

## Career preferences and academic performance: A gender based study

<sup>1</sup> Eisha Verma, <sup>2</sup> Dr. Ritu Bakshi

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, Department of Educational Studies, Central University of Jammu, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Studies, Central University of Jammu, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India

### Abstract

The main concern of this paper was to study the career preferences and academic performance of the students in relation to their gender, locality and parental occupation. The investigator tried to see differences in career preferences and academic performance among university students in relation to their gender, locality and parental occupation. For the present study descriptive survey design was used with sample of 60 Central University students of different departments with the help of simple random sampling technique. The data for the study were collected using self constructed questionnaire on career preferences and to measure the academic performance, the marks obtained by the students in the previous qualified examination were taken from the record. The collected data were analyzed with the help of critical ratio and the findings of the study revealed that there are significant differences in the career preferences of the students in relation to their locality. The results, in this way go a long to help parents, teachers, government and counselors to use their human and material resources in planning and implementing policies to direct students in the path most suitable to them.

**Keywords:** gender, career preferences, academic performance, locality and parental occupation

### Introduction

Gender is an essential part of our modern vocabulary and is clearly defined as the state of being male or female and is the range of characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between masculinity and femininity. Gender influences a wide range of career-related attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes. This includes career choice, career preference, career experiences, occupational health, work attitudes, other people's perceptions and outcomes. Career choice exerts a profound influence on an individual's life. Career choice is a complex decision for students since it determines the kind of profession that they intend to pursue in life. As students try to make career choice, they face problems of matching their career choices with their personalities, attitudes, abilities and academic performance.

Appropriate choice of a career is reported to have received greater attention in the world of work (Kulshrestha, 1979) <sup>[12]</sup>. Career choice is one important decision that every human being has to make in his/her life, it is a decision that nobody should make a mistake about since what a person does for a living affects him in the present, as well as for the rest of his life. Denga (2001) <sup>[4]</sup> asserts that choosing an appropriate career is one of the most difficult or serious decision which a man or woman makes. In the same vein, Kinanee (2004) <sup>[11]</sup> opinions that the most complex problem confronting youth today involves choosing a realistic and appropriate occupation, preparing for it, liking it and keeping it.

Career choice has become a complex task with the advent of information technology. Indeed career choice is as important as choosing a life partner since it is also a lifetime process. Just like becoming miserable when the wrong marriage partner is chosen, one can also become very unhappy if ones career is not well planned (Bedu-Addo, 2000) <sup>[2]</sup>. According to Hewitt (2010) <sup>[7]</sup> most people are influenced by careers that their parents favor in order to avoid conflicts in the home. In the same way, Taylor (2004) <sup>[20]</sup> revealed that children may choose

what their parents desire simply to please them. This makes the youth confused as to why parents still see them as kids and incapable of making their own decisions. Such an individual enters this career for the parents denying the self which may render the individual incomplete in the career.

In reference to career preferences lots of advantages are there. An individual's favorite career acts like a stimulus for the better result in that relevant field. By choosing a right career option students get satisfaction in the life and can create new innovation in their selected field. In the above discussion we can conclude if someone does not choose his/her right career then he/she will be in a dilemma that where they should go so it will be the wastage of their money as well as time, therefore preferring a career of their own choice and interest is very essential for students.

### Review of related literature

Yadav, R. (2000) <sup>[21]</sup> in his study on the vocational preferences of adolescents in relation to their intelligence and achievement revealed that the highly intelligent students prefer to go to jobs related to the area of Physical Sciences whereas the average and below average intelligence groups did not differ significantly in any of the area. The study further revealed that the level of intelligence influenced the vocational preferences to a great extent, showing that achievement and intelligence had good correlations with the area of physical science and executive jobs.

