Almuqadimah of Human and Social Studies Journal Volume (10) Issue (1),(June- 2025) pp 748-761
ISSN: 2602-5566 EISSN :2716-8999

Determinants of career choice among Algerian University Students: A field study on a sample of students from the department of Social Sciences at the University of Khemis Miliana

محددات الاختيار المهني لدى الطالب الجامعي الجزائري-دراسة ميدانية على عينة من طلبة قسم العلوم الاجتماعية بجامعة خميس مليانة-

Faiza Lahoual[1*]

[1] University of Djilali Bounaama Khemis Miliana (Algeria), f.lahoual@univ-dbkm.dz

Received Date:27/02/2024 **Acceptance Date:31/05/2025**

Abstract

The study aimed to know the important factors affecting the Career Choice of the Algerian university student, through a field study on a sample of 120 male and female students who were selected in a stratified random manner from the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Djilali Bounaama in Khemis Miliana during the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023.

The descriptive approach was used, and Khasawneh's test (2019) was applied after checking its psychometric properties on a sample of 30 male and female students, The data was statistically processed using the weighted average and the standard deviation.

The study concluded that: personal determinants, self determinants (inclinations, abilities, values), social, economic and cultural determinants, and determinants of satisfaction and happiness, respectively, are the most important factors affecting the university student's Career Choice.

Keywords: choice; Career; determinants; university; student.

ملخص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى معرفة أهم المحددات المؤثرة في الاختيار المهني لدى الطالب الجامعي الجزائري، من خلال دراسة ميدانية على عينة قوامها 120 طالبا وطالبة تم اختيارها بطريقة عشوائية طبقية من قسم العلوم الاجتماعية بجامعة الجيلالي بونعامة بخميس مليانة خلال السداسي الأول من العام الدراسي 2022-2023.

من أجل تحقيق هدف الدراسة تم استخدام المنهج الوصفي، وتطبيق مقياس محددات الاختيار المهني لخصاونة (2019) بعد التحقق من الخصائص السيكومترية له على عينة تتكون من 30 طالبة وطالبة، وقد تمت معالجة البيانات احصائيا باستخدام المتوسط الحسابي المرجح والانحراف المعياري.

وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن: المحددات الشخصية، محددات الذات (الميول، القدرات، القيم)، المحددات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والثقافية، ومحددات الرضا والسعادة على الترتيب تعتبر أهم العوامل المؤثرة في الاختيار المهني لدى الطالب الجامعي.

كلمات مفتاحية: اختيار ؛ مهني؛ عوامل؛ طالب؛ جامعة.

* Corresponding author.

1. Introduction

The issue of choosing a future career is one of the most important decisions and issues that concern the individual at present, due to the positive or negative impacts it carries in his life, especially with the developments of life in the current era, the expansion of human knowledge, the diversity of experiences, and the emergence of many varied professions.

Today, the profession has become of great importance, determining the integration opportunities, relationship patterns, and interactions with others for its holder in society.

It also defines the social and economic status, impacting various aspects of life in addition to its influence on the developmental process of society as a whole. Therefore, universities in various advanced and developing countries alike have shown interest in the field of academic guidance, as thinking about guiding youth correctly towards studies and specializations that they lean towards and that align with their tastes and abilities, while trying to match the individual's professional inclinations with the quality of the job market requirements is no less valuable than the greatest economic projects.

Proper guidance for the student according to his capabilities, abilities, inclinations, interests, and readiness can lead him to success and excellence in his studies and in his professional life and the requirements of his future career.

What is noticeable at the Algerian university is that there is always a group of students who fail in one way or another to continue their university studies by repeating the year, requesting a change of specialization and redirection...

We notice a high number of requests for transferring from one major to another, submitted by students at the beginning of each academic year, which lasts for a relatively long period from the start of the academic year, out of fear of continuing their studies in an undesired major, or one that they believe may not lead to job opportunities after graduation. Therefore, most students insist on fulfilling their desire to transfer based on the applicable laws, which allow the student the opportunity to switch from one major to another under certain conditions.

In this research paper, we aim to explore the factors influencing university students' Career Choices. Do they base their career decisions on their interests and aspirations towards specific professions and industries they wish to pursue post-graduation, or are there other factors at play?

Understanding these determinants is crucial for an individual's success in their professional journey.

