

Factors Affecting Career Choice Among Students: A Systematic Literature Review

Jinu Joy¹, Prakash Pillai R²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Personnel Management, Loyola College of Social Science, Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram

²Associate Professor, Department of Personnel Management, Loyola College of Social Science, Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram

ABSTRACT

A person's employment choice is an important life decision, particularly for students, as it entails balancing a number of variables. Interestingly, all such decisions may not be the right ones for many students. The present study is intended to identify the factors influencing the career choices of students. PRISMA 2020 was used to select the Research papers. The databases Scopus, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate were used to search for literature. The research paper's publishing timeframe is restricted to 2013 to 2023. Conducted a detailed review of the literature to better understand the determinants of career. The thematic analysis result explored four themes, such as personal factors, social factors, employment factors, and economic factors, that can be considered major determinants of career choice decisions among students. Details of different subthemes are also identified. Suggestions for selecting the right career choice are also included in the paper.

Keywords: Career choice, students, job choice, personal factors, social factors

Adhyayan: A Journal of Management Sciences (2024); DOI: 10.21567/adhyayan.v14i2.08

INTRODUCTION

A person's career is a pattern of their lifelong work-related activities (Mugonzibwa et al., 2000). So, choosing a career really comes down to selecting one over the other. One of the many crucial decision's students will have to make while deciding on their future plans is their career. They will be affected by this choice for the rest of their lives. Students are frequently under a lot of pressure while selecting a career choice (Dias, 2013). What a student wants to accomplish with their lifetime of work will ultimately determine who they are as an individual. Because of its complexity, the topic of "career choice" has attracted interest from academics, professionals, and the general public. The process of career decision-making among students is a complex and multifaceted journey influenced by a myriad of factors. A career lends itself well to examination from a variety of angles since it is the outcome of people interacting within organisational and social frameworks.

Research on career choice frequently proposes two prerequisites: the presence of substitute job paths and an individual's decision or preference among the accessible career paths (Özbilgin et al., 2005).

Corresponding Author: Jinu Joy, Research Scholar, Department of Personnel Management, Loyola College of Social Science, Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram, e-mail: jinujoy2112@gmail.com

How to cite this article: Joy J., Pillai P.R. (2024). Factors Affecting Career Choice Among Students: A Systematic Literature Review. *Adhyayan: A Journal of Management Sciences*, 14(2):42-48.

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None

The landscape of professional options in modern society is constantly changing due to globalisation, advancements in technology, and shifting socio-cultural paradigms (Shahzad et al., 2014). Students experience a variety of forces that shape their tastes, aspirations, and eventually, job choices as they navigate this dynamic environment. Understanding the dynamics that shape students' career choices is crucial for educators, counsellors, policymakers, and other stakeholders invested in supporting the next generation's transition into the workforce. Numerous researches involving students were carried out to determine the variables influencing job choice across the globe. Students'

decisions may also be impacted by variables like shifts in culture, national variations, the year they are studying and the corresponding shifts in the labour market, economic situations, etc. This study aims to explore and analyse the various factors that significantly impact the career decisions of students across different educational levels and backgrounds.

Major Career Choice Theories

A number of theories offer frameworks for comprehending the choice of career. Some of them are trait and factor theory, Holland's theory of vocational types, Super's developmental theory, Ginzberg's theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) etc.

Frank Parsons' "Trait and Factor Theory" (1909) proposes that people can make wise career decisions by aligning their personal qualities and aptitudes with the demands of particular professions. Throughout the process, one must evaluate themselves, consider their professional possibilities, and base decisions on how well their personal traits align with the demands of their chosen jobs.

The RAISEC model, or Holland's Theory of Career Choice (1959): This theory, which was developed by John Holland, suggests that individuals may be categorised into six personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC). A person's career satisfaction and success are higher when their personality type and career are compatible.