Gaikwad, Sudeepa, and Madhukumar (2012) <sup>[6]</sup> in their study on career preferences and attitude towards the rural health services among the graduating interns of a medical college in Bangalore rural reported that all the interns were aspiring for post-graduation seats; not a single intern wanted to Practice with MBBS degree; only 33 interns (44.00%) would like to serve in rural areas; whereas only 7 (9.33%) interns wanted to settle permanently in rural areas and serve rural people. Thus,

the authors concluded that the attitude of interns towards the rural service is not favourable.

Pathak and Rahman (2013)<sup>[16]</sup> conducted a study on the career preferences of undergraduate students in relation to their sex, rural-urban inhabitation and level of media exposure. The findings revealed that there is significant difference between male and female as well as between rural and urban undergraduate students in certain areas of career. The study further showed significant relationship between level of media exposure and some areas of career preference of undergraduate students.

Another important study undertaken by Shakya and Singh (2013)<sup>[18]</sup> in their study career preferences among degree college adolescents in Kanpur city assess the career preferences (science and technology, commerce and management, tourism and hospitality, mass media and journalism, art and designing, medical, agriculture, defense, law and order and education) of 300 adolescents. The findings of the study revealed that education and science and technology were the most preferred carrier of adolescents and agriculture as least preferred carrier. The study also revealed that the preference of adolescents for carrier also changes with time.

Mattoo (2013)<sup>[13]</sup> in his study career choices of secondary students with special reference to gender, type of stream and parental education studied the career choices of students at secondary level. The findings of the study showed significant differences on the basis of gender and parental education in various career choices of the subjects under investigation.

Singh and Singh (2015)<sup>[19]</sup> conducted an analytical study of career preference of secondary level students of Bareilly, U.P. India. The study was carried out with the objectives to explore the career preference of secondary level students. As per the findings of the study it was recommended that attempts should be made by school and colleges to arrange guidance and counseling programmes for career choice for students.

The foregoing account of the review of related literature has made the researcher clear that although a number of research studies have so far been conducted on career preferences, still there is lacking of some areas specially related to academic performance and parental occupation.

### **Justification of the study**

Education is learning acquired by individual which is inherited from one generation to another, while career serves as its application, the collaboration of these two fields play a key role in improving individual's competence and professionalism and serve as their personal achievement.

The present global economic scenario demands one to be very serious in his/ her career planning. In this age of science and technology one should choose right career in accordance with his/her physical as well as mental abilities, potentialities, interests, aptitudes, cognitive structuring, personality make-up and availability of resources to which he/she belongs. Students of higher education should be competent enough to choose their right career. But unfortunately, it is observed that in spite of the existence of individual differences, most students are choosing their career randomly, unintelligently, without analyzing the future orientation, psycho-physical potentialities and at the will of the parents which in turn produce unemployed graduates. In such a situation, to study the career preferences of the students becomes very important. Keeping

in view the circumstances mentioned above the investigator take up a study of career preferences and academic performance of the students in relation to their gender, locality and parental occupation.

### **Objectives of the study**

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To study the differences in career preferences among university students in relation to their gender, locality and parental occupation.
2. To study the differences in academic performance among university students in relation to their gender, locality and parental occupation.
3. To suggest some educational implications on the basis of findings of the study.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

On the basis of the objectives of the study following hypotheses were drawn:

1. There will be no significant gender differences in career preferences among university students.
2. There will be no significant locality differences in career preferences among university students.
3. There will be no significant differences in career preference among university students in relation to their parent's occupation.
4. There will be no significant gender differences in academic performance among university students.
5. There will be no significant locality differences in academic performance among university students.
6. There will be no significant differences in academic performance among university students in relation to their parent's occupation.

### **Delimitation of the study**

The present study was confined to the following areas:

1. The study was delimited to the students of Central University of Jammu only.
2. The study was delimited to a sample of 60 students only.
3. The study was confined to variables career preferences and academic performance only.

### **Population and sample**

The population of the present study was the students of the different departments of the central university of Jammu. In the present study, sample of 60 students studying in the different departments were randomly selected.

