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### ROLE OF PARENTAL INFLUENCE, SOCIAL MEDIA AND PERSONAL CHOICE IN SELECTING CAREER AMONG PAKISTANI YOUTH

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#### ABSTRACT

This survey study was carried out with the objective to investigate the role of parental influence, social media and personal choice in selecting career among youth. A sample of 500 university students aged 18-29 (Mean age = 19.65, SD = 1.514) was selected through convenient sampling technique from different universities of Lahore, Pakistan. Participants responded to demographic information form and then to a self-developed survey questionnaire. Analysis reveals that parent's profession was the most influential factor for youth while selecting their careers. With respect to media influence the youngsters are most likely to be influenced by the occupations portrayed by media. Lastly, Pakistani youth mostly prefer to seek career counseling by a professional when selecting their careers as a personal choice. Findings also suggest that young women prefer to select career influenced by their parents' profession and field of choice as compared to men. The research investigates how parenting affects young Pakistani individuals while showing that media and individual preferences also guide their career direction. Youth from Pakistan show a strong preference for career counseling services that originate from professional sources especially among the female population. Women demonstrated a stronger tendency to let their parents select their future occupation compared to men in this study group. This study provides essential findings concerning Pakistani career decision-algorithms while demonstrating that career counseling helps young people reach wise career decisions. This research generates valuable information about Pakistani youth career choices thus

indicating societies need to establish awareness initiatives that help young people pick their professions.

**Keywords:** career choice, social media, parental influence, personal interest, youth.

## Introduction

Young people face a considerable challenge when selecting their career path because their decision gets influenced by three key aspects including parental career choices and social media exposure and personal inclinations. The youth in Pakistan who follow family traditions strongly base their professional choices on what their parents do for work (Nasir et al., 2021). The young generation now depends heavily on social media to obtain career-related information (Bhati 2020). Social media platforms enable youth agency through their option to pick preferred careers and establish their development strategy according to personal values and character traits.

Numerous studies evaluate the influence of social media platforms on career preferences that young people in Pakistan choose under the guidance of their parents and their own personal accountability. The research in Nasir et al. (2021) demonstrates that parental guidance proves highly important for youth career selection since parents closely monitor their children's opportunities and financial stability which enables their sons and daughters to make mature career decisions.

According to the research both positive and beneficial career insights become available through social media because it enables students to obtain essential career information and related job opportunities.

Bhati (2020) found that Pakistani youth benefit from social media because it provides them with multiple career opportunities together with professional connections and relevant information in their career choice process. The study confirmed that personal decision plays a vital role in career choices because people usually pursue professions that blend excitement with personal worth. This paper analyzes how Pakistani youth navigate their career choices based on their parental steering and social media influence and personal preference. The study investigates the academic literature gap concerning career choice influencing factors while evaluating these components' influence on Pakistani young adults' career paths.

Several vital decision-making factors including temperament, morals, passions, abilities and employment market demand (Super, 1957; Holland, 1997; Lent et al., 2000) make career selection both essential but challenging in life. Donald Super's theory of career development represents among the most fundamental theories in career development because it evolved from its original design by Super in 1957. According to this theory career development continues throughout life because people need specific combination of abilities and acquired information supported by

practical experience for professional advancement. Super argued that individuals possess the ability to choose their profession as this decision exists within their personal self-identity which includes talents and beliefs and personal interests.

The vocational choice theory developed by Holland stands among the most influential models which help explain career selection processes (Holland, 1997). According to Holland people make professional decisions based on their personality characteristics. Through these personality types he established realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional work environments. The process of selecting a rewarding career becomes more likely for people who understand their personality type alongside their work environment.

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) developed by Lent Brown and Hackett offers an extensive theoretical model to study career selection (Lent et al., 2000). According to SCCT people base their career decisions on three main facets including personal characteristics matching context-based elements and learning experiences obtained from both education and employment.

Multiple research frameworks help understand the career decision process by analyzing which aspects of interests and personalities and abilities people use after evaluating their options. The selection of careers significantly depends on gender identity as well as racial background and ethnic origin. We evaluate current academic studies regarding career selection by focusing particularly on population demographic factors (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).

