



## A STUDY ON PARENTAL AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICE AS ENGINEER

Voice of Research  
Vol. 2 Issue 1  
June 2013  
ISSN No. 2277-7733

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### Abstract

*A career is traditionally seen as a course of successive situation that make up a person's work life. Students in the modern and fast changing world are trying to seek for those careers which would ultimately led them to achieve fairly in life. Career choice is a major life decision. The choice of career by an individual sometimes is influenced by parents and society. The present investigation has been designed to study the impact of parental and social influence on career choice. Accordingly, a group of 180 students (90 boys and 90 girls) were selected as sample in this investigation. A General Information Schedule, Parental Influence Questionnaire and Social Influence Questionnaire were administered to the subjects by giving proper instruction. The findings reveal that maximum parental influence is upon the girls who are under high income group and maximum social influence is upon the girls who are under low income group. Besides this, prestigious and high profile job, stability of the job, fulfillment of the expectation of parents, social status and proper identity are the reasons behind the parental and social influence upon career choice. Adequate information and knowledge about reality, social settings and job availability, future benefit etc. should be informed them properly so that they may choose a particular career according to their own choice.*

**Keywords :** Career Choice, Parental Influence and Social Influence

Students in the modern and fast changing world are trying to seek for those careers which would ultimately led them to achieve fairly in life. Each and every individual is coping with dynamic world and its demands. Therefore to choose the career which provide them fair chance in life, success, satisfaction and approved from both family and society is his prime focus. However, the choice of career by an individual is influenced by various factors and among them parental and social influence is very important. Each individual undertaking the process is influenced by many factors, including the context in which they live, their personal aptitude and educational attainment etc. (Bandura et al, 2001). The relationship between specific parental behaviour and career development of young adolescents was assessed by Keller and Whiston (2008). The findings reveal that parental behaviours tended to relate more to career decision making self-efficacy than to career maturity and also general psychosocial parenting behaviour appeared to be more salient than career focused parent behaviours. Besides this, DeRidder (1990) pointed out that lower levels of parent education can retard adolescents' career development. Being born to parents with limited education and income reduces the likelihood of going to college or achieving a professional occupational goal and essentially predetermines the child's vocational choice. Not only this, family income is another important aspect which influences career development. Middleton and Loughhead (1993) described three categories of parental involvement in adolescents' career development – a) positive involvement, b) non-involvement and c) negative involvement. The greatest numbers of adolescents feel about their career decisions or expectation, quite understandably is in response to

parents' negative involvement. The study of Lease and Dahlbeck (2009) investigated the relations of maternal and paternal attachment, parenting styles and career locus of control to college students' career decisions self-efficacy and explored whether these relations differed by student's gender or not. Findings revealed that attachment was relevant for females' career decision self-efficacy but not for males. Authoritarian parenting styles were predictive of women's career decisions self-efficacy. Locus of control was important for male students but not for female students. Besides this, occupational status and educational level of parents have had a significant impact on their career aspirations and career choice (Burlin, 1976). Wahl and Blackhurst (2000) indicated children's career aspirations were more closely related to parental occupations. It can further be said that all of our career choices take place within the context of society and the economy. Savickas et al (2002) suggested that competence in career development is related to greater realization of one's potential and a high degree of social adjustment. Perceived teacher support was significantly correlated with career decision making self-efficacy and vocational outcome expectation (Methany et al, 2008). Researchers agree that socioeconomic status influences career choice (Gottfredson, 1981; Sellers et al, 1999). Heins et al (1982) reported that families often encouraged the educational and career aspirations of male children but not those of female children. Greater level of psychological distress predicted higher levels of career indecisions, which in turn, were associated with lower career certainty and greater perceived family conflict (Constantine and Flores, 2006). Students sometimes suffer from dilemma for choosing a particular career for their future development. Considering



the above the present investigation has been designed to study the parental and social influence on career choice as perceived by the students who want to choose their career as engineer in their near future.

**Objectives**

To study the parental and social influence on career choice as perceived by the students who want to choose their career as engineer in the near future.

To study whether there is any impact of gender difference in connection with career choice or not.

To study whether there is any impact of family income in connection with career choice or not.

**HYPOTHESES**

Hypothesis – I : Parental influence on career choice as Engineer is differentially associated with gender difference.

Hypothesis – II : Social influence on career choice as Engineer is differentially associated with gender difference.

Hypothesis – III : Parental influence on career choice as Engineer is differentially associated with monthly income of the family.

Hypothesis – IV : Social influence on career choice as Engineer is differentially associated with monthly income of the family.

