



CAREER DECISION-MAKING AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Dr. Hakalyah Palaparthy

Degree Lecturr

MJPTBCWR Degree College

Abstract

Career decision-making is a crucial thought process where individuals choose their education and career options based on their interests and abilities to get into particular career. The study attempted to find out relationship between career decision making and achievement motivation in undergraduate level students from liberal and professional courses, considering gender and social category. For data collection, The adapted career decision making inventory developed by Keerandeep Singh (2014) and the achievement motivation scale developed by Deo- Mohan (2008) were administered to 60 undergraduate students from liberal courses and 60 undergraduate students from professional course. students in SR&BGNR Government college, Khammam. The collected data were analyzed using z-test and ANOVA. The study found that gender, social category and academic stream do not significantly influence undergraduate students' career decision making or achievement motivation. However, there is a significant difference in the levels of achievement motivation among these students. This highlights the importance and need for implementation of career counseling programs at institutional and communal levels to prevent misconceptions about subject choice and awareness programs should be conducted for parents and students.

Key words: *Career Decision Making, Undergraduate Students, Stream Arts, BCA, Computer Science, Achievement Motivation, Liberal and Professional Course.*

Introduction

Career decision-making is an important process in which people choose their educational and career paths based on their interests and abilities. A career is a lifelong process of learning, living and working experiences that are often seen as a means of earning a living (Germann, 1980). Personal growth and development involve various occupations, job opportunities, leisure activities, avocations and educational endeavors (Herr, 1970). In the words of Shingleton (1977), "a career is a dynamic process that involves planning, coordination of interests, abilities, attitudes, economics, and decision-making to enhance work and life-style satisfaction and reward" as cited in (Marie Klover, 1983). This process is crucial for making the right informed choices and decisions about their future (Savickas & Super, 1994). Career decision making for late adolescents (Super, 1957) and young adults involves a shift from undecided to committed and implemented choices career decision-making which enables sticking to a career and choosing the appropriate field of education. It is a process where individuals' actual education and career options are chosen whether it may be a college or coaching where most of the times there is an involvement of the family also

can be found in decision making.

Literature Review

Studies on Career Decision Making

Career can be defined as the devotion of a person to a specialization or the gradual progress of a person in his/her job work life (Stahl & Björkman, 2006). The first notion of career decision making was made by Frank parsons in 1909 (Patton & McMahan, 1999). Career can be defined primarily as a professional process that a person develops by spending the majority of his/her productive years and typically begins with education choices he/she made (Leung, 2008; Leung, Hou, & Li, 2011). According to Sharf (2002), there are different factors involved in a person's career decision making and they significantly impact the making of career decisions and choices and hence Carrer decision making is a complex and challenging process which may largely influenced by multiple factors importantly social as well as psychological factors such as gender, peer pressure and achievement motivation.

A study carried out by Tagy (2015) among 576 high school students from U.S and Turkey, to determine the difficulties in career decision making and the results clearly showed the significant difference with regard to gender in the career decision making. Similar study was by Sharma (2014) in Indian context has also found the similar results as significant gender differences on career decidedness dimension of career decision-making. In contrast to the results discussed in above studies, a study carried out by Jamba and Chechi (2019) in Bhutan revealed that there were no significant gender differences in career decision making.

It further discussed that 11.33% students make high-level career decisions, while 78% make average decisions and 10.67% make low-level decisions and commerce students were more inclined than arts and science students. Kaur and Kumari (2018) found that student's gender and stream did not influence to a significant extent in making career decisions. The level of achievement motivation remained the same between all students following Arts, Science and Commerce curricula. Baishya and Saharia (2018) found that most of higher secondary students demonstrated low career maturity through inadequate career-making attitudes and abilities. The research indicated significant differences exist between male and female students in their career maturity across career attitude and occupational information and self-appraisal along with goal selection and planning and problem-solving dimensions. The study conducted by Lalnunsiami (2017) Students demonstrated an average career maturity level amounting to 74% according to the research findings although there was no gender-based distinctions within this group. Migunde et al. (2015) discovered that student studying in public sector showed better career maturity together with less career indecision as compared to students studying in private sector. This study also delves in the gender differences in career decision making as females tend to score higher than males on career indecision. Students who receive suitable career guidance with information develop better career maturity. Study conducted by Hoorn (2013) found no significant differences in career maturity of university students based on their age or gender but presence of significant differences based on race. In a study done by Greene (2006) investigates career counseling services are vital for gifted and talented students with specific attention on multiple abilities and early development and behavioral characteristics and educational pressure from others. School counselors need to create career activities that address high cognitive skills and requirements for accomplishing for high achievement.

