

# Career Interest among Undergraduates: Implications for Career Choices

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## Abstract

Students who are at danger of dropping out of school were surveyed to learn about their future career aspirations. Eleven thousand four hundred (11,400) students took part in the research. Approximately 49% are male students and 51% are female. The results reveal that some students' career expectations were unrealistic. A lot of the jobs they're interested in, though, need further education or certification. Due to their general lack of intellectual prowess, they may struggle to enter certain fields. They often received low Cs and Ds in the STEM disciplines. About 75% of respondents are enrolled in elective vocational topics, while 25% are enrolled in MPV subjects, according to the research. When opposed to MPV courses, the optional vocational options are more intellectual in focus. For human capital development objectives, it is preferable to provide students at risk of academic failure with training in skill development immediately upon completion of the PMR assessment. Therefore, the MPV topics should be available in all secondary schools throughout the nation to meet the requirements of at-risk kids. Human capital cannot be wasted if we take this step. The role of school counselors in helping students realize their fullest professional potential has to be expanded as well. Skilled employees are essential for the future growth of the American economy.

**Keywords:** *Occupational, Choices, Skilled, Aspiration.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Choosing a profession is an ongoing process rather than a one-time event associated with graduation. Planning a career is the process of deciding on a profession throughout one's whole working life. The term "vocational development" (or "vocation") is often used to describe the process of reaching professional maturity, which necessitates the matching of one's skills and interests with those of potential employers. A person's vocational maturity affects their decision-making across several aspects of establishing oneself in the workforce, including their need to work, job selection, planning activities, decision-making behavior, and work capacity. This suggests that career planning is an ongoing process for students, one that will continue until they reach their desired destination as outlined in their goals. As a result, pupils will have a more difficult time than necessary making a well-informed job choice. Wilkins noted that numerous elements, including familial issues, environmental factors, and so on, may impact job choice, while Santrock argues that high school students commonly regard career exploration and decision making as accompanied by hesitation, ambiguity, and stress. According to Kazi's study, if someone has a strong interest in and an in-depth understanding of their desired profession, they are more motivated to work hard toward their goal. Plus, they'll be motivated to learn more about the topics that pique their interest thanks to their passions.

The teen years are crucial to future professional success. Numerous studies have been conducted on the professional goals of teenagers from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and many of the studies have come to similar conclusions regarding the elements that influence these young people's career decisions. Intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors appear to be particularly significant in shaping adolescents' career choices. One of the innate elements that seems to favorably influence guys' employment choices is their gender when it comes to fields like science and technology. Many studies have indicated that females are not as interested as boys in careers that include science and technology. Career development is influenced by many factors, including students' expectations and psychological satisfaction from school subjects, schools' and teachers' subject-

teaching abilities, students' families' socioeconomic status, and students' families' attitudes and support for their children's education. There is evidence that suggests that exposure to affluent role models influences a person's decision to pursue a career in affluent fields. Parental and young people's values, hopes, and ambitions have an effect on young people's job choices that is comparable to that of socioeconomic status (Otto, 2000). What's going on in Turkey right now? Ozdemir and Hacfazloglu (2008) discovered that parents and environment had a considerable impact on students' professional preferences in Turkey, despite the fact that there is little study on the variables affecting Turkish students' career choices. College expectations were also shown to vary widely among demographics of socioeconomic background. According to Aycan and Fikret-Pasa (2003), the job choices of Turkish college freshmen were influenced most by intrinsic variables and the least by interpersonal ones. Turkish students' school of choice is an essential but sometimes overlooked consideration while making career decisions. There are many distinct varieties of secondary institutions, each with its own focus and curriculum. When a student enrolls in a specific high school, they get an education tailored to the needs and goals of that institution. Therefore, it follows that students' vocation choices must be heavily impacted by what they learn in school.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Denise Jackson (2022)** In this research, students (N = 91) are analyzed to determine the effect of work-integrated learning (WIL) on their current occupational orientation. There is substantial evidence linking an individual's career path status to his or her personal and professional well-being, level of career satisfaction, level of professional achievement, and broader organizational performance. Undergraduates' happiness with their career paths is measured quantitatively, and the impact of WIL on those paths is investigated via structured reflections. Research shows that students who participate in WIL as a requirement for their degree are more likely to be satisfied with their professional path. The placement experience affected the student's career choice status in four ways: by providing professional networking and additional career choice opportunities; by providing information and insight into the student's intended career; by assisting the student in making a decision about which career to pursue; and by identifying strategies to pursue the student's targeted profession. To better understand WIL's role in career management and how teachers and other professionals may help students on work placement make well-informed career decisions, this research was conducted.

