

## The Factors Affecting Student's Careers Decision- Making Case Study: Weifang Vocational Colleges, China

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**Received:** October 8, 2023

**Revised:** June 29, 2024

**Accepted:** June 30, 2024

### Abstract

The study aimed to achieve two main objectives: firstly, to examine the career decision-making process among vocational college students in China, and secondly, to identify the factors that influence these students' career choices. The sample consisted of 446 vocational college students from Weifang Vocational College. Data collection involved the use of a questionnaire administered through purposive sampling. Data analysis utilized percentages, means, standard deviations, and chi-square tests.

The findings revealed that State enterprises was the top choice among students, followed by Government, International Organizations, Private Company and Self-Employed. Factors influencing career decisions-making included the student's expectations of their parents regarding their occupation, Academic performance and their own aspirations. On the other hand, certain factors were found to have impact on vocational college students' decision-making were Family factors, and Friends Factors. The study provides recommendations based on the findings: Firstly, decision-makers should have a clear understanding of their personal traits, such as habits, knowledge, skills, abilities, interests, personalities, health, attitudes towards occupations, and family financial situations. Secondly, educational institutions should offer students advice and guidance on career choices, providing them with relevant career orientation information to aid their decision-making process

**Keywords:** Career Decision-Making, Career Choice, Vocational College

## Introduction

The reason why a career decision-making is great is that it is inclusive of all rivers. Making a career decision can be either simple or difficult depending on the levels of education and information about the career alternatives. A career is viewed as a continuous process that occurs during individuals' formative stage and throughout their life. A career is a part of all the activities that occur before, during, and after the decision to pursue a particular profession, including making an attempt to succeed and succeeding during these periods using various resources. However, at present, Weifang Vocational college has not tested the careers decision making of the students, and it is not clear what careers choice prospect that the students will currently be direction at. Moreover, there is currently no systematic and complete testing tool to help student test accurately and efficiently guidelines. This makes colleges do not know the direction they should strive for leading of careers choices, and college do not know what means should be used to further improve courses that match their interested knowledge and also offer students advice and guidance on career choices, providing them with relevant career orientation information to aid their decision-making process.

## Research objectives

1. To examine the career decision-making process among vocational college students in China
2. To identify the factors that influence these students' career choices

## Literature Review

Making a career decision can be either simple or difficult depending on the levels of education and information about the career alternatives. A career is viewed as a continuous process that occurs during individuals' formative stage and throughout their life (Lent & Brown, 2020; Xu, 2021). According to these definitions, a career is a part of all the activities that occur before, during, and after the decision to pursue a particular profession, including making an attempt to succeed and succeeding during these periods using various resources (Gati & Kulcsar, 2021; Hurst & Brantlinger, 2022; Sutiman et al., 2022). Moreover, many variables must be considered when deciding on a career path. These variables may have complex interrelationships and influence one another. Academic reason or performance, Family background Factors and Parents pressure, and interest in career decision making, a changing program of study occurs when a student makes an initial decision from a list of options, then

reverses it and selects a completely different choice (Jemini Gashi & Kadriu, 2022; Wang & Jiao, 2022). College students in some instances, change their chosen career or program of study due to so many reasons or factors (Lu, 2022; Maheshwari, Kha, & Arokiasamy, 2023). Many variables influence an individual's career decision, including academic performance or reason, family or parental pressure, interest and ability, peer group pressure, personal attributes, and financial reasons (Yunusa et al., 2022). Astorne-Figari and Speer's (2019) study showed that student who are high ranking of study, the roles of academic performance, grade made 43% of students are having strong direction choosing their career decision. Moreover, Wang & Jiao (2022) conducted a study on college students' career decision making and found that 50% of the students change their careers follow their friends and peers pressure. Guidance and counseling are effective techniques among students in Asia for promoting career decision-making (Babatunde, 2018). Because of a lack of career counseling, lack of experience, peer, teacher and family advices, or the prestige attached to a particular career, many asian students select unsuitable careers (Wang & Jiao, 2022). It was discovered that students' academic achievement influenced their career choice (Adeyaniu, 2020). Students that make their career decisions based on their academic performance will be more successful compared to those that do not consider their academic performance (Ikuemonisan et al., 2022). One of the possible explanations was that they were influenced by their family, interest and ability, or peer pressure (Osuizugbo et al., 2022). This suggests that a lack of interest and ability influenced the students to change their chosen careers. Drawing on Yunusa's et al. (2022) interview finding, further research should be conducted to examine the empirical relationship between these possible factors such as academic performance, family pressure, interest and ability, and peer pressure. In short, the previous studies have informed that career decision-making of college students is highly influenced by a number of factors, such as academic performance, parental support, expectations of their parents, Family member, family income-financial reasons, organizational influences, family Factors, friendships and peer group pressure. However, lack of correlational research examines statistical connection between these factors and Asian college' career decision making.

