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Analyzing the Factors Influencing Career Choice of Students for Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

While there is considerable research on employees' satisfaction, motivation and performance, there is lack of conclusive evidence on these dimensions of organisational betterment. This puzzle becomes more complex for sales-force that deals with great stress in Indian life insurance context. This paper explores the underlying factors of satisfaction and motivation separately and predicts the impact of satisfaction on motivation, and the impact of motivation on performance. To justify these objectives empirically, a structured questionnaire has been executed to life-insurance sales-force with a sample size of 345 through stratified random sampling method. The data is analysed through explorative factor analysis, which is followed by regression analysis to test the prediction of motivation by satisfaction and then prediction of performance by motivation. The findings reveal that there is significant positive impact of sales-force satisfaction on their motivation, which ultimately has a significant positive impact on performance of sales-force in the life-insurance industry.

Keywords: Sales-force; Satisfaction; Motivation; Performance; Life-insurance industry; regression; factor analysis.

1.0 Introduction

The right career choice plays very important role into student's life, especially, up to senior secondary education. All students are dependent upon the knowledge and exposure provided by the school or authority, but after school education many students feels directionless and the majority of students in a backward state like Rajasthan, fails into their career and never achieved as per their expectations and efforts. This is a game

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changer stage of every student's life. We cannot avoid this time, money and motivation required at this point of their career. There are lots of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that cannot be neglected as knowledge, new technology trends, opportunities available into market, passionate goals, clarity about career choice, information about job opportunities etc.

This study is focused upon all UG and PG level students' of all streams like science, mathematics, commerce and arts students. In this study expert opinion method is used to get clear idea about factors influencing the career selection process of the students and then by using AHP, then to develop a framework ISM Modeling is used. Education Industry is having biggest contribution to develop the nation, to understand policies, establish successful business empire, to remove poverty and finally to create more employment opportunities. So this study focuses on the right career decision making process to increase the employability and job satisfaction level in India.

2.0 Review of Literature

According to Ahmed, Sharif and Ahmad (2017), factors influencing the career choice of business students are ease of subject, interest area, future opportunities, employability, social class have minor impact but mismatch of personality, lack of interest in subject and student counselling plays major role. This study draws a need to identify more factors and other interventions to provide them more updated knowledge and information to the students about environmental opportunities. According to Kemboi et al. (2016) conducted a study on students in Kenya & found that "interest in the subject" is the most dominant factor influencing career choices of business students. Financial outcomes, ease of subject and future job opportunities were observed to have minor impact. People prefer the career that could provide them sound basis for an improved standard of living Caves, Geri and Turgunbayeva (2015). Maxwell D Eremie (2014) concluded in his research that there is significant influence of prestige of a profession on choice of career among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State. It was also concluded that gender parity has significant influence on career choice pattern among male and female senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Alexander et al (2011) examination of students enrolled in the disciplines of information technology found that liking of the subject has chief significance when looking at the factors contributing in professional direction adopted by students. According Edwards and Quinter, (2012) research it was found that Employment opportunities and learning experiences are the most influential factors that influences the

career choice of males and females. According to Hewitt (2010), factors influencing career decisions can either be intrinsic. As he stated intrinsic may include parents' choice and passion that leads to decide a suitable career path, on the other hand few students flow with the career that provides external satisfaction as job opportunity, social prestige and high income are considered as extrinsic factors. Personality is the most influential factor that effects the career planning of students (Mihyeon, 2009).

Some important factors concluded from review of literature that influences the career choice are as follows:

1. *Academic performance (F_1):* Students' academic performance plays an important role in deciding their career path. After school education the selection of subjects in Indian education system is majorly based upon their final exam results and few schools are also following policies as per their previous benchmark giving admissions in science stream and mathematics stream. Similarly, if their academic performances are not good then they [have to face problems in career progression for taking admissions in top colleges and universities.
2. *Personal interests in subject (F_2):* According to previous researches and studies done in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa it can easily defined that while selecting any particular course, personal interest in subject plays very important role in career progression of student. Zhang (2007) research concluded that personal liking of an individual towards a particular subject majorly contributes in career selection decision process. Alexander et al (2011) found by examination of students enrolled in the disciplines of information technology, were influenced by personal interest when looking at the factors contributing in professional growth. It was found that interest depicted by students in some subjects will mostly lead to the better examination performance and selection of profession in the same direction.
3. *Personality and attitude (F_3):* Personality is another important factor in career choice. Studies have shown that students will choose a major that they think will fit their personality type (Mihyeon, 2009). The students who believe in themselves found some courses and filed in which they can enjoy their work life. According to studies, students who have an investigative personality are more likely to major in science fields. Students with an artistic personality are more likely to major in arts and in interdisciplinary fields. Kemboi et al. (2016) conducted a study on 399 students in Kenya which resulted in that there is a relationship between personality types, and career choice. Most of the students were satisfied with the course they selected before entering the university which indicates that suitable career choice for students would improve satisfaction and success in their course of study and future employment. But on the other side, when students make changes in their course

