-square table. So we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. From the table it clear that career preference of the graduate is significantly associated with gender. This finding is parallel with this study Huang &Sverke (2007).

Table.5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
4	0.460	0.212	0.187	5.1389	1.723

Predictors: (Constant), jobsecurity, Availability of Job, Inspired by Tutor, Challenging and interesting job

Dependent Variable: Career Preference

Source: Primary data

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
4	Regression	907.544	4	226.886	8.592	.000
	Residual	3380.23	128	26.408		
	Total	4287.77	132			

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	5.947	2.961		2.008	0.0467		
job security	-2.073	0.526	-0.338	-3.945	0.0001	0.838	1.193
Availability of Job	2.302	0.598	0.349	3.852	0.0002	0.752	1.330
Inspired by Tutor	-1.535	0.520	-0.276	-2.951	0.0038	0.702	1.424
Challenging and interesting job	1.365	0.546	0.207	2.500	0.0137	0.896	1.116

Regression analysis was performed to predict the factors that influence the graduate to choose the career. The main objective of the study is to assess the reason for choosing the career option. In this study 15 reasons were considered as independent variables and the composite variable career preference is the dependent variable. The result of regression analysis considered only four factors: job security, Availability of job, Inspired by teachers and Challenging & interesting job. Table 5 depicted the results: R square of 0.212 and adjusted R square 0.187 at $P < 0.05$ which is statistically significant. The finding accounted for 21.2% of the variance that explained the dependent variable (career preference) accounted for by the independent variable (job security, Availability of job, Inspired by teachers and Challenging & interesting job) where the F value = 8.592 at $P < 0.05$. Based on ANOVA table, factors (job security, Availability of job, Inspired by teachers and Challenging & interesting job) show significant influence with the career preference. Inspiration from teacher has influence the graduates to choose their career. This result parallel with various studies Shumba&Naong (2012) and Faitar&Faitar (2013). Graduates' career choices have been influenced by challenging and interesting jobs, this outcome is supported by Meddour et.al(2016). Job security highly influence the graduates to prefer their career. This result has similarity with the finding of Mostari& Roy (2018). Availability of job influential factors that influence the career choice of graduates this output agrees with Edwards & Quinter (2011). Further analysis of the two dimensions (Independent variables) Availability of Job ($\beta = 3.852$, $p < 0.001$) and Challenging & interesting job ($\beta = 0.207$, $p < 0.001$) were significant predictors of career preference. Contradicted with job security where ($\beta = -0.338$, $p > 0.001$) and Inspired by Tutor ($\beta = -0.276$, $p > 0.001$) were not significant predictor of graduates career preference.

Conclusion:

The present study investigated the career preference of the graduates and factor that influence the graduates to choose their career. Based on the above findings, the study concludes that Job security, Availability of job, inspired by teachers and Challenging & interesting job are significant factor that influence the graduates career choice. In addition to availability of job and challenging & interest on job plays a significant role in career choice of graduates. It also concludes that career preference of the graduate is significantly associated with gender. Female respondents are more likely than male

respondents to choose a banking career. Majority of the graduates prefer to enter into banking and insurance sector.

This study suggests that career counselors or policy makers and HR Manager should mention the number of vacancies that are available in their recruitment advertisement because it attracts the graduates to choose their graduation. For example, every time banking sector announce their job vacancies with their number of vacancies hence the majority of the graduates prefer banking sector as their career. Graduates should create the opportunity of networking with professional as they can enlighten their career prospect through LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and other professional group which will help them to know about industries expectation, number of opening etc. Tutor should also play an important role in career support to the graduates in taking career decisions from their first semester. The university can design market oriented and job related practical courses.

Further research

The researcher adopted convenience sampling technique to carry out study in selected cities, Pondicherry, Trichy, Madurai, Karaikudi, Chennai Ramanathapuram and Srivilliputhur. It is therefore recommended that a further study can be carried as pan India level or other regions of Asia. Research can also be undertaken by comparing pre and post career choice of graduate, student from a particular discipline competes for a specific career and their actual employment in specific profession.

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