Decisions regarding career paths should be made consciously, tailored to students' abilities and preferences, and aligned with societal needs and the job market. It is widely recognized that working in a desired and fitting profession brings about a sense of satisfaction and mental well-being, positively impacting productivity and creativity in the workplace.

Some studies have focused on the determinants of Career Choices among university students, such as the study by Khataibeh (2009) in Jordan, which found that the career orientations of university students were positive towards their future professions related to their academic specializations. (Khataibeh, 2009)

Their choices of academic majors were based on carefully considered orientations by them according to their preferences and interests, rather than being random. Boumegen's study (2002) in Algeria also confirmed the relationship between university guidance and student failure in university studies, as this guidance did not take into account the student's true desire and only aimed to fill pedagogical positions without considering the student's abilities and potential. (Boumegen, 2002)

As Sharaf Eldin's study (2007) in Yemen concluded that there are entities that somewhat share in influencing the student regarding his Career Choice, which subsequently determines his choice of university major, and this can be attributed to factors outside the university and linked to various influences exerted by the familial environment, peer group or friends, and different social and economic circumstances. (Sharaf Eldin, 2007)

Therefore, the current study aimed to shed light on some determinants that guide and define the student's choice of future profession, upon which he chooses his academic specialization. These determinants may be educational, related to admission and registration policies at the university, or social, cultural, or even developmental concerning the community's need for qualified individuals to actively contribute to various programs and developmental plans.

Given the context provided, we can ask: What factors influence the Career Choices of Algerian university students?

The Importance of the Study:

- The scarcity of data and field-related knowledge concerning the Career Choices of young university students, their perceptions,

inclinations towards professions and businesses they desire, and intend to pursue after graduation.

- Knowing the Career Choices of university students is essential for the development process in a manner that ensures proper guidance towards professions, contributing to the development of human skills that play a fundamental role in achieving development and progress in developmental fields.
- Contemporary society is characterized by tremendous dynamics, rapid changes in its economic, social, and cultural components, thereby increasing interest in the future and the desired destiny, especially among university youth approaching the job market, seeking to work in a profession that suits their inclinations, experiences, tendencies, and beliefs, necessitating an understanding of their orientations towards the world of professions.
- The importance of the study lies in its search for scientific facts related to the influential factors in the Career Choices of university students. Studying the factors affecting the crystallization of career orientations for young university students is necessary for economic planning policies, as societies aiming to elevate their levels of civilization do not dispense with the connection between theory and application when developing plans and programs that rely on conscious and aware planning of the importance of balancing between self-capabilities, desires, inclinations, and proficiency in professions.

Study Objective

The study aims primarily to identify the most effective determinants in crystallizing the Career Choice of Algerian university students.

2.Concepts of the Study:

2.1. Career Choice:

Career Choice is defined as: the individual preferences towards specific professions, activities, or occupational hobbies.

(Khataibeh, 2009, p. 193)

It is the expression of an individual's inclination towards a certain profession, and it is one of the strongest behavioral motivations, playing a significant role in individuals' success in their professions, their sense of prosperity and satisfaction in the professions they work in, and in the study that qualifies them for these professions. It is also the sum of responses to accepting a sample of activity methods related to a profession or work, or the sum of responses to accepting a set of activity methods mainly related to a

profession or work that is the individual's source of livelihood in life, and therefore considered an essential part of their life. (Al-Zahrani, 2009, p. 20)

As the concept of Career Choice includes the individual's knowledge of themselves in terms of abilities, inclinations, and personal traits they possess, the environmental circumstances surrounding them, the type and level of education and training they have received, the various professions and the capabilities, traits, education, and training they require, and the alignment between their self-awareness and their knowledge of different professions. (Khasawneh, 2019, p. 16)

Therefore, Career Choice is the individual's selection of a specific profession based on their abilities, inclinations, personal traits, and social circumstances. In general, it refers to a set of psychological, physical, environmental, cognitive, social, and economic factors that guide the individual in making their career decisions.

2.2. Career Choice Determinants:

These are the various factors that can influence a university student's choice of a profession, which can be classified in our study into:

Self-determinants: Referring to the individual's inclinations, interests, abilities, and qualifications that affect their Career Choice.

Personal determinants: Referring to the inherited or acquired personal traits that influence their Career Choice.

Social, economic, and cultural determinants: Referring to a set of social, economic, and cultural factors related to the individual's family and environment that affect their Career Choice.

Satisfaction and happiness determinants: Referring to what the profession provides the individual in terms of satisfying their motivations, desires, and needs.

