HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE AMONG TECHNICAL COLLEGE STUDENTS: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY IN UZBEKISTAN

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doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23466620

ABSTRACT: Career choice is an important developmental decision shaped by personal preferences, family expectations, peer relationships, and educational experiences. Understanding whose opinions students perceive as influential may help technical and vocational education institutions improve their career-guidance practices. This study examines the reported sources of influence on career choice among students at a technical college in Andijan, Uzbekistan. A paper-based questionnaire was administered in a classroom setting, and responses from 186 students across nine groups were analyzed descriptively. Students selected one of four reported sources of influence: parental advice, personal opinion, friends, or teachers. The findings indicate that parental advice was the most frequently reported influence, accounting for 99 responses (53.23%). Personal opinion was reported by 51 students (27.42%), teachers by 21 (11.29%), and friends by 15 (8.06%). These findings suggest that students' perceived career-choice influences include both family-related and individual factors, while teachers and peers were less frequently selected in this sample. The results highlight the potential value of career-guidance activities that involve families while also strengthening students' capacity for independent decision-making. However, the study is descriptive and based on one institution; it does not establish causality or represent all technical college students in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: career choice, technical college students, parental influence, vocational guidance, career psychology, Uzbekistan, descriptive study

INTRODUCTION

Career choice is a significant decision in young people's educational and professional development. It can influence their learning motivation, future employment opportunities, professional identity, and satisfaction with their chosen field. For students in technical and vocational education, the decision may be especially important because it is closely connected to the development of occupational skills and preparation for entry into the labour market. Career decisions are not necessarily made in isolation. Students may consider their interests and abilities while also taking into account advice from parents, teachers, friends, and other people around them. Social Cognitive Career Theory emphasizes the relationship between personal beliefs, contextual influences, and career-related choices (Lent et al., 1994). Research on adolescent career development has also highlighted the role of parental behaviour and support during career decision-making (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Katz et al., 2018). The Uzbek-language literature provides a relevant local perspective on career psychology and vocational guidance. Abduraxmonov and Abduraxmonova (2018) discuss career psychology, including psychological aspects of professional development and career-related decisions. Abdulmadjidova (2025) examines psychological characteristics associated with students' career choices and discusses the relevance of personal development, academic motivation, social factors, and psychological guidance. In Uzbekistan, professional education is also situated within a national legal

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ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

and institutional framework. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" (2020) establishes the general legal framework for education, while Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 466 (2020) concerns regulatory documents governing professional education. These documents provide institutional context for research on students' experiences in technical and vocational education, although they do not themselves establish the psychological factors that influence individual career decisions. Despite the relevance of these issues, local institutions need practical information about the influences students themselves identify when asked directly about their career choices. A simple descriptive survey can provide an initial picture of these perceived influences and help identify questions for more detailed future research.

1.1. Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to identify and describe the sources of influence that students at one technical college in Andijan, Uzbekistan, reported as important in their career choice.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Which source of influence do students most frequently identify when asked who influenced their career choice? The study focused on four response categories: parental advice, personal opinion, friends, and teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Personal and contextual influences on career choice

Career choice can be understood as a decision involving both personal and contextual considerations. Personal factors may include interests, perceived abilities, goals, and preferences. Contextual factors may include family expectations, educational opportunities, social relationships, and access to career information. Social Cognitive Career Theory proposes that career-related interests and choices are associated with factors such as self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, goals, and contextual supports or barriers (Lent et al., 1994). From this perspective, an individual's stated preference is important, but it should be considered alongside the social and educational environment in which a decision is made. The present study does not measure all of these theoretical constructs. Instead, it focuses on one practical aspect of career decision-making: the source of influence students themselves identify.

2.2. Parental influence and student autonomy

Parents may influence career decisions by offering advice, communicating expectations, providing information, or discussing future educational and employment opportunities. Research on career-specific parental behaviour has examined the relationship between parental involvement and adolescents' career development (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009). Katz et al. (2018) have also explored parental support for adolescents' autonomy when making an initial career decision. Parental involvement, however, should not automatically be interpreted as either beneficial or restrictive. Advice may help students understand opportunities, but effective guidance should also allow them to consider their own interests and abilities. In this study, the category "parental advice" records students' reported source of influence; it does not indicate whether that influence was supportive, controlling, or decisive.

2.3. Career psychology in the Uzbek context

Abduraxmonov and Abduraxmonova (2018) provide an Uzbek-language textbook on career psychology, offering a disciplinary foundation for discussing professional development and career-related decisions. Abdulmadjidova (2025) specifically addresses psychological characteristics of

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students' career choice. Her study involved 120 students aged 16–18 and considered career inclination, academic motivation, and social factors. The article also highlights the relevance of psychological assessment and counselling in career guidance. These works support the relevance of examining career choice in the Uzbek educational context. Nevertheless, the current study uses a narrower instrument: one direct question about the person or source that influenced a student's choice. Its findings therefore complement, rather than replicate, studies using broader psychological assessments.

