

## **Identification and Interpretation of Factors Governing Career Selection of Kashmiri Youth: A Case Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Numerous global studies explore the career paths chosen by students post-schooling, while the contemporary era emphasizes computerized solutions, particularly in education. However, a gap exists in understanding the factors shaping modern youth's career choices, leading to ineffective solutions. This research focuses on the Kashmir valley, analysing various factors influencing the career decisions of its youth. It identifies and discusses numerous factors and their impact, involving 300 Kashmiri students from diverse societal, geographical, and economic backgrounds. The study aims to emphasize demographic disparities, including environmental, familial, and peer influences, and assesses the role of gender in students' achievement, engagement, and motivation. Furthermore, it delves into emotional and cognitive abilities, crucial in career decision-making

**Keywords:** Career Selection, Career Planning, Student Attitudes, Career Decision Making, Career Readiness

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The contemporary generation faces formidable challenges, such as a rapid surge in global competition, economic volatility, and ongoing transformations in education systems. Currently, there is a notable shift in the career choices made by young individuals, necessitating a re-evaluation and transformation of guidance, counselling, and career development processes. [1], [2]. Eventually, it turns out that career selection has developed as an intricate science [3]. Numerous solutions have been offered in the recent years in the form of automated solutions. However, due to lack of knowledge and understanding about the controlling factors, which influence and form important basis in career-decision making, such schemes fail to deliver an effective and continued solution.

Various techniques within the education structure can significantly benefit from solutions that provide career predictions for students. In today's learning process, where numerous options are available, the task of career selection presents itself as a formidable and challenging aspect for the youth [2]. The sustainability and overall success of any nation or organization hinge on its youth. Opting for an appropriate career pathway ensures that the youth remain motivated in their jobs, leading to higher productivity [4]. Moreover, the

significance of career selection is evident in its lasting impact on an individual's social, economic, and psychological well-being. Decisions that result in a suitable career choice contribute to the reduction of resource wastage, encompassing both the cost and time involved in training and education processes [5], [6], [7], [8].

While previous research primarily delves into the factors influencing students in making career decisions, it's important to note that a student's choice is neither linear nor strictly economically rational. It is influenced by various contextual and situational factors such as the school attended, school experiences, academic achievement, and the availability of information, among others [9], [10], [11], [12].

The decision making involved in career selection appears to follow a non-linear pattern, which eventually contradicts the restrictive and conventional views convincing an individuals' decision, regulating to a great extent, the outcome of their lives [13]. However, career-decision making is anticipated to be a complex and multi-dimensional process [14]. Further, acquiring the exact pattern, in which young people will be making their decision in upcoming years seems to be bleak [15].

Subsequently, in this study, our aim is to recognize factors which govern the career-decision making process of Kashmiri students. Eventually, the findings will provide assistance in development of an effective model. Further, the study also divulges the complex inter-relationship between factors such as, parental education, social class and gender. The study focused on the characteristics of 11th and 12th standard student samples. The paper has been organized in five sections. Section II discusses the recent researches in this area followed by section III that puts forward the methodology being followed in the study. The findings from the undertaken study are offered in Section IV and lastly, the paper concludes in Section V.

## **II. RELATED WORK**

In this section, a number of researches conducted in understanding the attitudes of students' during the recent years have been discussed. Previously, research has been conducted to assess the career development process as approached by youth. One such standard measure designed is Career-Maturity-Inventory (CMI) in 1973 by John Critsis [16]. CMI has been developed for deliberating career-planning competencies along with career decision making readiness among the students followed by their knowledge of working environment and self.

A longitudinal study has been conducted by authors in [17], where the future educational pattern has been assessed as per the distinct sequences of expectations, academic achievement and ambitions. The main results highlighted that the students with higher ambitions and anticipation perform much better in their academics than those students with lower ambitions and anticipations.

Under ideal conditions, orientation of an individual towards a desired definite career field represents their career ambitions. The authors in [18], marked out the course of career aspiration with respect to prestige dimension of class 9th students for a period of 3 years, while appraising with the mathematics achievements and grades of students. The findings were in agreement with the notion of achievements in math subject as a critical filter to ensuing career aspirations.

An investigation has been conducted in [19], where the higher and lower poverty sections of rural communities were pondered to identify the relationship between educational characteristics and experience with the scholastic achievements and career ambitions of such youth. The chief findings revealed that scholastic achievements and career ambitions of students are projection of their educational characteristics and experience.

Further, influences on rural students' academic achievements and career ambitions due to socio-economic significances, educational experiences and residential predilections have been examined in [20]. The major outcome revealed both direct as well as indirect link between academic accomplishments specifically in mathematics and career ambitions with the course program followed by socio-economic impacts of such learners.