**Oluwakemi B Ajayi (2022)** Students at South African township secondary schools in the 12th grade were the focus of a research that looked at how their professional preferences influenced the paths they chose to take after high school. The researchers decided to use a survey with a correlation structure. A total of 204 high school seniors from six different township schools were included in the study's sample. Learners' responses were measured using the Career Interest Inventory and the Career Decision Making Scale. Pearson correlation, ANOVA, and regression analysis are examples of inferential statistics that were employed to examine the data. According to the findings, there was a significant link between entrepreneurial motivation and professional choice making ( $r=0.535$ ,  $n=204$ ).

**Md. Roknuzzaman Siddiky (2021)** The purpose of the research was to discover how college students go about getting themselves ready for the workforce and to learn more about the elements that influence their career choices. In addition, the research aimed to put out a hypothesis that may account for the students' profession preferences from a social ecological viewpoint. This study's primary data came from 120 students at Bangladesh's Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU), who were picked using a snow-ball sampling technique from amongst fourteen different departments. Several factors were found to have a significant relationship with students' career decisions, including family preferences, teachers' advice, job prestige, job security, remunerations, promotion opportunities, pension benefits, opportunities for professional development, students' individual interests, their chosen majors, their levels of education, and career development trainings. Students' profession choices were not significantly influenced by gender or socioeconomic status. A job choice hypothesis was put up based on the findings of the research, which suggested that students' career choices and preferences are influenced by a number of different social, cultural, and economic factors beyond their own whims and preferences. In order to get into the careers, they want, the vast majority of respondents rely on their own study efforts, the survey found. The majority of respondents do not have access to career development trainings, despite the fact that these trainings play a crucial role in preparing students for the workforce. According to the findings, NSTU students would benefit from enrolling in career education programs as a means of improving their employability. The report concluded by recommending that NSTU establish a career advice and counseling unit to connect their students to the present work market.

**Bennett, D., et al. (2021).** The purpose of this research was to better understand the motivations behind STEM(M) major selection at the collegiate level and to compare students' levels of academic and professional self-assurance within this demographic. Twelve thousand five hundred and seventy-six college students from Australian institutions participated in the research. The results indicate that the interests and motivations of the students in STEM(M) fields are the primary drivers of their career choices. Students majoring in medicine and health were more likely to feel certain about their job choices than their STEM or non-STEM(M) counterparts. It's interesting that they weren't as knowledgeable about their options or as ready to make a change if they needed to in their professions. Professional decision making, career identification, and career commitment were all areas where female students felt more confident than their male counterparts. One implication is the necessity for career narratives outside of the STEM fields, as well as career development activities that take into account inequalities in discipline and gender.

**Atitsogbe, K. A., et al. (2018).** This meta-analysis looked at how four distinct categories of self-evaluation generalized self-efficacy, process-related self-efficacy, content-related self-efficacy, and self-esteem correlate with two distinct types of professional choice making difficulties: indecision and indecisiveness. Statistical tests were performed on data from 86 studies (N = 54,160): A greater inverse relationship was found between process-related self-efficacy and career hesitation than between generalized self-efficacy, content-related self-efficacy, or self-esteem. However, low self-esteem was more strongly linked to hesitancy than career uncertainty. The second phase of this meta-analysis examined the differences between process-related self-efficacy and self-esteem in relation to the three main clusters of challenges associated with making career decisions. In a meta-analysis including 19 studies (N = 7,953), researchers found a significant negative relationship between process-related self-efficacy and both a lack of knowledge and inconsistent data. As for self-esteem, it was only tangentially connected to any of the three main clusters of problems involved in determining a profession choice. This study underlined the significance of self-evaluations in the professional decision-making process by demonstrating that different kinds of self-evaluations were more strongly connected with different types and causes of problems in career decision-making.

### 3. RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

A survey study design was used for this investigation. Eleven thousand three hundred ninety-five pupils at risk in Malaysian secondary schools constituted the study's sample. In a multi-step random selection process, they were chosen to participate in the research.