According to Ginzburg's developmental theory (1951), occupational choice is a process that is irreversible, and compromise is an essential aspect of every choice. He identified three stages such as fantasy stage, tentative stage, and realistic stage in the career development process. Ages 0 to 10 are known as the fantasy stage, during which youngsters mainly simulate various occupations and careers through play. Ages 11 to 17 are the tentative stage when older kids and teenagers begin to understand the specifics of various professional tasks. Children learn their likes and dislikes during the interest stage, and they discover how their capabilities align with the demands of various vocations and careers during the capacity stage. In the value stage, people begin to see how multiple jobs might fulfil their values, and they subsequently begin to take ownership of their activities in the transition stage. The third stage is the realistic period, which lasts from the age of 17 to the early 20s. During this era, the young person plans for and establishes backup job pathways. Exploration, crystallisation, and specification are all parts of the

realistic stage. In the exploration stage, a person chooses their job route while remaining open to other options; however, in the crystallisation stage, there is more focus on one particular career path and more outstanding commitment. Finally, during the specification stage, they commit to a specific field of their professional choice.

The social cognitive career theory (SCCT), a relatively new theory, aims to explain three interrelated aspects of career development: (a) how basic interests in academics and jobs emerge; (b) how decisions about schooling and careers are made; and (c) how success in both academics and careers is achieved. The theory incorporates a number of concepts from previous career theories, including interests, abilities, values, and contextual factors, that have been confirmed to affect career growth. The SCCT was developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett in 1994. It was based on Albert Bandura's general social cognitive theory, an influential theory of cognitive and motivational processes that has been extended to the study of many areas of psychosocial functioning, such as academic performance, health behaviour, and organisational performance.

Objective of the study

- To identify various factors affecting career choices among students.
- To categorize key factors affecting career choice among students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study's foundation is a systematic literature review on students' career choices, with the goal of identifying the variables influencing students' decisions. By using different key words, such as "career choice" OR "career choices" OR "Career decision" OR "career decisions" OR "VOCATIONAL CHOICE" OR " VOCATIONAL CHOICES" OR "job choice" OR "job choices" AND " STUDENTS" AND "determinants" OR "influencers" OR " influencing factors", the researcher searched for articles in the 'Scopus database, and 397 research papers related to career choice were obtained. Articles published between 2013 and 2023 were considered, and 238 documents were found. Subject area restricted to social science, business management and accounting, psychology, arts and humanities, and 133 research papers obtained. After conducting the initial screening, papers related to career developmental theories, career effectiveness, career decision-making, etc. were excluded, and 20

Table 1: Empirical understanding of factors affecting career choice among students

