



Business students' perception about their career and most influencing factors

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ABSTRACT

Career is of immense important and plays vital role in life of an individual. In Pakistan mostly students don't plan about their professional career during their studies and even if they plan, the planning is very vague and ambiguous. The aim of this study is to discuss the perception of business students about their career and explore the factors which influence their choice. In order to achieve this end, 300 business students were randomly selected from Lahore Business School. The data was collected through structured questionnaire. Data is analyzed by using SPSS, simple descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution is used for analysis. It had been revealed that majority of students like to choose finance as their career furthermore results showed that the most influential factor was personal interest (Mean = 4.15 & S.D.=1.04), followed by Team Work Skills (Mean = 4.10 & S.D= 0.97).

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Introduction

Career is immense important and play vital role in life of an individual. For every one it is mandatory that his / her career is ideally started, since it is utmost for completion of career goals successfully and efficiently. Selection of right career is first step in professional career planning; everyone should consider all pros and cons when he/ she decided to choose career. For stable life, effective professional career and attaining the aims of life the career must be according to interest and passion of person. (Gilbert, J. 2011).

Experts and counselors defined term "career" in different way; for example according of Oxford Dictionary "The general course or progression of one's working life or one's professional achievements: an officer with a distinguished career; a teacher in the midst of a long career. (Oxford Dictionary)

Pakistan is a developing country where unemployment rate is very high. Youth is facing a lot of problems in getting jobs even after completion of their higher studies. Thousands of students get degrees every year but there are not adequate opportunities for them in the market due to prevailing situation of law & order, terrorism activities, socioeconomic and political instability.

In Pakistan mostly students don't plan about their professional career during their studies and even if they plan, the planning is very hazy and ambiguous. For example; Most of the Business students are unable to trace their abilities, so they get confused in selecting major subject due to lack of guideline by educators / counselors / parents.

In Pakistan business students face the pressure of choosing the majors due to their parents conflicting views. Industry requirements of certain professions changes due to the fluctuating economic situations as well as political instability, so it is very hard for business students to choose right career in Pakistan.

Factors Effecting In Choosing Careers for Students:

Previous studies have explored that numbers of factors which normally affect the students in choosing their career and perception about the career. Some of them are discussed as under:

Parents

Parents influence their children in many ways while selection of children's career. Parents have the different expectations from their children. They thought that we are the right persons who guide their children in a good way. They thought that we are giving them the right and the important direction. Parents also believe that we must be involved in the decision of children career choice similarly, according to the major factor that influences children's education is background of parents. They want to see their children more brilliant and successful person in future that is why mostly parents compel their kids to choose career which according to them is suitable. It is rare that they consider the interest of their children. (Edelman, 2006)

In Pakistan parents also want that their son / daughter must adopt same profession as they have or chosen by their family members' children to compete with them.

Educators

Another factor which influences the students while choosing their career is educators. It has been observed that mostly students do not try to explore all possible options of careers even after completion of their high school education / graduation. It is recommended that teachers might forcefully inform students in their schooling about information, familiarities, techniques and skills they could apply in their daily life. So, this is most influential factor which affects the students in choosing the right career; like how good the teaching staff guide and inform students about choosing career. (Borchert, M. 2002)

Industry requirement:

It has been revealed from study that the demand in the industry for certain professions also affects the students to choose their specific careers. For instance: usually students prefer to adopt and are attracted towards Management Information System (MIS) courses due to its increasing demand in job market. (Boudarbat, B. & Chernoff, V. 2009)

Environmental factor:

There are several environmental factors which affect the students to choose their career. Like as, Movies relating to the profession choosers, National television programs, Educational and social websites, Newspaper articles, Information given by senior students and from alumni, Summoned speakers and Information from CD and DVD etc. (Borchert, M. 2002)

Economic factors

In economic crises it is not easy to forecast which of the profession will be popular by the time student's completes education. Consequently lot of the student selects the career which has less risk involve. As it seems that if the economy gets better, it will encourage the quality teachers as they will receive better salary and incentives. (Azubuike, O. C., 2011)

