Career Choice Preferences Among Undergraduate Students:
An Empirical Study of Management and Computer Science Students in South Gujarat

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Abstract
This study examines the key factors influencing career-choice decisions among undergraduate students enrolled in BBA and BCA programmes in South Gujarat. Employing a descriptive research design and quantitative method, data were collected from 772 respondents via a structured questionnaire. Using SPSS for statistical analysis, descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were applied to explore demographic profiles, preference patterns and associations between demographic variables and course choice. Findings indicate that job opportunities, business prospects, and faculty quality emerge as the primary determinants, while gender, academic performance and prior board of study do not significantly influence course selection. The study concludes that educational institutions should enhance placement support, enrich faculty quality and strengthen career guidance services to assist students in making informed decisions.

Keywords: Career Choice, Undergraduate students, South Gujarat, Decision Factors

Introduction
Selecting a career path represents one of the most significant academic decisions faced by undergraduate students, as it ultimately shapes their professional trajectories and life outcomes. In the Indian higher-education context, particularly among diploma and degree programmes such as BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration) and BCA (Bachelor of Computer Applications), the decision is influenced by a mixture of personal, familial, institutional and market-driven factors. Understanding how these factors interplay is critical for colleges, universities and policy-makers to facilitate better career counselling, curriculum planning and placement support.

In South Gujarat, where expanding higher-education enrolments and changing employment landscapes present both opportunities and challenges, it becomes particularly valuable to examine the determinants of career choice among BBA and BCA students. This study focuses on corridors of South Gujarat affiliated with Veer Narmad South Gujarat University (VNSGU) and investigates how students' demographic backgrounds, course-related considerations and decision-making behaviours influence their choice of undergraduate programme. The findings aim to offer actionable insights for institutions in aligning their offerings with student expectations and local employment demands.

Literature Review
Research into the determinants of students' career choices highlights multiple internal and external factors that guide decision-making. Studies have consistently pointed out that personal

interest, self-efficacy and individual aspirations serve as foundational drivers (Frontiers in Education, 2018). External environmental factors such as family background, socio-economic status and parental influence are known to exert strong impact on career outcomes (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Within the Indian context, Patel and colleagues found that convenience, family income, societal status and parental expectations significantly affect the career-choice process among Indian students. Studies of undergraduate economics students revealed that belief in self-efficacy, availability of career opportunities, and cultural influences play a central role in major selection and career intent. More recently, a 2024 survey of students across disciplines underscored that intrinsic factors (such as personal interest), interpersonal factors (such as peer and faculty influence) and institutional factors (such as placement support and curriculum reputation) interact to shape student career decisions. Taken together, these findings suggest a complex interplay of personal dispositions, contextual supports and institutional provisions, underscoring the relevance of exploring these determinants in the specific setting of BBA and BCA students in South Gujarat.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design to explore and describe the career-choice determinants among undergraduate students. A quantitative approach using structured questionnaire was employed. The population comprised BBA and BCA/B.Sc. (IT) students studying in colleges affiliated with VNSGU in South Gujarat. Using convenience sampling, a total of 772 valid responses were gathered. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire that included items on demographic characteristics and 15 Likert-scale statements measuring determinants of career choice. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) were computed for demographic variables and determinant factors, and chi-square tests were applied.

Results

Of the 772 respondents, 49.1% were male and 50.9% female, indicating gender balance in undergraduate enrolment. The majority (86.8%) belonged to the Hindu religion, and 80.7% had studied under the Gujarat Board. In terms of course enrolment, 56.1% were in the BBA programme and 43.9% in the BCA/B.Sc. (IT) programme. Over 62% of respondents had achieved more than 70% in their 12th-standard examinations and 89.8% came from the Commerce stream. Family background indicated that 42.1% of students had family members engaged in business, 35.5% in private service, and the remaining in other categories.