Therefore, the present study is responding to the current issue by investigating the empirical relationship between academic performance, parental support and expectations of family, family income- financial reasons, organizational influences, family relationships, friendships and peer group of college students in China. This study is urgently conducted due

to the high number of vocational colleges who choosing their career making-decision. Hence, examining the family support, academic reason, and interest is crucial since these variables represent both internal and external factors.

**Personal Factors** The intricate journey of career decision-making is significantly influenced by an individual's personal attributes, including personality traits, interests, skills, and values. These internal dynamics shape college students' preferences and aspirations, steering them towards paths that align with their unique inclinations. Research by Holland (1997) underscores the significance of congruence between personality traits and chosen careers.

**Family Background Factors and Parents Family**, as a foundational unit of societal influence, plays a pivotal role in shaping college students' career aspirations. Socio-economic status, familial expectations, and parental professions are key factors that impact their choices. Studies by Super and Nevill (1984) highlight the intergenerational transmission of occupational preferences.

**Factors that Affect Career making- Decisions** Similar to the sway of advertising and media on consumer behavior, external factors also shape college students' career choices. Societal trends, economic conditions, technological advancements, and cultural shifts all contribute to the complex set of influences guiding their decisions. The research by Brown and Brooks (1991) emphasizes the role of societal trends in influencing career choices.

**Organizational Types** Much like consumers choosing among various products, college students navigate a spectrum of career options. Dependent variables, such as Government, State-Owned Enterprises, Private Companies, International Organizations, Self-Employment, and other avenues, reflect their diverse choices. O'Brien and Figueiredo (2019) delve into the role of organizational culture in influencing career decisions.

#### **A. Personal and Family Background Factors**

In a research study the factor “match with interest” rated over job characteristics, major attributes, and psychological and social benefits in importance when students choose a major (Beggs et al., 2008)

How students have seen themselves in a role in which personality is a determining factor may influence a chosen career. Some careers demand that you have the personality to match the qualities of the occupation (Borchert, M. 2002).

-*Gender*: Several researchers have found out that gender plays an influential role in choosing the career of students. A study on undergraduate engineering students finds that females are more likely to be influenced by others than males (Mishkin et al., 2016). Male-dominated career includes STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and some other careers where there is a requirement of moderately to the high level of physical involvement. Kushwaha and Hasan, (2005) find that male students are more likely to choose appropriate careers due to their perception of being family income earners.

-*Age*: The career choice that young adults make is embedded in their perceptions of the "ideal job" and their career decision-making maturity. Occupational choice is not a mere matching process; rather, it is a choice made in a context of many influencing factors. The perception of the "ideal job" acts as a filter for job appropriateness and influences the choice process. "I think, like you have an idea of what the perfect job is in your head, exactly what you want to get up and go do every day." (Ferry, N. M. 2006). In fact, many studies have stressed the importance of parental influences on a young person's career development. For example, Ferreira et al. (2007) establish that parental influence is one of the multiple developmental contexts that have a bearing on the vocational behavior of adolescents.

