



Online ISSN: 3006-5879 Print ISSN: 3006-5860

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63468/jpsa.4.2.37>

Vol. 4 No. 2 (2026)

<https://journalpsa.com.pk/index.php/JPSA/about>



Recognized by: Higher Education Commission (HEC), Government of Pakistan

Examining The Parental Influence on Students' Educational Career Decision-Making Process: A Case Study of District Khairpur, Sindh, Pakistan

Shakeel Ahmed Junejo *

Assistant Professor, Government Girls Degree College, Gambat College Education Department, Government of Sindh

shakeeljunejo85@gmail.com

Dr. Paras Junejo

MS Public Health Scholar, College of Public Health (Sukkur Campus), Ziauddin University

junejo.dr.paras@gmail.com

* Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

One of the most critical problems that students have to deal with in developing countries like Pakistan is their educational career decision-making process influenced by their parents. The current research explores the influence of parental education, family size, income level, and guidance on educational career choices of students within District Khairpur, Sindh. The descriptive survey design was employed based on both quantitative and qualitative methods. A total of 320 students in both public and private institutions were used to gather data. Statistical methods such as regression analysis, chi-square, and reliability were used. The results indicate that parental impact is very strong in determining career choices of students; more so parental education and family size. Another limitation contributing to the issue highlighted in the study is the absence of formal career counseling services, meaning that students have to depend on parental choices greatly. The study ends with the policy implications that support the necessity of institutionalized career guidance programs in order to match the careers selected by the students with their abilities and interests.

Keywords: Parental Influence, Students' Educational Career Decision-Making Process, District Khairpur

INTRODUCTION

The role of parents in the educational career decision-making process of students is one of the most problematic questions among students in the modern society because of the absence of empirical study and the insufficient number of integrated guidance systems (Shorikov, 2007). Educational direction is important in assisting learners to establish developmental objectives and follow the right educational courses that are guided by the capabilities, interests, and future aspirations (Makinde, 1984). Parents in developing countries like Pakistan, where formal career counseling systems are not yet developed and often not accessible, are taking a more dominant role in influencing the choice of student's education and career choices. The impact starts at a young age of development of a child and extends to the key academic transition points, including subject choice and higher education.

It is well known that education is one of the main factors of economic growth and decreases in poverty since it raises the levels of knowledge, skills, and productivity, which lead to the development of the nation (Tilak, 1994; Tilak, 2005; Awan et al., 2008). In this regard, good career decision making is a necessity, as it identifies how people apply the learning success in the job market. Nevertheless, lack of appropriate career planning and counseling systems usually results in imprecise growth of human capital. Often students base career choices on incomplete information, lack of self-awareness, and exposure to the variety of opportunities, leading to dissatisfaction, underemployment and low career outcomes (Payne, 2003). This is more so in the developing societies where there may be weak or no institutional support systems to guide career.

Parental expectations often surpass the personal value of students in such societies as Pakistan, which results in the lack of correspondence between individual talents and the selected profession (Hashmi, 2013). Parents, who are usually influenced by social norms, economic factors, and the lack of knowledge about the newly emerging career opportunities, are more likely to promote traditional and socially desirable careers like medicine and engineering. Although this advice can be motivated by the true interest in the future of their children, it may also restrain the students, depriving them of their independent choice and investigation of the profession that suits their personal motifs and skills. This has been further supported by cultural values that promote obedience to their parents thus restricting free discussions and students making independent decisions.

In addition, the deficiency of knowledge about career diversity and workforce needs contributes to the issue. Most students and parents are still ignorant of other career options, new sectors, and what skills they need to succeed in a global economy that is fast changing. Consequently, this can cause students to end up in careers they did not plan because of having insufficient, or inaccurate information, resulting in a disconnect between education and employment outcomes. Such a discrepancy is found not only to have an individual career satisfaction effect but also to have economic efficiency and workforce productivity implications.

