



## Exploring the Socio-economic Factors of Career Decision-Making among Tertiary Education Students in South Punjab

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### Abstract

*The main objectives of this study were to find the enticing factors of career decision making process among tertiary level students in south Punjab, Pakistan. Data were collected through a survey, and quantitative methods were used for analysis to present evidence to verify the research hypothesis of this study. The many enticing factors were assessed through a structured questionnaire. Family background, family system, parental cultural capital, household income level, parental occupations, peer group influence on the career decision-making process, all these factors of career decision making the process of the students were observed through a structured questionnaire. In order to obtain an overall picture of the data, a descriptive analysis was applied to frequencies distribution; bivariate analysis was used for establishing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the current study. Pearson Chi-Square test was showed that there is an association between parental cultural capital and career decision-making among tertiary education students.*

**Key Words:** Enticing Factors, Parental Cultural Capital, Career Decision, Tertiary Education.

### Introduction

Education is very necessary for everyone to improve socio-economic status; it sets the career direction for future life. Education plays a vital role in career decision making. Career selection is a significant decision of a student's life which plays a strategic role to improve the social status and quality of life of the students. Decision-making is one of the complex mechanisms of the human thinking process. All students are born into a social setting; parents directed their children for their future planning which suited to the social and cultural environment. The researcher found there was a great influence of parental cultural capital on the career decision making in tertiary level education in south Punjab. The parental cultural capital has a significant impact on the student's career decision-making process between upper and lower family background students. The privileged family background students have faced no financial problems, and they easily secured their admissions in highly scoped fields at tertiary level education which leads to success in their future lives and those students who belong to the less privileged parental cultural capital faced many financial issues and they likely to pursue their future in vocational and less paid fields (Bourdieu, 1977). In the traditional society like Pakistani, youth is dependent upon parent's direction to make decisions for them; most of the students selected a career according to their family traditions, in traditional society hardly ever career is chosen scientifically based upon aptitude testing and career counselling (Arif, S., 2019). The education level of parents determines their children educational success and also parental cultural capital strongly associated with the selection of specific career selection for their children (Goyette, 2008). It is also observed that the parent's occupational fields are strongly associated with their children major subjects' selection process at tertiary level education (Dustmann, 2004). Parental cultural capital has strong effects on their children educational achievement and moves from secondary to tertiary level education (Conley,

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2001). The parental aspirations were influenced by children educational and occupation future planning. The social class, family background, parental occupation, attitudes and behaviors have affected differently the overall educational achievement and future career selection of their children (Bodovski 2010). The educational achievements of the middle class indicated that parental cultural capital plays a vital role in the educational attainment and career decision-making of their children. Parents see the higher social status in the higher education of their children, therefore; they spent their economic and social resources to support and encourage their children in prestigious high fields of study (Shah et al., 2010). The family cultural capital has supported their children in the study field selection which helps them to achieve high status in their future (Howard et al., 2009). Parental psychological support encouraged, and support to their children in the career decision making and the parental occupation determines the educational selection choices of their children (Leppel et al., 2001). In traditional society parents are the primary source of influential on child's occupational selection process, in south Punjab people are strongly associated with their traditions and youth of this area is bound to obey the instructions given by their parents.

## **Review of Literature**

Mahler & Winkelmann (2004) investigated that the family structure has a great influence on the education level of children and the field of study. The education level of children depends on family structure and resources. Single-parent families adversely affect children's educational choices, and it is believed that single-parent families restrict the field of study of German students. Stocke (2007) explored the impact of social class on student education decision-making. Research has found that parents' classroom status is closely related to students' academic achievement and academic performance. Parents were found to be very concerned about the motivation to maintain their state and also motivated to increase investment in children's education to achieve a similar family social status. Goldrick-Rab (2006) argued that there is a significant difference in college attendance among students with low and high socioeconomic backgrounds. The study found that students with low socioeconomic backgrounds found delayed university admissions, interrupted university attendance, university transfer trends, and two- to four-year schooling. Students who get more financial resources from their families are less likely to postpone enrollment and have fewer interruptions in attendance.