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	379	49.1	49.1	49.1
	Female	393	50.9	50.9	100.0
	Total	772	100.0	100.0	
Religion					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hindu	670	86.8	86.8	86.8
	Muslim	49	6.3	6.3	93.1

	Jain	36	4.7	4.7	97.8
	Sindhi	6	0.8	0.8	98.6
	Parsi	2	0.3	0.3	98.8
	Christian	3	0.4	0.4	99.2
	Sikh	2	0.3	0.3	99.5
	Other	4	0.5	0.5	100.0
	Total	772	100.0	100.0	

Board Studied in 12th Standard

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Gujarat Board	623	80.7	80.7	80.7
	CBSE	114	14.8	14.8	95.5
	ISCE	12	1.6	1.6	97.0
	Other State Board	17	2.2	2.2	99.2
	NIOS / Open	6	0.8	0.8	100.0
	Total	772	100.0	100.0	

Course Enrolled Currently

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	BBA	433	56.1	56.1	56.1
	BCA / BSC IT	339	43.9	43.9	100.0
	Total	772	100.0	100.0	

Class of Study

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FIRST YEAR	415	53.8	53.8	53.8
	SECOND YEAR	144	18.7	18.7	72.4
	THIRD YEAR	213	27.6	27.6	100.0
	Total	772	100.0	100.0	

Percent Secured in 12th Std.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	35% to 55%	54	7.0	7.0	7.0
	55% to 70%	238	30.8	30.8	37.8
	More than 70%	480	62.2	62.2	100.0
	Total	772	100.0	100.0	

Stream in 12th

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Arts	7	0.9	0.9	0.9
	Commerce	693	89.8	89.8	90.7
	Science	70	9.1	9.1	99.7
	Vocational	2	0.3	0.3	100.0
	Total	772	100.0	100.0	

Family Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business	325	42.1	42.1	42.1
	Private Service	274	35.5	35.5	77.6
	Government Service	25	3.2	3.2	80.8
	Farming	57	7.4	7.4	88.2
	Profession	37	4.8	4.8	93.0
	Auto Rickshaw Driver	3	0.4	0.4	93.4
	Other	51	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	772	100.0	100.0	

City where you live

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Surat	506	65.5	65.5	65.5
	Navsari	216	28.0	28.0	93.5
	Valsad/Vapi	47	6.1	6.1	99.6
	Bharuch/Ankleshwar	3	0.4	0.4	100.0
	Total	772	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output

The chi-square test between gender and course enrolled produced a p-value of 0.093, indicating no significant relationship. Similarly, the test between 12th-standard academic performance and course enrolment yielded p=0.109; and between board of study and course enrolled p=0.068. These results suggest that gender, prior academic performance, and board of study do not significantly influence the choice between BBA and BCA programmes in this sample.

Chi-Square Tests (Gender Vs. Course Enrolled)					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.819[a]	1	.093		
Continuity Correction[b]	2.581	1	.108		
Likelihood Ratio	2.820	1	.093		

Fisher's Exact Test				.096	.054
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.815	1	.093		
N of Valid Cases	772				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 166.43.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Source: SPSS Output

Chi-Square Tests (Student Academic Performance in 12th vs Course Currently Enrolled			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.440[a]	2	0.109
Likelihood Ratio	4.422	2	0.110
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.427	1	0.035
N of Valid Cases	772		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 23.71.			

Source: SPSS Output

Chi-Square Tests (Board in 12th vs. Course Enrolled)			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.738[a]	4	0.068
Likelihood Ratio	8.845	4	0.065
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.055	1	0.815
N of Valid Cases	772		
a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.63.			

Source: SPSS Output

Faculty quality (85.6%) and placement opportunities (85.8%) emerged as dominant factors, whereas campus appearance was least influential (14%). Career-decision timing revealed that 61.4% of students decided on their course during standard 12. Among determinants, Job Opportunities recorded the highest mean (M=4.43), followed by Business Opportunities (M=4.39) and Faculty Quality (M=4.38), indicating that students prioritize employability and teaching excellence.

Findings and Discussion
The study finds that employment and business opportunities, quality of faculty and institutional reputation are primary determinants of course selection. Gender, academic performance and board of study were not significantly associated with choice of course. Educational institutions should focus on enhancing placement services, faculty development and structured career counselling. Career choice among BBA and BCA aspirants reflects a rational blend of employability orientation, academic quality expectation and personal suitability.

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