

FACTORS AFFECTING ON DECISION MAKING AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN EDUCATIONAL PERSUITS OF STUDENTS IN SELECTING CAREERS

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The success of the educational endeavors of the students is determined by many factors. Making proper decisions and the social factors that influence are very important for the students to successfully complete education and achieve their career goals. In Sri Lanka, job market is highly competitive and only the students with higher intellectual capacity and have the ability to make right decisions would become successful. The parents and family, teachers, peers and other important social groups such as clergy, celebrities and social organizations are also contributors to their success. Selection of suitable subjects in General Certificate of Education, Advance Level is very important for acquiring better careers in the future. Upon successful completion of Advance Level Examination, only a handful of students get the chance to enter the Government Universities, where they could specialize to a certain profession or to obtain a special or general degree. After graduation they go into professional careers depending on the available opportunities, overall qualifications and career interest.

Limited studies have been carried out to ascertain the factors affecting the educational pursuits of Sri Lankan students at critical points such as selection of Advance Level stream, selection of specialization stream in the university and achievement of professional careers. Therefore, the present study was conducted to assess the factors affecting the decision making and achievements in educational pursuits of students in their advanced level and post school careers by collecting information from Advance Level students, current university students and professionals. The survey was conducted in the Central Province, Sri Lanka from April to June 2011 by conducting a questionnaire guided interview.

Seventy five percent of the professionals and current university students had at least one parent in a government job, which shows that there is higher chance of success for the children of government servants. This implies that children of government servants were guided for the success in education than the children of non government servants. Sixty percent of the respondents self decided about their Advance Level steam and others followed the decisions made by their parents/family. The ability to make individual decisions is going up in the university and postgraduate careers indicating less influence by

parents/family. Eighty percent of the school students preferred to be a socially high ranked professional. Primary people behind the career path and success of respondents were parents and teachers. Significant associations between preferred career and Grade for Ordinary Level Mathematics and between subject selection in Advance Level and Grades for Mathematics and Science were observed . Thus math and science education is crucial in deciding the future careers of students, therefore must, be strengthened at school level. Thirty three percent of respondents in all three categories had been motivated by successful role models in planning their life. Respondents were in the opinion that improving English language proficiency and career guidance programs at level Advance Level stage would be useful.

Decision making and achievements of the students are decided primarily by self interest and social factors such as parents/family and teachers. Through social groups such as peers, students mainly received motivation. Therefore, parents/family, teachers and other important social groups must play a crucial role in supporting students to successfully pursue education