-*Family Income per month*; Turner et al, 2003). Parents' SES variables usually interact with their proximal variables to influence the development of their children's career interests, the selection of their career goals, and their career behaviors

-*Family expectation* (Ali et al., 2005). Schröder, E., Schmitt-Rodermund, E., & Arnaud, N. (2011) Have said in their study that family business background has an influence on adolescents' career choice but that influenced is mediated by some personality traits, gender, perceived parental job rewards, their identification with the family business, parental succession preference, and so on. Otto (2000) reports that African-American adolescents are more likely to discuss career concerns with their mothers than with their fathers. Kniveton, (2004) states that family influences career choice directly or indirectly by providing guidance and related information. Ayiah-Mensah, F., Mettle, F. O., & Ayimah, J. C. (2014) Specify students are highly influenced by their father, mother, siblings' career, and advice while selecting their career. Clutter, (2010) shows that parental influence plays a significant role in deciding children's careers. Kniveton, B.H. (2004) states that family influences career choice directly or indirectly by providing guidance and related information. Apart from parental supports and

barriers, other parental influence terms such as parental involvement, parental encouragement, parental expectation, parental role modelling, parenting practice.

According to Reynolds (1992), parental involvement is a critically important component in the development of career outcomes.

### **B. Factors that influence career's decision-making**

#### Organizational factors

Abbasi and Sarwat's, (2014) study on Pakistani graduates show that they give significant focus on growth opportunities while deciding a career.

- Prestige as an inherent quality; It is sensed that certain jobs are more worthwhile than others, without being able to pinpoint exactly why. Eremie, (2014) has done a study on Nigerian students. This study based in Nigeria shows that both male and female students consider the relative prestige of the profession while choosing their careers

#### Family factors

Family and friends are considered to be an influential part of students' choice of major. Parents with an agriculture background most often have an impact in where students go to college. Family role models have more of an influence on what students major in (Wildman, and Torres, 2001). There are many people in a student's life who can influence their career decisions. Most of the time, parents and friends play a large role, but coaches and teachers can also have a huge impact on a student's life (Wildman and Torres, 2001). Teachers and coaches can help a student to do better in school, to get into college or to get on a better path. The impact that these adults have on young students can have a major influence on their career path.

A good number of researches around the world show a significant relationship between family factors and career choice. (Guerra and Braungart Rieker, 1999) discovered that the expectations of parents and their direct support and care play a significant role in the career decisions of their children. Kniveton, (2004) states that family influences career choice directly or indirectly by providing guidance and related information

#### Friend and peer group pressure personal factor

Peer has influence on anyone's way of life, social activities, academics, appearance and generally the socialization process (Sebald, 1992). Maina, (2013) conducted a study on the undergraduate students of public universities of Kenya and found that that 31% students feel that they are influenced by the mentorship of their friends while choosing a career. Peer

influence can help youngsters establish professional options and make better decisions (Naz et al., 2014).

## **Methodology**

This research uses quantitative research method as the survey method. Through questionnaire survey, the researcher has adopted the deductive approach in writing this paper, in which the evidences are mainly supported by existing researches empirical evidences. Hence, the reviewed of journal articles, publications and cases relating to a selected organization to review the concepts and applications related to Careers Decision- Making of College Students in education industry.

### **Research Basis and Purposes**

The Factors that affected Careers Decision- Making of College Students has attracting more and more attention. Although there are many studies on Careers Decision- Making, they're still at the level of Careers Decision- Making or career choices analysis, which cannot be directly used for reference and implementation. There is an urgent need for more effective investigation of the college's own situation to form more complete and practical data chain, to comprehensively discuss the current status of the direction of careers choices for vocational college student, to accurately grasp the real factor in their future careers, and to further discuss term.

This research conducts mainly through the survey of vocational college students with different majors and different level in Weifang Vocational Colleges, China, by distributing questionnaires to understand their cognition of Careers Decision- Making and the current 6 careers prospect. Through the above investigations, multi-dimensional and multi-level analysis and research with data collection involved the use of a questionnaire administered through purposive sampling. Data analysis utilized percentages, means, standard deviations, and chi-square tests. We aim at obtaining detailed and accurate results, which will become the most accurate data source for the paper.

