

Navigating Higher Education Choices: The Impact of Parents' Guidance and Influence with Special Reference to Delhi University Students

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Abstract

The present study is based on the research gap that lies in the dearth of studies specifically investigating the impact of parent's guidance and influence on students' course selection in colleges at Under Graduation (UG), Delhi University. While prior research from various countries has explored common factors such as affordability, college reputation, and familial or peer influence, no study has focused exclusively on parental influence on the choice of course of Delhi University students. This gap is crucial as Delhi University reputation and environment is very different in many aspects, however, similar studies have been conducted in Malaysia. Delhi is capital of India or it can be said as "Heart of India", city of development, population size, and multiculture nature suggest that despite sharing common factors, the reasons and causes may differ. Therefore, this exploratory study aims to discern and analyze the unique factors affecting students' course choices in Delhi University students.

Key Words: Parental Involvement, Course Selection, Children's Education, Under Graduation (UG) and Delhi University

1. Introduction

Parent's role in child upbringing is very important, it cannot be ignored. Every parent wants to see their child to have good career and success in their life. Parent is considered as first teacher, counsellor and guide for their child. The contribution of parents in selecting future career for their child can vary widely depending on cultural, familial, and individual factors (Pablo- Lerchundi, 2015). While parents often play a significant role in guiding and supportive their children's career choices (Devika, 2019), it's important to maintain balance between providing guidance and letting the child to take their decisions own. Even child also looks forward for emotional support & encouragement for their career aspirations. As supportive environment can boost a child's confidence and motivation to pursue their chosen path. Due to the advent of the internet and globalization, students have a wide array of educational courses which can help them to set up their career. In this complex landscape, parents often play a role in assisting their children by offering advice on the value of various fields and potential international opportunities. Parents can play an important role in providing information about different career options, educational courses and the job market. They can help their children in exploring different areas and understand the potential opportunities and challenges associated with them. Parents can encourage their children to explore and reflect on themselves by identifying their interests, strengths, values and long-term goals. This self- confidence is essential for making them informed about their course choice and career decisions. While making the children to take decision regarding course choice, parents should help them by setting realistic expectations through discussion of the level of commitment, choice of course to study to pursue their certain careers. Moreover, as education becomes increasingly specialized and costly, parents may take a more active role in decisions concerning the affordability and practicality of certain courses and institutions. They may also aid their children in making informed financial choices regarding student loans and scholarships.



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An Overview of Parental Influence

Throughout history, the influence of parents in shaping their children's educational and professional careers has undergone significant changes, varying across cultures and times. In traditional societies, parental involvement in choosing children's educational and career choices was predominant. Family traditions, caste systems and social expectations often determined one's professional career. Children were generally expected to follow in their parents' professional footsteps, whether that involved pursuing a family profession or any other profession. With the beginning of the industrial revolution and modernization there was a profound shift in society from agriculture. This led to greater occupational specialization and led parents to play vigorous role in shaping their children's education & prepare them for specific roles in emerging industrial and service sectors. The history of parents' involvement in their children's course selection reflects the development of social norms, economic structures and educational opportunities. But it's important for parents and students to maintain open and respectful communication throughout the decision-making process to ensure that the final choice is a well-informed and mutually agreed-upon decision. Parental involvement significantly influences career achievement & Regular attention and advice from parents facilitate achievement (Devika, 2019).

2. Review of Literature

Now a days choosing career has become a very difficult task due to this sometimes students are not able to express their choice in choosing career. The main reason behind this is that the information is available on internet in large number but students are not able to choose which would be suitable for them (Najmuddin, 2006). Students' choice of courses and university selection is influenced by various factors. These factors include future career prospects, passion for a particular field, parental influence, peer influence (Liu, et al., 2015), opportunity, personality, and the quality and cost of education (Palmer, 2011; Hussin, 2019; Gwelo, 2019). Academic achievement, assessments of talent and preparation, as well as wide criteria, are also considered in university selection (Mustafa, 2018). Demographic characteristics such as gender, nationality, parental education (Onkar, 2018; Lampard, 2007), and parental occupation can also play a role in students' choice of higher educational institutions (Delavande, 2019).

