

# Business Students Career Preference In Pakistan: A Case Study of Private and Public Universities in Peshawar

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# BUSINESS STUDENTS CAREER PREFERENCE IN PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN PESHAWAR

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#### Business Students Career Preference In Pakistan: A Case Study of Private and Public Universities in Peshawar

#### Abstract

This paper tries to explore the career preference of business students at public and private universities in Peshawar, Pakistan. A close ended questionnaire was randomly distributed among the final year business students of universities located at Peshawar, in order to know their choices apropos specialisation. The number of total students are 236 in which 152 (64%) are male and 84 (36%) are female. Both private and public sector universities students view is taken. Public sector respondents are 158 (66.94%) while private sectors 78 (33.05%). In public sector number of males is eighty two (82) and female 76. In private institution male are seventy (93.76%) and females 8 (6.24%). Majority of the students want to be employed in their chosen field speciality after getting their degrees. The major business courses that have been chosen by the business students for specialisation are Finance, Human Resource Management, International Business and Marketing. The respondents career choice varied between government job, own business, job in multinational organization and banking. Better career opportunities, financial benefits, challenging and interesting work environment and job security inspired the students. Family, friends and relatives are also a deciding factor while selecting the specialisation.

Keywords: Career Preference, Finance, Marketing and Human Resource Management

#### 1. Introduction

Choosing specialisation is a major career decision for business students. After completion of secondary education, further education of students depends on the skills, abilities, and knowledge and life ambitions. The definition of career according to Greenhaus (1987) is that career management is the process by which individuals collect information about values, interests, skill, strengths and weaknesses, identify a career goal and engage in career strategies that increase the probability that career goals will be achieved. Human resource management professionals have promoted the use of development systems career management for improving employees' career motivation, objectives and commitment because of the maintained link between career management, performance, growth behaviour, and participation in development activities (London & Mone, 1987).

In Pakistan, majority of the students are selecting medical. In 2016 alone 27,573<sup>3</sup> students appeared in an entry test for KP medical colleges, while in Punjab, 56,272<sup>4</sup> students contested for 3,405 MBBS and 2,106 for BDS. Engineering is the second preferred career, but due to lack of seats in the public sector universities and high fees of private universities they are not able to continue. In Social Sciences, they have many choices in which business education is the most preferred one. Business students have a lot of options such as Finance, Banking, Islamic Banking, Human Resource Management, Marketing and Project Management in

<sup>3.</sup> https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/137393-27573-appear-in-entry-test-for-KP-medical-colleges

<sup>4.</sup> http://educationist.com.pk/m-cat-test-56272-students-appeared/

which they can pursue specialisation. The basic objective of the study is to know the business students career preference and underline the reason of occupational choice of private and public universities in Pakistan. The number of business institutions is growing at an extraordinary rapidity in Pakistan, which is contributing to qualified graduates and skilled manpower. According to Stryker (1968) individuals seek opportunities in accordance with their most salient identities, skills and attributes.

Career identity and specialisation selection is one of the most complex decisions in the contemporary competitive job market. Most of the time students are observing the demand for the specialisation. Some are taking advice from relatives, friends and teachers, some are forced by parents. In order to know the basic reason behind selection of specialisation the primary factors are: financial benefit, recognition, social status, job security, non-financial benefit, good career opportunities in the field, good match with the capabilities for doing the job, being referred by someone else, parent's influence on career decision, challenging and interesting job, freedom and independence at work place, childhood aspirations, inspired by family, friends or relatives. In all these variables pay is the most potent factor. Many earlier studies include pay as a variable and found that it significantly influences the response of potential applicants (Schwoerer & Rosen, 1989; Zedeck, 1977).

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) defines the developed conceptual structure objective to get familiar with the processes through which people selecting the educational / professional interests, make career-relevant choices, and achieve performances of different quality in their educational and occupational preferences (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). It also emphasizes the rational person variables, such as self-efficacy, that are assumed to support someone to exercise personal agency in their career accomplishments. The theory also highlights the relationship between cognitive person variables and other stages of the person life, his or her behaviour, and background (e.g., barriers, support systems, gender and ethnicity).