Literature view:

Fortunately numerous studies have been conducted so far in order to explore the factor which influences students when they select their career. Some of them are discussed blow:

Crampton et al (2006) examined different factors which influence and impact business students when they select their area of specialization. The researchers also studied how much students are familiar with possible career options and their source of information. The results of the study showed that business students are well informed and know all pros and cons about careers in field of management, marketing, and accounting but they know little about opportunities in information systems careers. Furthermore, this study revealed that the most influential factors on career choice are personal interest in the subject matter, long-term salary benefits, likelihood of working in the field after graduation, reasonable starting salary, and professions' repute in society. According to writers, there is possibility that students' perception may vary according to situation and may not align with reality.

Hunjra et al (2010) studied the role of university students' perception towards profession of banking and finance, they were also interested to determine the relationship between profession and perception. In order to collect the data, there were 300 students selected in this study as sample from universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Sample was selected by using Convenient sampling technique. The results of the study showed that, according to most of students finance course is very valuable, flexible and innovative in its nature. They supposed it is an understandable, accurate and profitable for future prospects. At the end, the researcher suggest that the contents of major finance should align with banking and financing profession, it will create accord between subject and real practices.

Edwards, K. & Quinter, M. (2011) had observed that it is very difficult for students to choose a profession as career. The researcher said that according to Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations, from four secondary school of Kenya, students make career choice before sitting for final examination. Studies showed that mostly students enter into careers that are totally different from the ones they select while at school. In this study four secondary schools of Kisumu municipality, Kenya were selected and tried to explore the factors which influencing career choice among students. There were 332 students selected and used descriptive survey design. In order to collect data questionnaire and structured interviews were used. The results of the study showed that most influential factor affecting career choices among students is availability of advancement opportunities and learning experiences. Furthermore, this study explored that male students said that for them the most

influential factor is learning experiences and career flexibility and female students said for them most influential factor is availability of advancement opportunity and opportunity to apply skill.

Tanimoune, B.S. et al (2007) said that in December 2007, the US economy was in depression, which obviously affected people from all sphere of life, especially businesses and individuals. It had been explored by many studies that workers related to business jobs such as stock market brokers, sales people and real estate were in more pressure in economic dump. This study aimed to find the perception of college students regarding business careers and also to know their views on the impact caused by the current economic crises on business related jobs. In order to collect the data the questionnaire were distributed among business and non-business students; there were 307 complete and useable questionnaire were returned. For analysis purpose statistical software SPSS was used. Results of study depict how students perceived business careers in general and during current state of economy. They find out that the business and non-business students agreed on a few questions and disagreed on some other questions related to business careers but both groups felt that the economic crisis had negative effects on business careers. Authors also find that business students 43.60% and non-business 49.29% "Agreed" that they were respectively influenced by their college teachers and families. A high portion of the respondents also "Agreed" that they were motivated by high salary expectations, promotion opportunities, future job security, professional environment and challenging job.

Said et al (2007) observed what are the skills and attributes which accounting students consider are more important while selecting their career. The main objective of this study is to chalk out important factors play significant role in order to success in accounting career. This study was conducted in three institutes i.e. . UiTM Kedah, UiTM Perlis and UiTM Perak. Self-confidence, self-control, ability and willingness to learn, analytical thinking and teamwork and cooperation are found most significant factors. Furthermore, the results of the study revealed that as far as personal attributes are concerned the students of accounting among three institutes supposed that ambitious, motivation, energetic, innovative and creativity is very important.

Problem Statement:

The objective of this study is to determine the perception of students about their choice of careers. This paper is attempted to explore the relationship between demographic. In order to achieve this end simple descriptive statistics i.e frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation is used.

Research Methodology:

In this study descriptive survey design was used. The target population is all students studying at Lahore Business School, The University of Lahore. The University of Lahore is one of the leading university of Pakistan and among top 500 universities of world.

