

FACTORS AFFECTING CAREER CHOICE AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF ADEN

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ABSTRACT

One of the critical aspects of an individual's life is career choice as this will determine the role pattern needed to be played by the individual in the society in the future, and it is one of the important processes in life. This study aims to investigate the factors influencing the career choice of the students. This study focused on undergraduate students in the University of Aden. Undergraduate students were chosen because right upon graduation, they are the ones who will be deciding on their career choices. The findings of the study largely supported the hypothesized relationships proposed in the theoretical model and showed that the family, self-efficacy and economic considerations exerted significant influence on the choice of a career among students. Moreover, the results showed that the influence of family, self-efficacy and economic considerations was positive on career choices. To investigating student's career choice that is affected by other important factors, further studies are strongly recommended.

Keywords: Career Choice, Family Influence, Self-Efficacy, Economic Consideration, Partial Least Squares.

INTRODUCTION

Career choice is a major part of modern life, and the accuracy of choosing the right career depends mainly on the students' qualifications, enthusiasm and personality. The world is facing a serious crunch due to competitions, owing to unemployment of the educated youth seeking a sense of purpose of their life, self-fulfilment, and of course, income. Education aims to give young people proper knowledge realistically and to enable them to plan their future career most suitably. Career plays an exceptional and important part in the life of an individual not just because it decides the pattern of income but also because it affects the individual's personality and his concept of life. A career decision is like taking an interest in one's life, work or accomplishment, in which a person is involved throughout his/her lifetime (Napompech, 2011).

Career choice is a major challenge for young school pass outs as they reach the end of their schooling (Alberts, Mbalo, & Ackermann, 2003). Therefore, it requires more determination to aspire for and finish a professional education not only to earn higher wages but also enter into a more prestigious career. The National Center for Education Statistics (2006) published a report that during 1980 and 2004, young adults between the ages of 18 and 34 possessing a bachelor's degree earned higher than their peers with less education.

Statistics also revealed that in 1980, males who had a bachelor's or a higher degree earned 19% more than those who had completed only high school. Similarly, in 2004, males who had finished the college education or higher, had a yearly income of 67% higher than those who were secondary school graduates (Rooney et al., 2006). In the context of Yemen, there are several determinants that contribute to taking a career decision by university students in Yemen. Psychologists assert that the basic leadership skills get solidified with age, and individuals turn out to be more discerning and can foresee lifelong advantages of a specific study program and in turn, profession.

Career choice, in this knowledge millennium, plays a significant role in the knowledge economy of a nation depends much upon the employability level of its graduates. A need was therefore felt to have an empirical understanding of the factors that influence career decisions of these graduates. It was important to know whether these graduates remain ignorant of their career choices or they do make them in an informed manner. Issa and Nwalo (2008) drew attention to the fact that many students often choose unsuitable careers due to ignorance, inexperience and peer pressure. In this situation, such youths create nuisance not only to their own lives but also to their employers, and they are unable to contribute meaningfully to the society. Additionally, if the career choice and methodology were wrong, it can also lead to prompt fatigue in work, regret, suffering the loss or different risks, and an unhappy life (Abdullah, 2007). Moreover, there is a deep connection between education acquired and the progress that one makes in his or her career. The choice of a career has a great significance in the knowledge economy since employability depends on making the right career choice. Furthermore, the students must be aware of the factors that influence their choice of particular careers. It is no happiness to remain ignorant of one's career and leave it to chance; instead one must plan it (MoHE, 2010).

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has discussed career choice as a separate topic in Yemen, and therefore this study provides useful insights about career choice's criteria adopted by the Aden University students, who face problems in taking career decisions. This study identifies the factors that influence students in choosing their career, with particular consideration to undergraduate students from the various fields of studies or courses at the University of Aden. Even though previous studies from outside Yemen have identified many factors that may influence career choice among students, this study only focuses on family influence, self-efficacy, and economic consideration.

Family's Influence and Career Choice

The family provides valuable experiences in education through its member's roles and activities that support the discovery of career interest. Parents try all their best to influence their children to have promising careers (Daniel, 2015). This leads families to push their children to get into a well-known school before college, with a specific aim to guarantee that their kids will get into a prestigious career (Napompech, 2011). According to Okamopelola (2014), parents' excessive involvement in the career decisions of their children is aimed towards making their children more satisfied in their careers than they are in their jobs for the sake of pleasing their parents, and in this regard, children may start to seek and accept their parent's advice.

Several scholars have done studies on this subject revealed that if the participation of the parent is found to be effective and supportive, the success of the child at school as well as his future life is guaranteed as compared to the ineffective and oppressive/directive ways of involvement (Ngunjiri, 2013). According to Clutter (2010), parental impact on career development of their children is more powerful than that of teachers and career counsellors who are well aware of the careers chosen by the students. Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypothesis for testing;

H1: There is a significant relationship between family influences and career.

Self-efficacy Influence and Career Choice

Self-efficacy refers to how people think about their capabilities to produce a certain level of performance on events that will affect or change their lives. It is always true that self-efficacy can influence our insights, inspiration, influence, and decisions. Lindholm (2004) argued that career counsellor's diagnosis and individual active role during the assessment process and clarity of self-concept are important factors in career selection. People with large amounts of self-efficacy for a particular assignment will invest more energy, and contrastingly, people with low self-efficacy will be lead to the poor execution of tasks and surrender more easily (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Goh, 2008).