The other important aspect of parental influence is considered to be the socio-economic aspect like the education and income levels of the parent. Parents who are educated tend to be better placed to offer informed guidance since they have a better understanding of the systems of education and career opportunities. Conversely, parents who have low education levels might be guided by their beliefs or societal trends to guide their children hence restricting them to the wide range of careers. Equally, the issue of financial limitations also determines career choices, since families facing financial limitations might put affordability, as opposed to interest or ability, first and limit the options of students accordingly.

The parental influence is also enhanced by the lack of institutional checks and balances that may override or supplement family influence. Career counseling services are either weak or nonexistent in most learning institutions in Pakistan, and thus students are left to rely on informal sources of information, most of which are their parents. With such a dependency, the parental influence is now the major factor in decision-making on career choice without regard to whether the career choice is in line with the student personal aspirations.

This is where the need to investigate the level of parental influence on the educational career decision making process of students arises. Learning to harness this influence is crucial not only to the betterment of individual career performance but also to the general efficiency of the education system to develop a competent and flexible workforce. The policymakers and learning institutions will be able to implement specific interventions that can encourage students to make their career choice independently and with understanding of the primary factors that influence their decision-making process. Finally, there is a balance between parental control and student autonomy that is vital to making sure that career decisions are both personally rewarding and economically profitable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of parental involvement in education and career success of students has been broadly recognized. It has a close relationship with higher academic performance, positive behavioral pattern, higher social skills and greater determination in school (Henderson and Mapp, 2002). Parents are also at the forefront of the process of resource and support provision as well as modeling the aspirations and expectations of their children. Nonetheless, parental guidance can be effective, but on the other hand, too much control by the parents can have a harmful impact on the independence of the students and their capacity to make their career choices. Excessive involvement may limit the independence of students and make them less confident in their decision-making abilities and more likely to be unhappy with their career choices (Middleton and Loughhead, 1993).

Psychologically, Erikson theory of psychosocial development emphasizes the role of identity development in adolescence, the period when individuals have to experiment with various roles and invest a sense of commitment in their decisions in

order to attain a sense of self that makes sense (Erikson, 1968). Parents who enforce career choices may interfere with this developmental process leading to confusion of identity, self-direction and dissatisfaction in the long run (Papalia et al., 2003). This implies that although parental intervention should be involved, it should be in balance with the students having a chance to pursue their interests and abilities on their own.

In addition, family factors like parental education, income level, and family size play an important role in career aspirations and decision-making processes. Parental education tends to be more effective in offering relevant information and advice and financial limitations and large families may restrict access to education and influence career decisions (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Crockett et al., 2000; Schulenberg et al., 1984).

Moreover, socio-cultural aspects are also important to determine career choices especially in developing nations. In Pakistan, cultural norms and traditions are based on parental control and collective decision-making, which often restricts the autonomy of students in choosing their careers. This dependency is further enhanced by lack of systematic career guidance services where students are left to depend on parental guidance more than on their own interests and capabilities.

Hypotheses Development

The current research formulates a series of hypotheses based on the theoretical viewpoints and realities of the context in education setting in Pakistan. The hypotheses will be used to test the effect of parental influence and other socio-economic variables on the decision-making process of students in the career of education. Based on the existing literature on parental involvement, career development, and socio-cultural factors, the study has identified some of the most important determinants that could be influencing the choice of career by the students. The hypotheses are given in well-organized and theoretically justified form in the following subsections.

Parental education and career aspiration

The initial hypothesis is to determine the effect of parental education on career aspirations among students. Parental education is said to be a major influence on the awareness, expectations and access to career related information among children. With the improved knowledge of the educational system and career opportunities, educated parents would be more capable of guiding their children (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004). They are more likely to promote academic success and subject their children to new career opportunities. On the contrary, those parents who have lower educational levels might be guided by their traditional beliefs and lack of knowledge and, thus, they will not be able to expose their children to new career opportunities.

H1: Parental education level does not have a significant impact on the career aspiration of the child.

Institutional Differences: Public vs Private Sector.

