

Journal of Economics and Business

Ali, Taskina. (2020), An Integrated Model for Career Preferences of the Graduates in Bangladesh. In: *Journal of Economics and Business*, Vol.3, No.1, 90-95.

ISSN 2615-3726

DOI: 10.31014/aor.1992.03.01.180

The online version of this article can be found at:
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Published by:
The Asian Institute of Research

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An Integrated Model for Career Preferences of the Graduates in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Career selection is one of the most crucial decision made by potential incumbents and graduates in the business world. This decision is generally influenced by the factors like internal (cognitive ability, emotional ability, psychomotor skills) and external environmental (socio-economic condition, academic orientation, motivational factors, urban-rural background, etc.). Little studies have been done on the employment market, job situations, the process and the factors affecting career preferences of business graduates in Bangladesh. The proposed study aims at gaining a better understanding about the career preferences of business graduates in our country. It also intends to identify and analyze the determinants of career choices and find out the relevant major determinants with particular focus on the private and public sectors of Bangladesh. More specifically the study will focus on whether career preferences by the business graduates of Bangladesh are dependent on their family income level, gender, age, educational background, geographical location, individual cognitive ability, emotional intelligence, ethics, values, types of organization and employer's characteristics. It is further intended to focus on the pattern of variation in career preferences by the business graduates vary due to educational institutional orientation. The study is exploratory in nature. The extensive literature review suggests that, the career preferences of graduates are influenced by their family orientation, educational level, emotional attachment, cognitive ability, organization's reputation, age, gender.

Keywords: Career, Career Preferences, Business Graduates, Recruitment, Employer Characteristics

1. Background

There have been good amount of theories and researches on the expectations and preferences of graduates towards their career preferences in different countries. Extensive literatures show that gender differences, age, cognitive ability, family background, educational orientation have direct effect on graduates to select their career. But more needs to be discovered whether Bangladeshi business graduates are influenced by the same factors. Graduates' profile, context, internal and external orientation of graduates, curriculum, teaching methods, style are different in different countries. Thus it is required to focus on the graduates of Bangladesh to reveal their determinants in career preferences. Career choice is such a major decision which shapes the entire professional path of graduates. Moreover, this career selection also defines the future life pattern, work-life balance, social and economic status, job satisfaction, self-actualization of any graduates. This crucial decision is not easy to make and it is not a simple

task rather without proper guidance, clear perception, professional counselling graduates may select the wrong career. In choosing career, graduates should know their self-interests, passion, basic abilities, their personal surroundings and deficiencies also. This research seeks to provide an insight on Bangladeshi business graduates' career preferences and identifying the major determinants which influences graduates' career preferences in Bangladesh. As every year more and more graduates are joining the job market of Bangladesh so this area should be highlighted and thus employer as well as potential job seekers, graduates will also be beneficial.

2. Literature Review

The word "career" is from French and Latin origin. Geciki (2002) simply defined career as; the occupational, commercial or industrial activity that a person may adopt during his educational life or in some other part or till his death. Redman and Wilkinson (2001) termed career as a process of application of one's cognitive ability, contribution to a profession over a long time and better building better business network. Adaptability, emotional intelligence, cognitive ability and other competencies have positive impact on graduates' career preferences and career success also (Amdurer, E., Boyatzis, R.E., Saatcioglu, A., Smith, M.L. and Taylor, S.N., 2014).

