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## **Who influenced me more? A comparative study of the factors that affect career decision of undergraduate students in Bangladesh**

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## **Who influenced me more? A Comparative Study of the Factors that Affect Career Decision of Undergraduate Students in Bangladesh**

### **Abstract**

This study examined the extent to which Teachers among other significant factors contribute in undergraduate student's career decisions upon completion of their studies in Bangladesh. A quantitative methodology was applied and 200 Undergraduate Students (120 males, 80 females; age range 18 to 30 years) participated in the survey. The survey questionnaire was structured and derived from the theoretical framework and hypothesis to assess the demographic characteristics, role of teachers and other career decision factors. Data are analyzed using Minitab version 16 to find out the relationship between students career decision (dependent variable) and other factors that influence student's career decisions (independent variables). The study found that undergraduate students career choice were highly determined by their teachers who guided them to make a right career plan through career conversations, counseling and helping students to gain comprehensive understanding of curriculum to achieve career specific requirements. Other significant influencers such as parents, friends and students themselves were also taken into account however low positive correlation was found. Overall the study found that majority of the undergraduate students are highly career conscious and they generally seek employment upon their graduation.

**Keywords:** Career Decision, Teachers role, Counseling, Personal and Societal Factors, Under-Graduate Students, Bangladesh.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background**

A career selection decision is one of the key challenges in an individual's life and students encounter numerous problems in the process of career selection (Alberts et al. 2003, Olamide and Olawaiye, 2013). Individuals may become a source of inefficiency by underperforming not only at the workplaces but also for the national economy as a whole. Hence wrong career selection opens the door for lifelong consequences (Issa and Nwalo, 2008; Mashige and Oduntan, 2011).

However, almost every individual is challenged by the difficulties of occupational choice and most of them are students who are required to choose study programs corresponding to their future career goals (Ferreira et al., 2006). Precision and meaningfulness of life are voiced in one's career, therefore choosing it carefully is a must. However, at the time of career choice decision, students are embedded with multiple influences. Most students are influenced by careers that their parents decide, some follow the careers that their education has unleashed for them, and some other influenced by peers (Hewitt, 2010).

The total deposit share of Islamic banks is now more than 20% and that of credit share is 23%. This figure still has the potential to grow much further. When it comes to profitability measurement, Islamic banks are holding few of the top ranked positions. Their NPL position is also better compared to that of the conventional ones. In 2016, the default rate on loans for general banking was 9.2 percent, but it was 4.3 percent for sharia-based banking.

Nevertheless, teachers also can have a significant role and a huge impact on a student's life as well as career path (Wildman and Torres, 2002). Previous studies show that Teachers provide career information more than school counselors do as teachers meet students more compared to the counselors. Research has found that many schools do not have any career guidance programs on a regular basis therefore teachers do provide career information to students during normal teaching hours and outside the classroom also (Gao, 2008; Kano, 2012). According to scholars Gao and Kano, this brings career planning into daily teaching activities in class and opens the door of opportunities for students to ask questions, seek information, and express their concerns and experiences within a social group. Similarly, Falaye and

Adams (2008) suggest that teachers encourage students to take certain career that is compatible with their aptitudes and abilities.

Unfortunately, there is limited academic research to date on the teachers' role in students' career selection process in public and private universities of Bangladesh. Therefore, this research will try to fill this important gap by seeking the answers of the following research questions:

RQ 1: How do teachers among all other significant factors affect undergraduate students Career decision?

RQ 2: What are the relative factors and which factors are more effective in student's career choice decision?

RQ 3: Is there any new factor that has been considered by the new generation undergraduate students since the labor market of Bangladesh has been changed a lot?

In lieu with the research questions, this study aims to examine the factors that influence undergraduate student's career choice decision of public and private universities of Bangladesh. It will also measure which factor is more influential in the career choice decision of this target group.

## **2. Objective of The Study**

- To examine the extent to which teachers among other factors affect the carrier decision of undergraduate students of private and public universities of Bangladesh.
- To derive other relative factors and evaluate which factors are more effective in students' career decision in 2018.
- To understand whether there is any new factor that has been considered by this generation students as labor Market of Bangladesh has been rapidly changing.

