Factors Affecting the Career Plans of University Students after Graduation

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Abstract

The concerns of university students about result a job that fits with their field of education and abilities and also about their adaptation to business life are important problems to be considered. Therefore, career planning to be dealt with from the period of student years and having information about the factors affecting career planning have great importance.This research was conducted to determine the factors affecting the career plans of final year undergraduate students after graduation. The research covers 302 students studying in senior classes of two universities in the city of Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan. The data of research was collected by questionnaire. As the result of the research, the dignity of profession, economic factors, personal characteristics and skills, university and current developments were found to be the most important factors affecting the career plans of university students. It was found that the degree of difficulty of profession, family, social factors and legal obligations have less effect on their plans. It was found and observed that there are statistically significant differences between some factors affecting career plans of students by their gender, age, university and sector preferences which they desire to serve in.

Keywords: Career, career planning, university students, Kyrgyzstan

1. Introduction

Developing world economy increases the competitiveness in all working areas and creates new lines of businesses and opportunities. The qualified employees constitute the basic requirements of these economic developments and new lines of businesses. The concept of qualified employee can be defined as the individual to develop himself in a way to know all the intricacies of the work in which he works currently or will work in the future. This depends on the individual to make a plan in accordance with time and future, to develop and train himself to know all the intricacies of the business. This time and planning process can be described and defined as career planning.
Career planning according to Schreuder and Theron (1999:4) is defined as reaching the career-related steps correctly and realizing and accomplishing the planned decisions by making the right decision during this transition period by deciding what will be done in which time period.

The individuals, who are considered as ready workforce for whom career choice and planning is done, are university students in today's world. Students usually do not think over their careers when choosing their departments in universities at where they will get education and even their universities. Career planning of students usually starts after graduation (Kozak & Dalkıranoğlu, 2013). Universities are institutions that prepare students to the business world by offering and providing the basic information related to the students' field of specialty and also opportunities such as internships, courses and seminars. Students make their career planning by choosing their line of business at which they will work along with internal and external factors and also their education.
However, the career planning is not only a concept that should be considered and evaluated within the terms of education but also in business life (Adıgüzel, 2009).One of the main reasons for the career planning is the type of work or the advantages and benefits provided to the individual in the light of this work (Soysal & Söylemez, 2014). Entering business life is quite important in terms of sustaining it and advancing in the business life.

Career planning activity has to be made in the right way due to its high importance considering the above-mentioned reasons (Adıgüzel, 2009). This situation and rapid changes in business life compel individuals to make plans for the future even when receiving education (Soysal&Söylemez, 2014).Students, if they do not get the necessary guidance and support about their careers, may lead to time waste and waste of resources when they get a start in business life (Leung,Hou, Gati & Li, 2011).

The individual is affected by many factors when choosing a career. (Adiguzel,2009).These factors can be classified as family, age, gender, personal characteristics and abilities, legal factors, social factors, economic factors and the impact of educational institutions (Sav, 2008).

It was aimed with this study to examine and investigate the levels of factors affecting the career planning of senior both students who are about to graduate and those who are studying in two state universities in the province of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The subject of this research has great importance due to the limited number of studies with the same subject that have been conducted in Kyrgyzstan and the guidance to be made for students during their education would ease the employment policies of the country which tries to develop.

2. Concept of Career and Definition

The concept of career which has an important place in today's world has been a concept that has been dealt with its different aspects since the 70s due to the formation of new organization structures and changes in the business life. The concept of career that had been derived from Latin and French words is defined as "business or profession which a person intends to pursue during his education or in a part of his life or in the whole of his life (Geçikli, 2002).

Career is the concretization of knowledge and abilities, working individuals to specialize in their professions, work experience acquired over time and developed and improved business relations according to Redman & Wilkinson (2001:268).

Career planning makes employees to determine and identify their career goals, to be aware of business life opportunities and outcomes and, to make the assessment of direction and time in reaching and achieving the aimed opportunities and choices. This is the first step of the career choice and is a quite important one. Individuals tend to choose a profession which may provide and produce conditions enough for them to make a comfortable living both economically and in a way that they desire. This choice may be examined under two headings as social and psychological factors. Social factors are the social history of the individual, his relationship with his parents, the social and economic level of the family and the environment subject to the living of the individual. Psychological factors can be listed as the values, beliefs and attitudes, expectations, personality of the individual and opinions and views of the individual on the future of the business *(Özen, 2011)*.