The data is collected through structured questionnaire. Pilot survey was conducted before collecting data and minor change was made in order and format of questionnaire for the convenience and simplicity of participant. The questionnaire consist of three sections; first comprises questions regarding demographic and socio-economic back ground of students, second about factors which influence them to choose career, it contains four items. Third section having questions concerning about abilities / personal interest of students and comprises nine

items. A five point Likert scale was used to give response, "1" and "5" stand for strongly disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement respectively.

. Students are selected by using Simple Random sampling technique. Questionnaires were distributed among 400 students of BBA and MBA. 320 students returned the questionnaire to researchers, of them 20 were found incomplete, so 300 questionnaire were used for analysis purpose, hence the response rate was 75%. The data was entered in SPSS-16 and analyzed by using different statistical techniques.

Finding and Discussion:

The purposive of this study is to explore the factors which affect the career choice of business students. Total number of respondents in this study was 300. Descriptive statistics reporting frequency, mean and standard deviation are used for analysis. Furthermore, t-test is applied to comparison purpose. Following are the results for three sections. The value of cronbach alpha for career related factors and abilities / personal interest are respectively 0.752 and 0.839 respectively, which shows that the instrument used for data collection this study is reliable.

Students' Demographic and Socio- Economic Status:

Table- I shows the detail of different Demographic factors. There were total 300 students were selected randomly in this study of them 216 (72.0%) were found male and 84 (28.0%) were females. The age of students were (22.40 ± 1.79) years. It had found that of 300 participants, there were 170 (56.70%) doing MBA while remaining 84 (43.3%) were doing BBA. Of total sample, it had found that the day scholar and hostelized students were 165 (55.0%) and 135 (45.0%) respectively; which depicts that majority of students from out station.

The students were distributed into four groups with respect to their guardian's salary, it had been found that there were 46(15.3%) whose guardian's was up to Rs.30, 000. Out of 300 students, there were 48 (16%) and 66 (22%) respondents who said that their guardian's salary were upto Rs. 40,000 and Rs.50, 000 respectively.

Figure-1 indicates the area of specialization of participants. It had found that of 300 students, there were 77(25.7%) who were doing their specialization in Human Resource Management (HRM). There were 88 (29%) and 122 (40%) whose major were Marketing and Finance respectively. So, most of students want their career in field of Finance.

Figure-2 depicts that the participants were also asked about source of information regarding their selection of specialization as career, 37 (12.3%) said that their source of information was television or movie, 122 (40.7%) said portrayal of the occupation. Website and brochures were main source of information for 67 (22.3%) and 29 (9.7%) participant respectively. There were 45 (15%) students who consider major source of information for their career is newspaper articles.

Figure-3 shows the details about the person who influenced you to choose your career, in response to this question, there were 111 (37.0%) participants who said that no one influence them to choose their career, it is purely their own choice. Among total 300 students, there were 46 (33 %) and 33 (11.0%) who respond that they influence by their friends and relatives respectively. The number of students who were influenced by their teachers was 59 (19.7%), while the number of students who influenced by their parents was 51 (17.0%). Hence majority of students selecting their career by their own will and there were small number of students who were influence by relative in order to choose their career.

As far as, salary expectation is concerned, there were 60 (20.0%) students who expected that their salary will Rs.30, 000. Of total 300 respondents, there were 53 (17.7%) and 70 (23.3%) who expect their salary Rs. 40,000 and Rs. 50,000 respectively. Majority of students 117 (39.0%) said that they expect their salary more than Rs.50, 000.