The second hypothesis examines the existence of variations between learners in the institutions of the public and the private sector in terms of how parental

pressure influences career choice. The institutions vary regarding resources, academic exposure and access to counseling services. It is also believed that the facilities and organized guidance provided by the private institutions are usually better and this can make students more independent. Conversely, these support systems might not be present in public institutions, and it may be more dependent on parental guidance (Singh et al., 1995).

H1₂: Students in the public and the private sector institutions are not significantly different in terms of the impact of parental influence in the choice of career.

Parental Income and Choice of career.

The third hypothesis is concerned with the effect of parental income on the career choice of students. The access to quality education, institutions that are privately owned, and career opportunities depend on financial resources. The wealthier families are better equipped to offer educational support and exposure and students can be in a better position to make more informed choices regarding their careers (Crockett et al., 2000). Conversely, financial limitations can restrain the options of students and they will be compelled to choose based on affordability rather than interest.

H1₃: Parental income level does not have a significant impact on the career selection of the child.

Family Size and Career Decision-Making.

The fourth hypothesis will investigate how family size influences career decision-making. Even bigger families tend to be short of money and resources and these factors can affect the distribution of educational opportunities among children (Schulenberg et al., 1984). Parents in these situations might lay emphasis on some career lines that guarantee economic security. Also, the process of decision-making in bigger families is more centralized, which may decrease the autonomy of students.

H1₄: Family size does not have a significant impact on the career choice of the child.

Parental Influence in General on Career Choice.

The last hypothesis will be about the general effects of parental influence on career choices among students. Parental influence may be in different forms in terms of guidance, expectations, financial contributions and direct decision making. Whereas supportive involvement might boost confidence, overly strong control might impair autonomy and identity development (Middleton and Loughhead, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Papalia et al., 2003). Parental authority is a part of the culture of Pakistan and thus it increases this influence.

H1₅: There is no significant effect of the parental influence on the career choice of the students.

Summary of Hypotheses

To conclude, the proposed study has five hypotheses, in which they test the impact of parental factors on the process of making career choices among students in education. All of these hypotheses are a general guideline on how to examine the

interaction between parental education, institutional setting, income level, family size and general parental influence to formulate career preferences in students. These hypotheses are bound to be empirically tested in a way that would be very useful in terms of improving the career guidance system and enhancing more informed and autonomous decision-making among students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The current research paper has embraced a descriptive research design in order to investigate the issue of parental influence on the decision process of students concerning their career in education. The descriptive design would be regarded as a proper choice since it is the intention of the study to examine currently existing conditions, relationships, and patterns without including any manipulations of variables. According to this, the research is *ex post facto* because the independent variables cannot be manipulated or controlled since the effects have already taken place (Kerlinger, 2000). This design will enable the researcher to explore the impact of parental education, income, family size and institutional factors on the career choice of the students using real life examples.

Both the quantitative and the qualitative are also included in the research to give a complete picture of the phenomenon. The quantitative component allows to statistically analyze the relations between variables, whereas the qualitative one assists in the explanation of patterns and the interpretation of the contextual reality of the decision-making process by students. This type of a mixed-method strategy increases the validity and depth of the results (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

Research Approach

The research is mainly based on a positivist research approach since it aims at testing hypotheses and drawing relationships between variables using empirical data and statistical methods. The objective nature of the research is indicated by the use of structured questionnaires and standardized statistical methods. Meanwhile, interpretive aspects are introduced to describe the results in the socio-cultural context of Pakistan, specifically in District Khairpur. Such a combination enables the study to not only measure relationships but also give significant explanations of the observed patterns.

Study Area and Context.

It was carried out in District Khairpur in Sindh, Pakistan, a region that was chosen based on its social-economic diversity, population density, and a reflection of rural and urban features. Khairpur is an agro-economic district with a mixed economy, which consists of agriculture, small businesses, and formal jobs. The region is representative of the greater socio-cultural processes of Pakistan, in which the family is robust and dominant in decision making.

This area is of special interest as students in this region have to cope with several difficulties, such as lack of access to career counseling services, financial issues, and powerful parental pressure. All these make Khairpur a suitable place to study the

role of parental influence on educational career choices.

