



Research Paper

A Study on Career Preference of Under Graduate Engineering and Technology Students in Anna University Regional Campus Coimbatore

SENGATHIR A ¹, Dr. C. DHAYANAND ²

¹(Executive Assistant (Administration), Anna University Regional Campus Coimbatore, Navavoor, Coimbatore – 641 046, Tamil Nadu, India,)

²(Assistant Professor, Department of Extension and Career Guidance, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore – 641 046, Tamil Nadu, India,)

ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken with the major objective of ascertaining the career preferences of under graduate engineering students of Anna University Regional Campus Coimbatore.

The target population under the study was final year engineering students of Anna University Regional Campus Coimbatore. A sample of 185 respondents was selected randomly. The students were selected through simple random sampling. The data was collected through a pre-tested and pre-structured questionnaire. The collected data was classified and tabulated and interpretations were made with the help of the statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, percentages, Z test and correlation coefficient using latest statistical tools.

Correlation analysis revealed that family background, academic achievements, educational level of father / male guardian, occupation of father / male guardian, mass media exposure and influence of career benefit on career preference were found to have positive and significant relationship whereas birth order, educational level of mother / female guardian, occupation of mother / female guardian, family annual income, influence of family and influence of role models had shown positive and non-significant relationship with the career preference of under graduate engineering students.

The career benefit of knowledge development is having high influence on the career preference of the students and the career benefit of fulfilling family aspirations is having low influence on the career preference of the students.

Keywords: Career Benefit, Career Choice, Career Counseling, Career Guidance, Career Preference

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I. INTRODUCTION

Career is a regular occupation or profession in which one is making a living. Career preference is the occupation with the highest positive valence among alternative form of work value. Planning for career is very essential for the peaceful living and quality of life. It provides the basis of the individual's future life, his social recognition and finally contributes in the development of the country through proper utilization of human resources.

College students choose their job fields for many reasons. The factors that affect their decision include family, passion salary and past experiences. In addition to these factors, race and gender can also affect which field a student may choose. Some professions have greater percentages of a certain gender or race. Another thing that plays a big role in a student's decision of what field to choose is the people or role models in his/ her life. These role models can include a parent, teacher, or a recent employer.

Many factors can influence while college students' choosing their career path. Students will typically take into account the quality of life they want when they are older. Factors such as interest in field, academic ability, familiarity, economic stability, and influential people can all play a role in the decision.

1.1 Pattern of Career Choice

When students are choosing a career, they may not have all the information about the job they are pursuing. The job may involve more math or science than students are prepared to do. Students may like one aspect of a certain job and not understand what other aspects come with that profession. Also, students may not be open to all jobs in their area of interest. Tools that can help the students in their decision for certain career paths include career fairs, job shadowing, or internships. These tools can expose students to more career fields or areas within a certain field that a student did not know about.

Choosing a right career path is a huge part of a young man or woman's life. The career path students choose will affect how they live the rest of their life. A lot of students go through college without knowing what career path they want. Before students can pick a career path they need to experience what that career is like and what it involves.

There are many careers from which students may choose. There are great opportunities for advancement and job placement in the engineering field. Careers include home management, students – higher education, own business, employee in private organization, employee in government organization, skill development lead to business, skill development lead to employment, self professional practice and public servant through election.

1.2 Existing Scenario

Some students grow up knowing what they want to do in life. These are the students who will go the extra mile to reach their dream job. However, students often settle on a different path due to many factors they can't control. Students will research their chosen career path and explore everything about it. The salary and benefits of that job do not play a role in this decision. In a research study the factor "match with interest" rated over job characteristics, major attributes, and psychological and social benefits in importance when students choose a major (Beggs et al., 2008). Students will seek out schools that are well known for that major or trade. Most students today are more concerned with the amount of money they can earn. However, there are a few students who pursue their dreams (Mcglynn, 2007).