Over the past several decades, numerous authors have written and suggested several strategies/methods employed to hasten the achievement of upward mobility and salary progression. Vardi (1980) classified the following strategies as "individual level mediators" or "mobility behaviours", among the major strategies effecting job/career choice. We shall refer to these behaviours as career strategies and define them as behaviours which may be utilized by an individual to decrease the time required, for and uncertainty surrounding the attainment of important career objectives. Normally, the successful utilization of such strategies will result in the efficient achievement of salary and status objectives. In this

technological era, main focus of career is in obtaining good salary and status objectives is normally reflected in the average rate of salary progression for an individual.

### 1.1 Business Universities/ School in Pakistan

Universities, both public and private sector, play an important role in creating highly trained and educated specialists. Tertiary education sets the foundation for an enduring commitment by graduates in the form of learning and professional career development. In Pakistan total number of universities is 146<sup>5</sup>, in which 79 are public and 67 are private sector institutes.

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|---|---------|--------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Province  | Private | Public | Total |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Khyber Pakhtunkhwa                                  | 10      | 20     | 30    |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Punjab  | 24      | 27     | 51    |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sindh   | 30      | 20     | 50    |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Baluchistan   | 1       | 7      | 8     |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Azad Jammu Kashmir                                  | 2       | 5      | 7     |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total   | 67      | 79     | 146   |  |  |  |  |  |  |

 Table 1: Total number of universities in Pakistan

## **1.2 Research Questions**

• What is the career preference of final semester business students in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

• Which factors and who influence them in selecting the career specialisation?

# **1.3 Research Objectives**

The main objectives of the study are:

• To find out the career preference of the business school students in the public and private universities of Peshawar, Pakistan

- To find out the level of satisfaction from their specialisation.
- To identify the major factors influencing career/specialisation selection.

• To investigate the BBA, MBA, MPA, MPhil and PhD students selecting their broader career for livelihood;

• To know the starting of the career as employ or as an entrepreneur;

• To find out the motivating factors that encourage them to accept a job in an organization and

• To study the gender differences with respect to career preference and major influencing factors of the business graduates.

# 1.4 Hypothesis

Ho: Business students are not aware of their career preference.

H<sub>1</sub>: Business students are aware of their career preference.

<sup>5.</sup> http://www.hec.gov.pk/english/universities/Pages/DAIs/HEC-Recognized-Universities.aspx

#### 2. Literature Review

University of North Carolina in 1997, have done a research on the name of Family Friendly Human Resource Policies, Salary Levels, and Salient Identity as Predictors of Organisational Attraction. In this research, they took 263 participants of MBA alumni and students associated with a major South Eastern University. The research output indicates that all categories of individuals were attracted to an organisation with flexible career paths and policies. However, individuals with different salient identities differed in their attraction to dual and traditional career paths and policies. These results support the value of salient identity as an individual difference that influences career decisions.

Schwartz (1989), worked on the dual career way of life system in which employee, male especially female select a primary vocation of life style. The primary preference of the women for their career was family path work and travel. The analysis of dual career path clearly has many advantages in the traditional career.

Lent (2002) career preferences show that eight categories force them in selecting current specialisation. Majority of participants mentioned encouragement or social advices from friends and family members. Few respondent shows financial resources outcome such as job opportunities, goal setting, and self/career exploration activities determine the career choice.

Mohammad & Siddique (2012) has done analysis on the career preferences in private universities at Dhaka, Bangladesh. Their analysis was done on 256 final year BBA students. In the career preference field analysis, Finance and Banking were on top with (30.1%), Human Resource Management (23.0%), Accounting (18.4%), and Marketing (14.5%). While in the selection of building up the career, (38.7%) students were interested in banking field, 23.8% preferred to work in multinational companies, and 11.7% preferred teaching as their future career. Reasons behind the specialisations selections were different in which financial benefit (65.2%), social status (56.6%), prevailing opportunities in the job market (40.2%), job security (38.3%),and acquired qualities for doing the job (37.5%) were identified as extremely important.

#### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### **3.1 Data Selection**

The study is qualitative in nature. The population for the study consisted of BBA, MBA, MPA, MPhil and PhD final year specialisation students, who are currently enrolled in public and private universities located in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtwankhava, Pakistan. Total universities teaching business education in Peshawar are fourteen, we have chosen eight (four private and four public) of them based on ease of access and ability to collect responses.