### **Study design**

In the present study the survey method was used. For the survey a self made questionnaire was employed for career preferences and for the academic performance; the marks obtained by the students in the previous qualified examination were taken from the record.

### **Statistical technique used**

For the analysis and interpretation of data the following techniques were used:

1. Mean
2. Standard deviation
3. Critical ratio

**Results and discussions**

**Table 1:** Showing critical ratio of mean score of university students towards career preferences in relation to gender, locality and parental occupation

S. No.	Variables	N	M	$\sigma$	C.R.	Level of Significance	
01.	Gender	Male	30	30.70	8.01	0.29	Not Significant
		Female	30	31.03	7.93		
02.	Locality	Rural	27	27.33	4.66	3.05	Significant at .01 level
		Urban	33	29.31	4.44		
03.	Parental occupation	Services	31	28.44	5.33	1.52	Not Significant
		Business	29	29.55	4.98		

From Table 1 it clearly reflects that the critical ratio of mean score of university students towards career preferences of male and female students was not significant. Therefore it can be said that male and female university students do not differ significantly in their preferences towards career. So the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant gender differences in career preferences among university students was accepted. The results are in agreement with the study carried earlier in the field by (Hossain & Siddique 2015) [8].

From Table 1 it clearly reflects that the critical ratio of mean score of university students belonging from rural and urban areas was significant at .01 level of significance. As calculated value of C.R. (i.e. 3.05) is greater than 2.58 which is table value at 0.01 level. Therefore it can be said that the students belonging from rural and urban areas differ significantly in their preferences towards career.

Also by further comparing mean value we can say that the mean score of students belonging from urban area (M =29.31)

is more than the students belonging from rural area (M = 27.33). Hence it clearly depicts that the career preferences of the urban area students are different as compared to their rural counterparts. So the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant locality differences in career preferences among university students was rejected.

From Table 1 it clearly reflects that the critical ratio of mean score of the subjects in their career preferences on the basis of parental occupation was not significant. Therefore it can be said that the children whose parents are in services and business do not differ significantly in their preferences towards career and their parent’s occupation does not affect the career preference of their children. So the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference in career preference among university students in relation to their parent's occupation was accepted. The results are in conformity with the study carried out by other researcher (Singh and Singh, 2015) [19].

**Table 2:** Showing critical ratio of mean score of university students towards academic performance in relation to gender, locality and parental occupation

S. No.	Variables	N	M	$\sigma$	C.R.	Level of Significance	
01.	Gender	Male	30	19.33	4.60	0.15	Not Significant
		Female	30	19.23	4.41		
02.	Locality	Rural	27	22.37	5.44	1.40	Not Significant
		Urban	33	24.44	5.55		
03.	Parental occupation	Services	31	31.03	7.83	0.42	Not Significant
		Business	29	30.70	8.21		

From Table 2 it clearly reflects that the critical ratio of mean score of university students towards academic performance in relation to their gender, locality and parental occupation was not significant. Therefore it can be said that university students do not differ significantly in relation to their gender, locality and parental occupation. So the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference differences in academic performance among university students in relation to gender, locality and parental occupation was accepted.

**Findings and implications**

As per the findings of the study it is revealed that there are significant differences in the career preferences of the rural and urban area students and by further comparing the mean score we come to know that the mean score of students belonging from urban area is higher than the rural counterparts. Hence the following suggestions were offered:

1. It is suggested that there must be an arrangement for career guidance and counseling programmes for the rural area students so that they are also aware of the different

careers and the requisites essential for pursuing that career.

2. Career related workshops must be organized for the students so that they can explore their knowledge about different careers available to them.
3. Locality is emerged as a significant factor in the career choice of the students. It is therefore suggested that all stakeholders in education should continue to encourage both rural and urban area students to offer subjects of their choice, which invariably influences their career choice readiness.
4. Counselors and school authorities should continue to encourage students to go in for the options which they so wish and are capable of excelling in, under no circumstances or conditions a programme should be imposed on the student of any locality.

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