section it indicated that the choices of subject selection did not go in line with their future career choices. Consequently, it constructs probability of the status of the relationship between Personality and career choices. Ahmed, Sharif and Ahmad (2017) conduct research on personality types and career choice among undergraduate students in Kenya. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between personality types and respective career choices of students.

4. *Future opportunities (F₄)*: Every person is expecting future growth in present scenario. Similarly, youth is also looking for a career that can provide good salaries, life style and growth to fulfill their social needs and esteem needs. Every person undertaking the procedure of choosing opportunities subjective by many factors, context they live in, personal aptitudes and educational skills Bandura, Barbaranelli et. al (2001).
5. *Influential people (F₅)*: Friends and family circles comes under peer group and influential people for selection of any career path among youth. There are many people in a student's life who can influence their career decisions. Most of the time, parents and friends play a large role, but coaches and teachers can also have a huge impact on a student's life (Wildman and Torres, 2001). Teachers and coaches can help a student to do better in school, to get into college or to get on a better path. The impact that these adults have on young students can have a major influence on their career path.
6. *Easy subject (F₆)*: A vast majority of candidates enrolled found that due to lack of knowledge and skill set students are opting those subjects, which requires less technical ability & intellectual skills. So that they avoid few specialized courses such as Medical, Chartered Accountants and Scientists or Engineers. They do not want to involve in the fields that may sound to require extensive hard work.
7. *Financial expenditure (F₇)*: Financial outcomes also have key role in selecting career choices among students as the families who re not sound enough cannot motivate their children to go for coaching's, crash courses and other efforts towards achievement of career goals due to unavailability or unaffordability of financial expenses. A vast majority of candidates enrolled for university majors found themselves lacking intellectual abilities required for certain elective courses. They wanted to ease their lives by avoiding enrolments in such majors or specialized courses. They do not want to involve in the fields that may sound to require extensive hard work (Fizer, 2013). Borchert (2002), PhD thesis is based on the related topic in which he found that opportunities opened to an individual can contribute significantly in one's choice of desirable career. Poverty and income

constraints hinder their way of career success so these opportunities in various forms help them in shaping their career path.

8. *Social prestige (F_8)*: According to expert opinion social prestige associated with profession plays important role in career selection as money can be earned with various sources but few professions are having comparatively high respect and influence in society. Similarly, youth is also concern about the prestige issue while making career decisions for future growth.
9. *Gender (F_9)*: According to Perrone et. al. (2001). There is a significant difference between the choice of males and females while selecting their career as male were more influenced by anticipated earnings and females were more attracted towards social status.
10. *Career flexibility (F_{10})*: In today's world of globalization every employee, business man and youth wants to grow with economic era. So career flexibility should be considered to select particular course and its future availability of opportunities. Specifically for higher education students are more focused about flexible career to grab all opportunities worldwide.
11. *Job security (F_{11})*: Job Security plays an important role while selecting a career path because in the changing external environment youth also facing some insecurity with the high paid jobs for the short tenure they are preferring comparatively stable payment jobs with security. It is also concluded in previous researched when these students look into a major or a career path, they seek out the higher salary jobs or they look for majors that involve the most job security. Students want to make sure they are secure for the rest of their lives and may look into careers that have benefits to help them in the long run (Wildman and Torres, 2001).
12. *Dominating family business or course (F_{12})*: Students whose parents own and operate small businesses may want or feel obligated to follow in their parents' footsteps Students may consider the ease of life that is available to them because a job would be available to them right out of school, they could hold a high position within the business, and there is a possibility that they might own and operate the Business one day. So, before selecting any career path their dominating family business can influence them to select particular field. (Darren Fizer, 2013)

3.0 Objective of Research

The objectives of the paper are as follows:

- To identify critical factors influencing career decisions for higher education.

- To develop the causal framework among the critical factors and validate through appropriate analysis.

