

Factors Affecting Career Planning of Bachelor of Arts Undergraduates in Sri Lanka

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Abstract - In a dynamic labor market where the skills and job requirements demanded constantly changes affects the graduates of undergraduates, especially those following in the arts stream, career planning is important. In order to understand the career planning process to fill the gap between demand and supply of employment, the study aimed to identify the factors influencing career planning and to build a career planning model. The study considered a sample of 136 respondents following the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) program at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. A path analysis was conducted along with a Spearman's rho to test the hypothesized model developed using three career development theories, namely, Gottfredson's Circumscription and Compromise, Social Cognitive Career Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, to a four-stage career planning model. The study identified that there are influential factors that directly influence in the career planning process while factors such as prior achievement indirectly influence in the career planning process.

Keywords: Career Planning Model, Career Aspiration, Career Planning

Jayewardenepura that had the highest enrolment rate while having an employment rate less than 50% out of 10 state universities in Sri Lanka (Gunaratne et al., 2018, p. 18).

In a dynamic labour market where skills, knowledge, abilities, and requirements needed by the employers keep on changing, the static and traditional jobs sought by the graduates have created in supply and demand in the job market. The declining demand for traditional jobs in the job market and increase in demand for graduates with more diverse skills and ability to adjust and adapt along with soft skills, language proficiency, communication skills, and reporting writing skills among other skills have created a gap in the market. Further, the increasing gap between male and female graduates in the job market with respect to graduate output has created an unemployment social issue in Sri Lanka. Thus, in order to understand the aforementioned gaps, it is important to understand the main influential factors of career planning and the process of career planning. Therefore, the aim of the study is to develop and fit a career planning model based on the most influential factors of the undergraduate students following a BA (Hons) when planning their career paths.

I. INTRODUCTION

The career aspiration of the forms of ambitions leads to an individual to create a plan or blueprint of their career plan based on their ambition. In other words, career planning is a continuous and systematic process of selecting career goals and objectives based on an individual's profile (Gautam et al., 2016; Mathis et al., 2015) where the set goals are based on the career aspiration which is usually future oriented (Gautam et al., 2016, p. 1). The career planning process of an individual however is shaped by their socioeconomic and other environmental factors as well as their exposure to career information. The support and barriers received by the aforementioned factors can mould one's career plan based on their motivation and determination followed by their career aspirations.

In Sri Lanka, the unemployment rate of graduates based on graduate output is lowest in Faculty of Arts and Performing Arts (Gunaratne et al., 2018). Further, it was observed that there is a mismatch in skills possessed by the graduates comparing with the demand of the employers. Considering that Arts and Performing Arts stream provide the highest number of graduates (University Grants Commission, 2020) and the highest unemployment rate of graduates, it is important to understand the career planning process of the undergraduates graduating from the stream. Within the arts stream in Sri Lanka, it was identified that University of Sri

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

II.1 Career Planning Related Theories

The career plan of an individual can be considered as the blueprint for the career development of an individual based on their career aspirations. Thus, career planning is a systematic process which aids an individual to identify their short-term and long-term goals based on their vision and future desires. During this systematic process an individual will go through stages which can repeat once again through reflection and due to the dynamic nature in the labour market while navigating through their aspirations and barriers an individual might face.

Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise examines the compromises made by individuals when determining their career choices. According to Gottfredson, "compromise involves the process of limiting career choices due to prestige, sex type, and field of interest" (Gottfredson, 1981, cited in Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017, p. 49) whereas circumscription is the early vocational choice proceeds as a process of elimination (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2006, p. 199; Sharf, 2013, p. 184) of inappropriate alternatives based on the awareness of occupational differences to the children based on their exposure through family and others. Based on the four

