



## Effects of Demographic Variables on Career Choice of University Students

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**Abstract:** *The choice of right career is a defining stage in the life of all students. A right decision regarding career choice leads towards a productive life. Students have to consider several factors before deciding about their career. This study explored the demographic variables affecting the career choice of university students. It determined the effects of parents' education, their profession, background, family social status and income on career choice of university students. The population of the study consisted of female students of the 1st semester of the GSCWU. A questionnaire was distributed among 400 students of BS (1st semester) who were taken randomly. Data was analyzed using SPSS in terms of (Correlation, t-test, ANOVA). The results of the study revealed that parents' influence in career choice as most important, followed by financial resources, birth order of children, gender and personal interest of parents. The study results suggested that counselling sessions provide students with updated knowledge and information to create their interest in the right choices and available careers.*

**Key Words:** Career Choice, Demographic Variables, Career Selection, Future Employability

### Introduction

Everyone has to take up some profession to earn livelihood in a noble-way. Traditionally, the family profession(s) is/ are preferred by the younger ones. Mostly they seem to be following the guidelines of their parent, teachers and elders in the family in the choice of a career ([Ayaz, Khan & Khan, 2016](#)). Therefore, career selection or career choice is the most difficult decision for students in general and university students in particular. It explains the occupations which would be the part of the life of the students in future society stakeholders. Whenever students plan about their career choices, they have to face many obstacles which do not meet the requirements of their career interests and preferences ([Amrit & Gati, 2013](#)). The choice of career is a key and important decision which mainly has effects on the future life of youngsters. However, the interest and aptitude of the individual plays a crucial role in the choice of career ([Walsh, & Heppner, 2006](#)) and generally, the top-ranked professions seem to be choice of the many.

According to [Griffin \(2015\)](#), the consideration of an appropriate career appears an essential task before deciding to take up a final career. The appropriateness of the career choice enhances success and satisfaction in the career of an individual. Here different factors or variables seem to be affecting the process of career searching or choice of the university students ([Aydin, & Bayir, 2016](#)).

These need to be addressed through guidance and counselling for a better choice of the career. [Hussain, Khan, Baksh \(2016\)](#) suggested research studies on how to choose a career with a focus on aptitude and interests of the individual in order to create better and demanding socio-economic patterns of the profession(s). A career choice specifies success and happiness in ones' future life. A perfect match of ones' career with his/her interest and aptitude leads towards happiness and productive life; whereas, the deviation in career choice and interest or aptitude may result in otherwise situation ([Crisan, Pavelea](#)

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[& Ghimbulut, 2015](#). Therefore, the decision about the career or career choice should be a thoughtful process, and it should be taken in the early stages of the life of the students ([Cheng, 2017](#)).

There may be many factors which affect career decisions such as insufficient information, gender discrimination, and family background, social and environmental factors. As a result, there are many individuals who are not satisfied with their professions and have negative attitudes related to their careers ([Aydin & Bayir, 2016](#)). The students' choice of career is mainly influenced by many factors which cover personal and cultural ethics and values, career expectations, family background, freedom of opting desired professional field and career guidance ([Holly, 2005](#)). The students' awareness of being fit for specific jobs or professions also seems to be subjective by a number of factors including the year of study, cultural background, choice of subjects, and level of achievement, attitudes and differences in job features ([Hirschi, & Herrmann, 2013](#)). On the other side, profession of parents, the status of the family, their skills, knowledge, educational and cultural backgrounds and facility of financial resources and moral support to these young adults are also important factors in career selection. [Savickas \(2011\)](#) mentioned that basically, the home environment has a crucial influence on the decision-making regarding career ([Özlen & Arnaut, 2013](#)).

The choices of a student's career are the most essential phenomenon to decide a student's and his/her close lifestyle circle. There are many factors which effects on the opportunity of the student to discover all of the options present and available with the purpose of the design and make an educated and logical plan when taking-up a career formally. The major variables which affect the career choice are demographic factors related to family background, family pattern, cultural values, family values, expectations for career guidance and family financial position.

