

Factors Affecting Adoption of Educational Discipline and Satisfaction Level Among Higher Education Students

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Abstract

This study examines the education career change behavior of male and female students. Factors like current trends, own preferences, parental pressure, and career counselors can influence their career adoption. Quantitative method research design was conducted for the study and a sample of 268 students was taken: 145 female and 123 male students, from different public and private universities of Islamabad. Purposive sampling technique was applied for selection as respondents were those who had changed their career path during their educational life. The results showed that current and prevailing trends, one's own decisions, and career counseling affect the choice and adoption of educational career, but parental influence does not influence education career change decision. Results are nearly similar for both genders, but male are more satisfied with education career change as compared to female respondents.

Keywords: Career adoption, career counseling, current trends, educational career, parental pressure, prevailing trends

Introduction

Every human being requires a certain level of education to meet the challenges that they face. Helpful educational counseling and individual skills play a dominant role to achieve the future vision and decide upon the career that one wants to take. Singaravelu, White and Bringaze (2005) and Yakushko (2007) in their studies discussed the importance of educational line that matched the abilities of students and concluded that students cannot make growth and progress in their future career without selecting proper educational path that best suits their skills. Appropriate guidance for students is lacking which results in wrong and inappropriate selection of education path.

Raza and Kazmi (2012) in their study point out current trends of certain fields motivate young people to change their education line, even if their capabilities do not match with that field. A blind chase of prevailing trends force many people to change their educational discipline, even if they have completed their education and have a decent job (Raza & Kazmi, 2012). Family pressures, peer influence, own choices, affordability, and career counseling are the key factors that convince students to change their educational disciplines (Pargett, 2011). Commerce and management studies became popular and are still in high demand; therefore, it can be seen that students choose management sciences without knowing their abilities and potentials.

It is also discussed in recent studies that students try to adopt conventional and predictable fields of education just to secure their future job career (Duberley, Cohen and Mallon, 2006; Yakushko, 2007). Thus professional advice, prevailing market trends and demands,

parent and peer influence, as well as students' own preferences are factors that influence the selection of educational discipline (Singaravelu, White & Bringaze, 2005). Most people after Educational Career Change (ECC) are quite satisfied with the change of discipline (Feldman & Thomas, 2007). People may change their educational path for a number of reasons, but it is not mandatory for them to be satisfied with their new education career (Carless & Bernath, 2007). Students seem to be confused in selection of their educational disciplines because many people influence their selection of educational career such as, their parents' likeness towards a certain educational field may be responsible for pressurizing young students to opt for that particular field. A small ratio of students has also been seen changing educational paths even after their master's degree. The current study explores the aspects which make large impact on selection of students' educational paths. Based on the literature search, the following research questions were generated:

1. Which factors (current trends, parents, counselors, own interest) change the minds of students towards their educational careers?
2. To what extent are male and female students satisfied after ECC?

Literature Review

A successful person must have a clear vision and goal, but his/her directions can be defined by many factors, for example, forces like new and prevailing marketing factors make significant impact on the choice of one's educational career (Ahamd, Alam & Alam, 1997). On the other hand, existing trends and developments have made it increasingly complex and difficult for young people to make meaningful choices and to settle effective pathways and

transitions from education to work (Anderson, 1999). In order to attract and motivate students, promotional strategies also make an important impact on student's perceptions. Advertisements play a major role in adoption of educational discipline among young people (Buchwald, 1975). It is also important to assess the extent to which education career planning affects one's career and future goals (Churchal, Dickinson, Everhart & Howard, 2012; Virtanen, Kivimäki, Elovainio & Vahtera 2003). Educational and career information, advice and guidance play an essential role in assisting people of all ages to navigate rapid changes and participate effectively in lifelong learning (Carless & Bernath, 2007). Emphasis must be made on quality of pre professional counseling for students so that they may have a clear goal and path in front of them (Pargett, 2011). Wildman (2009) rightly puts in that "Often the academic advisor is the only link the student has with the institution, that has a profound effect on the student's academic career and the student's level of satisfaction with his college choice" (p.1).

Even though students are generally satisfied with the provision of information about course-related matters, they are far less satisfied with the information provided on the relationship between courses of study and adoption of educational paths (Anderson, 1999). Parent guidance also contributes in the selection of career, but parental influence does not make significant impact on selection of career (Ahamd, Alam & Alam , 1997; Raza & Manarvi, 2009). One should not forget peer influence on career choices as friends and colleagues can also make a significant impact on the change of educational path (De Vries, 1998; Voorhees & Zhou, 2000). Most of the students choose educational disciplines which are opted by their friends, cousins, and colleagues.