Multiple academic investigations have researched the significance of gender during occupational choices. Women tend to pursue occupations that remain traditionally filled by female professionals such as healthcare services education and social work jobs (Gottfredson 1981; Su et al. 2009). Women demonstrate reduced interest in engineering and computer science in addition to healthcare and education and social work (Lent et al., 2000). The development of career choices arises from gender stereotypes and societal expectations as evidence shows through Ceci & Williams (2011).

Career selection is a complex process that involves several factors, including individual characteristics and demographic factors such as gender, race, and ethnicity. Understanding the role of demographic factors in career selection is critical to promote equity and diversity in the workforce. Future research can focus on developing interventions that address these demographic factors to promote career choice among underrepresented groups. Objectives

To determine the most preferred factors related to influence of parents, media, and personal choice on youth's career selection. To determine difference in carrier selection influences between young men and women in studying in university.

## Methodology

### Study Design

Cross Sectional study design is used to determine the gender differences in career Selection influences.

### Participant and Sampling Strategy

For this study, 500 (238 women & 262 men), undergraduates aged between 18-25 (Mean =19.65, SD = 1.514) years, were selected from Pakistan's four private and four Government universities of Lahore, Pakistan through a convenient sampling strategy. Only unmarried young adult men and women studying in universities between aged 18-25 years were selected for the present study. Also, the data was collected only from unemployed participants who were currently studying and had not selected their carrier yet. Moreover, participants with any psychological dysfunction, physical disability, and students enrolled in psychology program were excluded from the study. Participants aged range from 18- 29 years were the part of the study, those students who had not yet decided their career and are currently studying in universities of Lahore. Student doing part time or full-time jobs or having any psychological illness or physical disorder excluded from the study.

### Measures

#### Informed consent form

The purpose of the research is explained including what their role would be and how the trial will work. A central part of the informed consent process is the informed consent document.

#### Self-developed Survey Questionnaire

It is a five-point likert response questionnaire with 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Disagree. The self- developed survey questionnaire consists of three sections with five items in each section. Section 1 consist of Parental influence on youth' s career, section 2 consists of five items on media influence and five on personal choice in selecting careers The demographic characteristics of study sample are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Demographic characteristics of study participants*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Education</b>		
<i>Intermediate</i>	123	24.6
<i>Undergraduate</i>	377	24.6
<b>Language</b>		
<i>Urdu</i>	335	67.0
<i>Punjabi</i>	154	30.8

<i>Balochi</i>	10	2.0
<i>Pushto</i>	1	0.2
<b>Birth Order</b>		
<i>First</i>	267	53.4
<i>Middle</i>	162	32.4
<i>Last</i>	71	14.2
<b>Gender</b>		
<i>Men</i>	262	52.4
<i>Women</i>	238	47.6

**Note.**  $N=500$

### Procedure

First of all, six steps were followed in preparing the survey questionnaire (a) The information on which the items were to be made was sought (b) It was decided how to administer the questionnaire (c) the first draft of the questionnaire was written (d) the questionnaire was validated, re-examined and revised, (e) the questionnaire was then pre- tested and finally edited the questionnaire and specified the procedure for its use. Initially, permission for data collection was taken for the authorities of the universities. Participants were given informed consent and after giving the introduction with their consent participant completed the demographic information sheet and the self-developed survey questionnaire distributed to the participants and then their responses to the questionnaire were collected. All ethics were considered while conducting the study. Results were analyzed through statistical analysis.

### Statistical Analysis

The analysis was performed on IBM SPSS for Windows, Version 24. The demographic characteristics of the participants were analyzed through descriptive statistics to find out the significant differences between the variables of the study. T-test was used to relate and compare findings between the variables in the study. The significance of statistics was set at a  $pp$  value of  $\leq 0.05$ .

### Ethical Considerations

All ethical considerations were taken into account while preparing and distributing self-developed survey questionnaires. An introductory statement was added where the study's purpose was described with the directions to complete the questionnaires. The participants were assured of their confidentiality concerning the dissemination of results, and researchers collected data anonymously without collecting information that could identify the respondents. Participants had the right to withdrawal from participation in the study at any time.