With increasing globalization process and the increasing number of regional trading blocs, doors are opening for business graduates to seek employment in different local, international organizations inside the home country as well as different parts of the world. In spite of the fact of global downsizing and prevailing high unemployment rate (4.2%) in Bangladesh, local business graduates are becoming quite choosy about their career offers. As more organizations are trying to find out the most talented incumbents for the vacant and newly created posts in their respective organizations, thus there is always a very competitive situation in the job market. Attracting or recruiting the right graduates for the business organization is more crucial than previous time. Graduates' emotional intelligence, communication skills, adaptation power directly influence them to choose career (Ketter, 2011). Interestingly, business graduates in Bangladesh are highly influenced by their socio-economic condition, educational background, cultural orientation (M. Rahman, 1987). Worldwide business graduates are largely affected by the job attributes like job descriptions, work environment, compensation and security packages offered by the organizations (Moy & Lee, 2002). Ngesi (2003) in his study stated that, graduates from poor socio-economic background chose those career where less trainings are required and duration of training is also short. Financial conditions of the family, social class, affordability and employability in a particular industry further influence the graduates to select their career choices (Ahmed, Sharif & Ahmad, 2017). Several studies also found that career preferences are determined by various motives and the most important motive influencing the career decision are financial success and high income (Carter, 2003), need of autonomy and independence (Van Auken, Stephens, Fry, and Silva, 2006), social recognition and status (Birley and Westhead, 1994). These aspiring young business graduates sometimes also strongly influenced by family member's decisions (Ajzen, 1991). Brown (2002) identified family members or friends' influence greatly impact the career decision-making process and the specific career path graduates opt for. As career selection is not only a challenge but also a great dilemma for the graduates, thus skills, life conditions, academic achievements are playing major role to choose right career (Ferry, 2006).

To serve the rapid expanding and new changing economy of Bangladesh, organizations are desperate to attract and retain skilled, motivated and of course diversified work force in their work premises (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). As business organizations are expanding in rapid rate and thus business graduates' services are required more than earlier, organization should address these graduates' preferences, expectations, and experiences. In addition, downsizing, rightsizing, horizontal structure of the organization, these factors also influence all major stakeholders towards career preferences (Fallows and Steven, 2000).

In some cases it is evident that gender is playing major role while selecting career by the business graduates (Browne 1997). In recent time, once again graduates' gender is a determinant in selecting career path (Konard, Ritchie, Lied & Corrigan 2000). Some of the researchers have exclusively focused on specific attributes, such as pay preferences (Cable & Judges 1994), and specific individual differences, like gender (Tolbert & Moen, 1998). Interestingly it is observed that higher financial benefits attracts men to accept job offer where women are influenced by social security, values, utility (Sax, 1994).

There has been a large amount of theory on how people decide which job offer to accept. One comprehensive and dynamic career theory that combines many aspects of career development is the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SSCT). The SCCT was derived from Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasized the importance of self-efficacy in one's choice of behaviour. According to Bandura (1986), individuals choose to accept any job offer based on their self-judgment about the qualifications required to accomplishing the task. Another theory "A Social Learning Theory of Career Selection" (Krumboltz, Mitchell & Brain, 1976) identified the impact of race, gender, physical appearances, intelligence, manual coordination and nature of job opportunity in choosing career by the business graduates. In many cases it has been observed graduates accept or reject career options based on their personal strengths and weaknesses (E. Hossain & T. Siddique, 2012).

It is also observed that cultural values, individual abilities, dominance of family members have greater impact on career preferences of graduates (Tanuja Agarwala, 2008). But at the same time there are situations also when graduates accept the available job offer without waiting further for the cherished career (Alan M Saks, Blake E. Ashforth; March 1998). According to Donald P. Schwab (1982) in job market potential as well as existing job seekers consider three factors when evaluating job offer and these are objective factors (pay, location, opportunity of advancement), subjective factors (match of person's personality, perception with organization's value, image) and recruiting factors (politeness, status, competency of recruiter).

At present in Bangladesh the fastest growing sectors are the financial, information technology and telecommunication where most business graduates are getting jobs and at the same time graduates also prefer these industries (Khaled Shams Chishty, Munir Uddin and kumar ghosh, 2007). Again, these business graduates consider their major academic orientation, gender, and personality to determine whether to join local organizations or MNCs (Huang & Sverke, 2007). Previous researches on the relationship between higher education and employment clearly demonstrated that the subjects graduates studied in the undergraduate level highly influence their career choices (Purcell, Elias and Davies, & Wilton, 2005). For the past few decades, many researchers have investigated various factors that influence job selection decisions. Several of them focused on preferences for certain categories of students such as accounting students (Bundy & Norris 1991, Rebele, Apostolou, Buckless, Hassel, Paquette & Stout, 1998, Rebele, Stout & Hassell 1991) and information systems students (Robbins 1996). Others have looked for differences between perceptions of students before and after a decision on a job offer (Turban, Eyring & Campion 1993), between students and recruiters (Butler et. al 2000, Kirsch, Leathers & Snead 1993), and between students and working professionals (Carcello, Copeland, Hermanson & Turner 1991).