The population of the study

This study will target the students in secondary and higher secondary schools, that is, students in the 10th class to graduate (16 years of education). The sample was chosen based on the fact that at this age; students are actively involved in making education and career choices i.e., subject choice and career planning.

The overall size of the population was estimated at about 1,400 students, who represented diverse institutions of the district both public and private. These students have various socio-economic backgrounds, which make it possible to thoroughly study the variables being studied.

The sampling technique and sample size

Random sampling method was used to make sure that all the members of the population have equal opportunities to be selected. This method will increase the representativeness of the sample and minimize sampling bias. Moreover, convenience sampling was employed to support the data collection in the available institutions, as there were viable limitations, including time and resource. A total sample of 320 students was selected for the study. It is assumed that this sample size is sufficient to make statistical analysis and test hypotheses because it has enough data to analyze the relationship between variables. The sample will consist of the students of both the public and the private schools so that there will be a balanced representation of the various educational settings.

Data Collection Methods

The study data collection was made with the help of a self-administered structured questionnaire based on multiple choices and close-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed based on the research objectives and insights from the literature review. It also covered demographic variables, parent education, level of income, size of the family, institution variables and the process of career decision making by the students.

A structured questionnaire will provide consistency in the responses as well as enable the quantitative analysis. The questionnaire was handed over to students of selected institutions and the responses were taken under the guidance of the researcher to ascertain accuracy and completeness.

Measurement of Variables

There are independent and dependent variables in the study. The independent variables include the level of parental education, the level of parental income, the size of the family, the type of institution (public/private), the source of information and the parental influence in the decision-making process. These variables are the most important variables that can affect the choice of career by the students. The dependent variable will be the independence of students in making educational career decisions, which will determine the degree of student autonomy in making career choices without being compelled into this decision. The variable is quantified based on answers to decision-making authority and consultation patterns.

All of the variables were measured by categorical and ordinal scales and could be statistically analyzed with the descriptive and inferential methods.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was used to test internal consistency. The achieved reliability coefficient was 0.737 which falls within the acceptable range of 0.70 or higher which shows that the questionnaire is reliable in measuring the constructs being studied (Koul, 1993; Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

The questionnaire was designed according to the existing literature and this ensured content validity because it was designed according to the objectives of the research. It also checked on the instrument to make sure that it had clarity, relevance and appropriateness of the questions.

Data Analysis Techniques

Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyze the collected data. The data and test of the hypotheses were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The demographic characteristics of respondents were summarized using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Relationship among variables and the significance of the hypotheses were determined using inferential statistics e.g., chi-square tests, regression analysis, ANOVA and non-parametric tests.

The level of significance used in testing the hypothesis was $p < 0.05$. A p-value below 0.05 implies that the null hypothesis is rejected whereas p-value above or equal to 0.05 implies that the null hypothesis is accepted.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations were followed keenly during the research process. No one was forced to participate in the study and the respondents knew the purpose of the research. Anonymity and confidentiality of responses was observed to ensure that the respondents were comfortable giving truthful responses.

RESULTS

The demographics analysis has shown that most of the respondents were males (63%), whilst most of the students were in the age range of 15-16 years, which is the most critical period in career decision-making. Most of the respondents were students in the public institutions (66%), as the public sector of education dominated the region. It is also found that although most parents were educated (68%), a sizeable percentage of uneducated parents (28%) were also found, and this could affect the quality of career guidance given. In addition, the majority of the respondents lived in big families with 46 percent of them consisting of nine or more, which means that they may lack resources. Regarding income, parents (56% of all) belonged to the low-income category (PKR 10,000-20,000), which shows that financial constraints can be an issue impacting education and career opportunities.