## Literature Review

The impact of career choices has an everlasting influence on an individual's life. It plays to be determinant and predictor of their potential level of income, nature of work and therefore leaves a mark on the personality, manner and attitude of an individual ([Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development- OECD, 2004](#)). Individuals who are not fit in their professions incline to be less productive and incapable to achieve their goals ([Killam, Degges-White & Micheal, 2016](#); [Liu, 2017](#)). The influence of family background on the career choice cannot be ignored. As parental education, family income, and occupational status of the family's head are positively associated with the career choice of graduates ([Reid, 2015](#)). The researches have included that individuals with more siblings had influenced career choices.

Being a child of single-parents or step-parent has proven to cause an adverse effect on the freedom of selecting a career. Similarly, parents' profession and their socioeconomic status appeared to be having an impact on career choice of college students ([Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2019](#)). Moreover, the executive or professional occupation of father effects on the female students as compared to mother with a similar occupational status. Instead, it holds to be opposite in the case of males. It is also observed and described by [Sheward & Branch \(2012\)](#) that the women from the high socioeconomic status don't usually have business as their major, and it is opposite in the case of males. Further, there are many studies which suggested that the advice of parents influence on the career choice of individuals. According to [Killam, Degges-White & Micheal \(2016\)](#) studies have reported that about 18.46% of the respondents feel that the advice of the parent's influences of their career. There are other factors too which mainly effects on the career choice such as occupation and profession of parents, the income of parents, education of parents, advice from parents, other family members or siblings ([Whiston & Rahardja, 2008](#)). Parent's preferences have a prominent effect on the career selection of children ([Levy & Lemeshow, 2008](#)).

There are many other studies which conclude that the profession of parents, their income level and their knowledge related to many other professions, them believes and norms related to every profession, updated information related to modern occupation, exposure to the internal jobs or local market and the job skills which are acquired by them significantly affect on the career choices of their children. Among other factors, socio-economic conditions of parents and education level of parents are most common. Mothers' professional status and education have a significant impact on the daughter's career

choices (Crisan, Pavelea & Ghimbulut, 2015). Parent's profession has a strong and direct influence on student's career choice. The present study is aimed to find out the impact of demographics on the career choices of the university of students.

Thus, one inappropriate decision can change the whole life and fate of a student. There is a scarcity of literature in the Pakistani context for the exploration of major demographic factors which affect the student's selection of career. There is a need to carry out a study in Pakistani population in order to get a clear picture of this certain phenomenon. The above discussion develops a way to conduct a study to investigate the various factors which have an effect on a student's career choice. Through this study, we would specify the most important demographic variables which play a major role in the career choice of university students. Its results would be helpful for the entire community of stakeholders: parents, students, counsellors, and academicians in designing career counselling programmes for the students in the right choice of career.

## Objectives of the Study

This study investigated the effects of demographic factors influencing the decision of career choice of university students.

## Research Methodology

### Population

The population of the study consisted of all of the students of BS (1<sup>st</sup> Semester) at the Government Sadiq College Women University (GSCWU) Bahawalpur.

### Sample

A sample of four hundred students was taken for the study through simple random sampling technique from the departments of Education, English, Management Science, Psychology and Arabic.

## Research Design

This research was quantitative in nature, in which 400 participants were selected through a random sampling technique. The data were collected from female students of BS (1<sup>st</sup> Semester) of the Government Sadiq College Women University of Bahawalpur. After a detailed review of related literature, a questionnaire consisting of 28 statements rated on a Likert scale was developed. These statements were categorized into eight categories, e.g., parents' education, parents' profession, parents' income, family pattern, family inheritance, freedom of choice, personal interest and career guidance sessions too. The tool was discussed with experts for content validity. Analysis of reliability showed a Cronbach Alpha level of 0.85. The researcher developed questions on demographic variables to gather the related details about the effects of those variables on the career choice of university students. Informed consent was obtained from the participants to acquire their willingness to participate in this study. They were ensured about the anonymity of their information and permission was also taken from the ethical review committee board to conduct the research. After the successful collection of data, analyses were done with the help of SPSS 24.0 by using the multiple regression, ANOVA and correlation test.