Parents play an important role in the selection of courses for their children in higher studies (Rini, 2014; Dalimunthe, 2014). They have the ability to influence their children's career choices based on their own age, education level (Onkar, 2018), and intentions (King, 2006). Effective communication between parents and children is decisive in the decision-making process, as it allows for a better understanding of each other's desires and expectations (Hussin, 2019). Parents provide guidance, considerations, and advice to their children, while friends and peers also play a role in sharing alternative choices (Cooper, 1991). Factors such as future career prospects, passion, parental influence, and peer influence (Liu, et al., 2015) all contribute to the decision-making process. By understanding these determinants, higher educational institutions can develop strategies to increase student admissions and improve academic quality and governance. The parent's perspective and engrossment in the special education process is crucial for supporting their children with special needs (Sistek-Chandler, 2017). Parents play a crucial role (Liu, et al., 2015) in the selection of courses for their child's higher studies (Mesiridze, 2009). Parental influence has been found to have a positive impact on students' choice of university course and regular support from parents (Yean, 2019) have proved a long- lasting effect on student's interest in careers (Gao, 2023; Liu, et al., 2015; Malik, 2016; Gao, 2017). Parental involvement, specifically social capital, can moderate the effects of cultural and economic capital on university access and choice (Yean, 2019). Male student's parents have a high school education (Cheng, 2019) or lower are more likely to choose a major in mathematics or science compared to male students whose parents have some college education or higher (Smoke, 2013; Kline & Juvonen, 2023). Students whose parents have some college education or higher are more likely to continue their education whose parents have a high school education or lower (Kaur, 2014). Parents from disadvantaged communities value education as a means of securing a good job for their

children and want them to progress further in the educational system (Scanlon, 2019). The overall effect of parent's employment sector on children's educational attainment is not obvious, as it can both benefit from higher levels of family income and be negatively impacted by reduced parental time spent with them (Schildberg-HöriSch, 2016; Liu, et al., 2015).

The income of parents plays very important role in selection of courses chosen by their income of parents has a significant impact on the selection of courses chosen by their children at the higher education level (Onkar, 2018). If parents having higher income is related with a higher likelihood of attending more selective institutions (Alexandersen, 2021) and predicts child attendance at Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC; Dur, 2004) with higher structural quality (Zarifa, 2012). Furthermore, parental actions and educational encouragement can influence a child's learning habits and academic performance (Hill, 2016). These findings highlight the influence of parental income on educational opportunities and outcomes for children, emphasizing the need for efforts to ensure equal access to high-quality education for all students, regardless of socioeconomic background.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Data Collection:

The sample of this research comprised of undergraduate students who are currently pursuing in academic year 2023, summer semester, i.e., from July to December within Delhi University Colleges. The University of Delhi (DU) has 71,000 undergraduate (UG) seats across its 68 affiliated colleges. As per reports, on average basis every year 93% seats are filled up. Undergraduate students studying during the academic period July to December, 2023, in various colleges of Delhi University were considered as the population for the present study. Purposive sampling was used as a technique of sampling.

3.2 Research Design

A Structured questionnaire was designed and administered to undergraduate students of different Delhi University colleges for the collection of Primary data. The questionnaire was designed to seek the data on the parental influence over students on the choice of the course at higher education level. A pilot study was conducted before administering the questionnaire to 20 randomly selected students. The pilot test led to the simplification of some questionnaire phrases and the further clarification of some questionnaire items. Respondents provided their opinion regarding Parental Involvement (PI) and Course factors (CF) on a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents also indicated whether their parents are working or non-working. Responses to this variable yielded the independent variable. The Questionnaire was administered to around 3000 students out of which only 548 students responded to the questionnaire sent through mails as well as WhatsApp group, out of 548 responses only 532 were found complete and valid.