3.1 Significance of the study

The scope of the study is to provide a clear picture to all students guide, academicians, mentors, parents and students about the driving forces while selecting a career path. This study will be worthful to all students segment, who are presently in selection stage for choosing any UG or PG Courses. This study will be needful to the planning endeavours for the fresh pass out school students to help them in selection of their correct career choice.

4.0 Research Methodology

4.1 Statement of problem

The problem in selecting right career choice among students has raised lots of questions in the mind of Academicians, parents and career counsellors. The problem has been a delicate issue that has to be approached with caution. There is no clear process that students must have used to make career choice. Senior Secondary school students and UG students should have the opportunity to explore all of the choices available in order to make a logical educated plan when choosing a career. So that they will not have to switch their career from one direction to other.

4.2 Type of research

Exploratory & Descriptive research design is used to analyze the factors affecting career choices of students.

4.3 Data collection

Based on literature review and expert opinion from academia from education industry, (including senior secondary school teachers, UG lecturers, PG lecturers) major factors were being selected. Then their contribution in career selection is analyzed. For analysing the data firstly, “AHP technique” is used to identify the critical factors to achieve the research objective. After identifying the critical factors a Structural framework is developed with the help of ISM modelling for sound results and to validate the digraph MICMAC analysis is applied to justify their contribution for career decision making process among students.

5.0 Data Analysis

The results and data analysis are presented in Tables 1-6 below.

Table 1: Pairwise Comparison Matrix

	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₅	F ₆	F ₇	F ₈	F ₉	F ₁₀	F ₁₁	F ₁₂
Academic Performance (F₁)	1	3	1/5	1/5	7	1	7	1/7	1/3	1/2	1/9	3
Personal Interest (F₂)	1/3	1	1	3	5	1/4	3	1/3	1/5	7	1/3	1/4
Personality & Attitude (F₃)	5	1	1	7	3	1/2	3	1	1	3	7	9
Future Job Opportunities (F₄)	5	1/3	1/7	1	5	5	1/7	1	2	3	1/5	7
Influential People (F₅)	1/7	1/5	1/3	1/5	1	3	1/5	1/7	1	3	1/9	1
Ease in Subject (F₆)	1	4	2	1/5	1/3	1	1/7	1/5	1/3	2	1/5	3
Financial Expense(F₇)	1/7	1/3	1/3	7	5	7	1	1/7	1/5	1/9	1/7	5
Social Prestige(F₈)	7	3	1	1	7	5	7	1	5	9	1	7
Gender (F₉)	3	5	1	1/2	1	3	5	1/5	1	3	1/5	2
Career Flexiblity (F₁₀)	2	1/7	1/3	1/3	1/3	1/2	9	1/9	1/3	1	1/9	2
Job security (F₁₁)	9	3	1/7	5	9	5	7	1	5	9	1	9
Family Course (F₁₂)	1/3	4	1/9	1/7	1	1/3	1/5	1/7	1/2	1/2	1/9	1

Source: Computed by Author by using AHP Technique

Table 2: Weightage Calculation

nth root	Eigen Vector	Lambda λ
0.774611425	0.048917599	1
0.851768157	0.053790135	1.11
2.359455895	0.149002344	3.30
1.178029041	0.074393884	1.39
0.441212412	0.027863069	0.50
0.653756304	0.04128546	0.88
0.674189905	0.042575865	1.26
3.292112449	0.207900674	2.72
1.316074013	0.083111582	1.28
0.520116186	0.032845933	0.75
3.408658099	0.215260666	3.09
0.365041465	0.023052787	0.44
Sum = 15.83502535	Sum= 1	average Lambda= 1.47

Source: Computed by Author through Ms-Excel

Contingency Index (CI) = $[\lambda_{avg} - 1]/(n-1) = 0.02911$, Contingency Ratio (CR) = 0.043088

Table 3: Self-Structural Interaction Matrix

	Personal Interest (F ₂)	Personality & Attitude (F ₃)	Future Job Opportunities (F ₄)	Social Prestige (F ₈)	Gender (F ₉)	Job security (F ₁₁)
Personal Interest (F ₂)		A	A	A	X	O
Personality & Attitude (F ₃)			O	O	A	O
Future Job Opportunities (F ₄)				O	V	X
Social Prestige (F ₈)					O	X
Gender (F ₉)						A
Job security (F ₁₁)						