Table 01: Demographics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	203	63.0
	Female	117	37.0
Age	14 years	62	19.5
	15 years	128	40.0
	16 years	72	22.5
	17 years	24	7.5
	18 years	22	6.75
	19 years	12	3.75
Institution Type	Public	210	66.0
	Private	110	34.0
Parental Education	Uneducated	89	28.0
	Educated	219	68.0
	No Response	12	4.0
Family Size	3–4 members	12	4.0
	5–6 members	50	16.0
	7–8 members	107	33.0
	9+ members	146	46.0
	No Response	5	1.0
Parental Income	PKR 10,000–20,000	180	56.0
	PKR 20,000–40,000	63	20.0
	PKR 40,000–60,000	35	11.0
	PKR 60,000+	29	9.0
	No Response	13	4.0

Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value above the acceptable threshold.

Table 02: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.737	19

The value of 0.737 indicates acceptable reliability, confirming that the instrument is suitable for measuring the constructs under study.

Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of parental factors

on students' independence in career decision-making.

Table 03: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0.645	0.416	0.402	0.578

The model explains 41.6% of the variance in the dependent variable, indicating a strong explanatory power.

Table 04: ANOVA Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	74.384	7	10.626	31.793	0.000
Residual	104.616	313	0.334		
Total	179.000	320			

The ANOVA results confirm that the model is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the independent variables collectively influence career decision-making.

Table 5 Regression Coefficients

Variable	Beta	t-value	p-value
Parental Education	0.331	3.273	0.001
Institution Type	-0.084	-1.448	0.149
Parental Income	0.070	1.259	0.209
Family Size	0.211	2.192	0.029
Source of Information	0.018	0.365	0.715
Institute Selection	0.037	0.779	0.437
Career Selection Decision	0.128	1.843	0.066

The results indicate that parental education and family size are statistically significant predictors, while other variables are not significant.

Hypothesis Testing Summary

Table 6 Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Statement	Result	p-value
H1	Parental education affects career aspiration	Accepted	0.001
H2	Public vs private difference exists	Rejected	0.149
H3	Income affects career choice	Rejected	0.209
H4	Family size affects career choice	Accepted	0.029
H5	Parental influence affects career choice	Accepted	0.066

Overall Interpretation

The findings have been clear to indicate that parental influence is a prevailing

factor in decision making process of students in their educational career. Parents do not just serve as the main source of information, but also have a defining influence in institutional and career decisions. Parent education is a major contributor to the quality of guidance and the family size has an effect on decisions due to limited resources. Interestingly, the parental income does not play a very important role, implying that cultural and social factors are more important in this scenario than the financial ones.

DISCUSSION

This study was aimed at investigating how parental factors affect the decision-making process of students in the educational career in District Khairpur, Sindh, Pakistan. The results present a valuable understanding of how parental education, family size, income level, and overall parental involvement influence the career preferences among students in a socio-cultural setting with a high family impact and weak institutional-support systems.

The findings clearly show that parental influence is more dominant in the choices of students in their educational careers. A significant number of those who were interviewed noted that their parents were the main source of information about schools and were directly engaged in the choice of the school and the school subject. This observation agrees with the previous studies that parents are dominant influences in influencing the educational pathways and career goals of children (Henderson and Mapp, 2002). When there are few formal career counseling services available, parents tend to be the decision-makers even though their advice may not be in the interests or abilities of the student.

Among the most important results of the research is the fact that parental education has a strong influence on the decision-making of students in terms of their career choice. The regression analysis shows that parental education marginally and positively influences the independence of students in their career choices. This observation serves to justify the claim that educated parents are in a better position to guide their children because they have insights into the educational opportunities, labor market needs and career prospects (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004). Parents with higher levels of education will also promote informed decision-making and exposure to a variety of career options, thus increasing the capacity of the students to make rational and autonomous choices. On the other hand, less educated parents might be guided by their cultural beliefs or society, and this may not expose the students to other career options.

It is also found in the study that family size is influential in the career decision-making of the students. Students who have more siblings have higher chances of being limited by financial means and parental care, an aspect that can affect their career decisions. This observation is in line with other studies that show that higher sizes of families tend to lead to weak distribution of resources, and thus influences education and decision making (Schulenberg et al., 1984). When this happens, parents can choose career choices that are seen to be financially stable or acceptable in the

society as opposed to those that interest the student. This relationship brings out the importance of family structure in influencing career choices especially in developing societies, where extended family structures are prevalent.