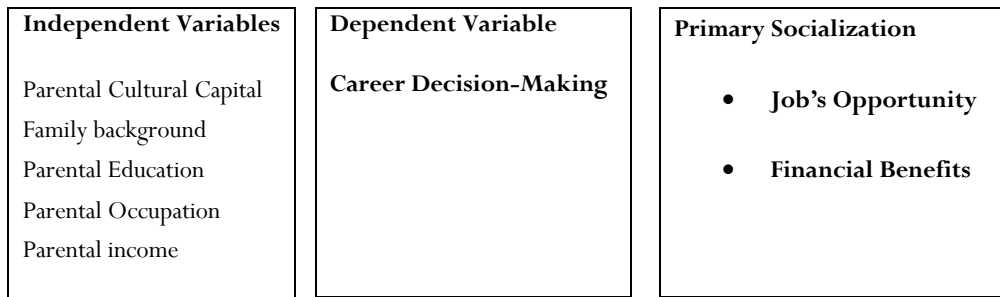
Bodovski (2010) explored that social class, ethnic background, and parenting style determine the attitudes and behaviors of parents, and these attitudes and behaviors will affect the overall education level of children differently. The research mainly addresses these issues: to find the relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and their parents' educational desires, and to what extent parents' desires are related to the educational achievements of white and African American students. Research has shown that there are patterns of racial differences in parental behavior. Relatively speaking, white students have acquired more social and cultural capital. Parents have a very high socio-economic background, so it can raise children's educational expectations of their parents. The study further explained that higher socioeconomic background and higher educational aspirations are positively correlated with students' educational achievement.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Social Reproduction Theory**

The theory holds that how children belong from different backgrounds received different kind of education which prepares them for their future role in social class structure order (Furlong, 2009). The work of Bourdieu showed the correlation between the parental cultural capital and their children educational achievements and also provides a greater conceptual explanatory power to the educational choices in the current modern world and described that individuals' class positions provide differentially access to these resources which may create different patterns of privilege and inequality.

## Conceptual Framework



## Methodology

In this study, Quantitative approaches were used to conduct the research. The data were collected through a survey questionnaire, the universe of the study was all students enrolled in graduate classes in the general cadre public colleges in South Punjab, all students enrolled in graduate classes in the public colleges of Layyah and Multan was target population. These two districts were selected though conveniently, one from the high populated district (Multan) and other from the low populated district (Layyah). As the population of the study was too big, and for the researcher within available resources and time, it was not possible to collect data from all the public colleges of Layyah and Multan. Multistage sampling was used, therefore, on the first stage, eight easily accessible public colleges, four colleges from Layyah and Multan, respectively. On the second stage, the stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a representative sample from the target population. Each selected college was divided into three strata; Sciences group, Arts group and commerce, from each stratum 20 students were selected randomly with equal representation of both genders, 320 respondents were interviewed from eight selected colleges (02 boys' colleges + 02 girls' colleges) Layyah and Multan, respectively. A stratum consisted of 20 students from graduate classes, and two strata (01 Sciences group + 01 Arts group & commerce group) were selected from each college. This resulted in 320 respondents were interviewed from both districts. 160 respondents were interviewed from four public colleges (02 boys' colleges + 02 girls' colleges) Layyah and Multan, respectively. The questionnaire was constructed for data collection from the selected students. SPSS version 20 software was used for data analysis; Inferential and descriptive statistics were applied for the stem line of the respondent's opinion. On the initial stage, descriptive statistical analyses were used to measure the central tendency (mean and median). Bivariate analyses (Chi-square test) were used to analyze the association between parental cultural capital and career decision-making among tertiary education students.

## Results and Discussions

The descriptive analysis showed that the majority of the students (62.8%) belonged to the age category of 15-20 years. The gender of respondents, 50% was male, and 50% was female. 55.3% of students were living in the joint family system, 33.9% father's education was college level.

**Table 1.** Your Father's Education Level \* It is your First Choice of Career

Variables	It is your First Choice of Career			Total	
	To Great Extent	To Some Extent	Not at all		
Your father's Education Level	Illiterate	8	15	8	31
	Primary	12	10	9	31
	Middle	8	19	24	51
	Matric	30	22	31	83
	College	42	26	34	102
	University	11	7	4	22
Total	111	99	110	320	

Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) = 19.401<sup>a</sup>, d.f = 10, “P” Value = 0.035, Level of significance = 0.05 The “P” value 0.035 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (**P-value 0.035 < 0.05 level of Sig.**). It means that there is a significant association between the father’s level of education and the student’s study group choices for their career planning. In south Punjab, the parent’s tertiary education level influence the student’s career decision making. 31.6% respondent’s mothers were illiterate, but others categories of mother’s education of middle, matric and college education show that the majority of the student’s mothers were educated and most of them were housewives.

**Table 2.** Your Mother’s Education \* It is your First Choice of Career

Variables	It is your First Choice of Career			Total	
	To Great Extent	To Some Extent	Not at All		
Your Mother’s Education	Illiterate	44	24	33	101
	Primary	24	32	18	74
	Middle	10	22	33	65
	Matric	14	8	19	41
	College	19	7	7	33
	University	0	6	0	6
Total	111	99	110	320	

Ch-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) = 46.699<sup>a</sup>, d.f = 10, “P” Value = 0.000, Level of significance = 0.05 The “P” value 0.000 it means “P” is less than 0.001 which is less than the level of significance 0.05, (P-value 0.000 < 0.05 level of Sig.). It means that is association between the Student’s Mother’s education level and the student’s first choice of career selection.