**Study area and sample**

A group of 180 students (90 boys and 90 girls) who want to choose their career as Engineer in the near future were selected as sample in this investigation. The pertinent characteristics of the subjects are as follows :

- a) Age : 16 to 18 years
- b) Gender : Equal gender ratio
- c) Education : Students of Class – XII ( Higher Secondary)
- d) Monthly income of the family :

- Group A – Rs. 20,001/- to Rs. 30,000/-
- Group B – Rs. 30,001/- to Rs. 40,000/-
- Group C – Rs. 40,001/- to Rs. 50,000/-

**Tools used**

General Information Schedule : It consists of items like name, address, age, gender, monthly income of the family etc. Parental Influence Questionnaire : It consists of 20 statements answerable in a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree where high score indicates maximum parental influence on career choice and vice-versa. Odd-even split-half reliability is 0.80 (developed by the investigator). Social Influence Questionnaire : It consists of 20 statements answerable in a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree where high score indicates maximum social influence on career choice and vice-versa. Odd-even split-half reliability is 0.78

(developed by the investigator).

**Administration, scoring and statistical treatment**

General information schedule, Parental influence questionnaire and Social influence questionnaire were administered to a group of selected subjects by giving proper instruction. Data were collected and properly scrutinized. Scoring was done with the help of standard scoring key. Tabulation was done separately for boys and girls for each questionnaire separately. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for general information schedule. Mean and S.D. were calculated for other two questionnaires. Comparisons were made by applying t-tests.

**Results and interpretation**

The general characteristics data inserted in Table – 1 reveals the characteristic features of the subjects under study.

**Table – 1 General characteristics**

General characteristic	Boys (N = 90)		Girls (N = 90)		Combined (N = 180)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Age (Mode)	17 years		17 years		17 years	
Income						
Rs. 20001 to Rs. 30000	30	33.33	30	33.33	60	33.33
Rs. 30001 to Rs. 40000	30	33.33	30	33.33	60	33.33
Rs. 40001 to 50000	30	33.34	30	33.34	60	33.34

Data inserted in Table – 2 reveals the parental influence on career choice upon the students who want to choose their career as Engineer in the near future. Analysis of data reveals that maximum parental influence on career choice is upon the girls who are in the category of comparatively high income level, although overall picture reveals moderate level of parental influence on career choice. The reasons behind comparatively high parental influence are mainly due to – a) prestigious and high profile job, b) stability of the job and c) fulfillment of the expectation of the parents. Thus, the Hypothesis – I which postulates, “Parental influence on career choice as Engineer is differentially associated with gender difference” – is accepted in this investigation.

**Table - 2 : Comparison between the boys and girls in terms of parental influence on career choice as Engineer**

Category	Parental Influence On			Career Choice			t-value
	Boys			Girls			
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	
Group A	30	63.10	7.79	30	63.33	8.46	0.11*
Group B	30	62.57	7.89	30	64.23	6.16	0.91*
Group C	30	61.07	7.42	30	70.30	10.22	4.00**
Overall	90	62.25	7.70	90	65.95	8.28	3.11**

Score range : 20 – 100

High score indicates maximum parental influence on career choice and vice-versa.

\* Difference is insignificant, \*\* p < 0.01

- Group A – Rs. 20,001/- to Rs. 30,000/-
- Group B – Rs. 30,001/- to Rs. 40,000/-
- Group C – Rs. 40,001/- to Rs. 50,000/-



Comparison was also made between the boys and girls in terms of social influence as perceived by the students who want to choose their career as engineer in the near future (Data inserted in Table – 3). Analysis of data reveals that maximum social influence on career choice is upon the girls who belong to comparatively low income group. The reasons behind this are mainly due to – a) social status, b) proper identity and c) placement assurance. It can further be said that social influence is more upon the girls than upon the boys. When comparison was made between the boys and girls considering the income group separately, significant difference was observed for Group A and combination of Group A, B and C. Thus, the Hypothesis – II which states, “Social influence on career choice as Engineer is differentially associated with gender difference” – is accepted in this investigation.

**Table - 3 : Comparison between the boys and girls in terms of parental influence on career choice as engineer**

Category	Boys			Girls			t-value
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	
Group A	30	56.33	6.61	30	65.93	6.49	0.11*
Group B	30	56.40	9.61	30	60.93	7.91	0.91*
Group C	30	57.93	11.29	30	57.23	11.34	4.00**
Overall	90	56.89	9.14	90	61.36	8.58	3.11**

Score range : 20 – 100

High score indicates maximum parental influence on career choice and vice-versa.