RESEARCH GAP

The present study offers a descriptive account of responses from 186 students at one technical college. Its contribution is the presentation of locally collected data on four perceived sources of career-choice influence. Because the questionnaire was limited in scope, the study should be considered an initial institutional investigation rather than a comprehensive assessment of career-choice psychology among Uzbek students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Research design

A descriptive quantitative survey design was used to summarize students' reported sources of influence on career choice. The analysis focused on frequencies and percentages rather than testing causal relationships or statistical associations between multiple variables.

3.2. Research setting and participants

The survey was conducted at Andijan City Technical College No. 6 in Andijan, Uzbekistan. According to the supplied survey records, 186 students from nine groups participated. The available records do not specify the exact data-collection date, students' age and gender distribution, programme of study, or the sampling procedure. These details should be added to the manuscript if the relevant records are available. They have not been inferred or invented for this report.

3.3. Data-collection instrument

The questionnaire was administered on paper in a classroom setting. Students were asked the following question in Uzbek: **"Kasb tanlashingizga kim ta'sir ko'rsatdi?"**

English translation: **"Who influenced your career choice?"** The recorded response categories were:

1. Parental advice
2. Personal opinion
3. Friends
3. Teachers

The supplied dataset contains a total of 186 responses across these four categories. The analysis treats the recorded categories as mutually exclusive for the purpose of summarizing the dataset. The questionnaire captures students' reported sources of influence. It does not directly measure career maturity, psychological well-being, parental pressure, vocational interests, academic motivation, or the strength of each influence.

3.4. Data analysis

The response counts supplied in the original records were aggregated across the nine groups. Overall percentages were calculated by dividing the number of responses in each category by the total number of responses (N = 186) and multiplying by 100. The formula was: Percentage = (Number of responses in a category / Total number of responses) × 100. Percentages were recalculated from the recorded counts to ensure consistency. Results are presented using descriptive statistics only.

3.5. Ethical considerations

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The materials provided for this analysis did not include documentation of informed consent, institutional ethical approval, or the procedure used to protect participants' confidentiality. These details must be verified with the institution and reported accurately before journal submission. No claim of ethical approval or informed consent is made in this manuscript without supporting documentation.

RESULTS

4.1. Overall distribution of reported influences

A total of 186 student responses were included in the analysis. Parental advice was the most frequently reported source of influence on career choice, followed by personal opinion, teachers, and friends.

Table 1. Reported sources of influence on career choice (N = 186)

Source of influence	Number of students	Percentage
Parental advice	99	53.23%
Personal opinion	51	27.42%
Teachers	21	11.29%
Friends	15	8.06%
Total	**186**	**100.00%**

Note. Percentages were calculated from the recorded response counts and rounded to two decimal places. Parental advice accounted for just over half of all responses (53.23%). Personal opinion was the second most frequently selected category, representing 27.42% of responses. Teachers were identified by 11.29% of students, while friends were selected by 8.06%. Together, parental advice and personal opinion accounted for 150 of the 186 responses (80.65%). This indicates that, within this sample, these two categories were much more frequently selected than teachers or friends. However, the categories should not be interpreted as measures of the actual strength of influence or as evidence that other people had no role in students' decisions.

4.2. Variation across student groups

The source records contain responses from nine student groups. The counts indicate that parental advice was a prominent response across several groups, while personal opinion was the most frequently selected category in some groups. For example, the records show 12 personal-opinion responses compared with 11 parental-advice responses in Group 21, and nine personal-opinion responses compared with six parental-advice responses in Group 5. This variation suggests that the overall pattern does not apply identically to every group. Nevertheless, group-level comparisons should be interpreted cautiously because the groups differ in size and the available data do not include background variables that could help explain the differences. The main finding remains descriptive: parental advice was the most frequently reported source across the combined sample, while personal opinion was also a substantial category.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to describe which sources of influence students identified when asked who had influenced their career choice. The main finding is that parental advice was selected most often, followed by personal opinion, teachers, and friends.

5.1. The prominence of parental advice

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More than half of the recorded responses identified parental advice as the source of influence. This finding suggests that family-related guidance is an important consideration in the career-choice experiences reported by these students. The result is consistent with the relevance of parental behaviour in adolescent career development discussed by Dietrich and Kracke (2009) and with research examining parental support for adolescents' autonomy during career decision-making (Katz et al., 2018). The finding also aligns with the importance of social context in career-choice frameworks such as Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994). However, the present data cannot establish why parental advice was selected so frequently. The survey did not ask whether parents provided information about occupations, expressed expectations, helped students evaluate their abilities, or directly influenced their final decisions. Nor does it establish whether students viewed parental involvement positively or negatively. These questions require more detailed instruments and follow-up research.