### **2.1. Methodology**

This study was conducted using descriptive survey research design. The qualitative approach as a method of inquiry using focus group discussions was applied to collect the data. The qualitative design was chosen in order to

gain an understanding of the perception of undergraduate students regarding the factors that influence in their career choice decision making. A survey method has been used for collecting relevant data's. The primary data has been collected through the survey questionnaires. The sampling units for this study were the students of various private and public universities of Bangladesh. A convenience random sampling method has been used with a sample size of 200 undergraduate students. The survey questionnaire was based on the theoretical framework and hypothesis. The questions included open-ended questions, and structured questions using dichotomous and Likert-scale type. Data's were analyzed using Minitab version 16 to find out the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variable. To analyze the data and results; tally/frequency, reliability test, correlation analysis and linear regression analysis were applied as statistical test.

### **3. Literature review**

#### **3.1. Teachers**

Teachers influence is expressed in the form of their expectations and support for students (Farmer, 2001). They serve as a role model by articulating interest in students' career goals. Fisher and Stafford (1999) found that teacher influence was among the strongest influences on the career planning of undergraduate students. Moreover their beliefs, interests and encouragement for students are instrumental in student's ultimate career decisions (Marta and Grygo, 2003). Teacher-students relationships during career conversation immensely affect the way students learn from their teachers (Brekelmans, Slegers and Fraser, 2000; Erickson and Schultz, 1982; Schultz von Thun, 1981). Research by Kuijpers and Meijers (2009) and Mittendorff et al. (2008) have shown the career conversation between teacher and student is an essential element, without conversations students find it difficult to construct meaning about themselves and their future career (Mittendorff et al., 2008). Teachers provide career information more than school counselors do as teachers meet students more compared to the counselors. Research has found that many schools do not have any career guidance programs on a regular basis therefore teachers do provide career information to students during normal teaching hours and outside the classroom (Gao, 2008; Kano, 2012). This brings career planning into daily teaching activities in class and opens the door of opportunities for students to ask questions, seek information, and express their concerns and

experiences within a social group. Similarly, Falaye and Adams (2008) suggest that teachers encourage students to take certain career that is compatible with their aptitudes and abilities. However, Harris (1997) and Watts (2005) cautioned that teachers need to critically evaluate the way they address career decision panning rather than telling students how to behave and manage their career but also helping them to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) that will enable them make better choice and smooth transition.

### **3.2. Students self-direction**

Researchers also have found that there are many personal factors to consider in career planning of students. In connection to the statement, O'Neil, Meeker and Borger (1978) mentioned that individual factors means what an individual expects of himself, his abilities, attitudes, aspirations and necessity to achieve. By supporting this, Umar (2014) and Adams (1994) discussed that genuine interest in the particular area is the most important factors that might influence students' career choice. Students environment along with talents, academic achievements, skills have a greater influence on their career choice (Bandura et al., 2001). Moreover, they can also facilitate themselves by developing effective communication skills, learning to function autonomously, differentiating myth and reality that are instrumental in effective career planning. Researchers also argued that early adulthood is a time when career planning is significant therefore seeking career information and becoming aware of professional interest is a major developmental task of high school students (Khan et al., 2011; Weiler, 1977; Kroll, 1970; and Super, 1980). Similarly, Wattles (2009) claimed that today, individual has not only to make career planning but also undergo in-depth career research before making a career decision to adjust with the changing socio-economic trends. In addition, influence of personal values as a behavioral determinant and attitudes on career decision need to be considered (Dries, 2011; Inglehart, 2008).

### **3.3. Family and Friends**

Mortimer (1992) found that family influence student's educational plan and occupational exploration and many of their attitudes towards profession is the result of their interaction with the family. Individual's family

background affects their professional goals and employment prospects (Lankard, 1996). Parents are highly regarded in creating strong and direct influence on their children's career choice (Ozbilgin and Malach-Piness, 2007). Moreover, the style of family interaction and perception about work and work experience, career goals and values have a substantial impact on the youth's career decision and planning (Goldenberge, 1995). Ferry (2006) elaborated how parent's expectations and perceptions of occupational fitting for their children have been instrumental in shaping their career choices. By supporting the statement, Uyar (2011) stated that the influence of parents does affect child's choice of career, although sometimes it may be contrary to the child's desire. In connection to the statement, Fisher and Stanfford (1999) mentioned a result in his study where he marked out that the elements of social context; basically parents take a key role on students' career choice. The influence was established by the data that showed the impact of behavioral relationship where students usually choose those occupations that similarity with their parents. (Bright et al., 2004). According to Brown (2002), family or group affect the process of career decision making. In respect to the statement, Pines and Yanai (2001) discussed that persons usually want to select a profession that helps them to complete their needs that weren't fulfilled in their childhood, and it also actualizes their hopes that transferred to them by their family. Sears and Gordon (2002) concluded that the culture of a society or a community is deeply rooted with some values that influence a student either to choose a career or any career that seems to undermine these values are unlikely to be pursued by them. Salami (2008) and Watson et al. (2010) equally investigated the social factors that influence the process of adolescent career progress. Societal factor was cited as influencing students' choice of career. He reported that societal influence on the adolescents inform their decision of career especially when the society places high value on salaries, position, glamour and prestige attached to certain vocation/profession. Adeniyi (2003) discussed that societal valued jobs like Medicine, Law, Banking and Finance; Engineering receives greater attention than History, Geography and Religious Studies. At present, majority of students are crowded in Business Administration more than Law which becomes unpopular due to the high rates of unemployed lawyers in Nigeria.