Thus, in the present context of un-employability, choosing career intelligently is of vital importance. Career planning is influenced by so many socio-economic and personality factors like sex, community size, educational level, occupation and income of the parents, parental expectations, place of residence, quality and category of education received, social environment, availability of job opportunities etc.. Availability of knowledge of different types/areas of careers is undoubtedly helpful for the students to be familiar with the emerging professions. Because, quite often it is seen that most of the students are unknown about certain areas of career.

Today, one has not only make due career planning but also exhaustive career research before making a career choice so as to adjust with the evolving socio economic conditions. Each individual undertaking the process is influenced by many factors, including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, and educational attainment.

The purpose of engineering education is to produce trained engineering graduates who should do something for services in government, NGOs, private Sector, or self-employment by adopting technology. In order to ascertain the extent to which this purpose is being fulfilled, the present study was undertaken with the objective to find out the career choice pattern of engineering and technology students of the final year undergraduate students.

1.3 Objectives of the study

- 1) To identify the career preferences of the respondents.
- 2) To determine the students career preferences based on their demographic factors.
- 3) To identify the factors influencing the career benefit on career preferences.

1.4 Hypotheses

- ❖ There is relationship between the influence of career benefit and career preference of students.
- ❖ There is difference between the career preferences of rural and urban students.
- ❖ There is difference between the career preferences of male and female students.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bandura et al. (2001) states that each individual process of choosing a career is influenced by several factors such as personal interests, social contacts, role models and educational attainment. He also concluded that career preference of students is highly influenced by factors like level of achievement in academics.

Schultheisis et al. (2001) found that sibling's relationships are having significant influence on the student's career preference. Emotional support, providing additional career information and encouragement to make decisions are the areas in which siblings influence the career preferences of the students.

Wildman and Torres (2002) concluded that family and friends are considered to be an influential part of students' choice of career. Parents with an agriculture background most often have an impact on where students go to college. He also found that role models of family have more influence on the career preference of the students.

Whiston and Keller (2004) concluded that across lifespan, both family structure variables such as parent's occupation, educational level and family process variables such as warmth, support, attachment and autonomy from parents were found to influence a large number of career constructs.

Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2006) reported that parents had a significant influence on the career decisions of students but mothers were more influential. He further reported that mothers play a major role in career choice of their children.

Oyamo and Amoth (2008) observed that the rural students tend to seek help from the parents more than the urban students and parents play a major role more than the teachers in the career preference of the students.

Edwards and Migunde (2011) reported that the student's career choices are influenced by numerous factors including individual variants such as Gender, personal interests, learning experiences, and personal contacts. He also stated that family members are more influential in students' career choices than any other persons. There were no variations in the level of influence that each person had on students' career choice by gender.

Shumba and Naong (2012) concluded that the family, the ability of learner self to identify his/her preferred career choice and teachers are the significant factors that influence the career choice of students. He also found that low family income is the most common impediment towards career choice.

Ramachandram et al. (2015) concluded that personal interests and family influence of the students significantly influence students' career choice.

Mbagwu and Ajaegbu (2016) found that teenagers whose parents from high educational background are most consistent and do not have much difficulties in making a career choice when compared with those whose parents have low educational background. Also, majority of teenagers whose parents had high educational background and made more of professional career choices while whose parents had low educational background made more of business career choices. He finally concluded that there is significant relationship between parent's educational background and choice of career.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was followed for conducting the study.

3.1 Population of the study

Population identified to participate in this study was all the final year undergraduate students of Anna University Regional Campus Coimbatore.

3.2 Selection of respondents

The study was carried out in Anna University Regional Campus Coimbatore in the year 2021-22. The total number of students of final year undergraduate engineering students was 240.

The selection of respondents was done by using non-probability sampling method. A total sampling technique was used in selecting 185 respondents from the final year undergraduate engineering students of B.E. (CSE / ECE / EEE & Mechanical Engineering). The questionnaire was circulated to all the students. However, only 185 students were responded with all the information's and others did not respond in complete. Hence the remaining responses were not considered.

3.3 Statistical Tools Used

Data collected were qualitative as well as quantitative. The quantitative data were interpreted in terms of percentage and qualitative data were tabulated on the basis of categorization methods. After tabulation, percentage, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of correlation was determined.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Career Preferences of the respondents

The data regarding influence of career preferences are presented in Table 4.1.

