



Integrating Sustainability in Higher Education: Career Choices among Management Students Based on Gender, Family, and Educational Background

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Abstract – Integrating sustainability in academia is vital for meeting global challenges & shaping socially responsible future leaders. This study examines career preferences and the factors influencing them among 500 management students aged 20–30 years in Bengaluru's Electronic City region. It identifies distinct trends shaped by gender, family structure, and educational background. Using structured questionnaires and interviews, the research highlights variations in aspirations, activity preferences, and career development approaches. The findings offer valuable insights for educators, recruiters, and policymakers in crafting strategies to meet the diverse needs of aspiring professionals.

Keywords – Career preferences, management students, gender differences, family structure, educational background, risk perception, mobility, Bengaluru Electronic City.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable curriculum integration, interdisciplinary approaches, research, innovation, and community engagement are important for higher education. Career decision-making is a multifaceted process influenced by individual aspirations and external factors such as family, education, and societal expectations. For management students, these choices are further shaped by the dynamics of the global job market, the evolving nature of work, and personal preferences. In a culturally diverse setting like Bengaluru, these factors interplay uniquely, creating a rich tapestry of career pathways.

This study aims to understand the nuanced career preferences of management students, examining how gender, family background, and educational discipline influence their decisions. By identifying these patterns, the research seeks to inform educators, career counselors, and recruiters about the diverse needs and aspirations of future professionals.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study involved a purposive sampling of 500 management students aged 20–30 years, drawn from institutions in Bengaluru's Electronic City region. Data collection methods included structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires addressed topics such as career aspirations, preferred roles, activity preferences, and the influence of familial and educational factors.

The semi-structured interviews allowed deeper exploration of individual perspectives, providing qualitative insights to complement the quantitative data. The study ensured ethical research practices, including informed consent and confidentiality for all participants.

The data was analyzed using thematic and statistical methods to identify significant patterns and correlations.

Findings and Discussion

Comparison Based on Gender

Sr. No.	Factor	Male Students	Female Students
a.	Job Selection Preferences	Prioritize alignment with long-term goals and aspirations.	More likely to accept any well-paying job for financial stability.
b.	Learning Approaches	Prefer group-based learning activities, emphasizing collaboration.	Favor individual-oriented learning, focusing on in-depth research.
c.	Career Exploration	Practical application-oriented approach.	More inclined towards subject mastery and exploration.

Comparison Based on Family Background

Sr. No.	Factor	Joint Family	Nuclear Family
a.	Career Aspirations	Focus on financial stability, salary-oriented roles.	Target “dream companies” and personal ambition.
b.	Risk-Taking Behavior	Emphasize employability skills and interview readiness.	Prioritize personal learning and classroom activities.
c.	Sibling Influence	Less emphasis on in-depth academic engagement due to family-based collaboration.	Greater reliance on peer interactions for knowledge exploration.



Comparison Based on Educational Discipline

Sr. No.	Factor	Humanities Students	Commerce & Science Students
a.	Risk Perception	Strong in qualitative and strategic risk assessment.	Excel in quantifiable, data-driven risk analysis.
b.	Career Decision-Making	Emphasize critical thinking and handling abstract challenges.	Focus on analytical precision and numerical problem-solving.
c.	Application of Knowledge	Adaptable to ambiguous, complex problems.	Prefer structured, formula-based solutions.

Comparison Based on Mobility Experiences

Sr. No.	Factor	Frequently Relocated Students	Stable Location Students
a.	Financial Priorities	Strong focus on financial stability post-graduation.	Prioritize knowledge acquisition before seeking high salaries.
b.	Career Stability	More adaptable to changing work environments.	Prefer stability in job roles and industries.
c.	Gender Influence	Female students prioritize subject clarity and role stability.	Male students emphasize application-oriented learning.