Interestingly, the researchers conclude that parental income does not significantly influence career choices of students. This finding is contrary to certain available literature that views the significance of financial resources in defining educational and career opportunities (Crockett et al., 2000). But when it comes to Khairpur, this observation posits that social-cultural issues such as parental expectations and power can be more influential in career choices than financial ones. Parents can still be influential with regard to the decisions their children make even in situations where they face financial constraints, which supports the notion that cultural norms are critical in influencing the decision-making process.

The other significant result is that there was no significant difference between the students in the public and the institutions of the private sector on the impacts of the influence of parenting. This implies that the effects of parental influence are similar in all the institutional settings, irrespective of the differences in resources and facilities. Although the private institutions might provide superior infrastructure and academic resources, this does not necessarily result in higher student autonomy in making career choices. This observation underscores the widespread quality of parental influence, which seems to be firmly embedded within the socio-cultural community aspect of the society.

The consultation patterns also aid the dominant position of parents as analyzed. Some students said that they consulted siblings, friends or teachers but a significant proportion of students did not consult anyone, or only parents. The fact that there is a minor contribution of teachers and professional counselors implies a large disconnect between support systems in institutions. Such a deficiency in formal career guidance services compels students to rely on parental advice that is not necessarily informed and responsive to the requirements of the contemporary labor market.

Psychologically, the results can be explained by the theory of psychosocial development introduced by Erikson, who states that identity formation is a crucial process that occurs in adolescence (Erikson, 1968). This parental dominance in decision-making can be a barrier to the students getting to explore their interests and form a strong sense of identity. Students who are not accorded a chance to make independent decisions might be dissatisfied and unmotivated in their career decisions (Papalia et al., 2003). This brings into focus the necessity to have a moderate stance, whereby parental advice is supplemented by the possibilities of free exploration and decision-making.

The general results of the research indicate that parental involvement can be incredibly important to support and guide students but when it is overly influenced, it may be counterproductive in shaping their careers. Without a well-designed system of counseling, parents will be the main factor in determining what career to follow, and in most cases, personal choice and talents are disregarded. This may cause an

imbalance in education and employment which translates to decreased job satisfaction and output.

Overall, the research findings have significant implications on educational policy and practice. The high dependence on the parental factor serves to highlight the significance of institutional interventions that would offer students the correct information, career guidance, and self-assessment opportunities. Learning institutions ought to be more involved in mentoring students in the process of career decisions, and hence less reliant on parental guidance? Also, parental awareness campaigns will be useful to allow parents to learn the need to match career choices with the interests and skills of their children, and not to press their expectations on them.

To sum up, the discussion points out that the topic of the parental influence is a complex phenomenon that may facilitate and limit the career development of students. Although, the education level of parents and family size are important determinants of decision-making processes, there is a lack of formal guidance systems, which enhance the influence of parents in shaping career outcomes. To overcome these issues, a joint endeavor by parents, schools and policymakers is needed to establish a situation that facilitates informed and independent career choices and student-centered career choices.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The results of this research add to the current amount of knowledge in career decision-making by highlighting the key importance of parental influence in the context of a developing country. Although earlier research has recognized the role of parental involvement in academic and career outcomes (Henderson and Mapp, 2002), this research goes a step further to prove empirically that certain parental factors, especially education level and family size, influence independence of students in career choices. The findings support the applicability of human capital theory according to which the education level of parents can improve knowledge and skills transfer to the following generation, thus affecting career choices and achievements (Becker, 1993).

Moreover, the results can be applied to the theory of psychosocial development by Erikson, who also attaches great importance to identity formation in adolescence (Erikson, 1968). The paper points out that too much parental authority can negatively affect this process as it deprives students of the opportunity to discover their interests and make their own choices. Connecting parental influence and identity development, the research can provide a better insight into the interaction of socio-psychological factors with educational and career decisions. It is the combination of sociological and psychological points of view that adds to a more comprehensive theoretical framework in the analysis of career decision-making in collectivist societies.

