



RESEARCH PAPER

**The Effect of Career Outcomes on the Career Aspirations of
Secondary school Students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of career outcomes on career aspirations of secondary schools' students. Study's objectives were to; (1) find out the effect of career outcomes on career aspirations of students at secondary level and (2) recommend strategies for the career guidance of students. Study's design was quantitative. Its population was 30439 students. A sample of 380 students selected with simple random sampling. A questionnaire was developed, validated and pilot tested for collecting data. Data were gathered with self-administered questionnaires and analyzed with using mean scores, standard deviations and chi-square test. The study found the significant effect of career outcomes on students' career aspirations. Income, work environment, recognition and future career opportunities significantly affect the career aspirations of students. The study recommended the provision of career guidance in secondary schools. Moreover, mechanism for students' career aspirations on the basis of interests and aptitudes may be provided at secondary level.

KEYWORDS: Effect, Career Outcomes, Career Aspirations, Secondary School Students, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Introduction

Career outcomes, economy and job market factors play a dominant role in the career aspirations of students at secondary level. These days there are fewer job opportunities and the job market can accommodate a less number of students, therefore, schools need to prepare students for achieving their desired career outcomes in the competitive job market. According to Finnie (2004) the world of work demands an adolescent to make career aspirations in order to adjust themselves in the changing socio-economic context. The schools of today must equip students with skills and abilities at the school in order to adjust them in the future competitive economy (Sanchez, 2003). Economy, job market and employment opportunities are factors for the fulfillment of hopes and expectations of students which affect the career aspirations of students (Salami, 2004). Several studies have identified work values and job characteristics as important elements in the occupational aspirations of students (Salami, 2000). Salami (2007) found job outcome expectations like social status, freedom and the spirit of serving the society that attracts the interest of students towards the selection of such careers. Moy and Lee (2002) identified the career attributes to be important influences on the career choice determination of students. These attributes include the interesting nature of the career, financial gains, job security and working conditions.

Agarwala (2008) found that financial gains from careers outcomes are the most significant factor in the career choice decisions of students. Students were also influenced by leisure and hours of working in careers in their career choice decisions. Employment opportunities, socio-economic status offered by the career, promotions, social status,

authority, salaries and income were found as significant factors affecting the career choice decisions of students. Obinu and Ebunu (2010) identified that economic factors like financial needs and demands, influence the career choice decisions of secondary school students. Mutekwe, Modiba & Maphosa (2011) found the aspirations of students for high income and good salaries as a significant influence in the career choice decisions of students. Thachenkery (2010) found that students are influenced by salaries, employment opportunities and job characteristics in making their career choice decisions. Bai (1998) found that students were mostly influenced by money, authority and power in career choice decisions. Auyeung and Sands (1997) identified salary, promotions, job security, recognition and authority as major influences on the career choice decisions of students. It is concluded that career attributes affect the career aspirations of students, therefore; the study investigated the effect of career outcomes on the career aspirations of students at secondary level.

Literature Review

Fleming et al. (2005) reported work values or career outcomes such as income, pleasant environment and working hours as influences on the career aspirations of students. Salary, income, facilities, leisure, promotion opportunities were significant factors in the career determination of students and identified financial rewards and prestige as important determiners in the career aspirations of students. According to Kee (2013) promotions, pleasant working conditions, responsibility, challenge, skills development, social recognition and leisure are the most important work values affecting the career aspirations of students. The same study also found financial rewards as an important work value for influencing the occupational interests of students. The status or perception about a job also affects career aspirations of young students. Teo and Poon (1994) reported salary, financial benefits, work environment, relations with work colleagues, future prospects, challenge, authority, power, prestige and job security as the most influential factors in the career aspirations of students.