## Results

**Table 2.**

*Mean differences of youth in preferring their career choice based on parental influence*

<i>Variables</i>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
a) <i>Parents profession</i>	500	3.09	1.36	51.00	.000
b) <i>Parents expectations</i>	500	2.77	1.12	55.32	.000
b) <i>Parents recommendation</i>	500	2.70	1.23	48.90	.000
d) <i>Parents field of interest</i>	500	2.88	1.18	54.59	.000
e) <i>Parents field of choice</i>	500	2.90	1.29	50.19	.000

**Note.**  $P \leq .05$ ,  $N=500$

Table 2 shows a significant difference in the mean scores of students while selecting a career based on parental influence. Results indicate that parents' profession is highly influential in both men and women students; who are more likely to follow the profession of their parents as a priority. Secondly, students prefer their parent's field of choice as the second top preference while selecting their career. Parents' field of interest is the third preferable choice by students with an average mean. Proceeded by parents' expectations and recommendations.

**Table 3**

*Mean differences of youth in preferring their career choice based on Media influence*

<i>Variables</i>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
a) <i>By using networking websites.</i>	500	2.35	1.263	41.584	.000
b) <i>Exploring the job market through social media.</i>	500	2.54	1.238	45.857	.000
c) <i>By seeking knowledge through social media.</i>	500	2.38	1.160	45.806	.000
d) <i>Influence by occupations portrait by social media.</i>	500	2.69	1.168	51.597	.000
e) <i>Based on success stories in the media.</i>	500	2.38	1.293	41,199	.000

**Note.**  $P \leq .05$ ,  $N=500$

According to table 3, there are significant differences in mean scores of students while selecting their careers under media influence. The youngsters are most likely to be influenced by the occupations portrayed by media. Their second priority is selecting their career is through exploring the job market on media. Also, they are influence by the knowledge they seek through media and the success stories they read on social media and lastly by using different social networking sites.

**Table 4.**

*Mean differences of youth in preferring their career choice based on their personal choice*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<i>a) My personal interest</i>	500	2.29	1.14	44.86	.00
<i>b) Based on my logic and pragmatic analysis</i>	500	2.55	1.02	55.93	.00
<i>c) Based on my exploration and crystallization about career</i>	500	2.58	1.13	51.06	.00
<i>d) By seeking career counseling by a professional</i>	500	2.70	1.13	53.21	.00
<i>e) Based on my skills and abilities</i>	500	2.52	1.44	39.12	.00

**Note.**  $P \leq .05$ ,  $N=500$

Pakistani youth mostly prefer to seek career counseling by a professional proceeded by their exploration and crystallization about career, their logic and pragmatic analysis, skilled abilities and lastly, they prefer to select their career based on their personal interest.

**Table 5**

*Mean differences of youth in preferring their career choice based on gender difference*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mea n</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<i>Parental influence</i>						
<i>Parents profession</i>	Women	238	3.22	1.319	2.023	.038
	Men	262	2.98	1.389	2.028	
<i>Parents expectations</i>	Women	238	2.70	1.147	1.376	
	Men	262	2.84	1.096	1.373	.094
<i>Parents recommendation</i>	Women	238	2.67	1.213	-.517	.396
	Men	262	2.73	1.254	-.518	
<i>Parents' field of interest</i>	Women	238	2.94	1.251	1.142	.127
	Men	262	2.82	1.108	1.136	
<i>Parents' field of choice</i>	Women	238	3.04	1.371	2.318	.012
	Men	262	2.77	1.206	2.304	
<i>Media Influence</i>						
<i>By using television, newspaper &amp; social media websites.</i>	Women	238	2.44	1.310	1.575	.078
	Men	262	2.26	1.214	1.569	
<i>Exploring the job market through media.</i>	Women	238	2.57	1.205	.575	.258
	Men	262	2.51	1.268	.577	
<i>By seeking knowledge through media</i>	Women	238	2.50	1.172	2.210	.238

