



Effect of Peer Attachment on Career Decision Making among Undergraduate Students

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Abstract: *This study was an attempt to explore the effect of peer attachment on career decision making among undergraduate students. A sample of 528 undergraduate students of the education department was selected from public and private universities of Lahore through a stratified random sampling technique. The questionnaire used for data collection was comprised of demographic information, career decision making self-efficacy developed by Betz, Klein and Taylor (1996) and inventory of peer and parental attachment developed by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) and revised by Gullone and Robinson (2005). Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between variables. An independent sample t-test was applied to determine the difference between the groups. The results showed that peer attachment has a significant effect on CDMSF.*

Key Words: Peer Attachment, Decision-Making, Undergraduate Students, CDMSF

Introduction

Career decision making is a process that explains a person's choices when choosing a particular career. This is a complicated subject with physical, psychological, and metaphysical implications (Kaur & Karamjeet, 2017).

Career decision-making efficiency is a key factor that guides entities through the development of career decision-making processes and enhances the further progress of futures, ventures, and job satisfaction of individuals (Betz, 2007; Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

Individuals with a high level of self-efficacy in career decision-making are more likely to engage in career research and planning practices, recognize their career interests, consistently strive on career aspirations and achieve higher results (Hou, Wu, & Liu, 2014; Rogers & Creed, 2011).

Career decision-making is one of the major dilemmas and obstacles in the lives of any individual. This requires a complex interaction of many elaborately interwoven influences. It is not a simple process and requires a complex decision-

making process. This problem is not restricted to Pakistan solely but also a problem for the whole world (Kazi, 2017).

Individual and social environment may influence career choices, as individuals interact more with their peers, mostly in this phase. As children grow and hit puberty, adolescents tend to be more reliant on their peers than their parents, particularly as they make decisions and develop their fundamental goals in life (Uslu, 2013).

Overall, adolescents devote more time to their peers. Peer influence is noted for imparting both optimistic and undesirable impact on individuals and without affecting the peer influence is ongoing learning (Gulati, 2017).

Stronger relationships can provide a favorable environment for healthy development and achieving good educational outcomes. Students of mutual friendships report high levels of school association; reciprocity and perceptions of connection have optimistic effects on career choices (Vaquera & Kao, 2008).

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Having friends facilitates the exchange of experiences, feelings, and understanding of problem-solving. But, not having friends lead to social alienation or limited social interactions since there are fewer opportunities for developing new connections and interactional social skills. Friendship also has a strong impact on social well-being (Ueno, 2004). While a contrasting association with peers is detrimental to psychological health (Laftman & Östberg, 2006).

Peers may assess interest in behaving, communicating, consuming narcotics, promiscuity, embracing and supporting abuse, adopting crime and anti-social behavior, and in other aspects of teenage life, such as career choices (Padilla, Walker & Bean, 2009).

Career decision-making is a complex and personal mechanism faced by every person in his/her life. A sensible career choice could be understood as a decision taken on a rational selection of all career options and personal skills usually appropriate for a particular career (Kaur, 2016).

Career decision-making on Pakistani youth appears to be a restriction. Because of twisted career choices, thousands of graduates and undergraduates miss out on appropriate career choices. Usually, students make career decisions directed by parents or wish to join colleges with peers and choose peer-influenced programs regardless of the quality of programs suited to their academic ability. Peers manipulate individual lives at many phases of life (Furdose, 2005).

This research made an attempt to explore the effect of peer attachment on CDMS among undergraduate students of public and private universities.

Objectives

1. To explore the significant effect of peer attachment on CDMS of students.
2. To find out the difference in the peer attachment of male and female students.
3. To explore the difference between peer attachment of students from public and private universities.

Hypotheses

Ho: There is no significant effect of peer attachment on CDMS of students.

Ho: There is no difference in peer attachment of male and female students.

Ho: There is no difference between peer attachment of students from public and private universities.

Literature Review

Career decision making is a mechanism that defines an individual's choices when making career decisions. This process also characterizes the factors which help the individuals to take the decision and provide us with an awareness of how certain aspects influence their decisions and career choices (Sharaf, 2002).

Career decision making is considered a highly creative and difficult process because, in the previous five decades, people had fewer career options, and careers were more linear, nowadays, the career environment offers many challenging opportunities and choices. Due to these circumstances, the career exploration process relatively requires a high level of self-assurance in one's ability to wisely integrate between available options and choose his career path (Arnold, 2001).

Parson (1909) launched the idea of career decision-making. He discussed that the career choices should be based on the following three comprehensive aspects:

- (1) A comprehensive understanding of oneself, expertise, goals, motivation, capital, shortcomings, and awareness of their causes
- (2) Recognition of the criteria, standards of performance, positives and negatives, rewards, incentives, and opportunities in various fields of work
- (3) A valid logic of the relationship between two categories of facts (Patton & McMahon, 1999).

CDMS can be defined as the level of student's confidence regarding his or her particular skills which engage in educational activities related to the collection of career information, setting or planning goals, and making decisions (Peterson, 1993). Bets and Taylor (2001) explained CDMS as the ability of an individual where he can effectively achieve his goals which are necessary for making decisions about his career.