## Results

The data were analyzed formulating means and frequencies for simple descriptive statistics. T-Test and ANOVA were used for finding out the significant between the various variables.

**Table 1.** Frequencies of most Influencing Factors on Career Choices

Item No	Statement	SDA	DA	UNC	A	SA	M	SD
1.	I want to choose the field of my choice because I would be able to give my best	12.5	17.8	4.8	36.3	28.6	3.49	1.40

2.	I would prefer to choose the field advised by my teacher	20.2	20.3	7.9	34.5	17.2	3.04	1.41
3.	I would prefer to choose the field whose working conditions suit me well	19.3	15.0	6.2	29.1	30.4	2.87	1.40
4.	I would choose the profession of my choice because I have the freedom to choose my profession	16.8	28.9	6.5	30.2	17.5	2.97	1.38
5.	I would choose the field which would match my current discipline	20.9	25.2	5.8	35.6	12.6	2.90	1.42

Table 1 presents the frequencies of statements regarding career choice with which the majority of students fully agreed. The statement with the greater frequency, 65% is that students are fully confident that if they choose profession of their choice, then they would be able to give their best. Next statement having high response 52% is that majority students choose the profession on the advice of their teachers. Another statement with the highest frequency is about the working conditions of a profession as 60% of students choose those careers which are more compatible with the students' nature. One more statement is on the freedom of choice regarding a career as 48% of students are of the view that freedom of choice is necessary for the selection of career. The fifth statement is on the matching between the current discipline with the future profession which scored 48% responses that clarify that majority of the students are in favour to join such professions which are according to their academic degrees.

**Table 2.** Frequencies of Least Influencing Factors on Career Choices

Item No	Statement	SDA	DA	UNC	A	SA	M	SD
1.	I would choose the career which is part of my family business	35.8	42.2	3.1	12.4	6.5	2.9	1.21
2.	I would choose the career as I am inspired by one of my relatives	38.9	36.2	1.8	14.2	8.9	2.13	1.32
3.	Parents positive marital status highly affect the choice of career	37.8	34.4	6.3	14.3	7.1	2.16	1.28
4.	I would choose that profession so that it becomes my family profession	29.5	42.5	3.2	11.3	15.5	2.36	1.30
5.	I would prefer the profession which would provide more money rather than a comfortable and positive environment	32.1	38.8	6.7	14.8	7.6	2.23	1.28

Table 2 shows those statements which having least frequent replies, representing that these factors were not persuaded to the career choices of the students. These results illustrate that 78% refused being influenced by their family business. And also 75% of students do not have any inspirations by any relative regarding opting career. 72% students disagreed with the statement that their parents' marital status affects their choice of career. 72% students are of the view that while choosing profession they never think about their future family business rather they ponder upon the current requirement and personal interest. 71% of students denied to adopting such professions which are highly paid, but with the uncomfortable environment rather they would prefer to join those careers which having low administrative issues etc.

**Table 3.** Effects of Locality on Career Choice of University Graduates

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.155	1.375		11.018	.000
	Q1	-.702	.981	-.065p	-.716	.475

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

Table 3 represents the effect of locality on the career choice of university graduates. The value ( $t = 11.018$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .000$ ) shows that there was a significant effect of locality on the career choice of university graduates.

**Table 4.** Effects of Family System on Career Choice of University Graduates

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.327	1.263		8.175	.000
	Q2	2.370	.720	.286	3.293	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

Table 4 shows the effect of the family system on the career choice of university graduates. The value ( $t = 8.175$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .000$ ) shows that there was a significant effect of the family system on the career choice of university graduates.

**Table 5.** Effects of Parents' Profession on Career Choice of University Graduates

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	14.913	1.298		11.486	.000
	Q7	-.115	.203	-.051	-.565	.573

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

Table 5 reveals the effect of parents' profession on the career choice of university graduates. The value ( $t = 11.486$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .000$ ) shows that there was a significant effect on parents' profession on the career choice of university graduates.