orientations of the theory, the career development path begins from adolescence and the theory is tested and supported by using the factors (a) gender (Aziz & Kamal, 2012; Cochran et al., 2011; Junk & Armstrong, 2010), (b) socioeconomic status (SES) components (Berger et al., 2019; Cochran et al., 2011; Migunde et al., 2011), (c) family members (Migunde et al., 2011), (d) prestige (Berger et al., 2019; Junk & Armstrong, 2010), and (e) prior achievement or ability (Cochran et al., 2011; Migunde et al., 2011) influencing career aspiration and development.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) presents a framework to understand how an individual develops career-related interests and makes (remakes) career choices (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017, p. 73) where an individual’s career aspirations and choices are the results of the complex inter-relationships of personal, environmental, and behavioural factors (Maltese & Tai, 2011, cited in Sahin et al., 2015, p. 787). SCCT is more focused on cognitive mediators and is built on the Bandura’s social cognitive theory in which self-efficacy beliefs refers to a “person’s beliefs concerning his or her ability to successfully perform a task or behaviour” (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2006, p. 719). Based on the three models, interest, choice, and performance models of SCCT, the career and educational aspirations are influenced by demographic factors such as gender (Kang & Keinonen, 2017; Rogers & Creed, 2011; Sahin et al., 2015; Sawitri et al., 2014), components of SES (Gautam et al., 2016; Koul et al., 2011; Lubben et al., 2010; Sawitri et al., 2014), and environmental factors such as family members (Restubog et al., 2010; Sahin et al., 2015; Sawitri et al., 2014), peers (Lubben et al., 2010), teachers (Sahin et al., 2015) as identified in peer researches. Further, the present research identifies ability also known as prior achievements (Gautam et al., 2016; Sawitri et al., 2014) which reflects on the self-efficacy of the respondents.

Ryan and Deci’s Self Determination Theory (SDT) holds that an individual’s personality and motivation influence the way they interact with the surrounding environment and performs based on the influences of the external factors. The theory identifies mainly two types of motivation which are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which influences in different extent and based on the level of degree it can influence and assert control over the decisions and thinking of an individual. In other words, SDT is “intrinsic and several types of extrinsic motivation and outlines how these motivations influence situational responses in different domains, as well as social and cognitive development and personality” (Legault, 2017, p. 1). Furthermore, SDT is not only based on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, but considers the based psychological needs of a human being which has been identified as autonomy, competence, and relatedness which can be combined to provide an account for career aspiration and choice (Rayner & Papakonstantinou, 2020; Skinner et al., 2017). Based on the theory of psychological needs *autonomy* is the need of initiating or self-directing the career planning process, *competence* is the need to feel effective and

mastering, while *relatedness* is the need for having connections and have a sense of belonging to the surrounding environment and relationships (Legault, 2017; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2020).

II.2 Career Planning Models

The proposed model is based on the SODA model of Career Planning, which is designed to arrange the information received when planning one’s career into four basic steps known as self-awareness, option-awareness, deciding, and acting and planning, in cooperation with the theories related to career development which have been identified and tested empirically by peer researchers.

II.2.1 SODA model

The four stages of SODA model can be expressed according to Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (2018) and New Zealand Government Careers (2019) as: (1) *self-awareness* means becoming aware about one’s self in terms of their strengths and weaknesses, (2) *option-awareness* where an individual becomes aware of different career options and choices available by exploring and comparing among the full range of options available along with the necessary requirements to be fulfilled, (3) the best option among all the possible options is done in *deciding* stage, (4) in *action and planning* stage the individual creates their career plan with steps to be taken to achieve the final goal of the career aspiration of an individual.

Similar career planning model can be observed in the human resource management field for individuals which can comprise five steps (Mathis et al., 2015, p. 339), seven steps (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2017, p. 129) or more. However, the four steps of SODA model can be used to compress the additional steps identified by other individual career planning models.

II.3 Suggested Relationships between Independent and Dependent Variables

Based on the three theories, the identified factors are illustrated in the SODA model in the proposed career planning model considering the four stages as dependent variables in the career planning model. Thus, combining the model and the theories the following relationships can be identified.