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

#### Occupational Choices by Students

The most common career option among kids at risk was that of a teacher (21.35%). Other common responses were military work (20.63%), business (18.06%), and law enforcement (19.92%). Table 1 displays the subjects' alternative career paths. It's possible that people's bias against certain careers stems from a lack of information about the skills and experience necessary to succeed in such fields.

How did They Fare in School? In this investigation, we focused on four different areas of study to gauge students' overall academic performance. Math, science, Malay, and English were among them. Math, science, Malay, and English were all areas where they underachieved. Table 2 shows that almost 75% of these students scored in the passing range on their math's assessments. The percentage of students who scored a D or an E in science is well above 63. The English proficiency of about 73.0 percent of respondents was below average. The only one of the four chosen topics in which they did well was Malay language. Nearly eighty percent of students earned a passing mark or above in this course.

**Table 1: Types of Occupation of Students' Choices**

Occupations	Frequencies	Percentage
Accountant	110	2.06
Lawyer	307	5.76
Engineer	349	6.55
Doctor	450	8.44
Architect	195	3.68
Scientist	47	.009
Police	902	16.92
Business	964	18.09
Pilot	93	1.74
Teachers	1138	21.35
Lecturers	167	3.13
Military	1100	20.63
Firemen	100	1.88
Chef	200	3.75
Air steward/stewardess	118	2.21
Mechanics	256	4.80
Manager	110	2.06
Nurses	238	4.47
Total	5330	100

**Table 2: Students' Academic Abilities in Selected Subjects**

Grades	Mathematics		Science		Malay Language		English	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
A	536	4.9	647	4.2	1276	11.6	423	3.8
B	848	7.7	1531	9.9	4116	37.3	944	8.6
C	2617	23.8	5041	32.7	3522	31.9	1682	15.3
D	5554	50.5	7372	47.8	1745	15.8	3156	28.6
E	1450	13.2	834	5.4	380	3.4	4814	43.7
Total	11005		15425		11039		11019	

### Vocational Related Training Received by Students

With this inquiry, we want to learn more about students' preferences in terms of vocational education. The value of pupils' exposure to vocational education was emphasized since it may provide them with a future source of financial stability. According to the results, barely 25% of the sample is taking MPV courses. Forms 4 and 5 of academic secondary schools often provide MPV topics, which are vocationally focused electives. The end goal is to have more qualified people available for related jobs, to assist people establish their own businesses, or to send them on to more advanced education in their fields. Table 5 shows that the remaining 75% of respondents are taking various occupational electives.

**Table 3: The Programs Students are in Now?**

	Frequency	Percent
Form 4 Electives	8595	75.4
MPV	2800	24.6
Total	11395	100.0

**Table 4: Types of MPV Courses Students Enrolled in**

Courses	F	%
Production of multimedia	124	4.5
Agriculture (food crops)	179	6.6
Agriculture (landscape and nursery)	556	20.4
Clothing designs and sewing	344	12.6
Domestic electrical equipment services	216	7.9
Furniture making	65	2.4
Computer graphic	186	6.8
Food preparation and catering	549	20.1
Signboard design	374	13.7
Domestic construction	68	2.5
Total	2727	100.0

**Table 5: Elective Subject Students Enrolled in**

Subjects	Frequency*	Percentages*
Agriculture science	518	6.00
Home science	429	5.00
Engineering technology	182	2.10
Innovation	244	2.8
Accounting	1282	14.9
Art education	4564	53.1
Engineering drawing	306	3.60
Commerce	4117	47.9
Basic economics	2170	25.2
Others	2357	27.4

## 5. CONCLUSION

All of this fits well with the family's reported income. Students from low-income backgrounds gave more weight to environmental responsibility. The results of this research demonstrated that students were not making sensible decisions about their futures. They need our assistance. Helping children see that there are a variety of careers out there that could be a good fit for their skills and interests is a shared responsibility of school counselors, classroom instructors, subject-matter teachers, and the whole school. These variables helped to clarify why students' job paths varied so widely. However, additional extrinsic and intrinsic variables were not investigated in this research. Studies in the future should look at the remaining mystery variables. The correlation research may be tailored to examine links between variables like students' interest levels and final major or career choices.

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