### **Questionnaire Design and Survey Implementation**

The design of the questionnaire is oriented toward the survey of students in Weifang Vocational Colleges, China with the intention to understand The Factors that affected Careers Decision- Making of College Students through 6 careers choices prospect. The content of each questionnaire has its own emphasis. The questionnaire focuses on the influence of Factors affecting Careers Decision- Making of College Students; In this survey, random sampling, and

the samples were determined by Kreicic and Morgan Table and used a simple random sampling method. (Leekitchwatana, 2022, 169, 180 - 183)

The questionnaires are released online via "Questionnaire Star", and the online questionnaires are sent to students according to different majors and level through student. The samples were the students of Weifang Vocational Colleges, China, who were registration in the academic year 2023 around 10,000 students and collect data in amount of 446 students.

### Main Research Questions and Assumptions in Questionnaire

The questions designed in the questionnaire are mainly applied to investigate The Factors that affected Careers Decision- Making of College Students, etc., and to comprehensively evaluate their impact on career choices from Personal and Family Factors and Factors that influences career decision-making toward 6 future careers prospect.

## Results

**Part 1:** Analysis of Factor that affecting careers decision-making of Students of Weifang Vocational Colleges, China. Crosstabs appear in the following table:

**Table 1:** Friend's Factors affect careers making- decision cross tab When students graduated, careers choices that students prefer. Crosstabulation

|   |   | When you graduated, what kind of careers will you prefer. |                     |                    |                       |                   |            | Total         |
|---|---|---|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|
|   |   | Governm<br>ent  | State<br>Enterprise | Private<br>company | Int'l<br>Organization | Self-<br>employed | Others     |               |
| Friend's Factor 1<br>affect Careers<br>decision-<br>making. | 1 | 3<br>(14%)  | 4<br>(18%)          | 1<br>(5%)          | 12<br>(55%)           | 2<br>(9%)         | 0<br>(0%)  | 22<br>(100%)  |
|   | 2 | 8<br>(10%)  | 24<br>(31%)         | 18<br>(23%)        | 21<br>(27%)           | 3<br>(4%)         | 3<br>(4%)  | 77<br>(100%)  |
|   | 3 | 16<br>(18%)   | 19<br>(21%)         | 10<br>(11%)        | 39<br>(44%)           | 4<br>(4%)         | 1<br>(1%)  | 89<br>(100%)  |
|   | 4 | 25<br>(13%)   | 46<br>(23%)         | 19<br>(10%)        | 78<br>(39%)           | 16<br>(8%)        | 15<br>(8%) | 199<br>(100%) |
|   | 5 | 10<br>(17%)   | 10<br>(17%)         | 7<br>(12%)         | 22<br>(37%)           | 6<br>(10%)        | 4<br>(7%)  | 59<br>(100%)  |
| Total   |   | 62  | 103                 | 55                 | 172                   | 31                | 23         | 446           |

$\chi^2 = 9.273$  df=4 Sig = 0.033

|                              | Chi-Square Tests    |    |                                   |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
|                              | Value               | df | Asymptotic Significance )2-sided( |
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 30.455 <sup>a</sup> | 20 | .033*                             |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 31.617              | 20 | .048                              |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 2.533               | 1  | .111                              |
| N of Valid Cases             | 446                 |    |                                   |

a .8 cells (26.7%) have expected count less than 5 .The minimum expected count is 1.13.

From Table1: The results of the study, it was found that The Friends factors affecting career decision- making. From the results of the study, it was found that Friends factors show result on friend factor number 4 to career decision-Makings of government 13%, State enterprise 23%, private company10 %, International organizations\* 39% self- employed 8% and other 8%.