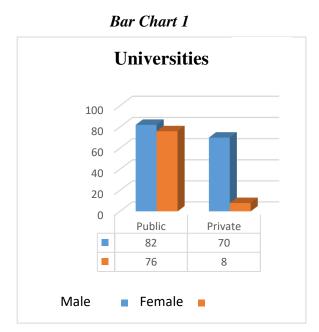
#### 3.2 Data Collection

Closed ended questionnaire has been distributed among the final year students of BBA, MBA, MPA, MPhil and PhD program of different private and public universities.

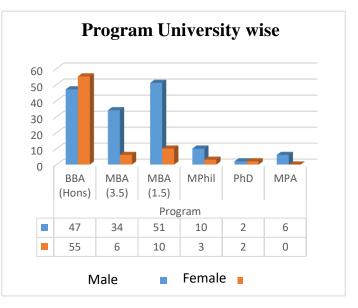
#### 3.3 Sampling Frame

Bachelor in Commerce is a two year, Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) is a four year honours degree, MBA is three and half year, one and half year and two and half year degrees in Pakistan. While MPA, MPhil is two and PhD is three year program. On an average in last year of the education students get the opportunity to choose specialisation in a particular discipline of business such as; Accounting, Finance, Banking, Marketing, Human Resource Management, Management Information System, International Business, Project Management, Total Quality Management and Research Methodology. Thus, the sample students are from final year who have already selected their specialisation. Students were asked to indicate their career preference and the reasons behind their preference, and to rank the reasons according to importance multiple answers were selected. The number of total students are 236 in which 152 (64%) are male and 84 (36%) are female.

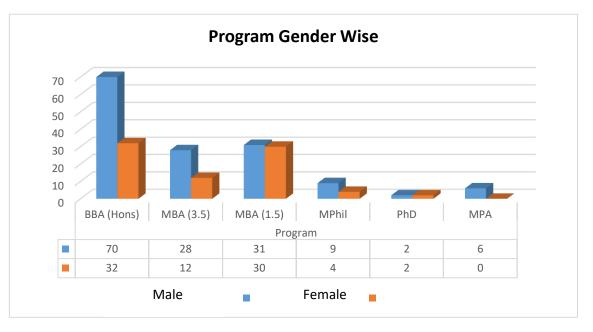
Both private and public sector universities students' view has been taken. The total number of students are 236 among them 158 (66.94%), are from public sectors and 78 (33.05%) from private. From public sector number of males are 82 and in private it is 70. Off the private sector majority 70 (93.76%) are males and the number of females are very low just 8 which is 6.24%. From the analysis in Peshawar, more females are studying in public sector compare to males.



Bar Chart 2



Data is collected from 236 respondents in six different programs. In BBA (Hons) total number of students are 102 in which, 79 are males and 32 females, 47 are from public sectors and 55 are from private. In MBA (3.5) the total is 40 in which 28 are males and 12 females, 34 are from public and 6 are from private universities. MBA (1.5) total number is 61, males are 31 and females are 30 in which 51 are from public and 10 are from private sector. Total MPhil students are 13 in which 9 are males and 4 are females, 10 are from public and three are from private. PhD total numbers are 4 in which 2 males and 2 females are from public and 2 from private. In MPA all 6 are males and from public sectors. Total number of students is 236 but ten of them have not mentioned their program.



#### Bar Chart 3

#### 3.4 Analysis Method

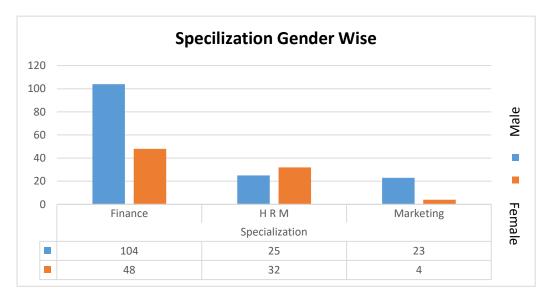
This study investigates the factors and their extent of satisfaction with the decision that influence Pakistan business students while selecting their career specialisation. The study also investigates any actual difference among the career preference and factors influencing the career choice of male and female business students. The collected data is processed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20).