According to Foskett and Hamsley-Brown (1999) the occupations of people may be classified into three categories on the basis of intrinsic qualities. They are high profile occupations, status occupations and customary occupations. High profile occupations give high earnings and are based on special talents like the occupations of sports, acting and music. These occupations have limited opportunities of entry for the individuals. Status occupations are typical professional careers like doctors, engineers and lawyers. They attract many individuals because of status, prestige, recognition and high income but such careers require very high academics. Customary occupations are high in number because most people are employed in these. The above categories of occupational choices are various alternatives of career aspirations for young students.

Maharaj (2007) identified working environment to be a significant factor in the career decisions of students. Students prefer works and employment opportunities with leisure and fewer working hours. Small and Mclean (2002) reported that majority of students preferred law, medicine and engineering as their careers because these careers offer status, prestige and high income. Swift (2009) found the influence of financial status on the career aspirations of students. Salami and Aremu (2007) identified that socio-cultural obligations coupled with economic conditions shape the careers of youth. Kiani (2010) highlighted that the students of secondary schools aspired for careers which offered prestige, social recognition and financial benefits for students in future.

Ososki et al. (2006) found enthusiasm and love for facing the challenges as important influencing agents on the career determination of students. Students love teaching because it is more challenging and is a great social service as compared to other services of the society. Olamide and Salami (2013) reported the availability of employment opportunities as a key factor in the career aspirations of students. Rottinghaus (2005) reported that individuals who have good information about job market and career opportunities are in good position to make better career choice decisions. Thus knowledge about job market, confidence and adjustment to career opportunities are essential elements for successful career development. Antonio et al. (2007) highlighted that these days young students are faced with the problems of unemployment as well as under employment. The reason is that they have to compete for the very few available career opportunities because of the competitive job market.

It is concluded that students' career aspirations are affected by the factors of the careers offered to them in future and they keep those characteristics of careers in mind for which they aspire. As secondary schooling lays the foundations of future careers for students, therefore; it is imperative to investigate the effect of career outcomes on the career aspirations of secondary schools' students. Hence, the study investigated the effect of career outcomes on the career aspirations of secondary schools' students. It will highlight the challenges of students in making appropriate career aspirations at the level of secondary schools and will recommend strategies for the career guidance of students in secondary schools.

Material and Methods

The design for the conduction and reporting of the study was quantitative survey for investigating the effect of career outcomes on the career aspirations of secondary schools' students. The population of the study was 30439 secondary school students from district Swat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The sample of the study was 380 which was determined with Raosoft online calculator for the determination of the sample for research studies. The sample was selected with using simple random sampling procedure. A questionnaire containing information about the effect of career outcomes on the career aspirations of students at secondary level was developed, validated with expert opinion of experts in the field of career guidance and pilot tested for the reliability. The reliability of the tool was 0.804. According to Law (2004) if the coefficient of reliability is 0.80 then it is excellent and if it is from 0.60 to 0.79 then it is adequate. The data were collected with using self-administered questionnaires and analyzed with mean scores standard deviation and the chi-square test of significance. Ethical principles for conduction of the study, participants and reporting the findings of research were followed.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Effect of Career Outcomes on Career Aspirations of Students

Statements	Number	Mean	S. D	χ^2	P
Income/Salary/pay influenced your Career Choice	380	3.77	.93	51.08	.000
Job security influenced your career Choice	380	3.82	.67	45.67	.000
Working environment influenced your career choice	380	3.65	.32	44.58	.000
Authority and power influenced your career choice	380	3.56	.45	67.43	.000
Autonomy and recognition influenced your career choice	380	3.61	.69	89.77	.000
Future Promotions influenced your career choice	380	3.69	.04	62.53	.000

Leisure and comfort influenced your career choice	380	3.89	.34	56.46	.000
Job satisfaction influenced your career choice	380	3.58	.88	41.75	.000
Competition /challenge influenced your career choice	380	3.81	.43	92.52	.000
Career opportunities influenced your career choice	380	3.66	.79	34.39	.000

Table 1 demonstrates the effect of career outcomes on the career aspirations of secondary schools' students. The mean scores of 3.77, 3.83, 3.65, 3.56, 3.61, 3.69, 3.89, 3.58, 3.81 and 3.66 highlighted that students agreed that career outcomes, i.e. income, job security, work environment, authority, recognition, promotions, leisure, job satisfaction, competition and future career opportunities significantly affect the career aspirations of students in secondary schools. On application of the Chi-square test, the findings were found statistically significant.