Table 1: SODA model and identified variables based on career development theories

Variable	Self-Awareness	Option - Awareness	Deciding	Action and Planning	Theory
Gender	□				Theory of Circumscription and Compromise, SCCT
SES	□		□		Theory of Circumscription and Compromise, SCCT

Family members		□	□		Theory of Circumscription and Compromise, SCCT
Prior Achievement	□		□	□	Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise, SCCT
Peers		□			SCCT
Lecturers		□			SCCT
Motivation	□			□	SDT

II.3.1 Background variables

The present study identifies variables mentioned in Table 1 along with the variables, social media, educational aspiration, and prestige as factors influencing career planning in the model.

Gender plays a significant role in career planning due to external factors such as gender composition (Berger et al., 2019) due to gender stereotyping (Karami et al., 2011) of certain careers in the market. Gender roles play a significant role in self-awareness specially in collectivist countries as individuals try to stick to traditional roles and preferences (Aziz & Kamal, 2012; Giri et al., 2015; Koech et al., 2016; Novakovic & Fouad, 2012). However, gender was found to be an insignificant factor for career planning by some empirical studies (Belser et al., 2018; Cochran et al., 2011; Du & Wong, 2019; Fernando & Jayasekara, 2015; Giri et al., 2015; Leung et al., 2011; Rogers & Creed, 2011; Sawitri et al., 2014; Zahid, 2017) which contradicts with the Gottfredson's theory and SCCT.

Motivation is influenced on career planning can be divided into two components, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as stated in SDT. The career path chosen along with academic major is influenced by intrinsic motivation while academic scores such as grade point average, university entrance score are extrinsic motivations (Fernando & Jayasekara, 2015; Rayner & Papakonstantinou, 2020). In the Sri Lankan context, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations have a significant positive influence on career aspiration of an individual (Fernando & Jayasekara, 2015). According to Rayner & Papakonstantinou (2020) both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are interrelated while gender act as an amotivational factor for an individual and is indirectly related. Based on empirical studies, motivation factor is significantly related with one or more stages of the career planning of an individual (Cheung & Arnold, 2010; Hertzman et al., 2015; Kim & Yun, 2015; Koul et al., 2011; Liu & Morgan, 2016; Lubben et al., 2010; Matsolo et al., 2018; Restubog et al., 2010; Rogers & Creed, 2011; Sawitri et al., 2014; Shumba & Naong, 2012; Skinner et al., 2017; To et al., 2014).

Language proficiency in terms of the ability of the use of English as a language is considered an important factor in career planning and education success (Mamo et al., 2017) as

it impacts the educational aspiration as well as career aspiration. The lack of language competency and communication skills act as a barrier in career aspiration (Madurangi et al., 2019).

Socioeconomic status (SES) of an individual, parents' level of education, occupation, and household income level, influences one's career choice, aspiration, and decision making. Parents' level of education (Al-Bahrani et al., 2020; Ashby & Schoon, 2010; Jamabo, 2014; Koul et al., 2011; Liu & Morgan, 2016; Madurangi et al., 2019; Mamo et al., 2017; Mudhovozi & Chireshe, 2012; Radhika & Ramkumar, 2016), parents' occupation (Ehigbor & Akinlosotu, 2016; Jamabo, 2014; Koech et al., 2016; Madurangi et al., 2019; Radhika & Ramkumar, 2016), and household income (Ashby & Schoon, 2010; Gautam et al., 2016; Jamabo, 2014; Koech et al., 2016) have a significant positive relationship to aspects of career planning such as career aspirations, choice, and expectations. However, in some studies SES as a whole is found to be significant in a smaller degree (Berger et al., 2019; Cochran et al., 2011) or insignificant (Sawitri et al., 2014) factor in the career planning process.

Family members influence in the gathering of career related information based on the source and exposure. Familial factors can influence both positively (Ashby & Schoon, 2010; Liu & Morgan, 2016; Mutekwe et al., 2011) and negatively (Fernando & Jayasekara, 2015) in career and educational aspiration as well as choice for an individual. Further, family members especially parents can influence their career decision making by pushing their children for higher prestigious career or career path they wished to pursue (Ma et al., 2014) or a career path in the field the parents and other family members are in.