Different studies focus on the relationship between job satisfaction and one's career orientation (Carless & Bernath, 2007). To establish a concrete education career goal, career planning is the key factor. This skill helps people to be pragmatic about oneself and one's career. Lack of proper planning ultimately leads to education career change (Carless & Bernath, 2007); therefore, proper guidelines are required for students so that they may identify their aptitude and potentials and are able to adopt educational discipline which best matches with their capabilities (De Vries, 1998). A young boy may be very dull in studies, but he can be a great musician or a languid boy can possibly be an efficient researcher. Professional advice is the key factor which identifies the hidden traits of a young person (Pargett, 2011).

If students do not receive adequate information about the relationship between courses of study, job prerequisites, and career paths, then there is a serious risk that they may make study choices that are ill-suited to their own capabilities (Duberley, Cohen & Mallon, 2006) and are hence less likely to reach their destinations safely and successfully if they lack the necessary map and advice (Anderson, 1999; Frost, 1994). It can therefore be safely shared that inappropriate selection of educational career path may hinder their employment and career aspirations, and may possibly be irrelevant to the needs of the wider community and industry.

This study also focuses separately on both male and female students as not only are females considered to be more efficient and hardworking than male, but they equally participate in every field of life. Previous studies show that the factors which are contributing to educational career advancements are different for both male and

female (Zhong & Couch, 2007). Female students are less likely to be satisfied from their educational line at early stage of their studies, but in the middle stage they are more committed to their career (Smart, 1998). Nevertheless, it can be said that family and peer influence, one's own choice, and professional advice plays an important role to achieve satisfaction level in the career that one has chosen.

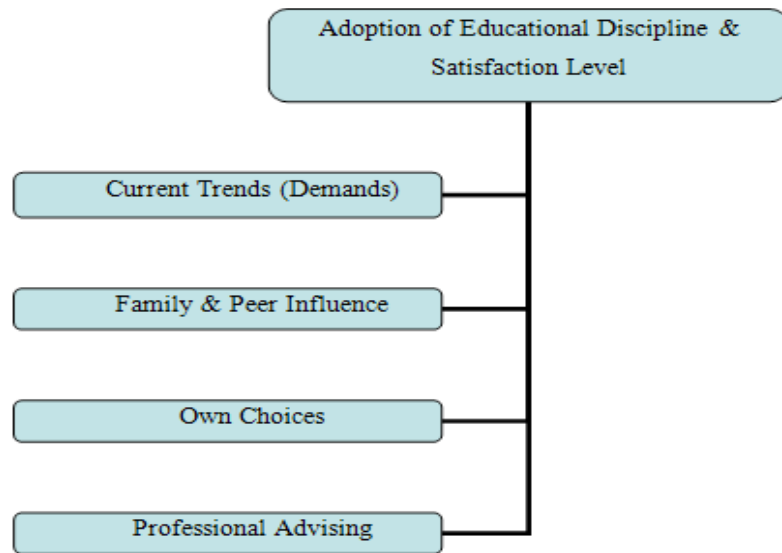


Figure 1. Theoretical framework showing relationship between independent and dependent variables

The above figure depicts the relationship between independent variables (current market trends or demands, family and peer influence, own choices, and professional advising) and the dependent variable which is adoption of educational discipline and satisfaction level. Impact of these variables is considered separately for both male and female students who had changed their education path at any stage of their education.

Hypotheses

The study was a comparative one that explored the impact of certain factors on adoption of educational discipline in both male and female students. The following hypotheses were developed:

- H1: Current trends make a significant impact on ECC of male and female students.
 H2: Parents and peers make a significant impact on ECC of male and female students.
 H3: Male and female students adopt their education line due to their own interest.
 H4: Counseling helps male and female students to make a choice of their education line.
 H5: There is significant difference in satisfaction level after education career change between male and female students.

Methodology

This is a quantitative study and survey method has been adopted to get responses from the respondents. A questionnaire was constructed as a tool to conduct survey. It was designed to examine the effects of different variables (including current trends, own choices, family and peer influence, professional advice) upon adoption of educational discipline and satisfaction level. The respondents of both genders who had changed their educational path at any stage of their education career were part of the sample. The respondents were at different stages of their education career while some respondents had diverted from their educational path even after completion of their university education.