From the valued Chi-Square test  $X^2 = 9.273$ ,  $df=4$  Sig = 0.033 the result showed that friends factor affecting career decision- making had statistically significant correlation with career choice at 0.05

**Table 2:** Family's Expectation Factors affect careers making- decision cross tab When students graduated, careers choices that students prefer .Crosstabulation

|  |   | When you graduated, what kind of careers will you prefer. |                  |                 |             |               |            | Total         |
|--|---|---|------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|  |   | Government  | State Enterprise | Private company | Int'l Org.  | Self-employed | Others     |               |
| The expectation of1 my family affects my decision-making | 1 | 1<br>(3%)   | 7<br>(3%)        | 4<br>(3%)       | 17<br>(3%)  | 2<br>(3%)     | 1<br>(3%)  | 32<br>(19%)   |
|  | 2 | 16<br>(21%)   | 23<br>(30%)      | 8<br>(11%)      | 22<br>(29%) | 4<br>(5%)     | 3<br>(4%)  | 76<br>(100%)  |
|  | 3 | 12<br>(14%)   | 15<br>(14%)      | 10<br>(14%)     | 38<br>(14%) | 7<br>(14%)    | 1<br>(14%) | 83<br>(87%)   |
|  | 4 | 21<br>(10%)   | 47<br>(22%)      | 28<br>(13%)     | 87<br>(41%) | 13<br>(6%)    | 16<br>(8%) | 212<br>(100%) |
|  | 5 | 12<br>(28%)   | 11<br>(26%)      | 5<br>(12%)      | 8<br>(19%)  | 5<br>(12%)    | 2<br>(5%)  | 43<br>(100%)  |

|       |    |     |    |     |    |    |     |
|-------|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| Total | 62 | 103 | 55 | 172 | 31 | 23 | 446 |
|-------|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|-----|

$$X^2 = 8.222 \quad df=4 \quad Sig = 0.025$$

| Chi-Square Tests             |                     |    |                                   |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
|                              | Value               | df | Asymptotic Significance )2-sided( |
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 34.150 <sup>a</sup> | 20 | .025*                             |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 35.489              | 20 | .018                              |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .082                | 1  | .775                              |
| N of Valid Cases             | 446                 |    |                                   |

a .8 cells )26.7 (%have expected count less than 5 .The minimum expected count is 1.65.

From Table2: The results of the study, it was found that The Family's Expectation Factors affecting career decision- making. From the results of the study, it was found that Family's Expectation Factors show result on Family's Expectation Factors number 4 to career decision-Makings of government 10%, state enterprise 22%, private company 13 %, international organizations\* 41% self- employed 6% and other 8%

From the valued Chi-Square test  $X^2 = 8.222$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $Sig = 0.025$  the result showed that Family's Expectation Factors affecting career decision- making had statistically significant correlation with career choice at 0.05

**Table 3:** Family's Factors affect careers making- decision cross tab When students graduated, careers choices that students prefer .Crosstabulation

|  |   | When you graduated, what kind of careers will you prefer. |                     |                    |               |                   |               |
|--|---|---|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
|  |   | Govern<br>ment  | State<br>Enterprise | Private<br>company | Int'l<br>Org. | Self-<br>employed | Others        |
| Family not effect on my1<br>career decision-making | 1 | 12<br>(17%)   | 9<br>(13%)          | 6<br>(8%)          | 36<br>(50%)   | 4<br>(6%)         | 5<br>(7%)     |
|  | 2 | 22<br>(12%)   | 41<br>(23%)         | 23<br>(13%)        | 71<br>(40%)   | 11<br>(6%)        | 9<br>(5%)     |
|  | 3 | 15<br>(13%)   | 29<br>(25%)         | 13<br>(11%)        | 42<br>(36%)   | 11<br>(9%)        | 6<br>(5%)     |
|  |   |   |                     |                    |               |                   | Total         |
|  |   |   |                     |                    |               |                   | 72<br>(100%)  |
|  |   |   |                     |                    |               |                   | 177<br>(100%) |
|  |   |   |                     |                    |               |                   | 116<br>(100%) |

|       |       |       |       |       |      |       |        |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|--------|
| 4     | 6     | 22    | 11    | 22    | 4    | 1     | 66     |
|       | (9%)  | (33%) | (17%) | (33%) | (6%) | (2%)  | (100%) |
| 5     | 7     | 2     | 2     | 1     | 1    | 2     | 15     |
|       | (47%) | (13%) | (13%) | (7%)  | (7%) | (13%) | (100%) |
| Total | 62    | 103   | 55    | 172   | 31   | 23    | 446    |

$X^2 = 5.622$        $df=4$        $Sig = 0.017$

\* Negative messages have their scores reversed

| Chi-Square Tests             |                     |    |                                   |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
|                              | Value               | df | Asymptotic Significance )2-sided( |
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 35.585 <sup>a</sup> | 20 | .017*                             |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 33.588              | 20 | .029                              |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4.491               | 1  | .034                              |
| N of Valid Cases             | 446                 |    |                                   |

a .8 cells )26.7 (%have expected count less than 5 .The minimum expected count is .77.