Table – 4.1: Distribution of the respondents according to their career preferences

S. No.	Variable in Career Benefit	Influence				Mean Score	Rank
		NI	LI	MI	HI		
1	Home Management	32 17.2%	15 8.1%	90 48.4%	49 26.3%	85.5	8
2	Students (Higher Studies)	31 16.7%	18 9.7%	69 37.1%	68 36.6%	90	7
3	Employer (Own Business)	30 16.1%	13 7%	73 39.2%	70 37.6%	92.25	6
4	Employee in Private Organisation	17 9.1%	78 9.7%	76 40.9%	75 40.3%	113.75	2
5	Employee in Govt. Organisation	12 6.5%	9 4.8%	53 28.5%	112 60.2%	199	1
6	Skill Development lead to Business	12 6.5%	12 6.5%	70 37.6%	92 49.5%	107	4
7	Skill Development lead to Employment	11 5.9%	11 5.9%	72 38.7%	92 49.5%	107.75	3
8	Self Professional Practice	24 12.9%	10 5.4%	68 36.6%	84 45.2%	99.5	5
9	Public Servant Through Election	42 22.6%	28 15.1%	70 37.6%	46 24.7%	76.5	9
10	Others	62 33.3%	15 8.1%	75 40.3%	34 18.3%	66.75	10

From Table 4.1, it is clear that 60.2% of the under graduate students said that Employee in Government Organization influenced their career preference compared to 6.5% who felt like they were not influenced by government job in selecting their career.

Nearly half (49.5%) of the undergraduate students felt that skill development lead to employment was important in determining their career preference while 5.9% said that it was not an important factor.

Thus, it can be concluded that Employee in government organization is having high influence on the career preference of the students followed by employee in private organization, skill development lead to employment, skill development lead to business, self professional practice, own business, higher studies, home management, public servant through election, others, are having low influence on the career preference of the students.

4.2 Career preferences of rural and urban undergraduate students of final year:

The data regarding career preferences of rural and urban undergraduate students of final year are presented in Table 4.2.

Table – 4.2: Career preferences of rural and urban undergraduate students of final year

S. No.	Variable in Career Preferences	Rural		Urban		Total		Z value
		Mean score	Rank	Mean score	Rank	Overall mean	Rank	
1	Home Management	38.50	7	47.00	8	62.00	8	0.68
2	Students (Higher Studies)	38.00	8	52.00	7	64.00	7	0.39
3	Employer (Own Business)	38.75	6	53.50	6	65.50	6	0.74
4	Employee in Private Organisation	40.75	4	56.50	5	69.00	5	0.32
5	Employee in Govt. Organisation	50.75	1	62.25	1	81.62	1	0.23
6	Skill Development lead to Business	44.75	3	62.05	2	75.87	3	0.25
7	Skill Development lead to Employment	46.25	2	61.50	3	77.00	2	0.37
8	Self Professional Practice	40.50	5	59.00	4	70.00	4	0.54
9	Public Servant Through Election	30.25	9	46.25	9	53.37	9	0.44
10	Others	29.00	10	37.25	10	47.87	10	0.79

From Table 4.2 it is clear that out of 185 final year under graduate students 79 students belonged to rural background and their first preference of career was employee in government organization, followed by skill development lead to employment, skill development lead to business, employee in private organization, self professional practice, own business, home management, higher studies, public servant through election and others respectively. Whereas 106 students belonged to urban background and their first preference of career

was employee in government organization, followed by skill development lead to business, skill development lead to employment, self professional practice, employee in private organization, own business, higher studies, home management, public servant through election and others respectively.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the final year undergraduate students were given preference to government jobs and skill development lead to employment though least preference was given to public servant through election and others.

4.3 Career preferences of male and female undergraduate students of final year:

The data regarding career preferences of male and female undergraduate students of final year are presented in Table 4.3.