Test instrument

There were two sections of the questionnaire: The first section consisted of nine questions which examined the demographics of respondents. This section included age, gender, earnings (if they were working), job description, marital status, current education line, and previous education. The second section examined the respondents' opinion about the variables which are mentioned in theoretical framework. In total, fifty four questions were asked and a five point likert scale was used (Schein, 1996) which ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Measurement

All dimensions of the variables discussed in this study were obtained from the literature, while current trends and facets were taken from Ahmad, Alam and Alam (1997), which included 'You change your educational discipline due to current trends in market'. Parent's influence scale was taken from Churchal, Dickinson, Everhart and Howard (2012); and Haley (2008), example 'Adoption of career is the choice of my parents'. Professional advising facets were taken from King (1998) and Pargett (2011), which included 'Professional advisors play an important role in adoption of educational line', 'The best teachers are usually the best advisors' and 'Universities need to increase the number of faculty who will plan active role in advising and mentoring students'. Satisfaction included some items like 'I am overall satisfied with my current career' (Smart & Peterson, 1997).

Target sample and sampling technique

Target sample consisted of those students or professionals who had changed their educational career at any stage of their life. Respondents were selected from different public and private universities from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. A cluster of objects was taken and purposive sampling technique was applied (Chaudhry, 2011). The core objective of purposive sampling is to focus on specific attributes of a population that are of interest, which will best facilitate the researchers to address the research inquiry. The questionnaire was distributed to respondents in different ways like; telephonic contacts, emails, personal interactions and other ways.

Participants

As this study was quantitative in nature, a questionnaire survey was conducted. Items which were part of the questionnaire were measured on a five point Likert Scale with end points of Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree. Three hundred questionnaires were circulated in different public and private universities in Islamabad, out of which 268 questionnaires were returned (response rate of 89%), in which 145 females (54.1%) and 123 males (45.9%) participated. 230 students were doing masters and 38 were doing bachelors, whereas the respondents' age ranged from 18 years to 40 years. Most respondents ranged from 18 to 28 years, as teenagers are unstable in their career choices as compared to mature people (Jacobs, Karen, & McClelland, 1991).

Instrument

SPSS (version 20) was applied to check regression, correlation, t-test, graphs, charts and ratios. Regression analysis was used to check the impact or effect of one variable (independent variable) on the other variable (dependent variable) (Chaudhry, 2011). To check the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha statistic was applied (Wildman, 2009). Descriptive analysis was done on control variables (gender, age, qualification) with the help of percentages and ratios. As comparative study was made between the sample of male and female students, two sample t-test was applied to conclude the comparison of two samples. Pearson's correlation analysis was also applied to test the association among variables.

Reliability analysis

To check the reliability of the research instrument, a pilot study was undertaken (Pargett, 2011). The variables discussed in this study were current trends, own choice of people, parent and peer influence on ECC decision, advising effects, and ECC. 40 questionnaires were floated and the reliability of all variables was tested using Cronbach Alpha. Results are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability statistics

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	No of items
Change of Education Line	0.652	5
Current Trends	0.769	4
Own Choices	0.662	3
Parents' and Peers' Influence	0.74	2
Advisor	0.737	4

Table 1 shows the Cronbach Alpha values of all the variables used in this study. The reliability of the data identify whether the instrument used to gather responses is reliable or not. According to David (2012), Cronbach's Alpha value more than 0.6 explains that the instrument is reliable. The reliability of change of education line is 0.652, current trends is 0.769, own choices is 0.662, parents' and peers' influence is 0.74 and reliability of advisor is 0.737. All values are more than 0.6 which shows that the test instrument used in current study is reliable.

Findings

Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis studies the control variables which are age, gender and qualification of respondents. According to Table 2, male respondents are 46% whereas female respondents consist of 54% of total sample.

Table 2. Descriptive analysis on basis of gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	123	46%
Female	145	54%

According to the results, 56% respondents are studying in masters' degree programs, 40% respondents are doing bachelors' and 4% are enrolled in MPhil or MS degree.

Regression and correlation analysis

The purpose of applying multiple regressions is to

demonstrate the affect of independent variables on the dependent variable (Chaudhry, 2011). Table 3 and 4 characterize the multiple regression analysis of the research.

