

A STUDY ON THE CAREER PREFERENCE OF UNDERGRADUATE LEARNERS OF DISTANCE MODE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KKHSOU ASSAM

Tarali Pathak

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Cotton University, Assam, India

Received: 12 Aug 2018

Accepted: 20 Aug 2018

Published: 30 Aug 2018

ABSTRACT

This study examined the career preferences of undergraduate learners of distance mode. For the study, all total 320 learners of KKHSOU were selected as samples and information were collected from them using the career preference Record by Vivek Bhargava and Rajashree Bhargava. It was found from the study that the most preferred career of the learners of distance mode of education is education that means the jobs related to teaching. While finding the differences between the male and female learners regarding their choice of the career no significant difference was found except the area Mass Media and Journalism.

KEYWORDS: *Career Preference, Distance Mode, Undergraduate Learners*

INTRODUCTION

Career is a regular occupation or profession in which one is making a living. The online search provider dictionary.com (2011) defines „career“ as a job or profession for which one is trained and which one intends to follow for part or the whole of one’s life e.g. a career in law (Sahu, S., 2012). Career preference is to giving preference to the occupation among other alternatives which has highest positive valence. Career preference refers to the “ability of the individual to select or commit him to a particular course of action, which will eventuate in his, preparing for and entering a specific occupation.” Career preferences play an important role in making a person mature enough to select his or her profession and be successful in life. If an individual lacks adequate and proper information about himself and the world of work, he/she may fail to make the appropriate occupational choice which may lead to a serious destruction of personal as well as social life. Such an individual experience frustration, anxiety and stress in life and also become a drag or parasite upon the family and society he belongs. Thus, the choice of a profession is an important decision a person makes for himself as well as for the society and nation at large.

Choosing of right career is very essential for the peaceful living and quality of life. But, today most of the students in higher education are facing career related problems in the form of either career indecision or wrong decision. In such a situation, understanding students' career plans and preferences that subsequently determine future prestige, wealth, and status is vital to higher educational professionals who facilitate students in their career selection. It is therefore, a great concern to find out the areas of the most preferred career of our young generation. Distance education which emerged as an alternative to the traditional system more particularly to the disadvantaged sections of the society is getting momentum today around the world. The easy access, affordability, and convenience provided by the distance education system have

contributed to its increasing popularity and growth. It provides an opportunity for continuing and lifelong education, thereby enhancing the lives of millions of people, particularly working persons, housewives, dropouts, marginalized sections of society, persons staying in hilly and remote geographic locations etc. Today, the Distance Education holds a special place in Indian higher education system because of its major contribution in enhancing the gross enrolment ratio (GER) and democratisation higher education to large segments of Indian population, particularly to meet the demand of lifelong learning which has become more of a necessity in the present knowledge-based society. In Assam Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU) since its inception has been offering different programmes and in the gradual process of starting new programmes. However, no intensive research study has been undertaken to evaluate the popularity and interest of students towards its different programmes of study. It is a matter of fact that no programme can bring result unless and until learners are not motivated by these. Rather, it may result in wastage of money, time and energy. Therefore, it becomes very important to know the interest and career preferences of the real beneficiaries i.e. the student community. The findings of the present study will be of great help to policymakers and regulatory bodies of not only KKHSOU and other distance education providers but also of formal education, in curriculum construction and designing innovative course contents according to the interest and choice of the beneficiaries i.e. the learners. The present study will also be helpful to counselors in helping the students to make the right choices considering their talents and abilities. It will also go a long way in checking the problem of the wrong allocation of most precious resource i.e. "labor" of students, parents, society as well as educational institutions, a problem which usually brings employment. So in the present study, an attempt has been made to study the career preferences of distance learners of Assam.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has been designed keeping the following objectives in view.

- To study the career preferences of male and female undergraduate learners of KKHSOU.
- To examine whether there is a significant difference between male and female undergraduate learners of KKHSOU in their career preferences.

Hypothesis of the Study

Ho1: There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate learners of KKHSOU in their career preferences

Methodology

The present study has been conducted under the descriptive method. Since the jurisdiction of KKHSOU is entire Assam, it is not possible to investigate taking all the study centres area. Hence, considering the feasibility of the study, a total of four (04) districts have been selected purposively-Jorhat, Sonitpur, Kamrup (Greater) and Dhubri. Since the present study involves a comparison between rural and urban learners, a stratified random sampling method has been employed in selecting the sample study centers from each of the selected districts. Consequently, four (4) study centers from each of the selected districts of which two each for rural and urban areas has been selected as sample study centers. Thus, the total number of study centers for the present study consists of $4 \times 4 = 16$, of which 8 each for the rural and urban area. Since the study involves a comparison between male and female learners, Stratified Random Sampling method has been employed for selection of sample learners from each selected study centers. 20 undergraduate learners have been selected from each

of the study centers (total sampled study centre is 16, 8 rural and 8 urban) of which 10 each for male and female. Thus, the total number of the sample consists of 20X16= 320 undergraduate learners of which 160 are male (80 rural and 80 urban) and 160 are female (80 rural and 80 urban) learners.