Studies on Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation is a vital aspect in students' academic lives, serving as the foundation for success and excellence, ultimately promoting a good life (N & Shastri, 2013). Academic achievement motivation plays a vital role for students' success as it involves their desire to achieve academically and their willingness to pursue important tasks for perfect results, leading to a sense of control and enjoyment in life (Kumar, 2017). Academic achievement motivation is very crucial for students' success, encompassing "cognitive, emotional, and behavioral indicators of students' investment and attachment to education" according to (Tucker, Zayco & Herman, 2002) as cited in (Kumar, 2017). Achievement motivation represents an individual's fundamental consistent drive to succeed at desired levels

of excellence when concluding tasks that boosts their academic outcomes (Sarangi, 2015). The study conducted by Mishra (2017) showed that high achievement motivation appeared in 16% of secondary school boys and 15% of girls but low motivation affected 9% boys and 8% girls and hence gender differences did not show any significant relationship with achievement motivation among secondary students. In contrast to the above-mentioned study, research conducted by N and Shastri (2013) revealed that girl students exhibit superior achievement orientation compared to male students. Rana (2022) found that boys in government schools exhibited higher achievement motivation than girls enrolled in government schools but girls in private educational facilities showed better achievement motivation than boys in private schools. So, achievement motivation plays a crucial role in academic and self-improvement of college students and driving them to achieve success, with higher motivation leading to greater career achievement (Xia and Lirong, 2017) as cited in Li et al. (2023).

Significance of the study:

Career development is a crucial task in today's competitive world, making it difficult for students to choose the right profession and lead a proper academic career. After doing a thorough literature review, researcher felt a clear paucity in the studies on Career decision making and achievement motivation of undergraduate students. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct a research work that makes an attempt to investigate decision-making processes for careers in relationship with achievement motivation through analysis of demographic variables such as gender, social groups and academic stream.

Operational Definitions of the Key Terms Used

Career decision making: It refers to the process by which undergraduate students select their future occupation and choose career paths based on personal abilities and interests aligns with their goals and aspirations.

Achievement Motivation: It refers to internal and external factors which drive people toward success, overcome obstacles and achieve excellence in their life pursuits.

Undergraduate Students: Refers to students who are currently enrolled in a bachelor's degree program for the year 2024-25 at a university or college particularly in Liberal and Professional Courses and Stream of Arts, BCA, and Computer Science.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the Career decision making and Achievement motivation of undergraduate students.
2. To find out the Career decision making in relation to their Achievement motivation of Undergraduate Students.
3. To find out the Career decision making and achievement motivation of undergraduate students with respect to Gender.
4. To find out the Career decision making and achievement motivation of undergraduate students with respect to Academic Stream.
5. To find out the Career decision making and achievement motivation of undergraduate students with respect to Social Category.

Hypotheses of the study

1. There is no significant gender difference between male and female undergraduate students in terms of career decision making
2. There is no significant difference among undergraduate students in terms of the course stream they are pursuing (Arts, Computer science and BCA).
3. There is no significant difference among the undergraduate student's career decision making in terms of social category.
4. There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in terms of their Achievement Motivation.
5. There is no significant difference in terms of Achievement motivation among undergraduate students from different streams which are Arts, Science and BCA.
6. There is significant difference in terms of Achievement motivation among undergraduate students from different social backgrounds which are General, OBC, SC &ST.

Methodology

Research Design

This study seeks to study Career decision making and Achievement motivation with respect to gender, social category and academic stream. Hence, keeping in view the nature, objective and hypotheses, the causal comparative research method was employed in the study.

Population and Sample

For the present study, the target population was all undergraduate students. In this study, all the undergraduate students' liberal and professional courses for the session 2024-25 studying in SR&BGNR autonomous degree and PG college, Khammam district was comprised of the population of this study. In this study, 60 students in liberal and 60 students in professional courses (Total N=120) were taken up by using selection by randomization technique.

- In the first phase: the investigator made a list of students enrolled in different liberal and professional courses SR&BGNR autonomous degree and PG college, Khammam district, for the session 2024-25.
- In the second phase: two departments of liberal courses and two departments of professional courses were selected using purposive sampling method.
- In the third phase, 30 students from each department i.e 60 students from liberal and 60 students from professional courses were selected.
- Finally, 120 students of undergraduate liberal and professional courses were included in the sample. The table 1 presents the distribution of the sample.

Tools Used for Data collection

The research investigator adopted the following two standardized tools considering their defined criteria and to cater the needs of the study.

- (a) Career Decision Making inventory by Kirandeep Singh (2014) and
- (b) Achievement motivation test by Deo-Mohan (2009)

Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods by using SPSS (Statistical \leq Package for Social Sciences), version-22. Initially descriptive statistics were computed to know about the data characteristics in the Career decision making inventory and Achievement motivation of undergraduate students. The study further employed z-test and One -way ANOVA were to find out the significance differences in career decision making and

achievement motivation of undergraduate students in relation to demographic variables such as gender and academic stream and social category.