Operationally, Career Choice determinants can be defined as the total scores obtained by the university student through their responses to the items of each dimension of the Career Choice Determinants Scale by Khasawneh (2019), where the dimensions represent the determinants mentioned above.

3. Method and tools

3.1.Study Method

The descriptive method was used due to its suitability for the study's purpose.

3.2. Study Population and Sample:

The study population will consist of all third-year students registered in the Department of Social Sciences specializing in Education Sciences: Counseling and Guidance, Sociology and Philosophy, as shown in the following table:

Table (1): Distribution of study community members according to specialization and gender

	Males	females	total
Education Sciences	16	192	208 (43.60%)
Sociology	66	166	232 (48.63%)
Philosophy	4	33	37 (7.75%)
Total	86 (18.97%)	391 (81.97%)	477 (100%)

Students specializing in Education Sciences represent 43.60% of the study community, while Sociology students represent 48.63% of the study community, Philosophy students represent 7.75% of the study community. As for the distribution of the study community by gender, males represent 18.02% of the study community, and females represent 81.97% of the study community.

To achieve the study's objectives, a stratified random sample of 120 male and female students was selected from all specializations in the Department of Social Sciences, taking into account the percentage represented by each specialization of the total study community, as well as the percentage of males and females in the study community.

The following table represents the distribution of the sample according to the specialization and gender variables.

Table (2): Distribution of study sample members according to specialization and gender

	Males	females	total
Education Sciences	4	48	52
Sociology	17	42	59
Philosophy	1	8	9
Total	22	98	120

Through the table above, we notice that the primary study sample consisted of (120) male and female students, equivalent to 25.15% of the study population, distributed as (22) males and (98) females.

As for the distribution of the sample by specialization, there were (52) students in the guidance and counseling specialization, (59) students in sociology, and (9) students in philosophy.

3.3. The Study Tool and its Psychometric Properties

To achieve the study's objective, the Career Choice Determinants Scale by Khasawneh (2019) was used, consisting of 20 items distributed equally across four dimensions: Self-Determinants (interests, abilities, values), Personal Determinants, Social, Economic, and Cultural Determinants, Satisfaction and Happiness Determinants.

Responses on the scale are made by choosing one of the five alternatives: happens to a very large extent, large, moderate, little, very little. The scale is scored according to the mentioned alternatives as follows, in order: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 for positive items and the reverse for negative items.

The scale's developer ensured its validity by presenting it to 10 experts from Jordanian universities, and its construct validity through internal consistency and using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for reliability. (Khasawneh, 2019)

The psychometric properties of the scale were verified in the current study by applying it to a sample of 30 male and female students.

Validity: Internal consistency method was relied upon as an indicator to verify the validity of the scale.

Internal Consistency Validity:

The validity of the internal consistency of the scale was ensured by calculating the correlation coefficient values between individuals' scores on the dimensions of the Career Choice scale and their total scores on the scale, with the results outlined in the following table.

Table (3): The correlation between individuals' scores on specific dimensions of Career Choice determinants and their total scores on the scale.

Dimensions	Self-determinants (inclinations, abilities, values)	Personal determinants	Social, economic, and cultural determinants	Satisfaction and happiness determinants
Total score of the Career Choice determinants scale	0.88**	0.74**	0.64**	0.84**

**The level of significance 0.01

It is clear from the previous table: that the correlation coefficient values between individuals' scores on specific dimensions of Career Choice determinants and their total scores on the scale are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. These values ranged from 0.64 as the lowest value to 0.88 as the highest value, indicating the internal consistency of the scale, which points to the scale's validity.

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to verify the scale's reliability.

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient:

This equation was chosen because individuals' responses to scale items were based on a five-point scale, and the reliability coefficient value for the scale was 0.72.

3.4.Statistical Methods:

In order to achieve the study's goal, the researchers utilized the weighted mean, standard deviation, and calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient and Cronbach's alpha to assess the psychometric properties.

4. Results

Presentation and analysis of the result of the question: What are the determinants of Career Choice among university students?

To answer the question, the weighted mean and standard deviation of the sample individuals' grades on the dimensions of the Career Choice scale were calculated, specifying the level based on intervals or ranges of the Likert scale.

The mean belonging to the range 1-2.33 indicates a low level, the arithmetic mean belonging to the range 2.34-3.68 indicates a medium level, and the mean belonging to the range 3.69-5 indicates a high level.