<i>Author</i>	<i>participants</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Dias (2013)	Students from Portuguese	The findings highlight the importance of a social status, intelligence, gender, competencies, values, and interests when creating a career plan.
Saleem et.al (2014)	Business students from Lahore, Pakistan	Identified the importance of mass media and personal factors.
Naz et.al (2014)	University students from Pakistan	Identified the influence of peer group
Abbasi and Sarwat (2014)	management, agriculture, engineering, pharmacy and medical students from of Pakistan	Students consider Growth opportunities, occupational charm, societal inspiration and self-esteem etc. when selecting career choice
Albugamy (2014)	MBA students from Saudi Arabia	Family and religion play an important role while selecting career.
Shahzad et.al (2014)	Students from Gujarat, India	The results demonstrate that a student's choice of career was influenced by their educational background, socioeconomic background, environment, personality, employment opportunities, and motivation.
Omar et.al (2015)	Accounting students from Malaysia	When choosing a job, starting salary, employer reputation, and working environment are crucial considerations.
Tampoe (2016)	Management students from Sri Lanka	salary, a fulfilling work, job security, and educational opportunities were the factors that influenced students' choice of jobs the most.
Kazi and Akhlaq (2017)	Public university students from Pakistan	According to the findings, parental influence is the most important, followed by peer, gender, print media, financial, and other influences.
Wüst and Šimić (2017)	German and Croatian students	While Croatian students place more significance on career opportunities and prestige, German students place a much higher value on safe jobs, trust, and a high salary.
Özek and Ferraris (2018)	University students from Turkey and Italy	Identified the role of self-awareness and self-efficacy.
Gwelo (2019)	public University students from Tanzania	Results showed that opportunities, family, peers, and personality all strongly influenced profession choice.
Njogu (2019)	Meru	The findings indicate that career guidance, family aspirations, and the media have a statistically and significantly significant impact on the careers chosen by students in public secondary schools in Meru County.
Khatri and Periwal (2020).	Accounting students from India	Based on the study, family members significantly and positively influence job decisions.
Sultana and Mahmud (2020)	Management students from Bangladesh	The decision about a career was greatly influenced by self-efficacy, personal interests, family influence, and economic factors.
Ajara and Luhar (2021)	Banking students, Mumbai, India	The findings indicate that the influence of career objectives, college counsellors, and the marks are the most important factors, followed by financial, peer, media advertisements and family influences.
Siddiky and Akter (2021)	Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU) from Bangladesh	The results of the study showed that a number of variables, including academic majors, educational attainments, career development trainings, job prestige, job security, salary, scope of promotion, scope of pension, and personal interests, significantly influence students' decisions about their careers.
Amini et.al (2023)	Students from Morocco	Based on the study, students' career decisions are significantly influenced by their study plans, educational objectives, and the support of their families and teachers.
Meinam et.al (2023)	Students from Manipur university, India	Interests, parental support, media impact (TV, radio, social media, etc.), and other factors were the key sources of motivation for students when it came to choosing a job.
Nguyen (2023)	private university from Vietnam	According to the findings, a student's decision about their major was significantly impacted by their interests, available funds, and career opportunities.



research papers were finally selected for the study. A systematic review of literature was conducted for 20 research papers, and various themes were identified. A thematic presentation is used to present the findings.

Empirical studies on factors affecting career choice among students

Twenty research papers that describe the variables influencing students' career choices are shown in Table 1. The articles were released from 2013 to 2023.

Findings

This systematic literature review set out to determine the variables affecting students' employment decisions. In light of this, all 20 articles were reviewed again to more thoroughly examine the variables impacting students' decisions on their careers. A thematic analysis was conducted. The thematic analysis result explored four themes, such as personal factors, social factors, employment factors, and economic factors, that can be considered major determinants of career choice decisions among students.

Theme 1: Personal factors

The unique qualities and traits that affect an individual's choices and actions are referred to as personal factors. Every person is unique. Everybody has distinct inclinations, tastes, and temperaments. And these factors determine a person's success in the specific employment role. The personal factors affecting career choice is a combination of different sub variables such as self-interest, abilities, skills, competences, self-efficacy and self-awareness. Personal factors are strongly affecting the career choices among student. (Salem et.al (2014); Shahzad et.al (2014), Gwelo (2019); Nguyen (2023)).

A genuine interest in a particular field might serve as a source of inspiration and job satisfaction. Interest is of the major determinant of career choice and it has been suggested that a person's personal interests, which are defined as specific topics they are interested in, are the main element influencing their choice of career (Nguyen et.al, (2023); Sultana and Mahmud; (2020); Siddiky and Akter (2021)). In 2023, Meinam et al. conducted a study among students at Manipur University in India and the study found that the students interests played a major role in determining their career path.

When choosing a career, people frequently take their own talents, skills, and abilities into account. A person could be drawn to a profession that plays to their skills and talents. It has been observed that students'

perceptions of their skill, competence, and ability play a crucial role when choosing one professional path over another. students place a high value on their education and training, which determines their skills, competence, and abilities.

Self-efficacy expectations, which are defined as an individual's views about their capacity to carry out a specific activity or behaviour, were thought to be important mediators of behaviour and behaviour change (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy ((Özek and Ferraris (2018) and self-awareness are identified as a strong determinant of career choice among students by many researchers (Özek & Ferraris,2020); (Gwelo (2019); (Abbasi and Sarwat, 2014).

Theme II: Social factors

The actions of socialisation agents in a person's life, such as peers, family members, educators, and societal obligations, are referred to as social. Factors such as the influence of peers, family, teachers, career counsellors, and the media are included in social factors.