3.3 Data Analysis

Analysis of the data collected was interpreted by applying statistical software SPSS version 21. The questionnaire was assessed for its reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and normality using Kolmogorov Smirnov test. The Cronbach Alpha's result as shown by table 3.1 that all constructs have Alpha values more than 0.60 which is considered good in social science researches and indicates that the construct are highly reliable.

Constructs	No. of Items in Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha value
Course Factor	11	0.933
Parental Involvement	9	0.818

Table 1.
Reliability Factor

Table 2.
Descriptive Statistics of
Statements

Labels	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
PI1	parent’s encouragement attitude	532	3.89	1.107	Slightly high
PI2	parents let me choose a carrier myself	532	3.96	1.084	Slightly high
PI3	parents encouraged me to do a job as per best of my abilities	532	4	1.038	Slightly high
PI4	choosing institution as per location that causes my parents to worry about me.	532	2.77	1.217	Moderate
PI5	consider the course in Institution as per location because my parents don't want me to stay far away from them.	532	2.66	1.195	Moderate
PI6	consider the course in Institution location when selecting a course because my parents don't want me to stay far away from them.	532	3.26	1.269	Moderate
PI7	parents encouraged me to pursue a stable carrier	532	3.85	1.041	Slightly high
PI8	parents encouraged me to pursue a stable carrier	532	3.71	1.065	Slightly high
PI9	think my parents’ educational qualifications will influence mine	532	2.96	1.253	Moderate
CF1	I prefer a course that can show my spatial talent.	532	3.71	1.001	Slightly high
CF2	I prefer a course that relate to creative work	532	3.7	0.995	Slightly high
CF3	I like to choose a course that needs less supervision from others	532	3.18	0.992	Moderate
CF4	I choose a course that has opportunity to further study	532	3.86	1.035	Slightly high
CF5	I prefer goals that can improve my competence	532	3.99	1.007	Slightly high
CF6	I will choose course that can help in earning good income	532	4.08	1.101	Slightly high
CF7	I choose a course that has good prospects for advancement.	532	3.99	1.03	Slightly high
CF8	I will choose a course that can secure my future	532	4.1	1.091	Slightly high
CF9	I prefer a course that can satisfy myself.	532	4.07	1.049	Slightly high
CF10	I choose a course because of some really positive advice.	532	3.48	1.053	Slightly high
CF11	I choose course, because of influence from my ideal	532	3.18	1.137	Moderate
Valid N (listwise)		532			

The analysis of the data has been done according to the objective of the study based on research problem and their stated hypothesis. The interpretations and conclusions were derived based on the results of the statistical tests. Researcher made use of statistical tools such as Descriptive analysis, correlation, regression and chi-square test as per hypotheses have been framed.

4. Findings of the Study

4.1 Demographic Profile

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of sample for the study. It can be seen clearly that number of female students are more than male students and most of the students falls in the age group of 19-20-year-old group trailed by 18-19- and 20-21-year-old group.

Age Group	Frequency	%	Gender	Frequency	%
17-18	74	13.9%	Male	157	29.5%
18-19	138	25.9%			
19-20	191	35.9%			
20-21	129	24.2%	Female	375	70.5%
Total	532	100%			

Table 3.
 Age & Gender Distribution of Sample

Source: Primary Data

As can be seen from the figure 4.1, the percentage that students decided to take admission on their parents' suggestions at Under Graduation (UG) level is almost same as decision taken by them independently. However, for career decision making, parental involvement is very much on higher side i.e., 84%.