Table 3. β values and significance values of independent variables for male respondents

Variables	β value	Significance value
Current Trends	0.403	0.000**
Parents' Influence	0.111	0.096
Own Choices	0.562	0.000**
Advisor	0.303	0.001**

** - significance at 1% level

* - significance at 5% level

The results reported in Table 3 show that for male, the current trends and demands (Hypothesis H1) make significant impact on career change of male students ($\beta = 0.403$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$), own choices (Hypothesis H3) make significant impact on career change of male students ($\beta = 0.562$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$), and career counselors (Hypothesis H4) also make significant influence on career change of male students ($\beta = 0.303$, $p = 0.001 < 0.01$). On the other hand, parents' pressure (Hypothesis H2) is not a significant factor for ECC ($\beta = 0.111$, $p = 0.096 > 0.05$). According to the results discussed above, hypotheses H1, H3 and H4 are accepted with regards to male, whereas hypothesis H2 is rejected. It is concluded that parents' pressure is not a significant contributor in ECC decision for males.

Table 4. β values and significance values of independent variables for female respondents

Variables	β value	Significance value
Current Trends	0.395	0.000**
Parents' Influence	0.008	0.924
Own Choices	0.281	0.001**
Advisor	0.214	0.023*

** - significance at 1% level

* - significance at 5% level

Almost the same findings for females are reported in Table 4. Current and existing trends (Hypothesis H1) make significant impact on career change of female students ($\beta = 0.395$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$), own choices (Hypothesis H3) make considerable impact on career change of female students ($\beta = 0.281$, $p = 0.001 < 0.01$), and career counseling (Hypothesis H4) also make significant contribution in their decisions of adoption of education line ($\beta = 0.214$, $p = 0.023 < 0.05$). Whereas the results show that parents (Hypothesis H2) do not interfere in the educational decisions of females ($\beta = 0.008$, $p = 0.924 > 0.05$). According to the results discussed above, hypotheses H1, H3 and H4 are accepted, whereas hypothesis H2 is rejected in case of female and it is concluded that parents' pressure is not a significant contributor in ECC decision for females. It is obvious from these results that the factors that affect students' ECC are same in both genders.

The results are not similar with satisfaction from ECC. According to the results reported in Table 5, Hypothesis H5 is accepted which states that male students are satisfied with new education career ($\beta = 0.181$, $p = 0.045 < 0.05$) as they think they make correct decisions and current education line matches their capabilities and interests (marginal and close to dissatisfaction as p -value = 0.045 which is near to 0.05). On the other hand, hypothesis H5 is rejected with regards to female students as they are dissatisfied with their new education profession ($\beta = 0.05$, $p = 0.549 > 0.05$). They think that they are facing problems in the new educational career as they were facing in the previous career.

Table 5. β values, t-test value and significance values for satisfaction level of both genders

Variables	B value	t-test	Significance value
Satisfaction level of males	0.181	112	0.045*
Satisfaction level of females	0.05	146	0.549
Gender comparison for Satisfaction level	-----	771	0.078

** - significance at 1% level

* - significance at 5% level

To study the association of all variables which are part of this study, Pearson Correlation was applied. Correlation results of both genders are presented in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6. Male correlation

Variables	1	2	3	4
1.ECC	-	-	-	-
2.Current trends	0.408**	-	-	-
3.Own choices	0.596**	0.009	-	-
4.Parents' influences	0.055	0.157	-0.197	-
5.Advising	0.303**	0.131*	0.266*	0.094

** - significance at 1% level

* - significance at 5% level

Table 6 depicts the correlation results for male in which ECC is significantly correlated with current trends (0.408** at 1% level of significance), own choices (0.596** at 1% level of significance), and with the advising (0.303** at 1% level of significance); whereas insignificant correlation with parent's influence (0.055).

For female students (results reported in Table 7), ECC is significantly correlated with current trends (0.389** at 1% level of significance), own choices (0.319** at 1% level of significance) and with advising (0.214** at 1% level of significance); whereas, ECC has insignificant correlation with parents' influence (0.008).