Factors related to Personal Interest and Abilities:

Table-2 depicts that with respect to " communication skills will help to choose the career", out of total 300 students, 109 (36.3%) said that they were strongly agreed, 54(18.0%) said that they did not know, while only 7 (2.3%) were disagreed with this statement (Mean=3.6 & S.D=1.03). In the second statement, the students were asked "You like challenges in your career", there were 111(37.0%) participants who were strongly agreed with this statement, 40(4.7%) said that they do not know and only 12(4.0%) who were strongly disagree with this. Hence, mostly students like challenges in their career (Mean=4.02 & S.D=1.02). With respect to third statement "Employment opportunities lead to choose a specific career", there were 92(30.7%), 57(19.0%) and 9(3.0%) students who were strongly agreed, did not know and strongly disagreed (Mean=3.04 & S.D=1.5). This study reveals that regarding the statement "You choose your profession according to your potential", out of 300 students, 126(42.0%) were strongly agreed, 31(10.3%) said they do not know and just 12(4.0%) were strongly disagreed (Mean=3.99 & S.D=1.12). So, majority of students will decide to choose their profession according to their potential. Personal interest is another factor which influence the selection of career, regarding the statement "Do you have the interest about your career", the result shows that 143(47.6%) were strongly agreed, 31(10.3%) do not know and just 10(3.3%) were strongly disagreed (Mean= 4.15 & S.D=1.04). According to most of students they want to choose their career, according to their personal interest. The analysis further reveals that "You find creativity in your career", out of 300 respondents, 106(35.3%) were strongly agreed, while 44(14.7%) said that they do not know and very small number of respondents i.e. 13(4.3%) were strongly disagreed. The degree of agreement regarding the statement "You have acquired personality related to your career", 89(29.7%), 62(20.7%) and 10(3.3%) replied strongly agreed, do not know and strongly disagreed respectively (Mean=3.82 & S.D=1.05). The degree of agreement regarding the last statement i.e. "You have the teamwork skills which help you to solve the career related problems", out of 300 students, there were 132(44.0%) who said that they were strongly agreed, 33(11.0%) who said they do not know while only 9(3.0%) who were strongly disagreed (Mean=4.10 & S.D=0.97).

Factors related to Job:

Table-3 presents the detail of the factors which are related to job and influence the choice of profession. The first statement is regarding about high salary, the students were asked that "High salary effects the decision of your career choice", out of 300 students, 76(25.3%) were strongly agreed, 70(23.3%) said that they do not know and 29(9.7%) were strongly disagreed (Mean=3.51 & S.D.=1.27). The degree of agreement regarding the second statement that "The job marketing conditions effect the decision of your career choosing", the results revealed that among 300 subjects, 54(18%) were strongly agreed, 70(23.3%) were remains neutral and 20(6.7%) were strongly disagreed (Mean = 3.49 & S.D =1.12). When asked about job securities i.e. "Job securities, factor effect your career choice", it was observed that 58(19.3%), 77(25.7%) and 17(5.7%) students were strongly agreed, do not know and strongly disagreed

respectively (Mean = 3.55 & S.D = 1.09). Occupational factor is another factor which influence the choice of career, regarding the agreement of statement “An Occupational growth affects your choice of career”, among total sample of 300 respondents, 80(26.6%) were strongly agreed, the students who said do not know were 58(19.3%) and very few students i.e. who were 8(2.7%) strongly disagreed (Mean = 3.80 & S.D = 1.02).

Conclusion:

In this study business students were asked about their perception about their careers’ choice and tried to explore the factors which play significant role in selecting their profession. This study is conducted in Lahore Business School, The University of Lahore. It had been observed that from the selected 300 participants, there were 216 (72.0%) male and 84 (28.0%) were females. The average age of the students was 22.40 years with S.D. of 1.79 years. Personal interest of students play vital role while selecting their career (Mean = 4.15 & S.D=1.04), followed by Team Work Skills (Mean = 4.10 & S.D= 0.97). It is recommended that the scope of the study can be expand to other discipline such as engineering, medical and social sciences etc