From Table3: The results of the study, it was found that The Family's member Factors affecting career decision- making. From the results of the study, it was found that Family's member Factors show result on Family's member Factors scale number 2 to career decision-makings of government 12%, state enterprise 223%, private company 13 %, international organizations\* 40% self- employed 6% and other 5%

From the valued Chi-Square test  $X^2 = 5.622$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $Sig = 0.017$  the result showed that Family's member Factors affecting career decision- making had statistically significant correlation with career choice at 0.05

## Discussion

From the tests of all variables, it was found that the variables that affect career decisions making are students' careers choices and accepted assumptions, such as Faculty, hometown, average monthly household income, and parents' expectations of students' careers. The test result of career choice in correlation testing is that students can decide whether to work in a company or a private enterprise. By testing the faculty variable, it was found that the majority of students studied in Faculty of business administration, business, and accounting, more than in other schools. The faculty of international Business is a course taught by all educational institutions, with a wide range of cross culture fields for students.

There are many more, such as accounting, finance, banking, marketing, sales, management, and services. Therefore, upon graduation from this faculty, students are interested in engaging in direct business world and the career choices that suits their generation one's choice is International Organization

From the variable tests of parents' expectations of students' careers choice, it was found that the majority of students decide to work in International Organization, and the new wave of parents expecting students to engage in this profession is high. It will affect the student decision. From the past "I also follow that profession, and the parents of a student who wishes to work in government service will decide to choose the government service profession". This may be wrong because now our global business has been changed from times-to-times Chinese's family support system plays a important role in advices nurturing, and warming family members, thus establishing good interpersonal relationships. Academic reason or performance, Family background Factors and Parents pressure, and interest in career decision making, a changing program of study occurs when a student makes an initial decision from a list of options, then reverses it and selects a completely different choice (Jemini Gashi & Kadriu, 2022; Wang & Jiao, 2022). This will be an incentive for children to serve as parents' advice and guidance, so it is related to parents' career expectations. This is consistent with the research findings of Chamnian Suksong (2000), who investigated factors related to the decision of students to continue their education at the opportunity expansion school M. 3. Study in Mueang County, Sha Dun Prefecture. The most common professions after graduation are government services and working in state-owned enterprises.

1. Career decision-makers need to first understand themselves. Especially in terms of character, knowledge, qualifications, abilities, interests, personality, health, habits, attitudes related to the profession, and family finances.

2. Educational institutions or universities should provide vocational guidance and knowledge to students before they decide to pursue this profession, so that they can become a good method for future students.

3. Public and private higher education institutions should adjust the standard of equal teaching to avoid educational differences, and families, parents, or relatives should participate and consider it.

4. Participate and consider relationships with family, parents, or relatives. Make many decisions for students and avoid making wrong decisions. Students' abilities and talents are

also supported.

5. The government should intervene and support cooperation with public and private organizations regarding the project, providing internship opportunities for students during the semester break, allowing them to learn through internships and gain experience before seeking employment and pursuing the profession.

6. Recruitment agencies should expand their work to the region through decentralized income localization to reduce unemployment and immigration issues. Regional research for students graduating from the college should be conducted to work appropriately in the local area.

### Suggestion

Suggestion for the next step of research: Determine students' career choices during learning. We should delve deeper into the target group who is about to truly graduate, which may require contacting the registration of faculty or guidance sector to conduct a questionnaire survey on various educational institutions and collect data on the number of students. When deciding which profession to choose well, it is important to first study the current labor demand market when disclosing trends and reasons. In order to maintain consistency with the situation in various.

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