Table 7. Female correlation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1.ECC	-	-	-	-	-
2.Current trends	0.389**	-	-	-	-
3.Own choices	0.319**	0.002	-	-	-
4.Parents' influences	0.008	0.016	-0.208	-	-
5.Advising	0.214**	0.117	0.288*	-0.109	-

** - significance at 1% level

* - significance at 5% level

Discussion

Reflecting on the outcomes of the study, the following points can be noted:

1. Mid education career change practice is common in all ages of learners, but students between 18 to 24 years of age are more likely to change their educational path, which is 69% of total sample values.
2. Current trends, own choices, and career counselors significantly influence students' education career choices of both gender.
3. Both male and female students do not change their educational path due to the pressure imposed by their parents.
4. Individually examined, males are more satisfied with their new education line, whereas females are not much satisfied with their new education field.

Education change decision is a frequent practice in Pakistani education system. Due to lack of proper guidance from parents and educational institutions, students often change their educational path either in the mid of their academic career or even after completion of their studies. First finding states that the majority of the students who have changed their educational line are young. (as reported in Figure 2). Appropriate guidance and career counseling is not available in Pakistani academic institutes (Ahmad, Alam & Alam, 1997), resulting in confusion to select a suitable profession. This forces the students to find other alternative career after some years of learning as they perceive that the current educational occupation does not go with their interest level.

The second finding of the current study confirms the findings of Ahmad, Alam and Alam (1997); Carless and Bernath, (2007); Churchal, Dickinson, Everhart and Howard, (2012); and Pargett, (2011) that both male and female students intend to adopt a new education line due to their own liking of a certain career. Moreover, popular market developments and career counselors are also one of the major reasons for ECC decisions. Beta and significance values reported in Table 3 and Table 4 show significant impact of own choices, current trends, and academic advisors on ECC decisions. Youngsters try to adopt education line according to their own choice and willingness. Also, new academic fields catch the attention of the young people and they get attracted towards those emerging fields. Adding on, academic advisors also play a significant part for selection of better educational path. Voorhees and Zhou (2000) disagree with the findings of the current study. They argue that new market trends do not significantly impact on adoption of a new educational discipline. Thus, the results of this study show that as students will explore new

areas, their interest may develop forcing them to change their field.

According to the third finding, the factor parent influence is not a significant contributor in ECC decision of students of both genders. Table 3 and Table 4 depict beta and significant values of parent influence on ECC decisions. The study of Raza and Kazmi (2012) confirms the findings of the current study. The choice of new education line is not because of elders' guidance or pressure; rather it is due to students' inspiration from observing new educational development around them (Ahmad, Alam & Alam, 1997). It seems that the trends in Pakistani society are shifting and as was once considered that parents were the deciding force in a child's career choice, such notion does not seem to hold any more.

The fourth finding of the study individually examines the contentment level of both male and female students with new educational line. According to the results reported in Table 5, male students are satisfied and comfortable with their ECC decision and are fully devoted to their new education career; however, female students are a little satisfied with their ECC decision and feel that their new career choice will not be successful. This finding is similar to findings of Singaravelu, White and Bringaze (2005), but Haley (2008) disagrees with the current findings and argues that satisfaction level prevails in both genders. The findings of the current study also confirmed the study of Raza and Kazmi (2012) that these results are true in both forms of gender. From this study, it was not clear as to why this trend exists in the female participants. The dissatisfaction of female with their career choice even after the career change needs to be probed further.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to test factors that might influence students to adopt an educational discipline that best suits their capabilities and interests. Further, it checked the satisfaction level of students from ECC. It was a comparative study of male and female students who were studying in different public and private universities in Islamabad. The findings clearly indicate that the prevailing market development, own choice of students, and career counseling make high impact on the choice and adoption of educational career, whereas family and parental pressure do not make significant impact on adoption of education line. It can be perceived that parents do not interfere in the career decisions of the students.

After adoption of new educational career, male students think they are significantly satisfied with their new education line, but female students are not satisfied with their education change decisions. The findings of the study have opened new vistas for more research in this domain. This study is limited to factors that were discussed above, but an important factor like affordability cannot be ignored. Many students in Pakistan are not able to adopt a reputable education career because they cannot afford it, in spite of the fact that those students might have the potential for a particular profession. It is also a common observation that some students change their education career only because they did not secure good marks to obtain admission in their field of interest or they perceived that the past field was tough for them and it would have limited scope in the coming years. It is suggested that more attention should be paid to career counseling so that students do not wander in the

wrong field and waste their precious time and potential by aiming at wrong objectives.

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