

Role of Parents on Their Children's Educational Career Choices in Pakistan



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Abstract

This study explores parents' influence on their children's educational career choice in Pakistan. This study was based on primary data collected from Class 9th and 1st year students of Government High School 157/E.B, Superior College Girls & Boys Arifwala and Harritage Girls and Boys College Arifwala. The data of 80 students was collected by a convenience sampling technique. Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that parents play a substantial role in shaping their children's academic pathways, particularly through their educational background, financial capacity, and occupational expectations. The findings indicate that many parents support their children's autonomy, significant disparities exist based on socioeconomic class and educational awareness. Parental pressure, particularly in lower-income households, was found to limit students' freedom in career decision-making, often resulting in mismatches between students' personal interests and chosen academic paths. The study highlights the importance of fostering open parent-child dialogue and integrating parental guidance into career counseling programs. It recommends policy-level interventions, including seminars and school-based awareness initiatives, to promote informed and supportive parental involvement in students' career development.

Keywords: Educational Career Choices, Parents, Children, Arifwala, Pakistan

Introduction

Choosing a career is one of the greatest dilemmas and challenges in any student's life. It is not an easy task and involves a complex decision-making process (Ikonen et al., 2017). An individual's environment, talents, skills, and academic achievement influence career choices. It may result in failure and disappointment if the wrong career choice is made (Bandura et al., 2001). Parents play a fundamental role in their children's career development and profession decision-making. Parents desire to locate happiness and success in their lifestyles for their youngsters and career desire is one element that influences success. When students experience support and love from their parents, they have more confidence in their ability to pursue their career goals and select an interesting and exciting career (Saleem et al., 2014). This is vital because teens who feel competent in career decision-making tend to make greater gratifying career options (Keller & Suzuki, 2004). Parental involvement has continually been a key element of each educational activity of the teacher-student school. Parents, who had been considered to be one of the faculty community's stakeholders, play a splendid role in the

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academic and environmental transformation of the child; hence, the depth or extent of the involvement of parents in the schooling and school of their child need to be realized greater often (Egbo, 2017).

When parents participate in their children's instructional process, the outcome can normally be positive and encouraging. In this regard, they are usually related and act beneath their very own parental attitudes, which are transmitted via their demonstration of mutual confidentiality concerning the competencies of the youth and their common learning ability, main them to prevail as a complicated process via learning, education (Eldegwy et al., 2024). Parents are consequently worried about helping their adolescents do their homework, as they offer parental support as one of the key techniques leading to a profitable college education for their children. Children's education stage in the family is more structured on the parent's education level, which strongly influences household relationships and children's successful development (Ulrich et al., 2018).

In Pakistan, parents' role in shaping their children's educational and career choices remains a profoundly influential and culturally embedded factor. The country's social fabric, marked by strong family ties and collectivist values, often places parents at the center of major life decisions, including those related to education and career paths (Zeb et al., 2018). Despite increasing awareness and access to career counseling and academic resources, many students still make educational decisions based on parental expectations, socioeconomic pressures, or familial legacy rather than personal interests or aptitudes. This can lead to a mismatch between a student's passion and chosen career, affecting academic performance, job satisfaction, and long-term success (Hassan et al., 2022).

Moreover, the effect of parents varies across socioeconomic backgrounds, with children from rich backgrounds often having more freedom and access to multiple opportunities in relation to the lower-income family backgrounds that face financial constraints (Abbas et al., 2020). Similarly, the parents' education and professional status substantially influence the children's career choices. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to analyze the role of parents in shaping their children educational career choices in Pakistan. The study's findings will provide important implications on how parents influence children's educational career choices. By focusing on the findings, policymakers can also hold seminars for students and parents to discuss the significance of parental support, motivation and financial support in students' choice of education careers and their success.

Literature Review

Various researchers examined the parental input in the education career choice of children, like the study by Shakil et al., (2025) conducted a survey of 500 students of universities in Lahore to identify the extent to which parents could go in influencing their children in the choice of career. The findings indicated there was a greater impact on the career choice of the students by the professional background of the parents. Moreover, the effect was also gender based and female students were more inclined to align their educational and career goals to the expectations of their parents. In the paper, it has been established that the traditional gender roles and parental control still exist in Pakistani society, and they tend to deny students the opportunity to choose their careers. Mujeeb & Sharjeel (2024) employed a mixed-methods design in their research of the influence of parental expectations, socioeconomic status, and cultural norms on students in Karachi, Grade IX. They have found out that majority of the students were likely to experience a conflict between what they were interested in career wise and what their parents have always been interested in mainly on the basis of feeling secure financially, socially and also culturally appropriate. The study concluded that parental influence in

Pakistan was a combination of guidance, control and socioeconomic determinism. Salamat & Akhter (2022) found that parental support, regardless of gender, influenced positively the career aspirations and ambitions of students. Their study used a survey of 400 Grade XII students in Sahiwal and also discovered that the educational levels of parents were important predictors of career expectations and planning of students. This implies that parents are also role models and sources of information, besides providing emotional support that influences the perception of future academic and professional opportunities by the children. Another qualitative data was also presented by Zulfqar et al., (2022), who conducted interviews with University students who stated that they did not receive parental guidance, felt pressured by their parents to focus on finances, and were not exposed to various career opportunities. It was seen that many respondents regretted choosing disciplines that were closer to what their parents wanted rather than what they wanted. This lack of connection between parental control and student agency was especially present in the lower-income families, where financial limitations and the need for stability were usually stronger than the student's interest.