Also, the study gives an insight on the application of the socio-cultural theory especially in the case of Pakistan, where family structures and cultural norms focus on parental authority. The results indicate that the parental influence is consistent in

all the public and private institutions implying that the cultural influences can be more powerful than institutional variations. This illuminates the fact that future studies need to be more explicit in considering cultural dimensions in studying career decision-making processes in analogous situations.

Practical Implications

The research has a number of implications on students, parents, and teachers. To students, the results show that self-awareness and decision-making skills are necessary in order to make sure that the career decisions are based on interests, abilities and long-term objectives. The schools must actively help the students through this process by offering them career exploration opportunities, aptitude tests, and exposure to different career paths.

To parents, the study highlights the importance of playing a supportive and facilitative role in the career decision-making process of their children. Parental guidance is desirable, but must not be too restrictive or controlling. The parents must promote free communication, give their children a chance to explore various career options, and take into account their personal preferences and abilities. Awareness campaigns and seminars may be held to inform parents on the current career opportunities and the necessity to match career options with the ability of the students.

To teachers and those in charge of the institutions, the results underscore the dire necessity of enhancing career counseling in schools. The low presence of teachers and counselors evident in the research implies a huge disparity in the institutional support structures. Colleges and schools need to come up with special counseling departments manned by qualified personnel who can help students to make wise career choices. Making career guidance a part of the curriculum can also assist students in gaining the necessary skills to make decisions and plan their careers.

Policy Implications

The policy implications of this study at the policy level are that education and workforce policies in Pakistan can be developed based on the findings of this study. The considerable dependence on the parental factor, combined with the absence of the organized counseling services, points to the necessity of a national career guidance system. The policymakers need to focus on the need to incorporate career counseling services at any level of education i.e., secondary school and higher learning institutions.

The government agencies, especially the Ministry of Education need to come up with standardized guidelines concerning the career counseling programs and make sure that they are implemented in the public and the private institutions. This encompasses teacher and counselor training, offering career assessment tool resources, and forging industry partners to give students real world career opportunities.

Also, the socio-economic issues that were identified during the study, including large families and low income, should be addressed by policies, and they can restrict the educational and career options of students. Financial aid schemes,

scholarships and vocational training programs have the potential to alleviate these limitations and give the students a broader range of options to follow their preferred careers.

Societal Implications

The study has implications on society in general, beyond the two areas of education and policy. The parental over-influence in career choices is a sign of strong cultural beliefs that emphasize on group decision-making as opposed to personal freedom. These norms may be beneficial and stabilizing, but they can also be restrictive to innovation and individual development unless they are accompanied by free thinking.

The culture of appreciating parental directions and at the same time the autonomy of each person has to be encouraged to provide a more dynamic and more adaptable workforce. By encouraging students to follow careers according to their interests and capabilities, job satisfaction can be higher, productivity can be more, and education and the labor market can more closely match. This, in its turn, leads to the general economic growth and social welfare.

Research Implications

The research will also be able to lead to future research in that it will reveal the necessity to find out other factors that affect career decision-making. The role of peer influence, psychological characteristics, and technological aspects including access to digital information can be investigated in future research. In addition, cross-regional or cross-country comparative studies can be used to give a wider view of the influence of cultural and institutional factors on career choices.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

Despite providing valuable insights, this study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. To begin with, the study is restricted to District Khairpur, thus restricting the generalization of the results to other areas with varied socio-economic and cultural background. Second, the research is based on self-reported data, which could be prone to response bias and social desirability. Third, the discussion is centered on the parental factors with little attention drawn on other significant factors like peer groups, psychological characteristics and the quality of the institutions, which were not addressed in detail. Future studies need to expand the study to a more geographical region, both urban and rural, Pakistan and other developing nations to strengthen the external validity. Also, longitudinal designs can be used in the future to study the change in career decision-making processes with time and add other variables like personality traits, online exposure, and career counseling interventions to have a more holistic view of the decision-making process.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that parental factor is very dominant and influential in influencing the process of decision making by students on educational careers within District Khairpur, Sindh, Pakistan. The results indicate that parental education and family size are important factors that determine career choices of students with

little influence of parental income and type of institution. The research points out that without the existence of the organized career counseling systems, students are left to the goodwill of their parents since they tend to prevail over individual interests and talents. Although parental support and guidance can be very helpful, over-influencing can limit student autonomy and result in less-than-optimal career outcomes. Thus, a balanced solution incorporating parental and institutional guidance is necessary to allow the students to make informed and autonomous career choices that are aligned with their abilities and interests.