### **3.4. Educational Institutions and Curriculum**



According to Kniveton (2004), Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012) educational institution is an important influence on career choice. As schools create opportunities by developing students employability students carefully choose their study places. Kim (2010) also identified the needs and preferences of high-achieving high schools. According to Weishew and Penk (1993) schools are social establishments that reinforce appropriate conduct, interests and professions. Similarly, competence-based learning environments also stimulate a self-directed and student centered tactic in which the learners are highly responsible for their own career route, and in which teachers are seen as coaches and mentors to guide students toward their occupational attainment.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

The teacher’s role, student’s self- direction, friends/family, and educational institutions and curriculum are the main factors that influence the career decision of students. Though there might be some other internal and external factors that influence students career choices however as this study is stimulated with profound understanding of the above four key factors extracted from the literature. Therefore, the theoretical framework presents the main factors that are considered for establishing relationships between variables of a student’s career choice decisions.

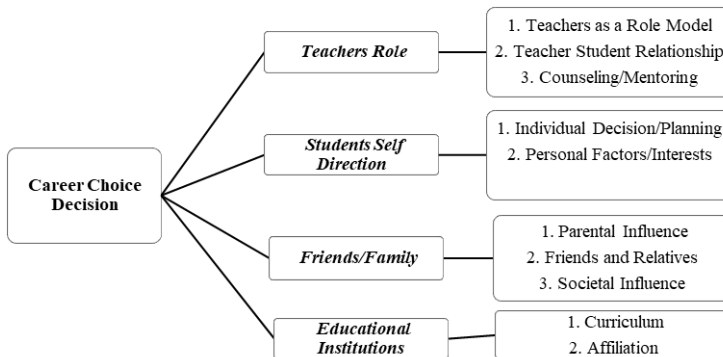


Figure 1: Actors affecting student’s career choice decision

Theoretical Framework describes both dependent and independent variables. At the center of the model there exist the dependent variable (students’

career choice decision) and the independent variables all around it. Any of these independent variables may affect the career choice decision. These variables and their relations are found from the analysis of the hypothesis developed by this model.

#### **4.1. Research Hypothesis**

There are two type of hypothesis has been formulated based on the theoretical framework. First one is Alternative hypothesis and second one is Null hypothesis.  $H_a$  represents Alternative hypothesis i.e. H1, H2, H3, H4 and  $H_0$  represents Null hypothesis Based on the theoretical framework the following research hypotheses (non-directional) are formulated to guide this research objective:

H1: There is a relationship between teachers role and students career choice decision.

H0: There is no relationship between students and their career choice decision.

H2: There is a relationship between student's self-direction and their career choice decision.

H0: There is no relationship between students and their career choice decision.

H3: There is a relationship between friends/family and students career choice decision.

H0: There is no relationship between friends and family and students career choice decision.

H4: There is a relationship between educational institutions and students career choice decision.

H0: There is no relationship between educational institutions and students career choice decision.

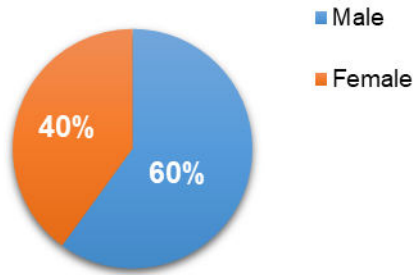


Figure 2: Gender distribution of sample

## 5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

### 5.1. Tally/Frequency

Table 1: Gender of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	120	60.0	60.0	60.0
Female	80	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

When looking at the gender of the population, see *Table 1/Figure 2: Gender of the Respondents*, it can be seen that the majority of the students were men, with a number of 60 percent.

The amount females within the population consisted of 40 percent. The age of all subjects were ranged between 18 to 30 years which includes the students who are currently studying in several public and private universities of Bangladesh and the number students who have recently completed their under-graduation from these public and private universities of Bangladesh and pursuing employability.