Peers also play a role in career related information which influences in career planning of an individual. The influence can cause discontinuation of an educational program (Lubben et al., 2010; Matsolo et al., 2018) or any other significant influence in their career and educational aspirations (Mutekwe et al., 2011; Obot et al., 2020; To et al., 2014; Ugoji & Ihegbu, 2020; Vitale et al., 2015) as peers can be identified as both competitors and motivators (Madurangi et al., 2019).

Teachers and lecturers provide guidance and information on one's career which can be influenced by their beliefs and dispositions (Liu & Morgan, 2016) which can significantly influence on career choices (Mutekwe et al., 2011; Shumba & Naong, 2012).

Social media has gradually become a more influential platform due to the exposure to various elements which maybe yield to provide both good and bad career information and guidance. Even though social media has not been considered as a factor in previous studies, the traditional media has been considered as a factor in very few studies which deemed that the influence is insignificant in making career choices (Kisilu et al., 2020; Mudhovozi & Chireshe, 2012; Y. J. Ryan et al., 2010). According to Kisilu et al.

(2020), the historical and media personalities were the role models for aspirations of those who were influenced by media.

Prior achievement can be measured in terms of GPA or any other scoring system and exam results. The achievement of education measured in GPA has a significant positive influence on their career aspiration (Al-Bahrani et al., 2020; Cochran et al., 2011; Gemici et al., 2014; Karami et al., 2011) and Z score used in university entrance is also identified to have a major influence on a student’s career choice and future education plans (Gautam et al., 2016; Rayner & Papakonstantinou, 2020). Contradictorily some studies found the prior achievement measurements such as GPA was not a significant factor influencing career and educational aspiration of an individual (Hertzman et al., 2015; Migunde et al., 2011; Sawitri et al., 2014).

Educational aspiration based on career aspiration would lead many individuals to consider pursuing their desired career through higher education (Kisilu et al., 2020; Lubben et al., 2010; Zahid, 2017).

Prestige of the selected career path was a significant factor in making career-decisions as the social status is influenced by the society (Giri et al., 2015; Radhika & Ramkumar, 2016).

III. METHODOLOGY

An explanatory cross-sectional study was carried out with 136 respondents with the objective of identifying and modelling the influential factors of career planning for the final year undergraduates pursuing a BA (Hons). A two-part questionnaire was developed which was distributed online using Google forms due to COVID-19 pandemic which affected the response rate. The first section of the questionnaire comprised basic information, while the second part comprised 60 questions following a 5-point Likert scale. In this study IBM SPSS, Minitab, and Excel were used for the data analysis of primary data.

III.1 Measures

Five scales were used in the survey which are: (1) Demographic scale was used for obtaining information regarding gender, education, and household income. The household income of the respondents was categorized based on the income brackets in Household Income and Expenditure Survey (Department of Census and Statistics, 2018, p. 7). (2) Motivation scale was developed using the three main motivation types introduced under SDT (Skinner et al., 2017, p. 8). (3) Career information scale which determines how career information is received by family members, peers, teachers and lecturers, and social media, as a sources of career information, in making career decisions. (4) Career aspiration scale was used to measure educational aspiration, the extent in which the respondent aspires to continue in education, and achievement aspiration, the extent in which the respondent wants to be recognised in the career, of the respondent. (5)

Random check scale which was used to screen whether the respondents are responding randomly.

III.2 Framework

Based on the three identified career planning theories and background variables, the SODA career planning model is hypothesized as depicted in Figure 1 based on interrelationships between variables in their respective career planning stages.



Figure 1: Hypothesized career planning model

IV. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

It was observed that the study has a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.967 which indicates that there is internal consistency within the items. A path analysis was conducted to test the hypothesized model as the sample size is relatively small to conduct structural equation modeling. The path analysis was conducted using regression analysis in which the four stages of career planning were tested as follows.