#### 4. Finding and Discussion

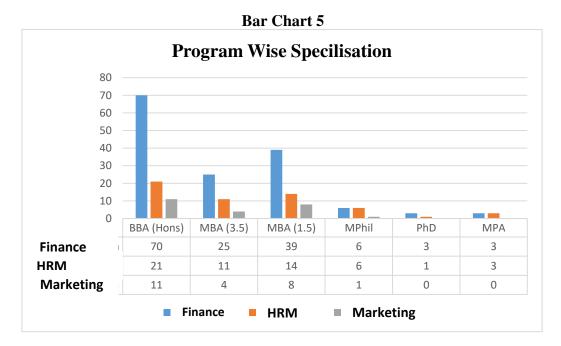
# 4.1 Career preference of business students in private and public universities of Pakistan

To identify the career preference and specialisation of the business students in the selected field, where they want to build up their career and how much they are satisfied from

their decision. Moreover, students were also asked to specify their area of interest in which they want to pursue their career majors. The business school students divided their specialisation into three main categories, Finance 64.4% in which 104 are male and 48 are female, Human Resource Management 24.2%, the female are 32, slightly more than males at 25 and Marketing 11.4%, among whom 23 are Male and just 4 females.



**Bar Chart 4** 



The degree of satisfaction with the selection of the undergraduates specialisations are shown in the table 2. below. The number of students is 236 but one of the students does not mention the percentage. Majority (45%) 103 out of 235, 65 out 103 are from finance, 26 are from HRMt and 12 are from marketing. 75% of them are satisfied with their specialisation

selection. 94 out of 235 are 100% satisfied. Among them, 62 are from finance, 23 are from HRM and 9 are from marketing. 31 out of 235 are 50% satisfied from their selection, 20 are from finance, 7 are from HRM and 4 are from marketing. 6 out of 235 are 25% satisfied from their selection. 1 out of 235 is not satisfied from his selection.

| Specialisation | Specify the degree of satisfaction with the selection of your specialisation? |     |     |     |      |     |  |  |
|----------------|---|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|--|--|
| -              | 0%  | 25% | 50% | 75% | 100% |     |  |  |
| Finance        | 1   | 4   | 20  | 65  | 62   | 152 |  |  |
| HRM            | 0   | 1   | 7   | 26  | 23   | 57  |  |  |
| Marketing      | 0   | 1   | 4   | 12  | 9    | 26  |  |  |
| Total          | 1   | 6   | 31  | 103 | 94   | 235 |  |  |

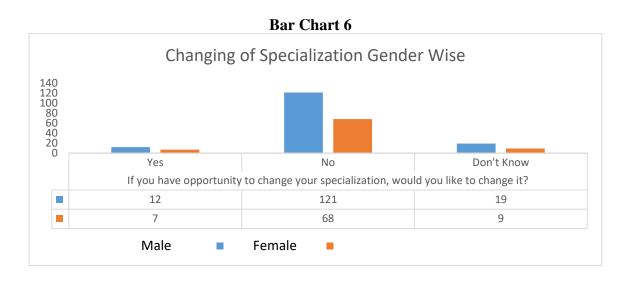
**Table 2: Specialisations** 

Majority of the students (80.1%) are satisfied with their specialisations selection and they do not want to change their field. Among them 65% are from finance, 24% from HRM and 11% from Marketing. About 8.1% want to change their filed in which 58% are from finance, 32% from HRM and 10% from Marketing. Around 11.9% mentioned that they don't know whether to change or not if they had the opportunity. Total 19 out of 236 want to change the specialisations in which 11 are from finance, 6 in HRM and 2 from marketing.