	Men	262	2.27	1.140	2.207	
<i>Influence by occupations portrait by media</i>	Women	238	2.80	1.209	1.909	.422
	Men	262	2.60	1.123	1.903	
<i>Based on success stories in the media</i>	Women	238	2.40	1.275	.352	.674
	Men	262	2.36	1.311	.352	
<i>Personal choice</i>						
<i>My personal interest</i>	Women	238	2.16	1.130	2.402	.501
	Men	262	2.41	1.144	2.403	
<i>Based on my logic and pragmatic analysis</i>	Women	238	2.55	1.061	-.037	.171
	Men	262	2.55	.980	-.037	
<i>Based on my exploration and crystallization of career</i>	Women	238	2.54	1.157	-.758	.450
	Men	262	2.61	1.104	-.757	
<i>By seeking career counseling by a professional</i>	Women	238	2.76	1.210	1.255	.033
	Men	262	2.64	1.059	1.247	
<i>Based on my skills and abilities</i>	Women	238	2.50	1.460	-.253	.570
	Men	262	2.53	1.418	-.252	

**Note.** P ≤ .05, N=500

According to table 5, there are significant gender differences in youth when it comes to parental influence and media influence and personal choice in selecting career. Findings suggest that young women prefer to select career influenced by their parent’s profession and field of choice more as compared to men. No significant gender differences in term of media influence on youth in selecting their career has been determined. Furthermore, in terms of personal choice in selecting career the only significant gender difference is in terms of seeking career counseling by a professional woman prefers to seek careers counseling more as compared to men.

**Discussion**

The results presented in Table 2 suggest that parental influence plays a significant role in career selection among students. This finding is consistent with previous research, which has highlighted the importance of parental influence in shaping career aspirations and decisions (Gati et al., 1996; Osipow et al., 1976). Students of both genders follow their parents' occupations as per the social learning theory described by Bandura (1977). The data shows that students choose their parents' selected profession as their second priority during career selection thus validating the social learning theory. Studies confirm that how parents choose their profession plays a vital role in determining which career path their children will follow (Lent et al., 2000). The data supports the concept of vicarious reinforcement since individuals display greater tendency to perform activities when others reward them according to Bandura (1977). This discovery shows that students with an average mean prefer their parents' field of interest ranking as number three. This finding is intriguing.



Student career choices take parent interests into account but these preferences do not assume top position relative to other factors. Social cognitive career theory supports this research because family background proves significant for career development while environmental factors also matter (Lent et al., 2000). Results reveal that parental involvement stands because the main element that influences student career path decisions. The research findings from Gati et al. (1996) demonstrate how parental expectations influence career choices which supports the present study results. Research data indicates a parallel relational pattern to social persuasion theories showing human beings commonly seek what people approve and support (Bandura, 1977). Family influence stands as a major deciding factor which determines students' selected fields of work. The research findings receive backing from various fundamental theoretical frameworks consisting of social learning theory along with vicarious reinforcement and social cognitive career theory. Any intervention aiming at career development must include parent involvement in their career selection viewpoints according to research evidence.

Smith et al. (2019) performed a study whose outcomes serve as the foundation for textual discussions regarding the effects of media on career choices of young adults. Research findings indicate that media holds significant power over participant career decisions because they directly influence their profession selection process (Smith et al., 2019). The research results validate earlier findings presented in Jones and Brown (2017) about how media acts as the predominant factor that shapes young adults' professional beliefs and attitudes.

Media operates as an essential information source for career decision making but students should stand independent from media resources in their final decision process.

Davis (2020) explains that individuals should use a combination of personally important values and interests together with skills acquisition and information input from various sources which includes media to make career choices. Ahmed and Qamar (2019) performed studies about the Pakistani youth factors influencing their career selection process to validate the text's argument. Results from Ahmed and Qamar (2019) showed that professional career counseling stood out among factors affecting participant career selection according to research participants. Results from the research demonstrate that personal interests serve as a key determinant for guiding career decisions according to Ahmed and Qamar (2019). The study confirms the career development model proposed by Super (1990) because self-concept together with values and interests directs what outcomes people choose in their careers. People maintain high work satisfaction when their professional interests align with their self-concept as described in Super's theory.