This comparative model highlights key variations in career preferences based on gender, family background, educational discipline, and mobility experiences. Understanding these differences can aid educators, recruiters, and policymakers in designing inclusive career development strategies tailored to diverse student needs.

Gender-Based Career Preferences

Job Priorities: Female respondents exhibited a higher willingness to accept any well-paying job compared to their male counterparts, who prioritized roles aligned with their long-term goals and aspirations. This difference highlights gendered perspectives on financial stability and career alignment.

Learning Preferences: Women favored individual-oriented learning activities, such as case studies and in-depth research projects, reflecting a curiosity-driven and detail-oriented approach. Men, on the other hand, preferred group-based activities, emphasizing collaboration and team dynamics.

Exploration vs. Application: Female participants showed greater enthusiasm for exploring subjects in depth, suggesting an intrinsic motivation to master specific areas. Conversely, males focused more on the practical application of knowledge to achieve immediate career objectives.

Implications: These findings suggest that tailored strategies are essential to support equitable career development. Institutions can offer a mix of individual and group-based learning activities to cater to diverse preferences.

Family Structure and Career Choices

Joint vs. Nuclear Families: Participants from joint families prioritized soft skills, career preparation, and interview readiness, likely reflecting a collective family emphasis on employability. In contrast, those from nuclear families focused on classroom activities and personal learning experiences, indicating a more individualistic approach.

Salary vs. Aspirational Roles: Students from joint families often aimed for salary-focused roles to achieve financial stability, whereas those from nuclear families targeted "dream companies," emphasizing personal ambition and fulfillment.

Sibling Dynamics: Students without siblings displayed a stronger preference for group work and deeper subject exploration. This may be due to their reliance on peer interactions for collaboration and learning. Conversely, students with siblings showed less inclination toward in-depth academic engagement, possibly because of pre-existing family-based collaborative dynamics.

Significance: These findings underline the importance of considering familial contexts when designing educational and career guidance programs. Institutions can offer personalized mentorship to address the unique needs of students from varying family backgrounds.

Educational Background and Risk Perception

Strategic vs. Quantifiable Risks: Humanities students demonstrated superior understanding of qualitative, strategic risks, owing to their training in critical thinking and analysis of abstract concepts. In contrast, commerce and science students excelled in quantifiable risk analysis, leveraging their skills in numerical and data-driven methods.

Disciplinary Strengths: Humanities students' ability to navigate complex, ambiguous challenges complements the analytical precision of commerce and science students. This interdisciplinary strength can be harnessed in team-based projects and real-world problem-solving.

Applications: The study highlights the need to foster interdisciplinary collaboration among students from diverse academic backgrounds. By encouraging cross-disciplinary interactions, institutions can prepare students for the multifaceted challenges of the professional world.

Mobility and Career Aspirations

Impact of Relocation: Students who frequently relocated during childhood prioritized higher salaries



immediately after course completion, reflecting a desire for financial stability and adaptability to change. Those who stayed in one location were more focused on gaining subject knowledge before seeking high-paying roles.

Gendered Perspectives: Female respondents from frequently relocating families placed greater emphasis on subject depth and role clarity compared to their male counterparts. This reflects a nuanced understanding of career priorities shaped by mobility and stability.

Implications: Early-life experiences significantly influence career preferences. Institutions can provide personalized support to align career paths with individuals' unique backgrounds and aspirations, ensuring holistic development.

III. CONCLUSION

This study reveals significant variations in career preferences among management students, influenced by gender, family structure, educational background, and mobility. Female students often prioritize financial stability and in-depth learning, while males focus on alignment with long-term goals. Similarly, family dynamics and educational disciplines shape career aspirations and approaches to risk.

Understanding these variations is crucial for designing inclusive educational and career guidance programs. Tailored interventions, such as mentorship opportunities, interdisciplinary projects, and personalized counseling, can help address diverse needs. By fostering an inclusive environment, institutions and recruiters can support management students in achieving their professional aspirations and contributing effectively to the workforce.

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