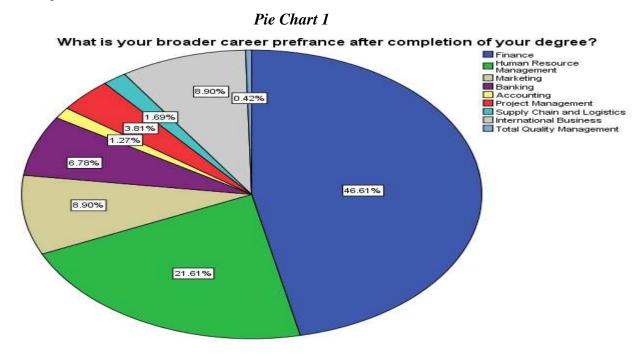
Among finance specialisation 81% of the students are satisfied and they do not want to change, 7% want to change and 12% mentions that they do not know what to do whether to change or continue with the finance specialisation. Among HRM specialisation 78% students are satisfied, while 11% are not satisfied and 11% do not know whether to change or continue. From the selection of marketing 78% are satisfied with their selection, 15% are confused and 7% of current students want to change their specialisations.

| Table 3        |                  |       |            |     |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------|------------------|-------|------------|-----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Specialisation | If you<br>your s | Total |            |     |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                | Yes              | No    | Don't Know |     |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Finance        | 11               | 123   | 18         | 152 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| HRM            | 6                | 45    | 6          | 57  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Marketing      | 2                | 21    | 4          | 27  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total          | 19               | 236   |            |     |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The male-female specialisation ratio is almost same. 8% of male and 8% female want to change their specialisations, 80% of male and 81% of female are satisfied with their specialisation and 12% of male and 11% female are confused apropos their specialisation.



Selection of career broader area is the important selection, because after the broader area you are going to further narrow down your area. 46% choosing finance as a broader area, 21% are going for HRM, 8.9% for Marketing and International business. 6.8% are going to banking sector, 4% are going for project management, 1% are going for accounting and 2% are choosing supply chain and logistics whereas 1 out of 234 is targeting Total quality management.



In finance 72% of the students are selecting it for the purpose of broader career, 11% want banking and international business, 2% accounting and project management. About 1% want to go for HRM, and no one want marketing and total quality management as a broader career preference after completion of degree.

In HRM 82% want to continue with HRM as a broader career preference after completion of degree. Around 2% intend to select marketing, supply chain and logistics and total quality management. 9% want to go for project management and 4 International businesses, no one intends to choose finance, banking and accounting as a broader career preference area. In marketing 74% will continue with marketing, 11% international business, 7% HRM and 4% want to go for project management, supply chain and logistics. Whilst 0% is going for finance, banking, accounting and total quality management among the marketing students.

| Table 4        |  |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |     |       |  |
|----------------|--|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|-------|--|
| Specialisation | What is your broader career preference after completion of your<br>degree? |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |     |       |  |
|                | FI   | HR | MR | BA | AC | РМ | SCL | IB | TQM | Total |  |
| Finance        | 109  | 2  | 0  | 16 | 3  | 3  | 2   | 16 | 0   | 151   |  |
| HRM            | 0  | 46 | 1  | 0  | 0  | 5  | 1   | 2  | 1   | 56    |  |
| Marketing      | 0  | 2  | 20 | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1   | 3  | 0   | 27    |  |
| Total          | 109  | 50 | 21 | 16 | 3  | 9  | 4   | 21 | 1   | 234   |  |

| Table | 4 |
|-------|---|
|-------|---|

 $\clubsuit$  FI= Finance.

✤ HR= Human Resource Management

 $\bigstar$  MR= Marketing

✤ BA= Banking

AC = Accounting

PM= Project Management

SCL= Supply Chain and Logistics

✤ IB= International Business

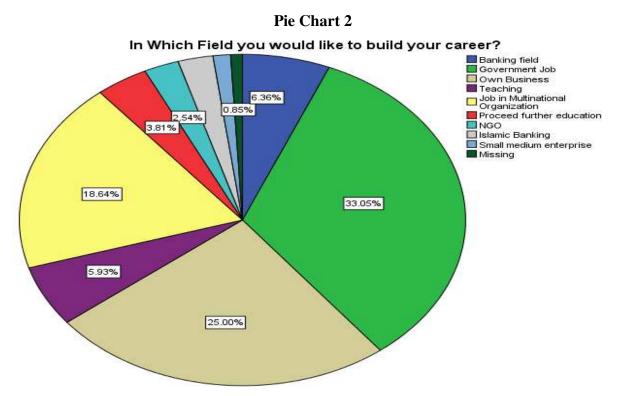
TQM= Total Quality Management

In broader career preference in finance majority 74% are males and 26% are females. In human resource management the number of females is more compared to male that is 52% female and 48% male. In marketing 81% are male and 19% are females. Females are more interested in banking sectors compare to male that is 69% female and 41% male. About 67% of male and 33% of females want to go for accounting. While 56% females and 44% males are interested in project management. In supply chain and logistics 75% of are females and 25% males. For international business ratio of males are 76% and females are 24%. In total quality management 100% are females.