Table – 4.3: Career preferences of male and female undergraduate students of final year

S. No.	Variable in Career Preferences	Male		Female		Total		Z value
		Mean score	Rank	Mean score	Rank	Overall mean	Rank	
1	Home Management	58.25	8	26.5	6	42.375	8	0.23
2	Students (Higher Studies)	62.75	7	26.25	7	44.625	7	0.22
3	Employer (Own Business)	65.75	6	25.75	8	45.75	6	0.02
4	Employee in Private Organisation	66.75	5	31.25	4	49	5	0.43
5	Employee in Govt. Organisation	73.25	2	38.75	1	56	1	0.04
6	Skill Development lead to Business	73.75	1	32.5	3	53.125	3	0.03
7	Skill Development lead to Employment	72.75	3	34.25	2	53.5	2	0.21
8	Self Professional Practice	68.25	4	30.5	5	49.375	4	0.34
9	Public Servant Through Election	54	9	21.75	9	37.875	9	1.25
10	Others	48.25	10	17.25	10	33	10	0.07

The data in Table 4.3 revealed that skill development lead to business was the most preferred area of career among male students followed by employee in government organization, skill development lead to employment, self professional practice, employee in private organization, own business, higher studies, home management, public servant through election and others respectively.

The data in Table 4.3 further revealed that employee in government organization was the most preferred area of career among female students followed by skill development lead to employment, skill development lead to business, employee in private organization, self professional practice, home management, higher studies, own business, public servant through election and others respectively.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the final year under graduate students were given preference to employee in government organization and skill development lead to employment though least preference was given to public servant through election and other category.

Thus, it can be concluded that career preference of male and female students were similar and employee in government organization was the most preferred area of career among the students.

4.4 Relationship between the career preference and socio demographic characteristics of the students

The data regarding the relationship between the career preference and socio demographic characteristics of final year under graduate students are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 – Relationship between the career preference and socio demographic characteristics of final year under graduate students

Sl. No.	Socio-demographic Characteristics	Career preference	
		“r” value	t-value
1	Birth Order	0.08	0.81
2	Family Background	0.02*	0.93
3	Academic Achievements	0.00*	0.00
4	Educational Level of Father / Male Guardian	0.03*	0.93
5	Educational Level of Mother / Female Guardian	0.16	0.64
6	occupation of Father / Male Guardian	0.01*	0.93
7	Occupation of Mother/ Female Guardian	0.26	0.46
8	Family Annual Income	0.25	0.483
9	Mass Media Exposure	0.04*	0.82
10	Influence of Family on Career Preference	0.21	0.52
11	Influence of Role Models on Career Preference	0.30	0.41
12	Influence of Career Benefit on Career Preference	0.02*	0.93

* Significant at 0.05 level of probability

Influence of career benefit had positive and significant relationship with the career preference of the students. It indicated that it is a vital variable that decides the career preferences of the students. This can be concluded that students choose a particular career because of the benefits like knowledge development and prestige that career provides them when compared to the other areas of career.

Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and research hypothesis was accepted and concluded that this character was correlated with the career preference.

4.5 Influence of Career Benefit on Career Preference:

The data regarding influence of career benefit are presented in Table 4.5.

Table – 4.5: Distribution of the respondents according to their influence of career benefit

S. No.	Variable in Career Benefit	Influence				Mean Score	Rank
		NI	LI	MI	HI		
1	Societal Recognition through values	6	15	95	70	103.75	11
		5.2%	6.1%	51.1%	37.6%		
2	Job Security	8	11	80	87	108	8
		4.3%	5.9%	43%	46.8%		
3	Economic Status – Salary	3	18	94	71	104.75	10
		1.6%	9.7%	50.5%	38.2%		
4	To fulfill the professional interest	2	5	75	104	116.75	2
		1.1%	2.7%	40.3%	55.9%		
5	To prove the competence	0	8	81	97	115.25	3
		0%	4.3%	43.5%	52.2%		
6	Knowledge development	0	5	59	122	122.25	1
		0%	2.7%	31.7%	65.6%		
7	Job satisfaction	2	13	67	104	114.75	4
		1.1%	7%	36%	55.9%		
8	Opportunities for career growth	1	14	70	101	114.25	5
		0.5%	7.5%	37.6%	54.4%		
9	Contribution for societal empowerment	1	14	93	78	108.5	7
		0.5%	7.5%	50%	42%		
10	Existence of holistic working environment	2	16	92	76	107	9
		1.1%	8.6%	49.5%	40.8%		
11	Opportunities to visit / work at multiple locations	4	13	70	99	112.5	6
		2.2%	7%	37.6%	53.2%		
12	Fulfilling family aspirations	3	6	34	113	103.25	12
		1.6%	3.2%	34.4%	60.8%		