Source: Computed by Author

Table 4: Initial Reachability Matrix

	Personal Interest (F ₂)	Personality & Attitude (F ₃)	Future Job Opportunities (F ₄)	Social Prestige (F ₈)	Gender (F ₉)	Job security (F ₁₁)
Personal Interest (F ₂)	1	1	0	0	1	0
Personality & Attitude (F ₃)	1	1	0	0	1	0
Future Job Opportunities (F ₄)	1	1	1	0	1	1
Social Prestige (F ₈)	1	1	0	1	0	1
Gender (F ₉)	1	1	0	0	1	0
Job security (F ₁₁)	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: Computed by Author

Table 5: Final Reachability Matrix

Factors	Reachability (R)	Antecedent Set (A)	Intersection Set	Level
F ₂	F ₂ , F ₃ , F ₉	F ₂ , F ₃ , F ₄ , F ₈ , F ₉ , F ₁₁	F ₂ , F ₃ , F ₉	1
F ₃	F ₂ , F ₃ , F ₉	F ₂ , F ₃ , F ₄ , F ₈ , F ₉ , F ₁₁	F ₂ , F ₃ , F ₉	1
F ₄	F ₂ , F ₃ , F ₄ , F ₉ , F ₁₁	F ₄ , F ₁₁	F ₄ , F ₁₁	
F ₈	F ₂ , F ₃ , F ₈ , F ₁₁	F ₈ , F ₁₁	F ₈ , F ₁₁	

F₉	F₂, F₃, F₉	F₂, F₃, F₄, F₉, F₁₁	F₂, F₃, F₉	1
F₁₁	F₂, F₃, F₄, F₈, F₉, F₁₁	F₄, F₈, F₁₁	F₄, F₈, F₁₁	

Source: Computed by Author

Table 6 (A): Interaction Partitioning Level 1

Factors	Reachability Matrix	Antecedent Matrix	Intersection Set	Level
F₄	F₄, F₁₁	F₄, F₁₁	F₄, F₁₁	2
F₈	F₈, F₁₁	F₈, F₁₁	F₈, F₁₁	2
F₁₁	F₄, F₈, F₁₁	F₄, F₈, F₁₁	F₄, F₈, F₁₁	2

Source: Computed by Author

Table 6 (B): Interaction Partitioning Level 2

	Personal Interest (F₂)	Personality & Attitude (F₃)	Future Job Opportunities (F₄)	Social Prestige (F₈)	Gender (F₉)	Job security (F₁₁)	Driving Power
Personal Interest (F₂)	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Personality & Attitude (F₃)	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Future Job Opportunities (F₄)	1	1	1	0	1	1	5
Social Prestige (F₈)	1	1	0	1	0	1	4
Gender (F₉)	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Job security (F₁₁)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Dependence Power	6	6	2	2	5	3	

Source: Computed by Author

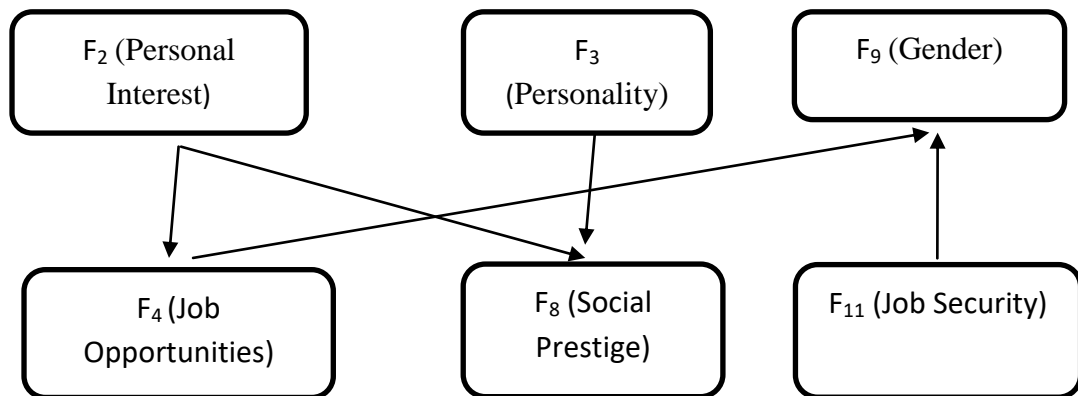
It is found in this research that F₂, F₃, and F₉ are Level 1 Factors and F₄, F₈ and F₁₁ are Level 2 Factors that influence the career decisions of UG and PG students for higher level, which interprets that F₄, F₈ and F₁₁ are driving factors and F₂, F₃ and F₉ are Dependence Factors.