Table (4): Distribution of study sample members according to specialization and gender

Dimension for Career Choice	Items	Weighted mean	Standard Deviation	Dimension Ranking	Level
Self-determinants (inclinations, abilities, values)	5	3.73	0.42	2	High
Personal determinants	5	4.02	0.53	1	High
Social, economic, and cultural determinants	5	3.66	0.57	3	Medium
Satisfaction and happiness determinants	5	3.30	0.33	4	Medium

Through the table, we notice that the average grades of the students in the Department of Social Sciences in the personal and valued determinants, with a value of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 0.53, came in first place, indicating a high level as it belongs to the field 3.69-5.

We also notice that in the second place, the self-determinants with an average of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 0.53, also indicate a high level.

In the third place, we find the social, economic, and cultural determinants with an average of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 0.57, which indicates an average level as it belongs to the field 2.34-3.68.

Finally, we find the determinants of satisfaction and happiness with an average of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.33, indicating an average level.

5. Discussion

Discussion and interpretation of the result of the question: What are the determinants of Career Choice among university students?

We conclude that the determinants of future Career Choice among students of the Department of Social Sciences were primarily personal determinants, as they see that they have personal traits that help them succeed

in their future careers, especially since the specializations they study are social specializations such as educational sciences, sociology, and philosophy, which are assumed to provide professions of the type of human services, such as education either with ordinary children or those with special needs in centers designated for them, or the profession of a counselor for school and vocational guidance or administrative positions...

Upon examining the responses of the sample regarding the personal determinants paragraphs, we find that they prefer professions that involve social interaction, communication with others, and providing assistance, which are characteristics offered by these future professions.

We also find that self-determinants rank second, indicating the university student's satisfaction with their future profession and their sense of pride in the noble services provided by that profession to society. It is also suitable for their inclinations, abilities, and capabilities. Therefore, based on the sample responses, the student sees themselves as primarily responsible for choosing their future profession, and the decision was not hasty or random.

However, the role and impact of social, economic, and cultural factors on the university student's choice of future profession cannot be denied, where the level of their impact was moderate according to the weighted mean.

Students in the social sciences department believe that their future profession should align with the social class they belong to and match their living conditions. Family income is considered a major reason for choosing a future profession, and the culture of the society they belong to, in addition to the influence of the parents' cultural and educational level in Career Choice. Education, according to them, is considered the best profession to pursue, especially for females, knowing that females represent approximately 81.97% of the study community.

As Ain Defla province is considered an area dominated by an agricultural character, you find that a significant percentage of its residents engage in agricultural activities.

A study by Farrah (2018) has shown a relationship between the cultural capital of the family, mainly represented by the educational and cultural level of the parents and the academic orientation. Having a library at home, dedicating time for reading with diversity in fields and in several languages are all factors that contribute to influencing the academic orientation of the student, leading to their choice of future profession.

According to the same study, cultural capital is transferred from parents to children directly and indirectly.

The family reproduces its cultural capital by educating its children and guiding them towards specific specializations, without neglecting other factors such as the parents' professions, monthly income, and the type of residential area, urban or rural, which are all indicators of importance in the child's choice of future profession. (Farrah, 2018)

It is the same as what Sharaf Eldin (2007) reached in his study, where he sees that the family environment, with its cultural, educational, or economic variables, plays a significant role in the student's choice of specialization at the university. For example, the educational level of the fathers of students in scientific colleges is high compared to the level of education of the fathers of students in literary and humanistic specializations. (Sharaf Eldin, 2007)

This is by no means absolute, as we do not deny that there are other situations that may arise independently of cultural capital and the access of some lower social classes and strata in the social ladder to surpass the social family status barriers with their modest cultural and economic capabilities or other components of cultural capital, achieving academic success and excellence, thus entering into prestigious specializations, where they have nevertheless managed to overcome the barriers of their social environment, enrolling in scientific colleges with high social demand, considering that the choice of university specialization, which determines the future profession, is also linked to admission rates, as some prestigious specializations require high grades.

In addition, we can mention the role of friends and companions in shaping the Career Choice of university students. Mansouri (2005) refers to neighborhood or village companions, and even high school companions.