Results

The researcher has used descriptive and inferential statistics for analyzing the data. The results of the study were presented below:

Table 1: Distribution of sample.

Course	Stream	No. of Students	Total
Liberal	Arts	60	60
Professional	BCA	30	60
	ComputerScience	30	
Total			120

Table-1 shows that the total number of people who participated in the study were n=120, this sample is consisted of 60 students from Arts stream, 30 students from BCA and 30 students from Computer Science stream.

Table 2: Comparison of Career Decision-Making Mean Scores of Undergraduate Students on basis of gender.

Group	N	M	SD	z- value	P-value
Male	62	40.74	5.32	-0.589	0.557
Female	58	41.26	4.56		

$p \leq 0.05$

Table 2 illustrates the mean score for career decision making scores of male students was 40.74 while female students scored slightly higher at 41.26 with 5.32 and 4.56 standard deviations respectively. The calculated 'z' value is (0.589) which fails to show significance because the P- value (0. 557) exceeds the established 0.05 level of significance. Hence, Ho1, which states that 'There is no significant gender difference between male and female undergraduate students in terms of career decision making' is accepted.

Table 3: Shows the summary of ANOVA for Career Decision-Making Scores of Undergraduate Students from

Arts, Computer science and BCA Academic Streams.

Sources of Variance	DF	SS	MS	F-ratio	P-value
Between Groups	2	91.15	45.57	1.888	0.156
Within Groups	116	2824.86	24.14		
Total	118	2916.00			

$p \leq 0.05$.

Table no. 3 demonstrates that the career decision making of undergraduate students from Arts, Computer science, and BCA academic streams showed no significant differences because their p-value (0.156) exceeded the 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, null hypothesis H_{02} , which states 'There is no significant difference among undergraduate students in terms of the course stream they are pursuing (Arts, Computer science and BCA) is accepted. The results indicate that undergraduate students across stream show identical patterns in their career decision making choices.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA Table for Career Decision-Making Scores of Undergraduate Students from different Social Categories

$p \leq 0.05$

Sources of Variance	Df	SS	MS	F-ratio	P-value
Between Groups	3	113.65	37.88	1.568	.201
Within Groups	115	2802.34	24.16		
Total	118	2916.01			

The table no. 4 indicates that undergraduate student career decision making belonging to General, OBC, ST, SC social categories show no significant differences based on the p-value of 0.201 which exceeds 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, null hypothesis H_{03} , which states 'There is no significant difference among the undergraduate student's career decision making in terms of social category' is accepted. Statistics confirm that undergraduate students from General, OBC, ST, SC social categories demonstrate no significant difference in their career decision making strategy.

Table 5: Comparison of Achievement Motivation mean scores of Male and Female Undergraduate Students

Groups	N	M	SD	z- value	P-value
Male Achievement Motivation	62	117.64	14.05	-1.826	.070
Female Achievement Motivation	58	112.89	17.36		

$p \leq 0.05$

The data presented in table 5 shows Achievement motivation mean score to 117.64 for male students while female students come in at 112.89 with corresponding standard deviations of 14.05 and 17.36. The calculated 'z' value of (-

1.826) fails to reach significance because the P- value (0.070) exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, Ho4 which states ‘There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in terms of their Achievement Motivation’ is accepted. This shows no significant difference in their mean Achievement motivation of male and female of undergraduate students.

Table 6: Summary of ANOVA for Achievement Motivation Scores of Undergraduate Students from Arts, Computer Science and BCA Academic Streams.

Sources of Variance	Df	SS	MS	F-ratio	P-value
Between Groups	2	1454.57	727.29	2.97	.055
Within Groups	116	28623.39	246.75		
Total	118	30077.96			

$p \leq 0.05$

The table no.6 shows that Achievement motivation among undergraduate students from Arts, Computer science and BCA academic streams is not significant at p-value (0.055) which exceeds the 0.05 levels of significance with degrees of freedom 2/116. Hence, null hypothesis Ho5 which states that ‘There is no significant difference in terms of Achievement motivation among undergraduate students from different streams which are Arts, Science and BCA’ is accepted. The data indicates undergraduate students in Arts together with Computer science and BCA programs have similar levels of Achievement motivation. All participant groups display comparable rates of Achievement motivation thus their frequencies are nearly similar.

Table 7: Shows the summary of ANOVA for Achievement Motivation Scores of Undergraduate Students from Different Social Categories.