The literature covered the degree to which friends, family, teachers, and social obligations affect students' decisions about their careers. Researchers like Kazi and Akhlaq (2017), Gwelo (2019), Njogu (2019), Khatri and Periwal (2020), Sultana and Mahmud (2020), Amini et al. (2023), and Meinam et al. (2023) have widely discussed the influence of family. Albugamy's (2014) study mentioned that students use their careers to give a feeling of pride to their parents by making them happy, along with providing better leaving conditions at a later stage of life.

Various studies verified that friends had influenced student's choice of jobs. (Naz et al. (2014); Kazi and Akhlaq (2017); Gwelo (2019); Ajara and Luhar (2021)). It has been demonstrated that instructors have a big impact on students' career decisions (Abbasi and Sarwat, 2014; Amini et al., 2023). Ajara & Luhar (2021) explained that college counsellors also play a crucial role in selecting a career.

As a part of society, media is also acting as a strong determinant of career choice among students (Meinam et al., 2023); Ajara and Luhar (2021); Njogu, 2019; Kazi and Akhlaq, 2017; Saleem et al., 2014).

Theme III: Employment factors

The most frequently found job-related criteria influencing students' career choices include those connected to professional prestige, safety, career development opportunities, safety, working environment, and other aspects of their jobs. Career decisions were strongly

influenced by the prestige statuses associated with particular occupations (Wüst and Šimić (2017)) and career development opportunities (Abbasi and Sarwat (2014); Shahzad et al. (2014); Wüst and Šimić (2017); Gwelo (2019); Siddiky and Akter (2021); Nguyen (2023)). The youth's selection regarding their career was also influenced by the availability of jobs. Another highly significant factor that influences profession choice is job stability (Wüst and Leko(2017); Thampoe, 2016).

Theme IV: Economic factors

Career choices are also influenced by financial considerations on a variety of levels. Money was regarded as a crucial aspect of life, especially for young people. Financial reward was also a high motivator for career decisions among students around the globe. (Wüst and Leko 2017); Sultana and Mahmud (2020); Omar et al. (2015); Tampoe (2016); Siddiky and Akter (2021).

Another sub-component of financial issues that has been found to influence students' profession choices is affordability. For the majority of people who go out to pursue careers, affordability is the most fundamental and important requirement (Nguyen et al., 2023). In layman's terms, affordability, or *paisa*, is what determines a person's purchasing capacity when they dare to dream. Only those with the means to do so can get top-notch instruction, insights, and exclusive chances. The majority of students choose a career that suits their budget rather than following their passions.

DISCUSSION

One of the most important decisions in a person's life is choosing a career, which frequently involves a complicated interaction of several contributing elements. The process of choosing a career path is especially important for students because it determines the direction of their professional life. It is essential for educators, policymakers, and career counsellors to comprehend the aspects that influence this decision-making process.

One of the main variables influencing profession choice is personal factors. These include a person's values, abilities, interests, and personality characteristics. Students who are seeking fulfilment and satisfaction in their chosen fields frequently stick into careers that match their passions and skills. It is important for students to choose a career that fits their talents, skills, and abilities for a number of reasons. A person can experience job happiness, improved performance and

success, career sustainability, and other benefits by choosing a career that aligns with their skills and talents. Career preferences can also be greatly influenced by personal objectives, such as the need for independence, creativity, or intellectual challenge Dias (2013). The career exploration process will help the students get a better understanding of themselves. Study plans and educational objectives of the students emerged as a strong influencer of career decisions (Amini et al., 2023).

Career decisions made by students are also significantly influenced by aspects relating to employment. Students' opinions of various occupations are greatly influenced by the characteristics of the labour market, which include options for career growth, earnings potential, and the need for particular talents (Tampoe,2016). Students frequently give serious thought to factors like employment stability, work-life balance, and opportunities for professional development (Thomas et al.,2024) while deciding on their future career prospects. The availability of employment in a certain field has a significant impact on career decisions (Nguyen,2023). People are more likely to seek jobs in a field where there are many job vacancies since the possibilities of employment there are higher. Professions with a reputation for long-term stability and rewards are frequently chosen over those with uncertain prospects. Clearly defined possibilities for promotion also make some careers more desirable.