Rehman et al., (2021) examined the role of fathers in influencing women to pursue socially acceptable and safe careers like teaching. The qualitative interviews of female school administrators showed that girls in conservative families had little freedom in the choice of a career, which also contributed to the gender occupational segregation. The study also highlighted the necessity of policy interventions towards gender equity in educational counseling. Hussain & Khoso (2021) examined the connection between parental occupation and academic performance by the students of Grade X in Muzaffargarh. The results showed that the occupations of the fathers explained 11.9 percent of the variance in student achievement, whereas the occupations of the mothers explained 7 percent, which proves that the socioeconomic positioning of parents was directly related to the success of the children in academics. This study has also revealed the discrepancy between the parental involvement in the urban and rural settings, an area that requires special educational intervention. Zeb et al., (2018) examined parental influences of educational career choice among children in KPK, Pakistan. In their research, they considered the information of 200 students and concluded that the majority of secondary school students followed their parental recommendations in terms of choosing careers and chose the careers based on the desire of their parents. It was also found that there was gender difference since their parental culture influenced female students more in their choice of careers compared to male students. Siddiqui (2017) investigated the correlation between parental educational attainment and school enrollment among Pakistani children. Using national-level data, the study found a significant positive relationship between parents' education and children's likelihood of attending and completing school. The analysis revealed that 71 percent of children whose parents had some level of education were enrolled in school, compared to only 13 percent from households with illiterate parents. These findings underscore the importance of parental educational background in shaping access to education and long-term academic engagement.

Research Methodology

This study was descriptive in nature and a survey method was used for data collection. The population of the study consists of all 1st year and 9th class male and female students of Government high school 157/E.B, Superior College Girls & Boys Arifwala and Harritage Girls and Boys College Arifwala, Punjab, Pakistan were the population of this study. The data of 80 1st-year and 9th-class students was collected using a convenience sampling technique. A self-constructed questionnaire consisting of demographic variables and 15 statements about parents' attitudes towards their children's career education choices was used for data collection. The questionnaire was first pilot tested using 38

students and then validated using appropriate statistical measures. SPSS software was used for data analysis and the data was analyzed using the percentage and mean score method.

Data Analysis

Table 1 shows 50.0 percent male students and 50.0 percent female students participated in this study.

Table 1: Gender-wise distribution of respondents who participated in Study

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	40	50.0
Female	40	50.0
Total	80	100.0

The data presented in Table 2 reveal insightful patterns about parents' attitudes toward their children's educational career choices. The responses suggest a moderately positive parental attitude, although variability exists across different dimensions. A significant portion of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (42.5% and 21.2%, respectively) that their parents encourage them to make career choices irrespective of their educational and professional background, reflected in a relatively high mean score of 3.49. This indicates that many parents support autonomy in career decision-making. When asked whether their parents encouraged them to pursue personal interests and aspirations, over half (52.5%) agreed, with a mean of 3.28. However, 25% disagreed, showing that some parents may still hold traditional views or prioritize practicality over personal ambition. Interestingly, 41.2% strongly agreed and 12.5% agreed that their parents question their reasoning for choosing a career in education (mean = 3.46), suggesting that although autonomy is encouraged, scrutiny and concern over specific career paths remain prevalent. Parental encouragement based on cultural background also scored moderately high (mean = 3.38), with 30% strongly agreeing, implying cultural values continue to influence educational choices. Parental involvement in discussions about career plans had a split response. While 33.8% strongly agreed their parents support open communication, 36.2% disagreed, yielding a mean of 3.28. This highlights variability in communicative openness among families. The influence of extended family in education careers was weaker (mean = 2.79), suggesting individual agency or parental guidance may play a stronger role than familial legacy. A notable finding is that a majority (51.2% agree, 23.8% strongly agree) felt their parents had high expectations for their career (mean = 3.65), showing the weight of expectations in shaping career decisions.