From Table 4.5, it is clear that 51.1% of the under graduate students said that societal recognition influenced their career preference compared to 5.2% who felt like they were not influenced by societal recognition through values in selecting their career. Nearly half (46.8%) of the undergraduate students felt that job security was important in determining their career preference while 4.3% said that job security was not an important factor.

More than half of the students said that salary, professional interest, competence, knowledge development, job satisfaction, career growth, Contribution for societal empowerment, holistic working environment, Opportunities to visit / work at multiple locations and fulfilling family aspirations were important factors in determining their career preference. More than 54.4% of the students said that career growth was an important factor in determining their career preference.

Thus, it can be concluded that knowledge development is having high influence on the career preference of the students followed by professional interest, competence, job satisfaction, career growth, travel opportunities, Contribution for societal empowerment, job security, Existence of holistic working environment, economic status, societal recognition through values and fulfilling family aspirations are having low influence on the career preference of the students.

V. FINDINGS

5.1 Career preferences of final year under graduate students

Thus, it can be concluded that Employee in government organization is having high influence on the career preference of the students followed by employee in private organization, skill development lead to employment, skill development lead to business, self professional practice, own business, higher studies, home management, public servant through election, others, are having low influence on the career preference of the students.

5.2 Career preference of rural and urban under graduate students

Career preferences of rural and urban students were similar and employment in government organizations and skill development lead to employment were the most preferred areas of career while public servant through election and others are the least preferred career.

5.3 Career preference of male and female under graduate students

Career preferences of male and female students were similar and employee in government organization was the most preferred area of career and public servant through election and other category were least preferred career.

5.4 Relationship between the socio demographic characteristics of the students and career preferences

Selected socio-demographic characteristics of the final year students, viz., family background, academic achievements, educational level of father / male guardian, occupation of father / male guardian, mass media exposure and influence of career benefit on career preference were found to have positive and significant relationship with career preference at 0.05 level of probability. While birth order, educational level of mother / female guardian, occupation of mother / female guardian, family annual income, influence of family and influence of role models had no relationship with the career preference of students.

5.5 Factors influencing the career benefit on career preferences.

The career benefit of knowledge development is having high influence on the career preference of the students and the career benefit of fulfilling family aspirations is having low influence on the career preference of the students.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

- Career preferences of rural and urban students and male and female students were similar and employment in government organization is having high influence followed by employment in private organization based on the study.
- An assessment to identify the skills possessed by students' need to be carried out in order to find out the skills gap existing among the students with reference their career choices.
- An awareness education has to be given to the students for the skill development towards employment and business, self professional practice, entrepreneurship, higher education etc.,

VII. SCOPE FOR FURTHER WORK

- This study was confined to Anna University Regional Campus Coimbatore only. Therefore, further research in this field may be carried out taking into account of other colleges in the District / other Universities of the State so that the results can be generalized.
- A probe into the other variables apart from those that are studied in the present investigation may be identified and their influence on the career preference of the students may also be studied.
- An assessment to identify the skills possessed by students need to be carried out in order to find out the skills gap existing among the students with reference their career choices (irrespective of career choices by the students-To become an Employee / Employer / Students of Higher Education).
- The present study was confined to explore the career preferences of students of Anna University Regional Campus Coimbatore, therefore further investigation may be conducted on the entrepreneurial needs of the students in Anna University Regional Campus Coimbatore as the students are exhibiting some interest on own business.

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