#### 4.2 In which Field you would like to build your Career?

Selection of career building is one of the most essential decision in everyones life. According to the survey in Peshawar Majority (33.5%) 78/234 in which 60% are male and 40% are female students want to do government job. 25.4% in which majority of males want to their own business (78% males and 22% females). 18.6% (64% males and 36% females) want to do job in multinational organization. 6.4% (67% males and 33% females) mentions banking field. While 5.9% (64% females and 36% males) want to become academicians.

Female are more interested in teaching compared to male. Around 3.8% (56% males and 44% females) want to proceed to further education. 2.5% (67% males and 33% females) want to join NGO. 2.5% (67% males and 33% females) want to join Islamic Banking and 1.3% (67% males and 33% females) of them want to build their career in small and medium enterprise sector.



According to the specialisation of finance students majority (35%) of them want to go for government jobs. 23% want to do their own business. 18% like to do job in multinational organization. 10% like to banking sector. 5% like to build their career in teaching. 2% like proceed further education. 2 out of 234 students like small medium enterprises and 1 student like to build career in NGO sector.

The student of HRM, 32% likes government job, 26% own business, 16% like to do job in multinational organization, 11% like to go for teaching, 9% like to proceed with further education. 5% wants to build their career in NGO sector. 1 of them wants to build career in small & medium enterprises.

Marketing students are more (33%) interested to do their own business. 30% like to do job in multinational organization. 26% like to do government job. 7% like to build career in NGO sector. 4% of the marketing students like to proceed with further education.

| Table. 5 |   |    |    |    |    |     |    |     |    |     |       |
|----------|---|----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|-------|
|          | In which Field you would like to build your Career? |    |    |    |    |     |    |     |    |     |       |
| Special  | lisation  | BF | GJ | OB | Т  | JMO | PE | NGO | IB | SME | Total |
| Fii      | nance   | 15 | 53 | 35 | 8  | 27  | 3  | 1   | 6  | 2   | 150   |
| Н        | IRM   | 0  | 18 | 15 | 6  | 9   | 5  | 3   | 0  | 1   | 57    |
| Mai      | rketing   | 0  | 7  | 9  | 0  | 8   | 1  | 2   | 0  | 0   | 27    |
| To       | otal  | 15 | 78 | 59 | 14 | 44  | 9  | 6   | 6  | 3   | 234   |

Tables 5

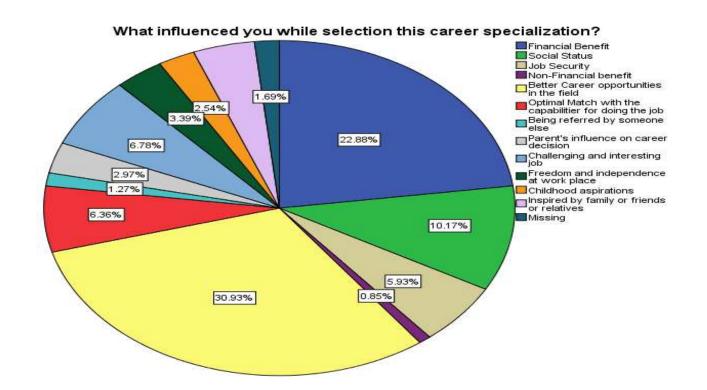
BF= Banking Field, GJ= Government Job, OB= Own Business, T= Teaching, JMO= Job in Multinational Organization PE= Proceed Further Education, NGO= Non-Government Organization, IB= Islamic Banking, SME= Small & Medium Enterprise.