Annexure

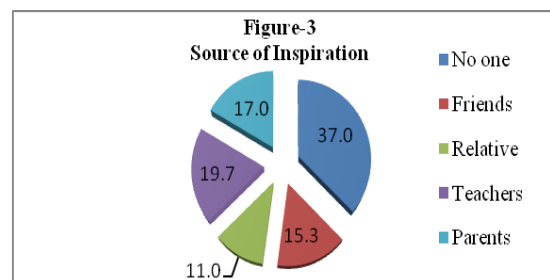
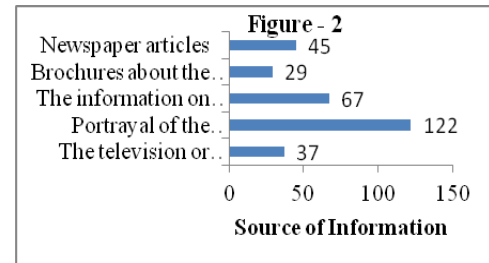
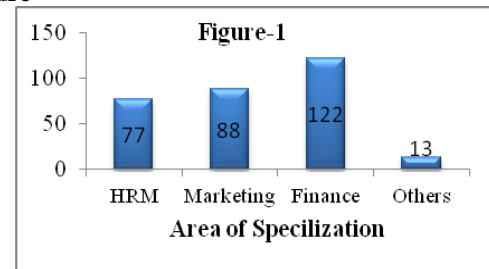


Table-1 Classification of Different Demographic Variables

Gender	Degree Programme		living Status		Salary (In thousands rupees)			
	BBA	MBA	Day Scholar	Hostelized	Up to 30	Up to 40	Up to 50	More than 50
Male	125	91	125	92	40	34	49	93
Female	45	39	40	43	6	14	17	47
Total	170	130	165	135	46	48	66	140

Table – 2

Descriptive Statistics and Frequency Distribution of variables related to Personal Interest and Abilities
1= Strongly Disagreed, 2= Disagreed, 3= Do Not Know, 4= Agreed, 5= Strongly Agreed

Questions	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
Communication Skills	7(2.3%)	23(7.7%)	54(18.0%)	107(35.7%)	109(36.3%)	3.96	1.03
Like Challenges	12(4.0%)	14(4.7%)	40(13.3%)	123(41.0%)	111(37.0%)	4.02	1.02
Employment Opportunities	9(3.0%)	28(9.3%)	57(19.0%)	114(38.0%)	92(30.7%)	3.04	1.05
Potential	12(4.0%)	25(8.3%)	43(14.3%)	94(31.3%)	126(42.0%)	3.99	1.12
Interest	10(3.3%)	18(6.0%)	31(10.3%)	98(32.7%)	143(47.6%)	4.15	1.04
Creativity	13(4.3%)	30(10%)	44(14.7%)	107(35.7%)	106(35.3%)	3.88	1.13
Personality	10(3.3%)	25(8.3%)	62(20.7%)	114(38.0%)	89(29.7%)	3.82	1.05
Analytical Skills	10(3.3%)	24(8.0%)	47(15.7%)	136(45.3%)	83(27.7%)	3.86	1.01
TeamWork Skills	9(3.0%)	8(2.7%)	33(11.0%)	117(39.0%)	132(44.0%)	4.10	0.97
Occupational Growth	8(2.7%)	29(9.7%)	58(19.3%)	125(41.7%)	80(26.6%)	3.80	1.02

Table – 3
Descriptive statistics and frequency distribution of factors influencing the career choice
1= strongly disagreed, 2= disagreed, 3= do not know, 4= agreed, 5= strongly agreed

Questions	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.d
High salary	29(9.7%)	43(14.3%)	49(16.3%)	103(34.3%)	76(25.3%)	3.51	1.27
Job marketing condition	20(6.7%)	38(12.7%)	70(23.3%)	118(39.3%)	54(18%)	3.49	1.12
Job securities	17(5.7%)	32(10.7%)	77(25.7%)	116(38.7%)	58(19.3%)	3.55	1.09
Occupational growth	8(2.7%)	29(9.7%)	58(19.3%)	125(41.7%)	80(26.6%)	3.80	1.02

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