Number of researchers have looked at various sets of factors important to individuals in evaluating jobs. Some have attempted to categorize these factors in various ways, including job and organization characteristics (Barber & Roehling, 1993; Feldman & Arnold, 1978); employment process categories (Barber & Roehling, 1993); work values (Judge & Bretz, 1992); motivation and hygiene factors (Misra & Karlo, 1972); factors intrinsic and extrinsic to the job (O'Reilly & Caldwell, 1980); existence, relatedness, growth factors (Shamir & Arthur, 1989); recruiter characteristics and evaluative issues (Rynes, 1900; Rynes, Heneman, & Schwab, 1980; Rynes & Miller, 1983). Importance and recognition of job, organizational attractiveness and diversity, characteristics of recruiter's greatly attract business graduates towards the organization and their preferred career (Thomas, 1999). On the basis of above analysis this study developed an integrated model for career preferences of Bangladeshi graduates which are shown in Fig-1.

3.3. A Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature reviews it has become an established fact that career preferences is quite influenced by the social status, living cost, family background, educational background, years of schooling, self-actualization, individual cognitive ability, emotional intelligence, personality, socio-economic background. Based on these factors a conceptual model has been developed to show the relationship among afore said variables and the career preferences. This model describes the relationships among various factors (internal factors like-cognitive ability, values, ethics, socio-economic, motivational, and employer's characteristics). This model also identifies the variables which may influence the various factors and thus giving a new dimension for graduates' career preferences in Bangladesh.

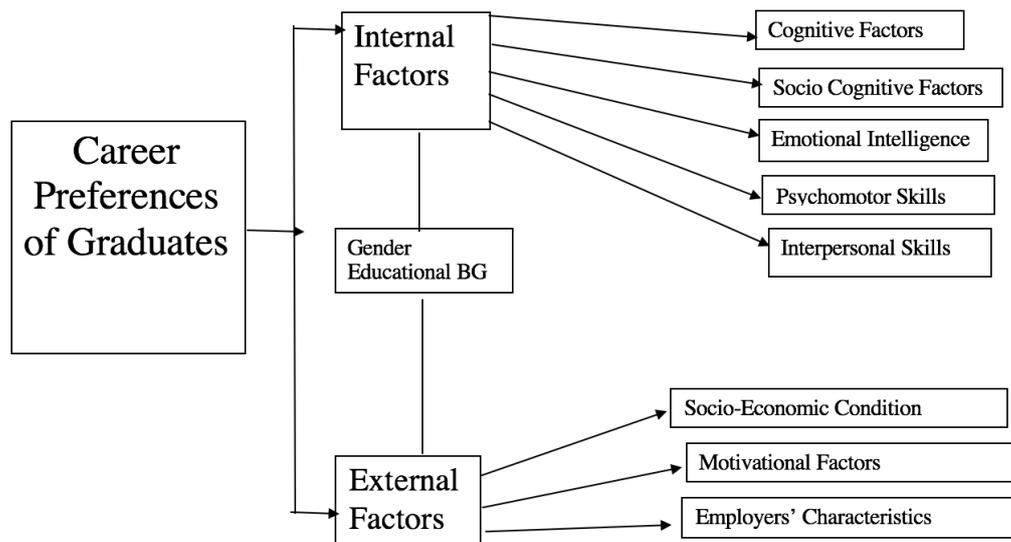


Fig: A Conceptual Framework of Career Preferences of Graduates in Bangladesh

5. Conclusion

Based on the substantial literature review it is visible that, age, gender, economic condition, family background, social status, emotional feelings, attitude of graduates, these variables have strong effect on career preferences of graduates worldwide. The developed conceptual framework also suggested that these variables also substantially influence the graduates of Bangladesh. The recruiters and both local, multinational private and public organizations can consider these variables while recruiting the graduates and thus make an effective recruitment decision.

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