The study identified the role of interpersonal factors such as the student's interactions and relationship with family members, teachers, and peers who can have an impact on the decision of the student while choosing a career to have a better societal life in the future(Gwelo,2019). The role of media is also highly visible. Students' job decisions are heavily influenced by social variables such as peer pressure, family expectations, and society norms. Social and cultural norms may encourage people to pursue particular careers or discourage them from pursuing others. Career decisions can also be influenced by family histories, influence of teachers and career counsellors, impact of media, and parental employment. Students frequently feel pressured to live up to family expectations or follow in the footsteps of family members. Families support their children emotionally, encouraging them to follow their goals and giving them comfort while they're making decisions.

When it comes to students' job decisions, teachers can be very influential. Teachers offer students the crucial direction and mentoring they need to recognise their



interests, shortcomings, and abilities. Making better job selections may result from this personalised guidance. Along with this, teachers can support students in developing their self-efficacy and confidence, which are essential for choosing a job and overcoming obstacles.

Using a variety of tests, including personality and interest inventories, career counsellors assist individuals in understanding their interests, strengths, and shortcomings. Additionally, they can help students to examine and evaluate their options by offering information on numerous employment possibilities, educational pathways, and career paths.

People who use media platforms are familiar with a variety of job options, some of which they may not have otherwise thought about. Through this exposure, they may be introduced to new areas and have their horizons widened. People are often motivated to pursue similar jobs by seeing successful professionals in many fields portrayed in media, especially movies, TV shows, and social media (Meinam et al., 2023).

Another important factor that influences students' decision about their career is their financial situation (Nguyen, 2023). Students' decision-making processes are greatly influenced by the cost of education, earning potential, and long-term financial stability associated with various careers. Since financial security and advancement are major incentives, careers with greater earning potential typically draw a larger number of applicants. Student opinions of the economic value and attractiveness of different career pathways can be influenced by factors such as student loan debt, tuition costs, and the availability of scholarships or financial aid schemes.

Practical implications

The elements that affect students' decisions about their careers are complex and interrelated. Individuals' career aspirations are shaped by a variety of factors, including personal preferences, work possibilities, social influences, and financial considerations. It is crucial to identify and understand these elements in order to direct students towards happy and attractive career pathways that suit their objectives, values, and areas of interest. Educators, policymakers, and career counsellors can assist students in making well-informed decisions about their future careers by properly addressing these influences, which will eventually promote their success and well-being in the workforce.

Limitations and Further research

This study had several limitations. We only used research papers published in the Scopus database for

identification. We might have overlooked some papers published in other databases. We used a keyword search to identify papers, potentially missing some. Our dataset was created using specific keywords. This study included only research papers published in English between 2000 and 2023. This may also act as a limitation of the study. In addition to these methodological limitations, another point related to theme identification could also be considered a limitation of the study. The researcher grouped the themes based on their own decision. There could potentially be bias in the selection of themes.

Further studies can extend in the areas such as tool development for identifying factors affecting career choices, and primary studies can be conducted to identify the various factors and their interplay in influencing career choices. We can also initiate comparative studies among different groups, such as educational levels.

CONCLUSION

This thorough literature review used thematic analysis to give a full picture of the literature around the world and come up with four main ideas. Personal factors primarily influence career decision-making. Career exploration will aid students in understanding their skills and abilities. Aspects of employment significantly influence the career decisions of students. Interpersonal factors are also influencing students' job decisions. Financial factors are also acting as a strong determinant of job choice. Students need to be careful and thoughtful when choosing a career. In the future, this study will assist in conducting quantitative research to understand the impact of factors influencing career decisions of various populations.