Career planning can be defined as the person's profession development planning in terms of the individual. Career planning in terms of organizational aspects, is the person's profession development planning and promotion planning within the organization. The answers to such questions as the time of courses for the employee, when he will pass to the other department, when he will be a director are given as a result of career planning activities carried out within the organization. As seen, even though career planning is divided into two according to individual and organizational terms, the individual and the organization are both participating in the system together when it is dealt with as a system. Career planning is the planning of the development of the individual or the planning of his promotion within the body of the institution at where he serves by determining and setting the way to make him reach his career goals in line with the employee's knowledge, abilities and motives (Bayraktaroğlu, 2011: 138).

It is such a curious thing to learn which factors the students are affected by during their career planning. It is important for both the organization and the individual.

3. Method

It was benefited from the questionnaire in this study which had been used in Sav (2008)'s study by the name of "A Study on the Factors Affecting Individual Career Planning and Influence of Universities over these Factors" in order to determine the factors affecting the career planning of students. The questionnaire is a 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of 30 statements and 10 factors. The 5-point Likert-type scale used in this study was scaled as "(1) Extremely Influential", (2) Very Influential", "(3) Somewhat Influential", "(4) Slightly Influential" and

"(5) Not At All Influential".Each participant was asked to evaluate the statement and choose one of the options. In this regard, it's considered that the higher the arithmetic average of an item is, the more decreases the level of influence.

The study population consists of 1061 senior students who will graduate from the Kyrgyz-TurkishManas University and Atatürk Alatoo University in the province of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan at the end of the 2013-2014 academic year. 302 students that had been selected from the population of the study by use of random sampling method constitute the sample group of the study. Questionnaires used in the study were administered to the students face-to-face by the researcher. Time of 20 minutes was given to the participants for the questions. 342 questionnaires were administered to the participants for the study. However, 40 out of 342 questionnaires have not been evaluated because of the reason that these had been filled missing.

The data obtained were analyzed by using SPSS 16.0 software package program. Frequency (f) and percentage (%) were used for the data related to demographic characteristics of the participants. In addition, average and standard deviation out of descriptive statistical analyses were used to determine the factors affecting career planning.

4. Results of The Study

The research was examined in two parts as the results related to the responses to the statements affecting demographic factors and the career planning.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Research Sample

A total of 302 students consisting of 174 females and 128 males participated in the study. The great majority (87.4%) of the students were single and 52.6% of them were in the range of 21-22 age group. 44% of the students were studying in departments related to Administrative Sciences and 15.9% of them were studying in departments related to Tourism and Management. 51.3% of the students were planning to work in the private sector. The students with families with average monthly income more than 9.001 som are 52.6% (Table 1).

Table 1: Characteristics of Research Sample

Variables	n	%	Variables	n	%
Gender			University		
Female	174	57.6	Kyrgyz-TurkishManas University	151	50.0
Male	128	42.4	Atatürk AlatooUniversity	151	50.0
Marital Status			Monthly Average Household Income		
Single	264	87.4	5000-7000som	55	18.2
Married	30	9.9	7001-9000som	88	29.1
Divorced	8	2.6	9001+	159	52.6
Age			Faculty / School		
19-20	26	8.6	Tourism and Management School	48	15.9
21-22	159	52.6	Faculty of Administrative Sciences	133	44.0
23-24	109	36.1	Faculty of Letters	33	10.9
25-26	7	2.3	Vocational School of Higher Education	40	13.2
29	1	.3	Faculty of Veterinary Science	10	3.3
Sector intended to work in			Faculty of Communication	15	5.0
Public	54	17.9	Conservatory	8	2.6
Private	155	51.3	Faculty of Agriculture	5	5.0
Self-employment	93	30.8			

4.2. Results Factors Affecting Career Planning of Students

Factors affecting career planning of students in this part have been examined under the following factors: Family, Social Environment, Legal Obligations, Economic Factors, Education, Profession's Level of Difficulty, Dignity of the Profession, Current Affairs and University (Table 2):

Considering the relative degree of influence of the participation to the statements constituting family factor, opinions of "Relatives ($\overline{X}$ = 2.42 ±1.411)" seems to have quite more influence on students when compared to opinions of "Mother ($\overline{X}$ = 3.51 ±1.38)", Father ($\overline{X}$ = 3.32 ±1.50)" and "Brother/Sister ($\overline{X}$ = 2.88 ±1.40)"

Considering the social environment, the influence in the career planning of students appears to be more for "Family Friends ($\overline{X}$ = 2.56 ±1.41)" when compared to their teachers and friends.