**Table 3.** Your Household’s Income Per Month \* Your Study Group in College

Variables		Your Study Group in College			Total
		Science	Arts	Commerce	
Your Household’s Income Per Month	Less than 10,000	14	12	1	27
	10,000-20,000	36	51	5	92
	20001-30000	28	36	4	68
	30001-40000	40	31	2	73
	40001-50000	23	10	0	33
	More than 50000	19	6	2	27
Total		160	146	14	320

Ch-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) = 19.308<sup>a</sup>, d.f = 10, “P” Value = 0.37, Level of significance = 0.05 The “P” value 0.037 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (**P-value 0.037 < 0.05 level of Sig.**). It means that there is significant association between the Household’s income and the Student’s study group in college. The 82.5% respondents were agreed (40%) and strongly agreed (42.5%) with the statement family background play a vital role in career decision making because without family support it is not easy to achieve your goal

**Table 4.** Your Father’s Occupation \* Family Background Play Any Role in Career Decision Making

Variables		Family Background Play any role in Career Decision Making				Total	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree		Strongly Agree
Your father’s Occupation	Job	0	6	16	32	46	100
	Business	2	1	8	39	53	103

Variables	Family Background Play any role in Career Decision Making					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Farmer	0	8	15	57	37	117
Total	2	15	39	128	136	320

These tables show that the “P” value 0.007 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (P-value 0.007 < 0.05 level of Sig.) It means that it is an association between the father’s occupation and family background play a role in the student’s career decision making. 162 (50.6%) respondents were in favor that career counselling is very helpful in career planning. The majority of respondents (70.6%) said there is no facility of a career counselling center in their college or university campuses, it means these colleges and campus initiate the career counselling centres for the better future planning of students. The 81.1% respondents were agreed with the statement of have discussed my career choice with family members. 56.6% of respondents were agreed, and 27.5% were strongly agreed with the statement that the family expected them to study in this career. 52.2% of respondents were agreed, and 16.9% were strongly agreed with that parent’s occupation influenced their career decision. The 77% of respondents were in favor to choose parents profession. 79.2% of respondents were in favor to choose parents profession because they were feeling a sense of security and hoped that their parent’s profession gave them success in a future life, especially in professional life.

**Table 5.** Your Study Group Is According to the Own Choice \* Parent’s Occupation Influenced on My Career Decision

Variables		Parent’s Occupation Influenced on my Career Decision				Total
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Your study group is according to their own choice	To a great extent	36	22	122	37	217
	To some extent	17	20	43	13	93
	Not at all	2	2	2	4	10
Total		55	44	167	54	320

Ch-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) = 13.495<sup>a</sup>, d.f = 06, “P” Value = 0.036, Level of significance =0.05 The “P” value 0.036 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (**P-value 0.036 < 0.05 level of Sig.**). It means that it is an association between the student’s current fields of study is according to his/her own choice and Parent’s occupation in the student’s career decision making.

**Table 6.** Your Study Group is According to the Own Choice \* My Parent’s Profession May be Grated me Feeling of Security in the Future

Variables		My Parent’s Profession may be Grated me Feeling of Security in the Future					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Your study group is according to their own choice	To a great extent	1	16	23	131	46	217
	To some extent	2	10	16	46	19	93
	Not at all	0	0	4	2	4	10
Total		3	26	43	179	69	320

These tables show that the “P” value 0.032 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (P-value 0.032 < 0.05 level of Sig.) so, the researcher accepted the alternative hypothesis on the 0.05 level of significance. It means that it is an association between the student’s current fields of study is according to his/her own choice, and Parent’s profession may be grated me feeling of security in the future.

**Table 7.** Your Study Group is According to the own choice \* My Parent’s profession gives me better Lifestyle in Future

Variables		My Parent’s Profession gives me Better Lifestyle in Future					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Your study group is according to their own choice	To a great extent	0	10	21	133	53	217
	To some extent	2	15	15	48	13	93
	Not at all	0	0	4	6	0	10
Total		2	25	40	187	66	320

This table shows that the “P” value 0.000 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (P-value 0.000 < 0.05 level of Sig.) so, the researcher accepted the alternative hypothesis on the 0.05 level of significance. It means that it is an association between the student’s current fields of study is according to his/her own choice, and Parent’s profession may be grated me better lifestyle in the future. The researcher observed 84.3% respondents were agreed that the friends are also a source of counselling and have guidance and have great influence in one’s career decision. 79.1% respondents have friends in their particular study group. The 79.4% respondents have discussed with friends and consulting institutions during the selection of particular career. The 79.4% respondents got helped from friends at the time of choosing their career. Ch-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) = 33.248<sup>a</sup>, d.f = 06, “P” Value = 0.000, Level of significance =0.05

The “P” value 0.000 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (P-value 0.000 < 0.05 level of Sig.). It means that is an association between the student’s selection of current fields of study and peer group has influenced to select this particular study group which leads to a better future life. The 75 % respondents were discussed with friends if they not discussed, they have chosen another career of life; it means there is a great influence of peer group on the career decision process.