Authors examined specific measures such as career indecision, scholastic achievements, career maturity and goals in [21]. As per the findings, self-confidence, scholastic achievements and career maturity were having direct association with the occupational status goals. Students who were reportedly having higher academic achievements recognized greater self-esteem and career maturity. Further, such students were more ambitious in opting professional occupations than students with skilled status ambitions. Moreover, students with skilled ambitions were found to possess less career knowledge than students holding semi-professional goals.

Likewise, there are researches, which contemplate personality of an individual as a driving factor in the entire career selection process. A study accomplished in [22], scrutinized measures such as, individual personality, scholastic achievement, socio-economic ranking,

interest and family influence, which were found to have a substantial impact on career ambitions of students.

Some studies have solely undertaken gender as a prominent factor in contemplating its role in career selection. One such research has been done in [23], where 1339 1st and 2nd generation students have been surveyed. Similarly, a study conducted in [24], where 27981 Canadian students were deliberated. The main findings of these studies reveal that, even though females and males does not seem to differ across wide assortment of choice, yet gender proves to have an inadvertent influence on the career choice, eventually controlling the choice of institution. Males tend to focus more on future earnings associated with a specific career than women. Similarly, females incline more towards financial considerations of an institution associated to a particular career field than males.

Exploring the attitudes of students aspiring to pursue careers in family businesses has been a focal point of research. One such study, conducted in [25], focused on specific parameters to understand their role in facilitating students' alignment with family practices in their career choices. The study targeted third-year medical students, a critical stage where career decisions become imminent.

The findings of this research aligned with prior works, highlighting the significance of parental influence, personal connections with patients, and the desire to provide medical care to family members as crucial factors guiding students towards family practices. Various studies have aimed to comprehend students' perspectives on family practices. For instance, a study in [26] revealed a significant difference in attitudes between students pursuing specialties aligned with family practices and those genuinely interested in such fields. Notably, students following family practices exhibited a less aggressive and materialistic nature compared to their counterparts. Their academic performance was commendable, attributed to a sense of affiliation. Additionally, these students showed a preference for community and tended to consider local small-town practices, especially if originating from rural backgrounds.

Once a career pathway has been chosen, unremitting determination affects the persistent efficacy at workplaces. The association between ones' interest and ones' skills plays a huge role in deciding the liking of a particular occupational path followed. On personal scales, such an understanding can lead to self-emphasis, personal satisfaction and at broader range to persistent organizational progress by retaining such productive, motivated

and well-trained employees leading to abridged workforce turnover expense [5]. Further, examining the role of career commitment signifying connection of individual to its job as well as organization with productivity at job, has been done by authors in [27]. Organizational commitment, job attachment and satisfaction has been deliberated as three measures to recognize the relationship. These three parameters were uninterruptedly found to be linked to career commitment, and enjoying ones' work at a particular position present higher margins of career commitment. Further, an achievement variable has been defined signifying the attainment of goals within a social setting; which have a longing influence on career commitment of an individual. Moreover, the emotional connection with the career conveys a dynamic potency to outgrow motivation and efficiency.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study has undertaken Kashmir valley as a demographic location, where the various situational factors are considered. A systematic research procedure has been followed to recognize and comprehend various underlying variables and factors influencing the pattern of career selection by pre-tertiary students. The study aims to highlight the demographic differences which involve influence of the environment, family, friends and evaluate role of gender in students' achievement, engagement and motivation. Moreover, the study concentrates on emotional and cognitive ability, which are the main attributes resulting in career-decision.

A descriptive study has been carried out, to give the contemporaneous depiction of state of affairs as they exist. A sample of 300 pre-tertiary Kashmiri students has been undertaken in the presented study, where the sample consist of both the genders. Further, the sample space constituted students of age group 16-18 years from three widely chosen educational streams (Humanities, Commerce and Science). The stratified random sampling approach has been followed for data elicitation from three districts of Kashmir valley.

In order to understand decision making process of Kashmiri youth involved in their career selection, the higher secondary schools representing varied geographical (Rural and Urban) and socio-economic (lower-class, middle-class and higher-class) aspects have been contemplated in the present study.

A well-designed questionnaire has been articulated, which presents a clear depiction of factors that influence students in opting a career pathway. The preliminary questions in the questionnaire were well-framed to illustrate the impact of elements such as family, parental

education, gender, racial settings, and status of institutions etc. The students participated in interview followed by their response to questionnaire to offer clear interpretation of the choices made in questionnaires.

The study undertaken suffers from the same downsides as encountered by research studies conducted in social sciences. The results of the study will hold true based on the assumption that respondents answered the questionnaire honestly in the data elicitation phase. Further, the findings recognized cannot be generalizable, as the study has been conducted on provisional level by considering population constituting smaller portion of national population.

#### **IV. FINDINGS**

In this section, a spherical viewpoint of the main findings has been provided.