Table 2: Factors Affecting Career Planning of Students

Factors	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Family	302	3.03	1.098
Mother	302	3.51	1.380
Father	302	3.32	1.507
Brother / Sister	302	2.88	1.402
Relatives	302	2.42	1.411
Social Environment	302	3.01	.999
Teachers	302	3.33	1.321
Friends	302	3.13	1.281
Family Friends	302	2.56	1.419
Legal Obligations	302	2.92	1.126
Military Service Obligation	137	3.23	1.388
Compulsory Service Obligation	302	2.89	1.246
Being not allowed to a second job	302	2.80	1.306
Personal Characteristics and Abilities	302	3.70	.936
Profession compliance with the personal characteristics	302	3.74	1.207
Profession compliance with the personal abilities	302	3.75	1.074
The level of knowledge and capacity required for the profession	302	3.61	1.167
Economic Factors	302	3.73	.936
Profession having high income/salary	302	3.98	1.180
Profession having a secure future	302	3.80	1.147
Private health services offered by the profession	302	3.52	1.200
High probability of result a job	302	3.63	1.258
Education	302	3.46	1.001
Long-lasting training required for the profession	302	3.47	1.166
Hard training required for the profession	302	3.44	1.162
Profession's Level of Difficulty	302	3.36	.985
Intensive work hours	302	3.25	1.185
Travel	302	3.46	1.238
Dignity of the Profession	302	3.90	1.004
Profession to have dignity	302	3.94	1.147
Profession to offer promotion opportunities	302	3.94	1.168
Profession to maintain timeliness even in the future	302	3.82	1.198
Current Affairs	302	3.63	1.001
Current situation of the country	302	3.73	1.170
Future expectations for the country	302	3.81	1.187
Current economic developments	302	3.63	1.221
Current political developments	302	3.37	1.263
University	302	3.66	1.077
Career weeks	302	3.61	1.238
Internship opportunities	302	3.71	1.237

Considering the statements constituting legal obligations factor, "Military Service Obligation ($\overline{X}$ = 3.23 ±1.38)" binding only the male students seems to have the lowest influence.

Considering the personal characteristics and abilities, average of "profession compliance with the personal characteristics ($\overline{X}$ = 3.74 ±1.20)", "profession compliance with personal abilities ($\overline{X}$ = 3.75 ±1.07)" and "knowledge level required for the profession ($\overline{X}$ = 3.61 ±1.16)" was found to have a moderate impact on career planning.

Considering the statements constituting economic factors, "Profession having high income/salary ($\overline{X}$ = 3.98 ±1.18)" can be said not to have a great influence on career planning. "Profession having a secure future", "High probability of result a job" and "Private health services offered by the profession" seems to have moderate influence on career planning.

Students stated that the factors "education ($\overline{X}$ = 3.46 ±1.00)", "the profession's level of difficulty ($\overline{X}$ = 3.36 ±.98)", "dignity of the profession ($\overline{X}$ = 3.90 ±1.00)", "current affairs ($\overline{X}$ = 3.63 ±1.00)", "university ($\overline{X}$ = 3.66 ±1.07)" have moderate influence on their career planning.

5. Discussion

That students do not prefer public sector while planning their careers may be due to the facts that top position is clear and precise in public sector in Kyrgyzstan and many countries in the world or incomes are less than in private sector or self-employed economically.

That military service obligation has the lowest influence on career planning of male students in legal obligations factor may be attributed to the fact that students studying in universities of Kyrgyzstan have the right to be exempt from the military service on condition that they have to pay a fee to the state. Thus, military service shall not constitute an obstacle to career planning of male students.

That the compliance of profession to personal characteristics and abilities of participants of the study has moderate influence on their career planning, may be caused from their wrong decisions when choosing their universities or departments or them not to get any advice and benefit from any kind of consulting service.

Kozak&Dalkıranoğlu (2013), conducted a research on university students studying in Turkey and found that they have tendency of working in sectors different from the sector which they have received education when planning their careers. He attributed the reason for that situation to the mistakes in the selection of university, lack of jobs in the sector which they have received education and department not to meet the expectations of the student. This situation is consistent with the results of our study. That students studying in Kyrgyzstan transfer to other universities while studying at a university, supports it.

Students think that "economic" and "educational" factors and in addition the factors "the profession's level of difficulty", "dignity of the profession", "current affairs" and "university" have moderate influence on their career planning. This situation may suggest that students studying in Kyrgyzstan may have other expectations rather than the above-mentioned factors when planning their careers. Lairio and Penttinen (2006) found as a result of their studies that students have negative opinions and thoughts about their careers and future and the results of this study support our study and is consistent with it.

In conclusion, it was found as a result of our study that university students need counseling service on their career planning. The large part of this need depends on universities and them to support students in parallel to responding to country's economy. This support may only be possible by providing internship opportunities to students nested to the sector by including career planning courses to all departments of the universities.

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