Tools used

For the present study Career Preference Record (CPR-BB) by Vivek Bhargava and RajashreeBhargava has been used.

Statistical Treatment

In order to arrive at objective findings and dependable conclusion, the scores derived for each of the 10 areas of career have been subjected to suitable statistical techniques like ‘mean’, ‘sd’, and ‘t-test’ which are explained in brief as below. The whole analysis is made through using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The .05 level of confidence interval has been adopted to determine the statistical significance of ‘t’.

Results

Objective-1: To study the career preferences of Male and Female Undergraduate Learners of KKHSOU

Table 1: Mean Scores and Preference Order of Areas of the Career of Undergraduate Learners of KKHSOU

Areas of Career	Undergraduate Learners (N=320)		
	Mean	SD	Preference
Mass Media and Journalism (MMj)	8.70	3.81	III
Artistic and Designing (AD)	9.01	4.25	II
Science and Technology (ScT)	7.51	4.36	VIII
Agriculture (AG)	7.87	4.04	VI
Commerce and Management (CM)	8.35	4.23	V
Medical (M)	7.11	4.41	X
Defence (D)	7.22	4.28	IX
Tourism and Hospitality Management (TH)	7.69	4.09	VII
Law and Order (LO)	8.41	3.98	IV
Education (E)	9.47	4.15	I

Table 2: Mean Scores and Preference order of Areas of Career of Male and Female Undergraduate Learners of KKHSOU

Areas of Career	Male Group (N=160)			Female Group (N=160)		
	Mean	SD	Preference	Mean	SD	Preference
Mass Media and Journalism (MMj)	9.18	3.65	II	8.22	.92	V
Artistic and Designing (AD)	9.15	4.19	III	8.88	.32	II
Science and Technology (ScT)	7.73	4.36	VIII	7.30	.36	VII
Agriculture (AG)	8.07	4.09	VII	7.67	3.99	VI
Commerce and Management (CM)	8.29	3.97	V	8.42	4.49	III
Medical (M)	7.16	4.24	X	7.06	4.58	IX
Defence (D)	7.53	4.29	IX	6.91	4.27	X
Tourism and Hospitality Management (TH)	8.10	3.94	VI	7.28	4.13	VIII
Law and Order (LO)	8.58	3.79	IV	8.24	4.18	IV
Education (E)	9.24	4.11	I	9.71	4.18	I

Objective 2: To Examine Whether there is Significant Difference Between Male And Female Undergraduate Learners of KKHSOU In Their Career Preferences

Table 3: Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Each of the 10 Areas of Career between Male and Female Undergraduate Learners of KKHSOU

Areas of Career	Male Group(N=160)		Female Group(N=160)		t-value	Status
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Mass Media and Journalism (MMj)	9.18	3.65	8.22	3.92	2.26	S
Artistic and Designing (AD)	9.15	4.19	8.88	4.32	.58	NS
Science and Technology (ScT)	7.73	4.36	7.30	4.36	.87	NS
Agriculture (AG)	8.07	4.09	7.67	3.99	.89	NS
Commerce and Management (CM)	8.29	3.97	8.42	4.49	.28	NS
Medical (M)	7.16	4.24	7.06	4.58	.20	NS
Defence (D)	7.53	4.29	6.91	4.27	1.29	NS
Tourism and Hospitality Management (TH)	8.10	3.94	7.28	4.13	1.82	NS
Law and Order (LO)	8.58	3.79	8.24	4.18	.74	NS
Education (E)	9.24	4.11	9.71	4.18	1.00	NS

From all the tables it can be seen that Education (E) is ranked at 1st position by all the target groups and the least preferred area is medical for the male students and defense for the female students under consideration. The study further reveals that Mass Media and Journalism (MMj) is another highly preferred area of the career of undergraduate learners. It is placed at 2nd and 5th rank by all the target groups of learners. It was also seen from the study that there is a significant difference among the male and female students regarding this area though it is preferred by most of the students. At the present time, there are vast opportunities for the jobs in the field of mass media, so courses in this area will definitely help the learners. Artistic and Designing (AD) is another high area of career preference of learners as evident in the findings of the study. Law and Order (LO) are given 4th rank out of 10 areas by all the target groups as evident. Starting the Bachelor of Law (LLB) programme may not be feasible for a distance university. But Diploma and Certificate courses on Tax Calculation, Petition writing, Legal Writing, Drafting and Pleading etc. may be started. Regarding other areas, it can be seen that there is no significant difference between the male and female learners so the hypothesis can be retained for all the areas except the area Mass Media and journalism. Provisions for guidance and counseling for the learners should be there to help the students to realize their own interest and potentialities to go for a particular course. There should be extensive research studies to assess the relevance of different types of existing courses in the educational institutions specially in the open universities because it not only provides degrees and diplomas, it has a great responsibility towards the society.