Table 2: Parents' Attitude Towards Their Children's Educational Career Choices

Statements		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	S.D
		f	%	f	%	f		
My parents encourage to make choices irrespective of their educational and professional background.	f	8	13	8	34	17	3.490	1.273
	%	10	16.2	10	42.5	21.2		
My parents encouraged me to pursue my career interests and aspirations.	f	9	20	--	42	9	3.280	1.273
	%	11.2	25	--	52.5	11.2		
My parents often question my reasoning for	f	11	17	9	10	33	3.460	1.534

choosing a career in education.	%	13.8	21.2	11.2	12.5	41.2		
My parents encourage to choose an education career based on their cultural background.	<i>f</i>	10	15	14	17	24	3.380	1.407
	%	12.5	18.8	17.5	21.2	30		
My parents encourage me to talk to them about my career plans.	<i>f</i>	9	29	--	15	27	3.280	1.518
	%	11.2	36.2	--	18.8	33.8		
Other immediate family members are also educators who have influenced my decision to be an educator.	<i>f</i>	19	27	--	20	14	2.790	1.490
	%	23.8	33.8	--	25	17.5		
My parents tell me they have high expectations for my career.	<i>f</i>	7	13	--	41	19	3.650	1.254
	%	8.8	16.2	--	51.2	23.8		
My parents have encouraged me to be involved in extracurricular activities.	<i>f</i>	11	17	9	22	21	3.310	1.425
	%	13.8	21.2	11.2	27.5	26.2		
My parents understand my thoughts, feelings, and opinions about various topics.	<i>f</i>	12	14	--	28	26	3.520	1.475
	%	15	17.5	--	35	32.5		

The data presented in Table 3 examines the relationship between parents' socioeconomic background and their children's educational career choices. The findings indicate a significant influence of economic and educational factors on students' decisions, although with varying degrees of agreement. A large portion of respondents (41.2% disagreed and 21.2% strongly disagreed) rejected the idea that parents' socioeconomic status does not influence educational career choices, yielding a low mean score of 2.52. This suggests that, in reality, socioeconomic status plays a considerable role in shaping students' educational paths. Regarding financial considerations, 28.8% agreed and 13.8% strongly agreed that money is not a significant factor in choosing a career, but a combined 32.4% disagreed, with a mean of 3.08. This split response highlights the mixed impact of financial constraints on career decisions. A strong consensus (41.2% strongly agreed, 12.5% agreed) supported the idea that parents' educational and professional background significantly influences students' career choices, resulting in a high mean score of 3.54. On financial support, 60% (38.8% agreed and 21.2% strongly agreed) stated their parents could finance their education regardless of the chosen career, with a mean of 3.40, showing the importance of economic capacity in career feasibility. Similarly, 63.8% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that parents' occupational preferences affect students' career choices, reflected in the highest mean of 3.56. Finally, 48.8% affirmed their parents provide adequate resources and opportunities for career development, yielding a mean of 3.31. In conclusion, the data suggest that parental socioeconomic background, especially in terms of education, occupation, and financial support, significantly shapes students' educational and career pathways.

Table 3: Socioeconomic Background of Parents and Their Children's Educational Career Choices

Statements		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	S.D
Parent's socioeconomic status does not influence the educational career choice of students.	<i>f</i>	17	33	9	13	8	2.520	1.273
	%	21.2	41.2	11.2	16.2	10		
Money is not a significant factor in my choosing my intended career.	<i>f</i>	13	13	20	23	11	3.080	1.290
	%	16.2	16.2	25	28.8	13.8		

Parents' educational and professional background affects students' choice of educational career.	<i>f</i>	8	17	12	10	33	3.540	1.458
	%	10	21.2	15	12.5	41.2		
My parents can finance my education whichever career I choose.	<i>f</i>	8	17	7	31	17	3.400	1.368
	%	10	21.2	8.8	38.8	21.2		
Parent's occupational preference affects the career choice of students.	<i>f</i>	6	18	5	27	24	3.560	1.330
	%	7.5	22.5	6.2	33.8	30		
My parents are able to provide the relevant educational opportunities and resources to provide for my career development.	<i>f</i>	12	20	--	27	21	3.310	1.503
	%	15	25	--	33.8	26.2		

Conclusions

This study explores parents' influence on their children's educational career choice. The study's population was Class 9th and 1st year class students of Government High School 157/E.B, Superior College Girls & Boys, Arifwala and Harritage Girls and Boys College. For collecting data, 80 students were selected by the convenience sampling technique. Data was collected with the help of a questionnaire that the researcher designed. To evaluate parents' influence on their children's educational career choice, statistical software SPSS was used to calculate the frequencies and mean values. The outcomes of this study revealed that their parents' socioeconomic status significantly affects the children's educational career choice. Parents' socioeconomic status and educational background significantly affect children's career choices. Some students responded that their parents cannot finance the education career they want to choose. On the other hand, educated and financially strong parents were more involved in their children's educational activities. Educated parents prefer choosing a career for their children and uneducated parents send their children to school, unable to show their preferences due to a lack of education. Keeping in view the study outcomes, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Educational career talks need to be organized in schools. This will assist the student in choosing a career/subject combination relevant to their University and other tertiary institutions' choice of course.
2. Students should be exposed to various educational opportunities to compensate for a lack of stimulating home background.
3. There should be a good interpersonal relationship between parents and teachers. This will help to make learning from home to school a continuous process.
4. Parents should not force their children to occupy themselves, but encourage their school progress.
5. Parents should encourage learning for their children. They should talk to their kids in a friendly environment, so kids should not hesitate to discuss school issues with their parents.

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