IV.1 Self-Awareness

The variables gender, intrinsic motivation, SES, prior achievement, and educational aspiration were identified as variables influencing self-awareness in the hypothesized model. It should be noted that language proficiency was taken into consideration under language proficiency. Thus, the fitted model for self-awareness is as follows.

Table 2: Fitted model for Self-awareness

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Gender	0.007474	0.006079	1.229581	0.2219
Intrinsic Motivation	0.984689	0.007065	139.3823	0.0000
Prior Achievement	-0.007560	0.007411	-1.020162	0.3102
Educational Aspiration	0.043781	0.008230	5.319383	0.0000
SES	-0.001915	0.005439	-0.351966	0.7256

Based on the fitted regression model for self-awareness step of career planning, it can be observed that the model is good with a root mean square error (RMSE) of 0.0533 and

statistically significant at the 5% level of significance (F (5, 94) = 8280.341, p = 0.000). Further, it was observed that 99.77% of the total variability is explained by the model.

Based on the results in Table 2, it can be observed that the variables gender, prior achievement, and SES is statistically insignificant at 5% level of significance. Thus, by removing the insignificant variables the self-awareness can be estimated as follows.

$$Self - awareness = 0.9803 * IntrinsicMotivation + 0.0423 * EducationalAspiration$$

Equation 1: Self-awareness path analysis

IV.2 Option-Awareness

The awareness of career options based on career information was categorized to family members, peers, teachers and lecturers, and social media, and the fitted model are as follows.

Table 3: Fitted regression model for option-awareness

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Family Members	0.156141	0.042713	3.655558	0.0004
Lecturers	0.708849	0.036100	19.63572	0.0000
Peers	0.345914	0.074426	4.647782	0.0000
Social Media	-0.192696	0.035860	-5.373591	0.0000

The fitted regression model was found to be a good fit for the option-awareness stage of career planning (F (4,95) = 465.6306, p = 0.000) with a RMSE of 0.2947. It was observed that 95.15% of the total variability of the model is explained where all the assumptions of the model are satisfied. Thus, based on the path analysis, option-awareness can be estimated as follows.

$$Option - awareness = 0.1561 * FamilyMembers + 0.7088 * Lecturers + 0.3459 * Peers - 0.1297 * SocialMedia$$

Equation 2: Option-awareness path analysis

IV.3 Deciding

The career decisions of an individual are assumed to be influenced by their motivation, family members, SES, prior achievements, educational aspiration, and prestige of the career path. The fitted path model for this career planning stage is as follows.

Table 4: Fitted model for deciding career plan

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Family Members	-0.097542	0.032552	2.996532	0.0035
Prestige	-0.050707	0.029741	1.704940	0.0915
Prior Achievement	0.033277	0.034078	0.976489	0.3313
Educational Aspiration	0.216064	0.039911	5.413681	0.0000
SES	0.031596	0.025445	1.241738	0.2174
Motivation	0.766043	0.034907	21.94499	0.0000

The fitted model explains 94.42% of the total variability as the it is a statistically a good fit at 5% level of significance (F (6, 94) = 266.041, p = 0.000) with a RMSE of 0.2619. It was observed that the fitted model does not have multicollinearity among its variables and other assumptions of the model are satisfied.

Based on Table 4, it can be observed that the variables prestige, prior achievement, and SES is statistically insignificant at 5% level of significance. Thus, removing the insignificant factors influencing the career planning stage of deciding one’s career can be estimated as follows:

$$Deciding = -0.0725 * FamilyMembers + 0.2519 * EducationalAspiration + 0.803 * Motivation$$

Equation 3: Deciding path analysis

IV.4 Action and Planning

The fourth stage of career planning is affected by the variables: motivation, prior achievement, educational aspiration, SES, and prestige of the career for the career planner. The action and planning fitted model is as follows.