CONCLUSIONS

Career decision often seems to be an insurmountable task. SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis is the first and foremost prerequisite for making the career decision. The students are to be well aware of their interest, attitude, aptitude, values, cognitive structures, and other personality traits before deciding their career. One should consider his area of interest, ability as well as limitations. Then to identify the broad area in which many jobs or trades are possible and accordingly the career should be selected that deemed to be appropriate. A thorough knowledge and information of the relevancy and job prospect of the program he intends to consider is required in this regard. If required, help should be taken from career counselors and other career development professionals. In the present context,

the importance of career education and career counseling is duly recognized starting from the secondary stage of education considering the changing nature of Indian education system to bridge the gap between education and life and efforts are being made to make education work oriented. The findings of the present study will definitely help the policymakers of distance education, teachers, and counselors in helping the learners with their choice of career.

REFERENCES

1. **Arul, P.G. (2014).** *Designing and delivering skills development programmes by higher educational institutions for management students through industry participation, University News, 52(3).*
2. **Best, J. W. & Kahn, J. V. (2008).** *Research in Education. New Delhi :Prentice Hall of India Private Limited.*
3. **Choudhary, Kirti (1995).** *A Study of Vocational Aspiration and Academic Choice and Their Relationship with Parental Background. V-Survey of Research in Education, Vol-II, Page-1538.*
4. **Cochran, Daria B. (2011).** *Adolescent Occupational Aspirations: test of Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise. Career Development Quarterly, 59(5), Pp 412-427.*
5. **Cosby, A. (1978).** *Career decisions and attainment of rural youth: sex and race comparisons. Washington, DC: Cooperative State Research Service.*
6. **Creed, Peter A. (2010).** *Career Development and Personal Functioning--Differences between Work-Bound and Non-Work Bound Students. Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 76(1), Pp- 37-41.*
7. **Garret, H. E. (1961).** *Statistics in Psycholgy and Education. Bombay :Allied Pacific Private Limited.*
8. **Goswami, D. (2011).** *Higher Education in India: Growth Expansion and Issues. Guwahati: DVS Publishers,*
9. **Gupta, N. (1989).** *Career Maturity Inventory. National Psychological Corporation, Agra (India)*
10. **Hirschi, Andreas (2010).** *Swiss Adolescents' Career Aspirations: Influence of Context, Age and Career Adaptability. Journal of Career Development, 36(3), Pp 228-245.*
11. **Khan, Khuwaid-Ur-Rehman (2006).** *A comparative study of occupational aspiration of boy and girl students of senior secondary schools of Delhi. Ph.D Thesis (Edu). Department of Teacher Training and Non-formal Education. IASE. New Delhi:JamiaMilliaIslamia.*
12. **Kothari, C. R. (1985).** *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.*
13. **Koul, Lokesh (1997).** *Methodology of Educational Research (10th Revised and Enlarged Edition). Noida:Vikash Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.,*
14. **Kumar, Rajeeb& Dhaliwal, Upreet (2011).** *Career Choices of Undergraduate Medical students. The National Medical Journal of India, 24(3), Pp 166-169.*
15. **Mangal, S. K. (2010).** *Statistics in Psychology and Education (Second Edition). New Delhi: PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd.,*

16. **Tarali Pathak & Md. Afzalur Rahman**, *A Study on the Career Preferences of Undergraduate Students in Relation Totheir Sex, Rural-Urban Inhabitation and Level of Media Exposure*, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (IJHSS)*, volume 2, Issue 1, February-March 2013, pp. 87-96
17. **Mathur, Gul. & Sharma, Prachi (2002)**. *A Study of career maturity among adolescents*. *Indian Educational Abstracts*, 2(1). Pp.88
18. **Rahman, A. (2014)**. *A Study on the Value Dimensions of Undergraduate Students of Professional Courses in Relation to their Level of Aspiration*. *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Gauhati University*.
19. **Sahu, Sudhir (2012)**. *Alienation, Career Maturity And Study Habits Of Adolescents In Relation To Academic Achievement, Locus Of Control And Socio-Economic-Status*. *Ph.D Thesis, MaharshiDayanand University, Rohtak*.
20. **Saikia, Jyoti Prasad (2008)**. *Youth and Career Aspiration*. *Guwahati: DVS Publishers*.
21. **Sarmah, Nabanita (2009-10)**. *A Study on Career Preference Level of the students of class XII of Higher Secondary Schools with special reference to Greater Guwahati Area*. *Unpublished M. Phil Dissertation. Gauhati University*.