The findings identified that career outcomes, i.e. income, job security, work environment, authority, recognition, promotions, leisure, job satisfaction, competition and future career opportunities significantly affect the career aspirations of students in secondary schools.

Discussions

The study found that career outcomes, i.e. income, job security, work environment, authority, recognition, promotions, leisure, job satisfaction, competition and future career opportunities significantly affect the career aspirations of students in secondary schools. Several other studies have also identified the influence of career outcomes on the career aspirations of the students. Thachenkery (2010) found that students are influenced by salaries, employment opportunities and job characteristics in making their career aspirations. Several studies have identified work values and job characteristics as important elements in the occupational aspirations of the students (Salami, 2000). Bai (1998) and Auyeung and Sands (1997) identified salary, promotions, job security, recognition and authority as major influences on the career aspirations of the students. Agarwala (2008); Maharaj (2007) and Fleming et al. (2005), found employment opportunities, socio-economic status offered by the career, promotions, social status, authority, salaries and income were found as significant factors affecting the career aspirations of the students. Moy and Lee (2002) identified the career attributes to be the important influences on the career choice determination of the students. These attributes include the interesting nature of the career, financial gains, job security and the working conditions. Similarly, Teo and Poon (1994) reported salary, financial benefits, work environment, relations with work colleagues, future prospects, challenge, authority, power, prestige and job security as the most influential factors in the career aspirations of the students. The findings of many other studies are also in conformity with the findings of the study. Similar to the findings of the study, Kee (2013) found promotions, pleasant working conditions, responsibility, challenge, skills development, social recognition and leisure as the most important work values affecting the career aspirations of the students. Kiani (2010) highlighted that the students of secondary schools aspired for careers which offered prestige, social recognition and financial benefits for the students in future. This brings significant theoretical and practical implications for the career guidance of students in secondary schools.

Conclusion

The study revealed that career outcomes, i.e. income, job security, working environment, leisure and comfort, job satisfaction, promotions, authority and power, autonomy and recognition, competition and career opportunities significantly influence the career choices of secondary schools' students.

Recommendations

Keeping in view the objectives and findings of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations.

- The study recommends the provision of career guidance facilities for the effective career planning of the students in secondary schools. As the career guidance facilities are not available in secondary schools, therefore, it is very difficult for the students of secondary schools to select appropriate subjects of their study at this level, which are based on their
- There must be collaboration between parents, teachers and schools' authorities for the support of students in career choice decisions. As a friendly relation between home and school is compulsory for making conducive environment regarding career choice decisions of students, therefore, it will help the teachers and parents to know the interests and abilities of the students for making proper subjects selection that may lead them to their desired future destinations.
- The information about job market and career opportunities is an essential element for the better career choice decisions of the students; therefore, the study recommends career orientations, workshops and career days for the students and their parents at secondary schools, for awareness and to know information regarding the career opportunities and job market.
- For the effective career guidance of the students, there is the need to know the interests and aptitudes of the students in secondary schools. Therefore, the study recommends the establishment of assessment mechanisms for identification of students, interests and aptitudes and the integration of these with the career choice decisions of students.
- In order to prepare the students of secondary schools for the future careers in an effective manner, there is the need for provision of information about the future requirements and terms and conditions for entry into the desired professional colleges. The study recommends the incorporation of career guidance subjects in the schools' curricula for the provision of career information and knowing the requirements for the entry into the professional colleges.
- Career guidance in secondary schools needs the provision of books, brochures and social media. Therefore, the schools must be provided with books, brochures and Internet facility for the facilitation of students, in career guidance.

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