According to Dykasa, Yair and Cassidy (2008), the performance of individuals in establishing and maintaining supportive peer

relationships is considered an important feature of successful socio-emotional transition during their lifetime. Hence, the recognition of the various factors correlated with the positive features of peer interactions between children and adolescents was a major goal of developmental researchers.

The world is heading into the era of unprecedented skill inferiority that can adversely affect economic growth and ultimately change the dynamics of the approach to employment. Every person experiences a career decision-making process that is influenced by many factors such as the environment in which they work, their personal skills, peers' impact and educational achievement ([Watson et al., 2010](#)).

According to [Salami \(2006\)](#), most young people make incorrect career choices because of confusion, inexperience, and peer pressure or because of a perception linked to certain occupations without appropriate educational advice and career counselling. Peer pressure/attachment influence their perception of career choices.

[Naz et al. \(2014\)](#) indicated that colleagues and friends have a significant effect on CDMSF. [Akhtaq \(2017\)](#) revealed that when it comes to choosing a profession, the youth is influenced by peers and the media. [Salami \(1999\)](#) found out that many young people in Nigeria go into inappropriate careers because of several factors, including peer pressure and family members' advice. Therefore, many of them are inappropriate for their careers, as they usually find themselves in jobs where their needs could not be satisfied. Generally, people are unable to make a meaningful contribution to the community and eventually become the nation's obligation.

[Saima \(2011\)](#) showed a significant positive relationship between peer attachment and

CDMSF. She found that both family influence and peer attachment lead to self-efficiency in career decision-making, while parental influence appears to be significantly higher than peer influence.

To make the right choices about career, students need to conduct a thorough research about all choices and alternatives and compare those with the socio-economic position it helps to make the right verdict ([Humayun et al., 2018](#); [Noreen & Khalid, 2012](#); [Shumba & Naong, 2012](#)). Likewise, [Ahmed, Sharif and Ahmad \(2017\)](#) advise if the undergraduate students of Pakistan did not make the right career choices, it would be impossible for them to reach their desired goals, and it would also affect the country's economic state. The country deems for in the neck throat competition of neo-liberal economics.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Research design is the concaved plan, layout, technique, and analysis to ensure the analysis for problem and control difference ([Akhtar, 2016](#)). Quantitative analysis is described as the processing and analysis of numerical data for defining, understanding, forecasting, regulating interesting phenomena ([Creswell, 2013](#)). The study was a casual comparative ex-post facto. A causal-comparative concept is also known as ex post facto; it seeks to determine the cause or effect of current disparities in the status of individual groups ([Gay, 2015](#)).

Population

The target population was the students from the department of education of public and private universities of Lahore.

Table 1. Students from Public Universities

S. No	Universities	Number of students
1	University of the Punjab	200
2	Kinnaird College for Women	150
3	University of Education	250
4	Lahore College for Women University	450
Total		1050

Table 2. Students from Private Universities

S. No	Universities	Number of students
1	Beacon house National University	100
2	University of Lahore	150
3	Forman Christian College	180
4	Lahore Leads University	20
5	University of South Asia	70
6	University of Management and Technology	90
7	Minhaj University	100
Total		710

Sampling

A stratified random sampling technique was applied to the population in order to get an accurate sample size. It is a sampling process that

includes the classification of a population into smaller subgroups known as strata. Strata were made on the basis of the nature of the institution.

Table 3. Sample Description

Universities	N	n
Private Universities	710	213
Public Universities	1050	315
Total	1760	528

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was used for collecting data. It was comprised of three parts; the first part was consisting of demographic information (gender and nature of university), the second was the career decision making self-efficacy scale CDSES-SF, and the third was Peer Attachment scale (IPPR).

(1996), was used to assess the CDMSF of students. It has 25 items and 5 subscales. It was a 5-point Likert-type scale (from not confident at all to complete confident).

Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSES-SF)

Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSES-SF), developed by [Betz, Klein, and Taylor](#)

Peer Attachment (Scale) (IPPR)

The Peer attachment scale was originally developed by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) and revised by [Gullone and Robinson \(2005\)](#). It has 25 items and 3 subscales; Trust, Communication and Alienation. It was measured on a 5-point Likert type scale.

Table 4. Detail of Peer Attachment (Scale) (IPPR)

S. No	Subscales	items
1	Trust	1 to 10
2	Communication	11 to 19
3	Alienation	20 to 25

Ho: There is no Significant Effect of Peer’s Attachment on CDMS of Undergraduate Students

Table 5. Effect of Peer’s Attachment on CDMS

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.881 ^a	.777	.775	7.66776

a. Predictors: (Constant), TR, CM, AL

Table 5 demonstrates the result of multiple regression analysis to check the effect of independent variable peer attachment on career decision making self-efficacy. 77% variance is explained in the dependent variable CDMS of undergraduate students by independent variable peer attachment (R square of $77.7 \times 100 = 77.7\%$). In multiple regression, the R square indicates

variation that can be contributed by all the independent variables in the progression. In the table, the value of R square 0.777 shows the 77% variation in the dependent variable: CDMS. Independent variables that had been studied in this research were TR (trust), CM (communication), AL (alienation).