##### ***Role of people:***

This involves the effect of people surrounding the students i.e. parents, siblings, relatives, friends, teachers and counsellors. The results highlighted the impressive role of parents than teachers in selection of career pathways particularly in relation to personality uniqueness such as, birth-order. Further, the influence of parents was mainly based on conventional gender stereotypes, but not always. Moreover, with birth order the influence changes as seen from the results. The students who were younger children of their parents were found to be affected less by their parents and elder sibling seemed to have a greater role in influencing them. The role of people in career selection has been tabulated below in Table1.

*Table 1. Influence of People*

<b>Influential People</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Father	2.42
Mother	2.31
Counsellor	1.32
Teacher	1.46
Brother	0.39
Adult friend	0.88
Sister	0.35
Other	0.83

***Gender/Sex factor:***

The results reveals that female students have better academic achievements compared to fellow male students mainly due to high levels of self-discipline. Moreover, the effect of gender can be seen as more significant from same-sex parent. Furthermore, it has been observed that the financial aspect followed by future learning are also sub-parameters within gender guiding career selection.

***Social status:***

As per the findings, there exists direct relationship between choice of a career and social status. The students belonging to poorer socio-economic groups considered careers, which are less prestigious mainly due to fear of debt, which in turn also affects their institution choice and eventually lead to selection of careers provided by universities closer to them. Further, their career selection is guided by the nous of filling in, risks and challenges associated with such careers. Thus, social-status which is in direct association with financial income, constraints the selection of career made by students.

***Parental education:***

From the analysis of acquired data, dramatically different patterns were witnessed among students which belong to academic and non-academic families. The students coming from academic families make clear choices of attending research universities. Thus, such students claim higher knowledge of career choice they wish to aspire than those coming from non-academic backgrounds. However, students which constitute 40% of sample space belonged to families where parental academic achievements were confined to higher secondary levels. These school children had moderate aspiration in continuing their career in specific field and to pursue for further studies. However, such students have moderate ambition towards their future, as they were poised on following further studies in universities but not about what to study in such institutions.

***Racial group:***

The ethnicity of individuals serves as a significant demographic factor with a profound influence on shaping students' career choices. This demographic element plays a crucial role in limiting students from pursuing professions that involve working in regions known for hostility, particularly towards Kashmiri students. Additionally, students facing

constraints due to their racial background may find their career options restricted, even if they possess favorable factors such as parental education, social status, and gender that could otherwise lead to high-performing careers.

Apart from these factors, the career choices are seen to be affected by school performances and achievements, which highly influence the aspirations of students towards a particular career field. As per the findings, it has been seen that students with good record in science and mathematics were more aspiring to develop careers in engineering and medical fields. While students who performed poorly in such subject seemed to pursue career other than these fields.

Thus, from the systematic research conducted, it has been revealed that career selection process depends on several factors like: family background, social status, racial culture, financial circumstances, life history and eventually on academic achievements and performances.

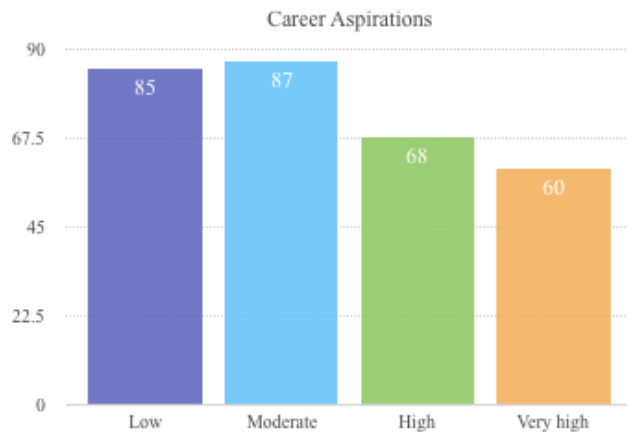
The level of career aspiration among the sample of 300 students have been tabulated in Table 2.

*Table 2. Aspirations Levels*

<b>Aspiration levels</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Low	85	28.3%
Moderate	87	29%
High	68	22.6%
Very high	60	20%
Total	300	100%

As per the table, only 22.5% and 20% of the participants have exhibited high and very high aspirations for their upcoming careers. While 28.5% have shown moderate level aspirations and 29% have displayed low level aspirations for their imminent careers as shown in Fig 1.





*Fig. 1 Career Aspirations*

## V. CONCLUSION

In this study, an attempt has been made for better understanding of factors influencing the decision making of Kashmiri youth, which guide their career selection. Apart from challenges confronted by today's youth on global level, Kashmiri youth are challenged by certain additional challenges quoted as demographic variables. The study undertaken has contemplated numerous parameters such as role of people, parental education, gender, social status, and institutions etc. The parental influence was witnessed much more than other people. Likewise, the role of birth-order has also been deliberated. The aspirations of students in relation to the above mentioned factors have been pondered. The findings revealed in the study is used to benefit the education system and society in general by developing solutions by introducing career guidance and counselling schemes in educational institutions. Further, the presented finding can be a great help in designing an automated solution, which will offer not only continued support but also deliver a much effective solution.

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