### 5.2. Reliability Analysis

The results of Reliability Analysis are discussed below:

**Table 2: Reliability analysis**

	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>
Career Choice Decision (Dependent variable)	0.754	7
Teachers' Role (Independent variable)	0.735	5
Students' Self Direction (Independent variable)	0.749	5
Friends/Family (Independent variable)	0.713	5
Educational Institutions (Independent variable)	0.699	5

The alpha coefficient for the dependent variable mentioned as Career Choice Decision = .754. And the alpha coefficient for the four independent variables mentioned are as Teachers' Role = .735, Students Self Direction = .749, Friends/Family = .713, and Educational Institutions = .699. According to standards, the reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered "acceptable" in most research situations and in this research statistics shows four variables that are independent are acceptable (Teachers' Role , Students' Self Direction. Friends/Family and Educational Institutions) and one dependent variable (Career Choice Decision) are greater than 0.7.

### 5.3. Statistical Analysis

Subsequent suitable statistical tools were used for data investigation.

#### 5.3.1. Pearson correlation

Allowing to the necessities of the theoretic model, the test of determining the link between variables is Pearson correlation, as it checks the "interdependency" of the variables deliberated in the model.

**Table 3: Correlation analysis**

	<b>Career Choice Decision</b>	<b>Teachers Role</b>	<b>Students Self Direction</b>	<b>Friends/Family</b>	<b>Educational Institutes</b>

<b>Career Choice Decision</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.662**	.498**	.320*	-.098
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.010	.031	.166
	N	200	200	200	200	200
<b>Teachers</b>	Pearson Correlation	.662**	1	.346*	-.064	.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.036	.709	.874
	N	200	200	200	200	200
<b>Students Self Direction</b>	Pearson Correlation	.498**	.346*	1	.720**	.209
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.036		.000	.215
	N	200	200	200	200	200
<b>Friends/Family</b>	Pearson Correlation	.320*	-.064	.720**	1	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	.709	.000		.001
	N	200	200	200	200	200
<b>Educational Institutes</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.098	.027	.209	.521**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.166	.874	.215	.001	
	N	200	200	200	200	200

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlations table indicated that there exists a high positive correlation between career choice decision and teachers role ( $r = .662$ ,  $n = 200$ ,  $p = .000$ ). There exists a lower but positive correlation between career choice decision and students self-direction ( $r = .498$ ,  $n = 200$ ,  $p = .010$ ), friends/family ( $r = .320$ ,  $n = 200$ ,  $p = .031$ ).

And there exists no statistically significant linkage (exists a lower and negative correlation) between career choice decision and educational institutes ( $r = -.098$ ,  $n = 200$ ,  $p = .166$ ).

### 5.3.2. Linear Regression Analysis

To measure the relationship between two variables by predicting the value of a dependent variable based on the value of an independent variable. Linear regression attempts to model the relationship between two variables by fitting a linear equation to observed data where one variable is

considered to be an explanatory variable, and the other is considered to be a dependent variable.

The regression equation:  $Y = a + (b_1X_1) + (b_2X_2) + (b_3X_3) + (b_4X_4)$   
 Career Choice Decision = Constant + (b1TR) + (b2SSD) + (b3F/F) + (b4EI)

The regression equation is: Career Choice Decision  
 $= 3.55 + 0.488 TR - 0.664 SSD + 0.236 F/F + 0.142 EI$

**Table 4: Linear regression analysis model**

Predictor	Coefficient	SE Coefficient	T	P-Value	VIF
Constant	3.5525	0.2512	14.14	0.000	
Teachers Role (X <sup>1</sup> )	0.48769	0.06037	8.08	0.000	1.721
Students Self Direction (X <sup>2</sup> )	-0.66442	0.04411	-15.06	0.000	1.230
Family/Friends (X <sup>3</sup> )	0.23641	0.05036	4.69	0.000	1.956
Educational Institutes (X <sup>4</sup> )	0.14242	0.07832	1.82	0.071	2.497
S = 0.280373		R-Sq = 68.2%		R-Sq (adj) = 67.6%	
<b>Analysis of Variance:</b>					
Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Regression	4	32.8912	8.2228	104.60	0.000
Residual Error	195	15.3288	0.0786		
Total	199	48.2200			

\*Dependent Variable: Career Choice Decision \*Independent Variables: X1, X2, X3, X4