Table 5: Fitted model for action and planning path analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Intrinsic Motivation	0.718766	0.043700	16.44769	0.0000
Extrinsic Motivation	0.017346	0.039525	-0.438847	0.6618
Educational Aspiration	0.296147	0.046283	6.398610	0.0000
Prior Achievement	0.008599	0.041715	-0.206142	0.8371
Prestige	0.104765	0.035925	-2.916214	0.0044
SES	0.022251	0.029641	0.754056	0.4527

The fitted model was identified as a good fitted model where the model is statistically significant at the 5% level of significance (F (6, 93) = 198.122, p = 0.000) with a RMSE of 0.268. Further, it was observed that 92.74% of the total variability is explained by the model where the assumptions of regression model are satisfied.

According to Table 5, the variables extrinsic motivation, prior achievement, and SES can be observed to be statistically insignificant at 5% level of significance. Hence, the insignificant variables were removed from the fitted model. Thus, action and planning can be estimated as

$$Action and planning = 0.7273 * IntrinsicMotivation + 0.2972 * EducationalAspiration - 0.0933 * Prestige$$

Equation 4: Action and planning path analysis

IV.5 Interrelationships between Variables

Based on peer articles it was observed that there is an association between the variable’s motivation, educational aspiration, and prior achievement. A Spearman’s rho

correlation analysis was run to identify whether there is an association between variables as the data are not normally distributed. The results obtained are as follows.

Table 6: Correlation analysis between variables

Variable	Prior achievement	Educational aspiration	Extrinsic motivation	Intrinsic motivation
Prior achievement	1.0000			
Educational aspiration	0.2400**	1.0000		
Extrinsic motivation	0.3170**	0.0607	1.0000	
Intrinsic motivation	-0.0665	0.4207**	-0.2130*	1.0000

* Significant at 5% level of significance

** Significant at 1% level of significance

Motivation considered as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was statistically significant where the two types of motivation influence each other negatively ($S_k = -0.213, p = 0.0128$). Prior achievement had a strong positive relationship with both educational aspiration ($S_k = 0.24, p = 0.0049$) and extrinsic motivation ($S_k = 0.317, p = 0.0002$) while it was insignificantly negatively related with intrinsic motivation ($S_k = -0.0665, p = 0.4416$). Further, it was observed that educational aspiration had a strong positive association with intrinsic motivation ($S_k = 0.4207, p = 0.0000$) while it was insignificantly associated with extrinsic motivation ($S_k = 0.0607, p = 0.4830$).

Furthermore, the association between gender and motivation was taken into consideration as gender is considered as motivational factor in the study conducted by Rayner & Papakonstantinou (2020). It was observed that there is an insignificant negative relationship between gender and motivation ($S_k = -0.0675, p = 0.4348$).

IV.6 Career Planning Model

Based on the path analysis conducted for the four stages of the career planning model, the hypothesized model (Figure 1) was modified to represent only the significant relationships.

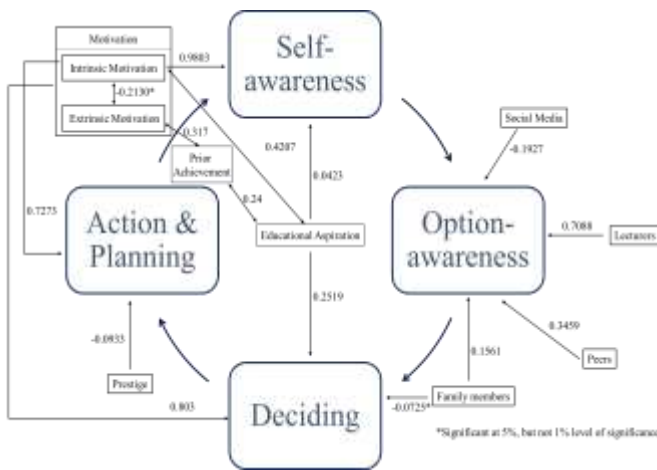


Figure2: Career planning model Discussion and Conclusion

The study sought to identify the influential factors of career planning in order to build a career planning model. The major findings of the study are as follows.