The 190 (59.4%) respondents said agreed that social media influenced them in the selection of subjects. The 73.3% respondents influenced by a newspaper in the selection of career. The 186 respondents said that jobs ads had influenced the selection of career. The 76.9 % respondents were influenced by jobs ads in the selection of career. The 63.1% respondents were agreed and strongly agreed 19.4% that they have influenced by T.V programs in their career selection. Ch-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) = 18.875<sup>a</sup>, d.f = 04, “P” Value = 0.016, Level of significance =0.05

The “P” value 0.016 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (P-value 0.016 < 0.05 level of Sig.). It means that it is an association between the student’s selection of current fields of study and the influence of social media on the selection of this study group as the career planning of future life.

Majority of respondents (62.8%) were agreed and (22.2%) were strongly agreed that one’s gender plays a vital role in his career selection. The 63.4% respondents were agreed, and 18.4% were strongly agreed that there is an influence of socio-cultural expectations on one’s choice of career selection. 58.8% respondents were agreed, and 21.9% were strongly agreed that the working condition in a certain career suitable for one gender. Ch-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) = 19.836<sup>a</sup>, d.f = 08, “P” Value = 0.011, Level of significance =0.05, The “P” value 0.011 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (P-value 0.011 < 0.05 level of Sig.). It means that is an association between the student’s first choice of study and gender role in the selection of a suitable career for one’s specific gender. 60.9 % students were agreed, and 22.8% were strongly agreed that the gender is limited to him/her to select others career option. 54.4% respondents were agreed, and 30.3 % were strongly agreed that they are engaged with a

suitable career with their gender. Majority of students 63.8% were agreed, and 21.9% were strongly agreed that psychological factors play a vital role in one's career decision. 56.6% students were agreed, and 31.3% were strongly agreed that they have a personal interest in this career selection. Ch-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) = 21.951<sup>a</sup>, d.f = 06, "P" Value = 0.001, Level of significance = 0.05. The "P" value 0.001 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (P-value 0.001 < 0.05 level of Sig.). It means that it is a relationship between the student's first choice of study and the (Psychological factors) personal interest in this particular field of study. The majority of respondents, 58.8% were agreed, and 28.4% were strongly agreed that the current field of study is according to their skills, competencies and abilities. 60.0% students were agreed, and 30.0% were strongly agreed that they easily accessed to this particular career. 59.4% respondents were agreed, and 29.1% were strongly agreed that teacher's motivation influenced in the student's career selection. Ch-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) = 15.681<sup>a</sup>, d.f = 06, "P" Value = 0.016, Level of significance = 0.05.

The "P" value 0.016 is less than the level of significance 0.05, (P-value 0.016 < 0.05 level of Sig.). It means that it is an association between the student's first choice of study and Psychological factors this field is according to my skills, competencies and abilities.

The majority of the respondents 55.6% were agreed, and 34.1% were strongly agreed that they influenced by their school in the career selection process. 57.8% respondents were agreed, and 30.0% were strongly agreed that they are sure that the selected field of study enabled them to run their own business. The majority of the respondents 57.5% were agreed, and 31.9% were strongly agreed that the selected fields of study granted more financial rewards in their future lives.

## Conclusion

The study found that the early socialization process and background variables of the family significantly affected students' career choices. The student was found to have made a decision consistent with family traditions. The family is the source of capital, and the parents' education and professional background have an impact on the students' career decision-making process. Both students use their parental status as a reference to achieve a status similar to that of their parents, and the students may reproduce their parental resources. In the traditional society like Pakistani, youth is dependent upon parent's direction to make decisions for them; most of the students selected a career according to their family traditions, in traditional society hardly ever career is chosen scientifically based upon aptitude testing and career counselling. The findings of the study are supported by the theory of social reproduction, which shows that the family's social origin plays an important role in children's education. Family background constitutes the social and cultural capital of students. Parental cultural capital provides visionary students with access to useful information so that they can make smart career decisions. The theory suggests that parents invest in children's education because they want to reproduce their resources in the future.

The study also found that students imitated their parents and adopted peers in their career decisions. The social learning theory of career decision-making considers the influence of parental cultural capital such as family traditions, family background social and economic status, which are factors that affect students' career choices at tertiary level education. In general, the research results are supported by theoretical viewpoints, namely, social reproduction theory. The research found an association between the basic theoretical assumptions means parental cultural capital and the main findings student's career decision-making at tertiary level education in south Punjab.

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