REFERENCES

- Abbasi, M. N., & Sarwat, N. (2014). Factors inducing career choice: Comparative study of five leading professions in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS)*, 8(3), 830-845.
- Ajara, M. N., & Luhar, A. S. (2021). Factors Influencing Career Choice While Selecting a Bachelor of Commerce in Banking and Insurance (BBI). *International Journal of Management (Ijm)*, 12(1), 1224-1229.
- Albugamy, R.T. (2014). Institutional and personal influences on career choice: a study on MBA students in Saudi Arabia (Doctoral dissertation, Brunel University, London).
- Amini, N., Sefri, Y., & Radid, M. (2023). Factors affecting students' career choices in Morocco. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 12(1), 337-345.
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (2001).

- Self-efficacy beliefs as shapers of Children's aspirations and career Trajectories. *Child Development*, 72(1), 187–206.
- Dias, D. (2013). Students' choices in Portuguese higher education: influences and motivations. *European journal of psychology of education*, 28(2), 437-451.
- Gwelo, A. S. (2019). Determinants of career choice among university students. *MOJEM: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Management*, 7(1), 1-19.
- Kazi, A. S., & Akhlaq, A. (2017). Factors affecting students' career choice. *Journal of research & reflections in education (JRRE)*, 11(2), 187-196.
- Khatri, I., & Periwal, V. (2020). Study of influence by family on career decisions of Indian management students. *International journal of creative research thoughts (IJCRT)*, ISSN, 2320-2882.
- Meinam, M., Ojha, S. N., Singh, Y. J., Lahiri, B., & Meinam, T. (2023). Educational Aspirations among the Students of Manipur University, India. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 59(4), 77-81.
- Naz, A., Saeed, G., Khan, W., Khan, N., Sheikh, I., & Khan, N. (2014). Peer and friends and career decision making: A critical analysis. *Middle-east journal of scientific research*, 22(8), 1193–1197.
- Nguyen, T. L., Nguyen, H. T., Nguyen, N. H., Nguyen, T. T. D., & Le, D. L. (2023). Factors affecting students' career choice in economics majors in the COVID-19 post-pandemic period: A case study of a private university in Vietnam. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 8(2), 100338.
- Njogu, S. W. (2019). *Analysis of factors influencing career choice among public secondary schools' students in Meru County, Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, KeMU)
- Omar, M. K., Zakaria, A., Ismail, S., Sin, J. S. L., & Selvakumar, V. (2015). Job selection preferences of accounting students in Malaysian private universities. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 31, 91-100.
- Özek, H., & Ferraris, A. (2018). The role of self-awareness and self-efficacy on career decision-making: An innovative perspective. *Innovation and Capacity Building: Cross-disciplinary Management Theories for Practical Applications*, 207-229.
- Saleem, N., Hanan, M. A., Saleem, I., & Shamshad, R. M. (2014). Career selection: role of parent's profession, mass media, and personal choice. *Bulletin of education and research*, 36(2), 25–37.
- Shahzad, M. N., Zahra, S. T., & Ahmed, M. A. (2014). Determinants and influences on student's career choice. *University Journal of Management and Social Science*, 4(3), 9-30.
- Siddiky, M., & Akter, S. (2021). The students' career choice and job preparedness strategies: A social environmental perspective. *International journal of evaluation and research in education*, 10(2), 421-431.
- Sultana, T., & Mahmud, M. K. (2020). Exploring the influential stimulators of career choice: an empirical assessment by exploratory factor analysis. *Asian Journal of Empirical Research*, 10(5), 137-149.
- Thampoe, M. (2016). Factors influencing on job decision of management undergraduates in North and East Universities of Sri Lanka. *Journal of Resources Development and Management*, 16,168-174.
- Thomas, P., John, D., & Thomas, L. (2024). Factors influencing career decision of undergraduate and postgraduate students: an Indian context. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, 14(1), 95-108.
- Wüst, K., & Šimić, M. L. (2017). Students' career preferences: Intercultural study of Croatian and German students. *Economics & Sociology*, 10(3), 136-152.