**Table 6.** Effects of Parents' Monthly Income on Career Choice of University Graduates

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.340	.881		17.410	.000
	Q22	-.731	.495	-.132	-1.477	.142

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

Table 6 shows the effect of parents' monthly income on the career choice of university graduates. The value ( $t = 17.410$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .000$ ) shows that there was a significant effect of parent's monthly income on the career choice of university graduates.

**Table 7.** One- Way Analyses of variance (ANOVA) of career choice affected by Fathers' Education

Factors	N	M	SD	F	Sig
F1	422	2.14	.610	34.435 2.675	.003

It explains the analysis of data by ANOVA, which reveals a significant effect of the independent variable like fathers' education  $F(34,432) = 2.675$  and  $p = .003$ . On career choice of university students.

**Table 8.** One- Way Analyses of variance (ANOVA) of career choice affected by Mothers' Education

Factors	N	M	SD	F	Sig
MI	422	2.10	1.10	24.432 1.62	.002

It explains the analysis of data by ANOVA, which reveals a significant effect of the independent variable like mothers' education  $F(24,432) = 1.62$  and  $p = .002$ . On career choice of university students.

## Discussion

A career decision is certainly a difficult stage and part of practical life. There are emerging, and new careers and current significant preferences seem to be the challenges in making such significant decisions. Furthermore, it demands a balance between the freedom of students to make a free decision and the counselling by parents and teachers based on their vision, wisdom and experience. In the present study, ANOVA and t-test were applied to know the degree to which various demographic variables affect the career choice of university students. The results represent that profession of parents, and their education has a significant influence on career choice of university students. Father's education generated significance, especially in the category of parents' influence. This shows that the father plays a key role in career choice. The results also reveal that fathers who have professional degrees appear to be more influential. Similarly, the mother's influence was also significant as educated mothers influenced a lot in terms of motivation and inspiration. Overall all this study presents that education of parent plays a leading role in the career choice of university students. These results correspond to those of the previous studies ([Whiston & Rahardja, 2008](#); [Whiston & Rahardja, 2008](#); [Savickas, 2011](#); [Özlen & Arnaut, 2013](#); [Mekgwe & Kok, 2017](#)).

Another influencing factor is the parents' financial position. Those students who belong to strong financial backgrounds are more confident and selective in the choice of career. Parent's financial conditions have a significant influence on career selection of students. Even so, a large number of students were also influenced by their teachers for guiding them to make a career choice. They either motivated or inspired them to choose their field of choice and interest. Teachers' friendly and polite attitude would have encouraged and motivated their students in the right choice of career. The same results were reported by previous studies ([Liu, 2017](#); [Levy & Lemeshow, 2008](#); and [Killam, Degges-White & Micheal, 2016](#)).

In short, there are three major demographic factors affecting career choice parents' education, parents' financial conditions and parents' marital status. This study identified the most important factor of the three in deciding upon career choices.

During the course of study, mostly the students think about getting through the examinations and securing higher marks. They would have been thinking about a career but narrowly. Their main focus is on their studies and higher percentage; in this way, they seem to link performance with their career of future life. It makes sense of rationalizing career choices. However, parents, their education, financial status and profession and the teachers seem to play a significant role in the career choice of university students.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the profession of parents and their education has a significant influence on career choice of university students. Father's education generated significance, especially in the category of parents' influence. This shows that the father plays a key role in career choice. The results also reveal that fathers who have professional degrees appear to be more influential. Similarly, mother's influence was also significant as educated mothers influenced a lot in terms of motivation and inspiration. Overall this study presents that education of parent plays a leading role in the career choice of university students. Another influencing factor is the parents' financial position. Those students who belong to strong financial backgrounds are more confident and selective in the choice of career. Parent's financial conditions have a significant influence on career selection of students. Even so, a large number of

students were also influenced by their teachers for guiding them to make a career choice. They either motivated or inspired them to choose their field of choice and interest. Teachers' friendly and polite attitude would have encouraged and motivated their students in the right choice of career. In a nutshell, there are three major demographic factors affecting career choice parents' education, parents' financial conditions and parents' marital status. This study identified the most important factor of the three in deciding upon career choices.



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