Table 6. Results for Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.849	.076		9.380	.000
Trust (TR)	.367	.074	.329	4.934	.000
Communication (CM)	.631	.155	.217	23.364	.000
Alienation (AL)	.619	.185	.309	8.741	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CDMSF

As displayed in table 6, the statistical significance and beta weights were evaluated and examined. Beta weights and significance values for predictive variables were Trust (TR) = 0.329 (p = .000),

communication (CM) = 0.217 (p = .000), Alienation AL = .309 (p = .000). The values of beta show positive relationship of all the factors TR, CM and AL with peer attachment.

Table 7. Effect of Peer Attachment on Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	66.648	3	22.216	607.578	.000
	Residual	808.304	524	58.794		
	Total	74.953	527			

a. Dependent Variable: CDMSF

b. Predictors: (Constant), TR, CM, AL

The F ratio is used to examine how reliable the measures are in forming a good fit for the model.

The p-value is .000 < .05 which suggests a good fitted model.

Ho: There is no Significant Difference in Peer Attachment of Male and Female Students

Table 8. Peer Attachment of Male and Female Students

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2 - tailed)
Male	288	25.7436	16.78140	526	526	.000
Female	240	22.0000	20.0000		389.00	

Table 8 shows independent sample t-test results to test the hypothesis. It shows a significant difference between peer attachments of male and female students. The t-value is 526, and the p-value is .000 < .05, which shows a significant

difference in peer attachment of male and female undergraduate students. Mean values show that male students are more influenced by peers than female students.

Ho: There is no difference between Peer Attachment of Students from Public and Private Universities

Table 9. The difference in Peer Attachment of Students on the basis of Nature of Institutes

Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig. (2 - tailed)
Public	315	16.8342	6.49898	-322	526	.002
Private	213	17.0000	.00000		367.00	

Table 9 shows independent sample t-test results. It shows a significant difference between peer attachments of students based on the nature of the institution. The t- value is -322, and the p-value is $.002 < .05$ at a level of significance that shows a significant difference in peer attachment of students from public and private universities. Mean values show that students from public institutes are more influenced by a peer than students from private institutes.

Discussion

The study tried to check the effect of peer attachment on CDMSF among undergraduate students of Lahore. The results showed that peer attachment has a significant effect on the CDMSF of undergraduate students. It also showed that all factors of peer attachment (trust, alienation, communication) had a positive effect on CDMSF.

The study conducted by [Ajmal \(2009\)](#) revealed similar results; peer attachment predicted the career CDMSF, peer attachment and its relationship with CDMSF also showed a positive correlation indicating that with the increase in peer attachment bonds, CDMSF also increases. Findings also showed a positive correlation between CDMSF and factors of peer attachment among males and females.

Another study conducted by [Naz et al. \(2014\)](#) revealed that peers and colleagues have a strong opportunity to make career decisions that are self-efficient and professional. Reports by [Isaacson and Brown \(2011\)](#) on career decision-making showed that peers and friends contribute to career decision-making, vocational jobs, helping in work selection, helping in future job prospects, and earning patterns are often affected by friends and colleagues.

Similarly, [Saima \(2011\)](#) also found a significant positive relationship in her study between peer attachment and CDMSF. The study revealed that both maternal and peer bonding leads to

predicting CDMSF, while parental involvement seems greater than parental involvement.

The results indicated a significant difference in peer attachment of male and female students. The results revealed that males' students were significantly more affected by peers than females' students. In literature, some studies showed males were more influenced by peers, and some show females were more influenced by peers.

A study conducted by [Ogutu, Odera and Maragia \(2017\)](#) revealed that peer attachment significantly influences student career decision-making such that, as peer influence increases, career decision-making among students often continues to increase in the very same manner., male students are more affected by peers than females students.

Another study conducted by Arab [Naz et al \(2014\)](#) revealed that 69% of male respondents were confessed to influence by peers 31% of female respondents were acknowledged to be influenced by peers in their career choices.

Likewise, literature has shown that women are more loyal to peers than men ([Gullone & Robinson 2005](#); [Nelis & Rae 2009](#); [Richards et al. 2010](#)). Most importantly, they show greater confidence in their mates and a closer connection with them; they are more influenced by their peers in career choices than males ([Gullone & Robinson 2005](#); [Ruijten et al. 2011](#)).

[Claes \(1992\)](#) also found a result likewise that there were similar numbers of peer interactions between teenage males and females, but females were more closely linked to peers and take their academic and professional career decisions with the help of friends.

Recommendations

1. Universities could help students in career decision making by providing them with detailed information about the subjects and their future scope.

2. Teachers might play a vital role in career decisions making through giving them a foundation of mindful thinking, which might help them in making the wisest choice according to their interest.
3. Teachers may help students by observing their interests and making up their minds from initial levels.
4. A qualitative study on this topic can be done, which may also provide valuable, comprehensive, and in-depth knowledge.

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