The abilities of a person that is produced and learned with a section of time likewise impact career determination (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001). One's career course, or the variables that are included with an individual's career hunt, are balanced with self-efficacy convictions. Taylor and Popma (1990) inferred that career investigation capacities were anticipated by the level of general self-efficacy. Kroth and Boverie (2009) maintained that individual's skills and abilities to do something and his learning rate also contributes to the development of career choices (Saleem et al., 2014). Ghuangpeng (2011) research discovered that the significance of the idea of self-efficacy and recommended that students build up their self-efficacy given the match between their own characteristics and the occupation or career. By the discussion above, it is proposed that;

H2: There is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and career choice.

Economic Considerations and Career Choice

Economic consideration is the continuous and careful thought about the economy when an individual formulates a decision or judgement. The circumstances of a nation also play a major role in the students' career choice. Therefore, the study must possess a sound data of the national economy including information about the accessibility of occupations in the segment that he needs to work in and from which he can make a legitimate career choice. It is the obligation of career guidance establishments and agencies to provide such data, but unfortunately, career guidance is a neglected section of our economy. Due to the absence of right guidance, often students fail to get the right picture of today's economy (Sarwar & Azmat, 2013). According to Harris et al. (2005) and Maharaj (2008), students had opted for monetary reasons as a critical requirement of a job. Similarly, Afidatul Asma (2015) cited a study by Henderson et al. (1988), who found that the choice of a career or occupation was much influenced by the value of economic returns.

According to Ogunrinola (2011) and Onijigin (2009), in spite of the fact that each study completed on secondary school students in Nigeria had different findings, almost all the respondents regarded monetary advantages as a primary factor in making a career decision. These studies also revealed an important socio-economic factor, which is the family income

and family needs, as a critical factor to determine a career chosen by the secondary school students in Nigeria. Similarly, Onijigin (2009) stated that the primary motivation behind an individual to get into a career is the economic reason because the employment will give him and his family adequate resources and monetary compensation to meet the social and economic needs. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed to be tested;

H3: There is a significant relationship between economic considerations and career choice.

The framework of the Study

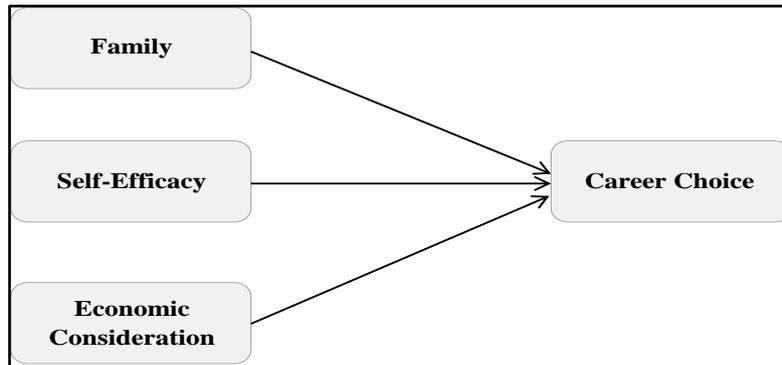


Figure 1

Research Framework

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

The survey of the questionnaires was carried out among the undergraduate students of Aden University with 364 questionnaires distributed to the respondents. Following collection, cleaning and preparation of data commenced immediately after the return of questionnaires by the respondents. At the end of collecting data process, only 302 out of the 364 distributed questionnaires to the respondents were returned. The obtained number represented 83% response rate. To confirm the validity and reliability of the used measurement, different statistical software were applied for data analysis through SPSS version 22.0 and Structural Equation Model (SEM), specifically Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM), and SmartPLS Version 2. Hence, the current study used a mixture of both inferential and descriptive statistics method. More specifically, the inferential method was applied to test the research hypotheses of the conceptual model by using SmartPLS version 2, whereas descriptive statistics were conducted to summarize the sample characteristics of the collected data by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The acquired results show that all hypotheses were supported. Table 1 below indicates the path coefficient of each hypothesis.

Table 1

Path Coefficient of the Research Hypotheses

Hypo	Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Error	T- value	P- value	Decision
H1	FI→CC	0.381	0.201	1.893	0.030	Accepted*
H2	SE→CC	0.420	0.219	1.917	0.028	Accepted*
H3	EC→CC	0.367	0.174	2.113	0.018	Accepted*

Significant at p**= < 0.01, p* <0.05

Abbreviation: CC= Career Choice, FI= Family Influence, SE= Self-Efficacy, EC= Economic Consideration

CONCLUSION

This study determined the significant factors that influence career choice among undergraduate students in the University of Aden. Moreover, the findings indicated that undergraduate students in University of Aden perceived family, self-efficacy and economic consideration to play a major role in their career choice. The current study, therefore, contributes to the knowledge of career decision-making theory by supporting Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) statement that family members influence students' career interest and career choice. Significantly, the study has strengthened the notion of Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory that people make career decisions based on several factors, among them being self-efficacy, outcome expectations and interest. Also, a current study came up with a reliable research instrument, which can be used for future researches in the domain of management. Aside from the above contributions, the model for the influencing factors of career choice among undergraduate students in the University of Aden was developed, which could assist the future research in this domain.

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