Gender was found to be an insignificant positive factor in planning career which confirms the findings of some empirical studies (Belser et al., 2018; Cochran et al., 2011; Du & Wong, 2019; Fernando & Jayasekara, 2015; Giri et al., 2015; Leung et al., 2011; Rogers & Creed, 2011; Sawitri et al., 2014; Zahid, 2017) which contradicts the Gottfredson’s theory and SCCT.

Motivation was found to be a significant influential factor in career planning. Intrinsic motivation was found to have a strong positive influence on self-awareness, and action and planning stages of career planning while both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as a whole had a strong positive influence in career deciding stage of an individual’s career planning process. Further, it was observed that language proficiency acts as a part of intrinsic motivation of an individual. The findings are in accordance with the empirical studies while it contradicts the study of Rayner & Papakonstantinou (2020) of gender. Further, it should be noted that educational aspiration was observed to have a significantly influencing intrinsic motivation while prior achievement was observed to influence extrinsic motivation of an individual (Fernando & Jayasekara, 2015; Rayner & Papakonstantinou, 2020).

Language proficiency was identified to be an ability that was considered as intrinsic motivation that influence career planning stages other than option-awareness. Consideration of the language proficiency can be seen as considering one’s skills or as barriers based on competency level when making career related decisions and considerations as observed in the study by Madurangi et al. (2019).

Socioeconomic status, which consists of parents’ education, occupation, and household income was found to be statistically insignificant factor in many career planning process stages. There was an insignificant negative effect on self-awareness while an insignificant positive effect on deciding stage, and action and planning stage. Even though the findings are in line with the findings of Sawitri et al. (2014), the findings contradicted many empirical studies as well as Gottfredson’s theory and SCCT.

The environmental influences were observed to have a significant influence on career planning of an individual, especially in the option-awareness stage of an individual. Family members had a significant positive influence on career related information influence on career planners (Ashby & Schoon, 2010; Liu & Morgan, 2016; Mutekwe et al., 2011) while they had a significant negative influence when it comes to decisions related to career. Further, it was observed that both peers and teachers and lecturers had a significant positive influence while the career information obtained from social media had a significant negative influence when it comes to being aware of one’s career options. It should be noted that teachers and lecturers had a significant higher influence on

option-awareness seconded by peers with respect to family members of the career planner.

The prior achievement did not have an influence on career planning which contradicts the observations of peer studies (Al-Bahrani et al., 2020; Cochran et al., 2011; Gemici et al., 2014; Karami et al., 2011). However, it did have a strong positive association with extrinsic motivation and educational aspiration (Gautam et al., 2016; Rayner & Papakonstantinou, 2020).

Educational aspiration based on career aspiration was found to have a significant positive influence (Kisilu et al., 2020; Lubben et al., 2010; Zahid, 2017) in career planning in self-awareness and deciding stages. Further, it was observed that there is a strong positive relationship between prior achievements of the career planner and their educational aspiration.

Prestige of the career was not a significantly influential factor for making career-decisions as observed by Giri et al. (2015) and Radhika & Ramkumar (2016), but it has a significant negative influence on action and planning stage of the career planning process.

Thus, it can be concluded that motivation, educational aspiration, prestige, and environmental factors such as family members, peers, teachers and lecturers, and social media had a significant influence in the career planning process while prior achievements had an indirect influence on the career planning process. Gender did not have a significant influence in any stage of the career planning process of an individual.

V.1 Limitations

The study was conducted with a relatively small sample with a less than 50% response rate due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic as online questionnaires were distributed to those with internet accessibility. The internet accessibility of the respondents as well as the coverage and internet data availability to fill the questionnaire was impacted in the study.

V. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies are encouraged to increase the scope of the study considering the influence of demographic factors such as urban, rural, estate, etc., on career and educational aspiration in career planning, and the influence of personality traits on motivational factors of career planning in self-awareness, and action and planning stages of career planning.

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