\* Difference is insignificant, \*\* p < 0.01

Group A – Rs. 20,001/- to Rs. 30,000/-

Group B – Rs. 30,001/- to Rs. 40,000/-

Group C – Rs. 40,001/- to Rs. 50,000/-

**Table – 4 : Comparison between the groups (considering monthly income of the family) in terms of parental influence on career choice as Engineer**

Comparison between	(Boys)				(Girls)			
	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value
Group A Vs. Group B	30	63.10	7.79	0.26*	30	63.33	8.46	0.47*
Group B Vs. Group C	30	62.57	7.89	0.76*	30	64.23	6.16	2.79**
Group C Vs. Group A	30	61.07	7.42	1.04*	30	70.30	10.22	2.88**

Score range : 20 – 100, \* Difference is insignificant, \*\* p < 0.01

Data inserted in Table – 4 reveals the parental influence on career choice considering the monthly income of the family. It can be said from the findings that parental influence is maximum upon the girls who belongs to Group C category. Analyzing the data it can be said that parents influence to choose the particular career mainly to fulfill their expectation for the prestigious job. When comparison was made between the income groups separately (for girls), significant difference was observed between Group B vs. Group C and Group C vs. Group A. But no significant difference was observed in case of Group A vs. Group B. It can further be said that for boys, no significant difference

was observed in each comparison. Whatever be the income level parental influence is more or less same upon the boys for Groups A, B and C. Thus the Hypothesis – III which postulates, “Parental influence on career choice as Engineer is differentially associated with monthly income of the family” – is accepted for Group B vs. Group C and Group C vs. Group A (for girls) and is rejected for all other comparisons.

High score indicates maximum parental influence on career choice and vice-versa.

Similarly, data inserted in Table – 5 reveals the social influence upon the boys and girls regarding career choice in connection with the monthly income of the family. It can be said from the findings that social influence is maximum upon the girls those who belong to Group A category Advertisement, role model, attractive career related handbills, banners etc. are the significant causes regarding the social influence upon the girls who belong to Group A category. When comparison was made group-wise, significant difference was observed between Group A vs. Group B and Group C vs. Group A but no significant difference was observed between Group B vs. Group C. It can further be said that no significant difference was observed in connection with group-wise comparison for boys regarding the social influence on career choice as Engineer. Thus the Hypothesis – IV which postulates, “Social influence on career choice as Engineer is differentially associated with monthly income of the family” – is accepted for Group A vs. Group B and Group C vs. Group A (for girls) and is rejected for all other comparisons.

**Table – 5 : Comparison between the groups (considering monthly income of the family) in terms of social influence on career choice as Engineer**

Comparison between	(Boys)				(Girls)			
	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value
Group A Vs. Group B	30	56.33	6.61	0.03*	30	65.93	6.49	2.68**
Group B Vs. Group C	30	56.40	9.61	0.57*	30	60.93	7.91	1.48*
Group C Vs. Group A	30	57.93	11.19	0.67*	30	57.23	11.34	3.69**

Score range : 20 – 100, \* Difference is insignificant, \*\* p < 0.01

High score indicates maximum social influence on career choice and vice-versa.

**Major findings of the study are as follows**

Maximum parental influence on career choice is upon the girls who are in the category of comparatively high income level, although overall picture reveals moderate level of parental influence on career choice.

The reasons behind the comparatively high parental influence are mainly due to – a) prestigious and high profile job, b) stability of the job and c) fulfillment of the expectation of the parents.



Maximum social influence on career choice is upon the girls who belong to comparatively low income group.

The reasons behind this are mainly due to – a) social status, b) proper identity and c) placement assurance.

Parental influence is moderate and more or less same for the boys belonging to Group A, Group B and Group C respectively.

Social influence is maximum upon the girls those who belong to Group A category. Advertisement, role model, attractive career related handbills, banners etc. are the significant reasons behind this.

### Conclusion

Career choice is a vital factor in the present day scenario. Students in the fast changing life sometimes suffer from dilemma to take a proper decision regarding career choice. Parental support and encouragement were found to influence vocational outcome. Through interactions, such as, conversations and through verbal and non-verbal reactions, parents conveyed their influence to their children, which in turn, affected the children to choose various careers. This eventually affected the children's attitudes and behaviours towards work. Undoubtedly it can be said that the parents have an important role regarding career choice. But parental and social influence sometimes may create negative impact upon them and it is not appropriate for their future development. Some significant factors like, social status, prestigious job, influence of peer group, financial benefit, advertisement etc. create impact upon the students in different ways. Proper information and knowledge about reality, social settings and job availability, future benefit etc. should be informed them properly so that they may choose a particular career according to their own choice.

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