The regression analysis model shows that, from the independent variables i.e. teachers role, students self-direction, friends/family, educational institutions and the dependent variable i. e. career choice decision, the three of the independent variables in the model are having significant values that are teachers role (p=0.000, p<0.05), students self-direction (p=0.000, p<0.05), and friends/family (p=0.000, p<0.05). The fourth independent variable in the model is having an insignificant value that is educational institutions (p=0.071, p>0.05). The coefficient of determination (R-Sq) is 68.2%, whilst the adjusted R-Sq = 67.6%; therefore, about 68.2% of the variation in the students career choice decision (Y) has

been explained by all the independent variables (X's). Adjusted  $R^2$  is also an estimate of the effect size, which at 67.6%, is indicative of a large effect size according to Cohen's (1988) classification. P column in the analysis of variance associated with the F statistic. This is the result of subjecting the data to a statistical test of  $H_0$  versus  $H_1$  which shows that the whole model is significant as p-value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 ( $p < .05$ ,  $0.000 < 0.05$ ). Thus, we can conclude that the regression model has fitted well.

With the help of the results of the linear regression analysis, we can conclude the regression equation model and the rationale for accepting or rejecting each alternative hypothesis:

Hypothesis number 1: There is a relationship between teachers role and students career choice decision. ( $p=0.000$   $p < 0.05$ ,  $H_1: \mu \neq 0$ , Accepted)

Hypothesis number 2: There is a relationship between students' self-direction and their career choice decision. ( $p=0.000$   $p < 0.05$ ,  $H_1: \mu \neq 0$ , Accepted)

Hypothesis number 3: There is a relationship between friends/family and students career choice decision. ( $p=0.000$   $p < 0.05$ ,  $H_1: \mu \neq 0$ , Accepted)

Hypothesis number 4: There is a relationship between educational institutions and students career choice decision. ( $p=0.071$   $p > .05$ ,  $H_4: \mu = 0$ , Rejected)

## **6. Findings and Discussions**

The empirical studies revealed that student's career choice is influenced by a range of factors that may vary from one context to another due to unique socioeconomic, geopolitical and demographic factors which are the global mega trends. This research aimed to test the relationship between the career choice decision of students with teachers' role, students' self-direction, friends/family, educational institutions and Curriculum.

The Previous studies have found a positive connotation between students' career choice decision and the factors such as teachers as role model, teacher student relationship, counseling/mentoring/guidance by teachers. parents occupation, peers, friends, relatives, role models, social role models, social values, social context , students own interest, personal factors, decision or planning for future, curriculum, etc. However, This current study included these factors as sub-factors under some prime influencers as 'teachers role', 'students self-direction', 'friends/family', and 'educational institutes.

This study's results found a higher and significantly positive relationship exists between the teachers' role and the career choice decision of students. Based on perception of the students it has been found that the students' career choice is highly determined by their teachers in public and private universities of Bangladesh; who guides them to make a right career plan through career conversations, counseling and providing the clear understanding of curriculum.

The second factor influencing career choice examined in this research was the students' self-direction in making career choice decision. It has been found that there is lower but significantly positive relationship exists between the self-direction of students and their career choice decision. It is though found that, the students of public and private universities of Bangladesh are able to make their own career decision making to some extent.

The enquiry related to the third factor which was the influence of friends/family found that there is lower but significantly positive relationship exists between the friends/family and students career choice decision. Surprisingly, the parental influence now a days is not as important as it was in the past. Parental and societal restrictions are reducing gradually, thus students can make their career decision. But still there are some traditional restricts has been followed by the societies of Bangladesh. Female students are still not independent in making their career choice. Some career preferences are still restricted based on the gender ability.

The influence of educational and curriculum was the last factor and the study found that there is a lower and insignificantly negative relationship exists between the educational institutions and students' career choice decision. It has been found that the educational institutions in Bangladesh such as public and private universities are not providing enough



opportunities for the students so that they can choose the right direction for their career choice. However, more empirical evidence is required to support this finding as this study has also found a new factor based on the direct answers of the students. Quite a large number of students think that the affiliation programs such as internship placement, job fairs, business plan exhibitions, workshops, field works, conferences, seminars, etc., are helping students to make the right career decision. University-Industry partnership and collaboration could also facilitate students to make the appropriate career decisions.

## 7. Conclusion

The paper attempted to see the key variables that impact the career choice decision of undergraduate students of Bangladesh in relationship with different factors. The study examined the extent to which Teachers among other significant factors contribute in undergraduate student's career decisions upon completion of their studies in Bangladesh. The results of this research confirmed hypothesis concerning the positive relationship between the factors related to students' career choice decision. The study showed that some components of social group, personal factors and affiliation of educational institutions as the most important factor impacting on career decision making of students.

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