A number of them usually tend to enroll in the same specialization without considering their desire for the specialization or even the required capabilities and cognitive preparations, but rather with the aim of maintaining the community that they consider a symbol of security for them. (Mansouri, 2005)

We can also mention the student organizations present at the university level, which often provide guidance to students, especially new students, in choosing specializations and influencing them in that. Meanwhile, the university administration should activate what is known as university media, which should contribute to guiding students academically and professionally,

given its importance in changing ideas, explaining educational policy, facilitating access to information for all university human resources, and providing students with necessary information about their academic path and training fields for new students, and guiding towards specializations for existing students in those fields.

University media plays a major role in guiding and informing students about various information they may need to facilitate their university life and future Career Choices, as emphasized by the study of Fadloun (2014) on the role of university media in academic and professional guidance for educated human resources, despite its absence in our universities.

(Fadloun, 2014)

We find that students in the Department of Social Sciences see that satisfaction and happiness determinants are considered factors that influence their choice of future profession, as they were at an average level, where the profession of the future will enable the student to satisfy his motives and desires.

This result agrees with Khataiba's study (2009), which concluded that feeling comfortable, secure, and enjoying work away from fatigue and exhaustion is an important feature in youth's work, as they aspire to achieve it and reach it during work. (Khataibeh, 2009)

They also desire to join professions that provide them with a suitable income, where the economic situation constitutes a strategic criterion that youth seek to obtain its advantages, explained by the pressures of economic and different living conditions experienced by youth in contemporary society, and the dominance of materialistic ideas that have disrupted all aspects of life.

6- Conclusion

According to the research findings, the personality traits, both inherited and acquired, were found to be the primary factors influencing the future Career Choices of university students.

Following closely are self-assessments, encompassing academic interests, personal inclinations, capabilities, and readiness to tackle the demands of their chosen profession. Social, economic, and cultural influences also play a significant role in shaping their career decisions, alongside considerations of satisfaction and happiness, as students seek professions that align with their passions and life goals. Across diverse social strata, most students opt for majors driven by a long-term strategic utility, focusing on the anticipated benefits post-graduation that match their interests and ambitions.

Recommendations:

According to the results we have reached regarding the factors influencing the student's choice of their future career, and believing in the role of university management in planning the guidance process, the following can be suggested:

- Giving the student guide more attention in terms of its contents and the nature of the information it contains, so that it is clear and accurate. This will help the student make a decision to choose a specialization based on awareness, without hesitation, and in line with their interests and aspirations. It should include details of study plans, academic programs, and other necessary information for the student.

- Expanding the issuance of brochures and posters and diversifying them as an effective and rewarding means of delivering information smoothly and simply to the student who is in urgent need of guidance.

- Activating university media and emphasizing the good selection of reception committees that receive students before the start of the admission and registration process, by competent and good-natured individuals. This is to guide the students.

- Setting up academic counseling centers at universities significantly aids in the personal growth and independence of students when it comes to deciding on their academic majors. Academic counseling guides students to become capable of responsibly choosing their fields of study and future professions.

Reference

1. Al-Zahrani, S. (2009). *Career Preferences and Decision-Making among a Sample of Students from Vocational Colleges in Jeddah. Umm Al-Qura University: Unpublished Master's Thesis.*
2. Boumegen, N. (2002). *University Guidance and the Failure of Students in the Common Core of Exact Sciences, Computer Science, and Technology. Batna University: Unpublished Master's Thesis.* .
3. Khasawneh, I. (2019). *Determinants of Career Choice and Its Relationship with a Safe Environment for Jordanian University Students. Amman Arab University: Unpublished Master's Thesis.*
4. Mansouri, M. (2005). Errors in University Guidance: Consequences and How to Manage Them. *5*, pp. 230-241.
5. Sharaf Eldin, H. (2007). Determinants of Student Choice of University Major: A Field Sociological Study on Students of Taiz University . *Aden University Journal for Social and Human Sciences*, *10*(21), pp. 122-149.

6. Fadloun, Z. (2014). The Role of University Media in Academic and Career Guidance for Educated Human Resources: A Field Study at Arab Ben Mahidi University in Oum El Bouaghi . *Journal of Human and Social Sciences, 17*, pp. 93-104.
7. Farrah, F. (2018). The Cultural Capital of the Family and University Orientation of Students: A Field Study at Zian Ashour University in Djelfa. *Journal of Social Science Development, 11*(1), pp. 130-140.
8. Khataibeh. (2009). Career Trends among University Youth: A Field Study in Jordan. *Jordanian Journal of Social Sciences, 2*(2), pp. 191-210.