REFERENCES

- Awan, M. S., Malik, N., & Sarwar, H. (2008). Impact of education on poverty reduction. *EABR & TLC Conference Proceedings*, Germany.
- Benhabib, J., & Spiegel, M. M. (1994). The role of human capital in economic development: Evidence from aggregate cross-country data. *Journal of Monetary Economics*, *34*(2), 143–173.
- Betz, N. E., Klein, K., & Taylor, K. (1996). Evaluation of a short form of the career decision-making self-efficacy scale. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *4*(1), 47–57.
- Blau, P. M., & Duncan, O. D. (1967). *The American occupational structure*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Crockett, L. J., et al. (2000). Pathways to college: Family, school, and adolescent influences. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., & Guido-DiBrito, F. (1998). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ferrett, S. K. (2000). *Peak performance: Success in college and beyond* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Friedenberg, L. (1995). *Psychological testing: Design, analysis, and use*. Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.
- Germeijs, V., & Verschueren, K. (2007). High school students' decision-making process: Consequences for choice implementation in higher education. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *70*(2), 223–241.
- Guerra, A. L., & Braungart-Rieker, J. M. (1999). Predicting career indecision in college students: The roles of identity formation and parental relationship factors. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *47*(3), 255–266.
- Hahs-Vaughn, D. (2004). The impact of parents' education level on college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, *45*(5), 483–500.
- Harkness, S., & Super, C. M. (1991). Parental beliefs and theories on early childhood education. *Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *2*, 193–202.
- Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.
- Hossler, D., et al. (1992). *Choosing colleges: How social, economic, and educational factors influence decisions*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Keller, B. K. (2004). Parental behaviours that influence adolescents' career development. University of Washington.
- Keller, B. K., & Whiston, S. C. (2008). The role of parental influences on adolescents' career development. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 16(2), 198–217.
- Koul, L. (1993). *Methodology of educational research*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing.
- Makinde, O. (1984). *Fundamentals of guidance and counselling*. London: Macmillan.
- Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. B. (1999). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press.
- Navin, D. S. (2009). Effects of dating and parental attachment on career exploration. University of New Hampshire.
- Ngumi, O., Ngari, S. M., & Mumiukha, C. K. (2007). Challenges facing secondary school guidance counsellors. *Journal of Education and Human Resources*, 4(1), 20–33.
- Papalia, D. E., Olds, S. W., & Feldman, R. D. (2002). *A child's world: Infancy through adolescence* (9th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Papalia, D. E., Olds, S. W., & Feldman, R. D. (2003). *Psychology: Adolescent and adult development* (9th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Payne, J. (2003). Choice at age 16: Participation and progression in education and training. *Journal of Education Policy*.
- Saint, W. (2009). Tertiary education and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. *World Bank Report*.
- Saka, N., & Gati, I. (2007). Emotional and personality-related aspects of career decision-making difficulties. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*.
- Schulenberg, J. E., Vondracek, F. W., & Crouter, A. C. (1984). The influence of the family on vocational development. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 129–143.
- Shorikov, V. (2007). Career development and counseling challenges. *Career Development Journal*.
- Singh, K., et al. (1995). Family and school influences on career aspirations. *Educational Research Journal*.
- Tilak, J. B. G. (1994). *Education for development in Asia*. Sage Publications.
- Tilak, J. B. G. (2005). Post-elementary education, poverty, and development in India. *Centre of African Studies Working Paper*.
- Zikmund, W. G. (1986). *Business research methods*. New York: Dryden Press.