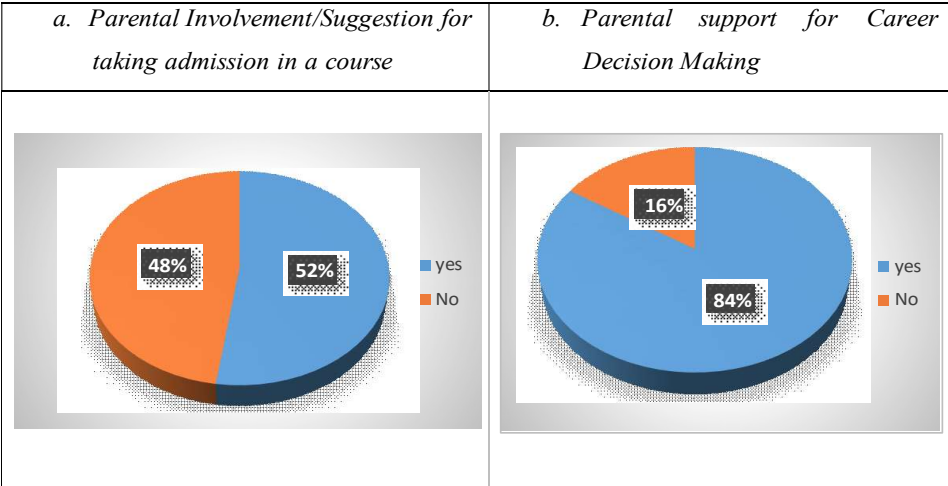


Figure 1.
 Parental Involvement in Student's Decision Making

4.2 Hypotheses testing

H01: There is no significant impact of parental involvement and the choice of course chosen by their child at UG level

In order to test the significant impact of parental involvement on choice of course chosen by their child at UG level, the correlation and Regression analysis was conducted. The results reported that there is high correlation between the parental involvement and choice of course is 0.713. The results are further supported by the multiple regression analysis. The result of the regression as shown in table 5.2 shows that 50.8% ($r^2 = 0.508$, $F = 546.726$, $p \leq 0.05$) of the variance of career choice. This means that parental involvement has significant influence on career choice ($\beta = .713$, $p < 0.05$).

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change
1	.713 ^a	.508	.507	.56838	.508	546.726	1	530	
a. Predictors: (Constant), mean_PI									

Table 3.
 Multiple Regression Analysis

ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	176.621	1	176.621	546.726	.000 ^b
	Residual	171.217	530	.323		
	Total	347.838	531			

a. Dependent Variable: mean_CF
b. Predictors: (Constant), mean_PI
Source: SPSS 26 version Output, Primary Data

H02: Parent's education and the choice of course chose by their child at UG level are independent of each other.
In order to examine the relationship between parents' education and choice of course by their child at UG level, the Correlation and Chi-Square test was performed. The results reported the Correlation value is 0.030, which shows positive correlation but very low. The Chi-square value, p-value is 0.978, which means we accept the null hypothesis.

H03: There is no significant relationship between parent's occupation sector and the choice of course chose by their child at UG level.
In order to examine the relationship between parents' occupation and choice of course by their child at UG level, the Correlation test was performed. The data analysis reported that there is high correlation between parents' occupation sector and choice of course. This leads to rejection of null hypothesis.

H04: There is no significant impact of parent's income on the selection of course to be chosen by their child at UG level.
In order to examine the relationship between parents' income and choice of course by their child at UG level, the Correlation test and Chi-Square test was performed. The data analysis reported that there is high and positive correlation between parents' income and choice of course (Pearson Correlation value 0.693) and Chi-Square p-value 0.301>0.05. This leads to rejection of null hypothesis.

5. Conclusions

The aim of the study was to explore the role of parents in choice of course of selection by their child. As parents have a vital role in their child's career development by respecting individuality, discussing finances, using networks, fostering open communication, aiding educational decisions, and adapting to changing circumstances. Balancing guidance and autonomy are crucial for successful career choices. The data analysis concluded that still parents are involved into their child's course of study at UG level to a great extent, Delhi University.
The study is limited to only UG students belongs to Delhi University and data was collected only from those students who were doing graduation during academic period 2023 mid-summer semester. In this way, the results of the present study cannot be generalized on all students as in private university students might produce different results.

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