Sources of Variance	Df	SS	MS	F-ratio	P-value
Between Groups	3	435.38	145.13	.568	.637
Withingroups	115	29642.58	257.68		
Total	118	30077.96			

$p \leq 0.05$

Table no. 7 indicates that career decision making of undergraduate students from General, OBC, ST, SC social categories show non-significance because the p-value (.637) surpasses the 0.05 level of significance with degrees of freedom 3/115. Hence, null hypothesis Ho6 which states that ‘There is significant difference in terms of Achievement motivation among undergraduate students from different social backgrounds which are General, OBC, SC &ST’ is accepted. The data shows that undergraduate students from General, OBC, ST and SC categories do not differ significantly in terms of their Achievement motivation frequencies.

Discussion

Major Findings

Analysis and interpretation of data enabled the investigator to reach certain findings through the interpretation process. Below are the primary results of this study based on its established objective and hypothesis.

❖ **Findings related to career decision making of undergraduate students in relation to achievement motivation with respect gender, social category and academic stream:**

1. High achievement motivation and low achievement motivation among undergraduate students did not produce significant difference in their mean career decision making capabilities.
2. The study found no significant difference in the mean career decision making of male and female achievement motivation of undergraduate students.
3. Undergraduate students from Arts, Computer science and BCA stream did not show significant different career decision-making. These groups have almost same frequency of career decision making strategies.
4. The study discovered that undergraduate students from General, OBC, ST and SC social categories show equivalent levels of career decision making strategy.

❖ **Findings related to achievement motivation of undergraduate students in relation to gender, social category and academic stream**

1. The study indicates that undergraduate students with different levels of Career decision making achievement skills do not demonstrate different achievement motivational strategy.
2. The study found no statistically significant difference in the Achievement motivation means between undergraduate male and female students Career decision making.
3. The study found no significant differences in Achievement motivation of undergraduate students from Arts, Computer science and BCA stream groups. The groups demonstrate similar frequency of Achievement motivation between each other.
4. Undergraduate students from different social categories including General, OBC, ST and SC showed no significant difference in their Achievement motivation. This indicates that they have same frequency of achievement motivation.

The study revealed that the high achievement motivation and low achievement motivation of undergraduate students did not find significant changes in their mean career decision making capabilities which is supported by the studies of Rana (2022); Awan et al. (2011); Xia and Lirong (2017); and Li et al. (2023). This study also revealed no significant difference in male and female undergraduate students' achievement motivation and their career decisions; similar results also found in study of Mishra (2017) and Sarangi (2015). Undergraduate students demonstrated varying achievement motivation levels depending on their gender status, social category and academic stream. The study revealed that undergraduate students' achievement motivation varied depending on gender, social category, and academic stream. High and low career decision-making undergraduate students showed significant differences in achievement motivation, while male and female undergraduate students showed no significant differences, as supported by study of Mishra (2017) and Sarangi (2015). The frequency of achievement motivation was similar among students taking Arts courses with students enrolled in Computer Science and BCA programs. The motivation strategies similar between students belonging to the General, OBC and ST and SC social categories. The research findings establish that academic streams produce comparable motivating forces among students to continue advancing toward their objectives. The study indicates that similar motivation to pursue their goals is similar across various academic streams. The study also showed no significant difference in career decision making the mean of male and female undergraduate students, regardless of gender, social category, or academic stream which is supported by the study of Kaur and Kumari (2018) and result of the study contradicted by the study of Rautaray and Panda (2021); Jamba and Chechi (2019). The research shows that stream such as Arts, Computer science and BCA students chose their career decision making strategies at a similar frequency which is supported by the study Kaur and Kumari

(2018) and Baishya and Saharia (2018).

Recommendations

The study may develop an insight to understand the reasons behind career decision making in male and female undergraduate students and provide measures to improve it. It emphasizes the importance of education in determining employment success. The institution needs to encourage and motivate the students in completing their education. In order to avoid the misconceptions of students there is need to conduct career counseling programmes at institutional and communal level. The specific awareness campaign needs to be conducted by the institution, government and community to educate the unaware parents and students to raise their awareness for effective career decision making and selecting the subject. There is need to create and maintain the supportive learning environment at institutional level and community level to foster creativity, motivation and effective career decision making. The curriculum needs to be design as the needs of the students so that they can choose one area of their interest and needs that foster their employability. The study will help in developing effective pedagogical models that foster job-oriented skills among students and designing effective vocational oriented curriculum. The recommendations are presented below figuratively:



Conclusion

The study revealed that career decision making among undergraduate students achievement motivation between male and female students and those from Arts, Computer science, BCA streams and General, OBC, ST, and SC social categories not differing statistically which indicates similar frequency of career choices among undergraduate students regardless of their academic and social background. The study revealed that no gender difference in career decision making of undergraduate students. The study found no statistically significant difference in achievement motivation of undergraduate students, regardless of their career decision-making. The study also revealed that the undergraduate students from Arts, Computer science, and BCA streams along with those from General, OBC, ST, and SC social categories did not show any differences in achievement motivation levels.

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