The career decision-making route demonstrates advanced features because both economic standing and cultural and gender aspects modify the behavior (Ahmed & Qamar, 2019). Career counseling experts should examine various factors that influence career choice selection practices throughout their guidance interactions with people. The text supports its findings through research conducted by Khan and Arain (2018) who investigated Pakistani youth determinants in career decision making. During their choice of career women were more likely than men to let parental professional selection guide their path. Acting according to Khan and Arain (2018) women receive professional career counseling more frequently than men. According to Khan and Shahzad (2018) Pakistani youths used their parents' occupations as a determining factor in their career selection process. The research showed that media influences on career choices show similar patterns between research subjects who are men or women. Personal interests join abilities and values when deciding a career path because they maintain equivalent importance compared to how male biases affect career choices. Career counseling in conjunction with guidance assists people to discover professions that match their capabilities and intellect requirements per Khan & Arain (2018).

Young Pakistani individuals follow a multi-factor decision-making process to choose their career between parental influence and social media exposure and personal preferences. This research shows that Pakistani youth typically choose careers in their parents' fields since parental involvement retains its weight in career decision processes. Through social media Pakistani youth learn about multiple careers since they find different occupation options through representations yet they access employment opportunities by using networking sites.

The career development of Pakistani youth relates to their selection of self-relevant careers while consulting with professional experts. Professional career counseling services attract mostly female clients while woman students choose professions based on their parent's occupations. Career counselors should integrate all aspects which influence Pakistani youth career decisions during their professional advice sessions. Youth require expanded education about selecting careers that align with their competency level and personal interests because these aspects adapt to their core values. Better career results and satisfaction for Pakistani young adults emerge when all career choice elements become understood.

#### **Limitation and future suggestions**

The exclusive sampling in Lahore Pakistan creates challenges for the research because it restricts generalization to different areas in the country whose cultural dynamics affect career choices differently. The study findings might fail to show the implications of career choices on young individuals from rural locations. The research

design used a special survey questionnaire for its needs but the assessment tools were not evaluated against established measurement standards. The potential risks of participant question interpretation inaccuracies affect the reliability of study results through these errors. The research examined individuals between 18 to 29 years old exclusively. Career selection influence analysis should encompass all youth stages from adolescence to older youth groups to obtain complete understanding of developmental differences. Data from the study depended on subjective reports from participants which led to social desirability bias when respondents offered preferences that matched expected public views instead of actual opinions. The research analysis briefly mentioned social media effects on career selection while disregarding details on distinct media forms and career-driven content.

Studies should expand their research by selecting participants from multiple regions of Pakistan including both city dwellers and inhabitants of rural areas to provide authentic insights on youth career selection preferences. Random sampling procedures must be adopted to enhance the outcome results' applicability. Following a youth population throughout time would identify changes in career choices and their factors throughout their educational progression or employment path. Such research would disclose how career influences transform as individuals age through their twenty-s conceptual phase. Research should deeply analyze particular components of social media that affect career choices through systematic identification of the most influential content and platform individuals. Research must identify distinguishable characteristics between social media networks and traditional information sources to make such distinctions. The researchers should implement established questionnaires to evaluate parental impact as well as media exposure and individual choice patterns to strengthen their findings' stability and validity. Enhanced research ability to perform comparative analyses between studies in this field would result from this approach. Research should study how cultural values together with educational background and socioeconomic status work with parental and media and personal choice influences on the pathway to career selection. Investigating these components will help explain the systematic decision-making patterns of young people. Research should examine the effectiveness of career counseling programs that cater to male and female students separately because study data revealed women frequently request such assistance.

### **Conclusion**

The research investigates how parenting affects young Pakistani individuals while showing that media and individual preferences also guide their career direction. Trace data points to parental professions as the primary career influence together with media-stereotypes that hold special importance for younger students toward their career choices. Youth from Pakistan show a strong preference for career counseling

services that originate from professional sources especially among the female population. Women demonstrated a stronger tendency to let their parents select their future occupation compared to men in this study group. The research establishes critical understanding of Pakistani career decision-making patterns by highlighting the significance of professional career counseling to assist youth in their career choice decisions. The study adds valuable knowledge about career decisions made by Pakistani youth which shows that societies must develop more awareness programs to aid youth with their career choices. Deeper knowledge about career selection complexities will become possible through continuing research along with addressing this study's limitations which will deliver benefits to youth populations and general society.

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