6.0 MICMAC Analysis to Validate the Developed Frame Work

The purpose of MICMAC analysis is to analyze the drive power and dependence power of factors. It is done to identify the key factors that drive the system in various categories as follows:

Autonomous factors: These factors have weak drive power and weak dependence power. In this study these categories factors have eliminated like subject convenience, dominating family business etc.

Figure 1: Develop a Causal Frame Work between These Six Critical Factors



Source: Developed by Author

Linkage factors: These factors have strong drive power as well as strong dependence power. In this study

Dependent factors: These factors have weak drive power but strong dependence power. Here Personal interest F_2 , Personality & Attitude F_3 , and Gender F_9 have weak driving power (3, 3, 3) and High Dependence Power (6, 6, 5). So these are identified as dependent factors.

Independent factors: These factors have strong drive power (5, 6) but weak dependence power (2, 2, 3) like Future job opportunities F_4 and Social Prestige F_8 , Job security F_{11} . A factor with a very strong drive power (5, 6) called the 'key factor' falls into the category of independent or linkage factors.

Diagram 2: MICMAC Analysis Validation

Driving power

	Driver Factors (IV) (1)	Linkage Factors (III) (2,3,4) F_4, F_8, F_{11}
	Autonomous Factors (I)	Dependence Factors (II) (5,6) F_2, F_3, F_9



Dependence Power

Source: Computed by Author

7.0 Findings of the Study

This study reveals that factors like Social prestige, Future job opportunities and Job security are most influential factors while selecting career choice of students at higher level of education. These factors are followed by student's personal interest, gender and personality traits of an individual. It reflects from the study that Ease of subject, financial expenses, Career flexibility has less influence on career selection criteria. In Indian education system people are more concern about future job opportunities and job security before selecting career path. As Employability is the most influential factors among youth for choosing any career path and will be followed by social prestige associated with profession. Hence, through expert opinion it is proved that youth is more interested in opting a respectful profession like Doctor, Engineer, and Scientist and they give more priority to social prestige rather than monetary benefit. On the other hand few factors, like Personality & attitude, Personal interest and Gender is also proven as influential factor but the results are differ from person to person as these factors come under dependent factor.

Personal Interest > Personality & Attitude > Gender = Dependent Factors

Future Job Opportunities > Job Security > Social Prestige = Independent Factors

These critical factors are identified by ISM Modelling by calculating dependent and driving power and then structural frame work was developed for level 1 and level 2 factors. It results as level 2 factors are dependent upon level 1 factors, which states these following results –

Job opportunity influences personal interest, Personality or attitude and Gender. As youth is more concern about employability and it is found that in any profession if external opportunities are more for job then it will affect the pre-mind set of youth and their interest will get divert. Similarly, job opportunities influences personality and gender. As male are more dominance in career planning by this factor.

Social prestige influences personal interest and attitude of an individual towards its life. It is found by expert opinion that some students select defence sector, few of them like to join NGO and rest are running for their jobs in private or government sectors. So it's clearly found that if someone is more concern about social prestige then it doesn't matter upon their gender only their personal interest and attitude will dominate their career selection process.

Job security influences gender, as males are more influenced by job security and giving priority in career selection criteria.

8.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Education is most important tool to judge any persons reachability and knowledge, intelligence and decision making power. This study helps in identifying factors influencing student's career decision process. It is found that there are Nemours factors as Academic performance, personal interest, personality 7 attitude, ease in subject, future job opportunities, job security, dominating family course, peer pressure, career flexibility etc. As till yet any universal process is not available to explore career options for higher education. According to individual budget, knowledge and resources availability youth is selecting their career path but at later stages after completion of their courses they are not having stability in their life to beat financial expenses and maintain standard of living. This research concludes that personal interest, personality traits and gender are most dependent factors which plays important role while selecting career path. Youth is more influenced by future job opportunities, job security and social prestige associated by profession. These are called as linkage factors, which critically affects students mind for opting any career path. On the other hand ease in subject, family business dominance and financial constraints are least important factors. However, teachers and guardian are more influential to shape their career. This study recommends that the education counsellors should keep this hierarchy of critical factors while suggesting towards any career option to the students. Counsellor can encourage students to select right path by following systematic process of sorting any options. So that career switch ratio will be decreased in few students. It will help to identify their strength and weakness at very initial stage and accordingly students can increase the probability of their successful career. Tis process will also help in educational institutes and colleges to improve their results and failure or drop out students will get reduced.

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