5.2. Personal opinion and independent decision-making

Personal opinion accounted for 27.42% of responses, making it the second most frequently reported category. This result shows that a substantial proportion of students identified their own opinion as the principal source of influence. This finding is relevant to discussions of autonomy in career decision-making. Students may need opportunities to explore their interests, reflect on their abilities, and compare career options while receiving appropriate support from adults. Research on parental support for adolescent autonomy provides a useful framework for understanding why guidance and independent decision-making should not necessarily be treated as opposites (Katz et al., 2018). Nevertheless, selecting "personal opinion" does not necessarily demonstrate complete independence from family, teachers, or peers. The questionnaire asked students to identify a source of influence; it did not measure autonomy directly. Further studies should therefore distinguish between students' perceived independence, their actual decision-making processes, and the social influences they experience.

5.3. The reported roles of teachers and friends

Teachers accounted for 11.29% of responses, while friends accounted for 8.06%. These categories were less frequently selected than parental advice and personal opinion in the combined sample. One possible practical implication is that career guidance in technical colleges could make the role of teachers more visible through structured career conversations, information about occupational pathways, workplace visits, and individual counselling. Such activities could provide students with additional information while supporting their capacity to make informed choices. This is a recommendation for educational practice, not a direct conclusion tested by the survey. The data do not show that teachers or friends had little influence in students' lives overall; they show only that these categories were selected less frequently in response to the question asked.

5.4. Relevance to vocational education in Uzbekistan

The findings offer a small-scale institutional perspective on career-choice influences among technical college students in Uzbekistan. They may help the participating institution reflect on how career guidance is organized and whether students have sufficient opportunities to explore career options independently while involving their families where appropriate. The Uzbek-language work of Abduraxmonov and Abduraxmonova (2018) provides a local disciplinary foundation for career psychology, while Abdulmadjidova (2025) highlights the relationship between career choice, psychological characteristics, academic motivation, and social factors. The current survey

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complements this literature by providing a simple distribution of students' self-reported influences in a technical-college setting. The legal framework for professional education provides the broader institutional context for such work (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020; Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020). However, the present survey did not evaluate the effectiveness of any policy or career-guidance programme.

5.5. Practical implications

Based on the descriptive results, the following measures may be worth considering at the institutional level:

1. **Strengthen structured career guidance.** Provide students with opportunities to learn about occupational pathways, qualification requirements, and employment options.
2. **Support informed family involvement.** Invite parents or guardians to career-guidance sessions that encourage constructive discussion rather than prescribing a single career path.
3. **Promote student self-assessment.** Help students reflect on their interests, skills, values, and educational goals before making career-related decisions.
4. **Increase access to teacher counselling.** Make it easier for students to seek advice from teachers, psychologists, and career-guidance personnel.
5. **Collect more detailed evidence.** Use follow-up surveys or interviews to explore how students interpret family advice and how they balance external expectations with their own preferences.

These recommendations are proposed applications of the findings and relevant literature. Their effectiveness was not tested in this study.

LIMITATIONS

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted at one technical college in Andijan. The results cannot automatically be generalized to all technical college students in Uzbekistan or to students in other educational settings. Second, the questionnaire contained one direct question about the source of influence on career choice. It did not measure the wider psychological constructs discussed in career-development theories, such as self-efficacy, vocational interests, outcome expectations, decision-making confidence, or autonomy. Third, the data were based on students' self-reports. Their answers reflect the source they identified in response to the question and may not capture every influence on their decisions. Fourth, the available records did not include detailed demographic information, the sampling procedure, the date of data collection, or documented ethical procedures. These details should be added where reliable records exist. Finally, the analysis was descriptive. It did not test statistical significance, examine associations between background variables and responses, or establish causal relationships. The study therefore identifies patterns in the recorded responses rather than explaining why those patterns occurred.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could extend this initial survey in several ways. A larger study involving multiple technical colleges and regions of Uzbekistan would help assess whether similar response patterns appear in different educational contexts. A more comprehensive questionnaire could measure students' vocational interests, self-efficacy, perceived parental expectations, autonomy, academic motivation, and access to career guidance. Interviews could further explore how students understand parental advice and how they negotiate personal preferences with family expectations. Future studies should also document participant characteristics, sampling procedures, consent arrangements, and relevant institutional ethical approval. Where appropriate, statistical analyses could examine whether

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ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
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reported sources of influence differ according to age, gender, field of study, or other relevant variables. Such questions should be investigated using suitable data rather than inferred from the present survey.

CONCLUSION

This descriptive study examined reported sources of influence on career choice among 186 students from nine groups at Andijan City Technical College No. 6 in Uzbekistan. Parental advice was the most frequently selected category, with 99 responses (53.23%), followed by personal opinion with 51 responses (27.42%), teachers with 21 responses (11.29%), and friends with 15 responses (8.06%). The findings indicate that parental advice and personal opinion were the two most frequently identified sources in this sample. They highlight the potential value of career-guidance approaches that recognize family involvement while also supporting students' independent reflection and informed decision-making. The results should be interpreted within the limits of the research design. The questionnaire identified students' reported sources of influence but did not measure all psychological factors involved in career choice or establish causal relationships. Further research using broader measures, more diverse samples, and clearly documented ethical procedures is needed to develop a fuller understanding of career decision-making among technical college students in Uzbekistan.

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