|        |   |    |    |     |     | Tabl | e: 6 |     |     |     |    |      |       |
|--------|---|----|----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|----|------|-------|
|        | What Influenced you while Selecting this Career Specialisation? |    |    |     |     |      |      |     |     |     |    |      |       |
| Gender | F B   | SS | JS | NFB | BCO | OMC  | BRS  | PIC | CIJ | FIW | CA | IFFR | Total |
| Male   | 41  | 15 | 7  | 2   | 41  | 7    | 2    | 3   | 12  | 8   | 5  | 5    | 148   |
| Female | 13  | 9  | 7  | 0   | 31  | 8    | 1    | 4   | 4   | 0   | 1  | 5    | 83    |
| Total  | 54  | 24 | 14 | 2   | 72  | 15   | 3    | 7   | 16  | 8   | 6  | 10   | 231   |

Tables 6

FB: Financial Benefit, SS: Social Status, JS: Job Security, NFB: Non-Financial Benefit, BCO: Better Career Opportunities in the Field. OMC: Optimal Match with the Capabilities for doing the job, BRS: Being Referred by Someone else, PIC: Parent's Influence on Career decision, CIJ: Challenging and Interesting Job, FIW: Freedom and Independence at Workplace, CA: Childhood aspirations, IFFR: Inspired by family or friends or relatives

231 out of 236 students have mentioned the influence factor while selection their career specialisation. 31% says that better career opportunities in the field influenced them for the selection of this specialisation. 23% stated financial benefits, 7% cited challenging and interesting job, 6% mentions job security and optimal match to their capabilities while 4% of the students are inspired by family or friends or relatives on selection of the specialisation. 3% of the students selected the career specialisation because of Parent's influence apropos career decision, childhood aspirations and because of freedom and independence at work place. 1% has selected the specialisation because of non-financial benefits and being referred by someone else. 2% of the students did not mention why they have selected the following specialisations.



Pie Chart 3

Influencing factors for selecting specialisation is different between males and females.76% males has selected specialisation because of financial benefits whereas just 24% of females consider financial benefits. 63% of males and 37% of females selected their specialisation because of social status. 50% of males and 50% of females selected their specialisation because of job security. 100% of males selected their specialisation because of non-financial benefit. 57% of males and 43% of females selected their specialisation because of better career opportunities in the field. 47% of males and 53% of females selected their specialisation because of optimal match with the capabilities for doing the job. 67% of males

and 33% of females selected their specialisation because of being referred by someone else. 43% of males and 57% of females selected their specialisation because of parents influence on career decision. 75% of males and 25% of females selected their specialisation because of challenging and interesting job. 100% of males selected job because of freedom and independence at work place. 83% of the male and 17% females students has selected because of childhood aspirations. 50% males and 50% females has selected their career specialisation because of inspired by family or friends or relatives.

According to the three main (Finance, HRM and marketing) broader career specialisation. Finance was selected by 72%, HRM by 19% and marketing by 9% students because of financial benefits. Because of social status 71% finance, 13% HRM and 16% marketing. The selection of finance because of job security is 57%; HRM 29% and 14% selected marketing. Non-financial benefit 50% selected finance and 50% selected HRM. Finance was selected by 64% students, 22% of HRM and 14% of marketing students because of better career opportunities in the field. Finance was selected by 60%, HRM 33% and marketing 7% students because of optimal match with the capabilities for doing job. Finance was selected by 67% and 33% HRM students because of being referred by someone else. Finance was selected by 86% and HRM by 14% of the students because of parents influence on career decision. Finance was selected by 44% and HRM 56% of the students because of challenging and interesting job. Finance was selected by 63%, HRM 13% and marketing by 24% students because of freedom and independence at work place. Finance was selected by 67% and HRM by 33% of the students, because of childhood aspirations. Finance was selected by 70%, HRM by 20% and marketing by 10% of the students because of family, friends or relatives inspiration.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

This research work attempted to gauge the business students career preferences in 8 public and private sector universities in Peshawar KPK. The findings of the study shows that there is a need to give more importance to these factors to encourage the production of quality manpower for the region in particular and Pakistan in general. career counsellor's enterprise facilitators shall be available at every university to facilate students through training apropos career choice. The students should be guided in light of their interests, likings and abilities rather then forcing them on employment-focused narrowly set considerations. There is also a need to identify the constraints and opportunities faced by business graduates that influence their capacity to maximize their potential, in terms of both learning opportunities and access to careers.

Finally, we should note the limitations of the introspective methods we employed (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Further research can be done to thoroughly study the barriers and challenges in selecting career specialisation of the business students.

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