Summary and Conclusion

Summary

Choosing a career path and making tentative career decisions is an important task in adolescence. Several factors influence this choice and an understanding of the process of career choice making may aid in the development of effective career guidance programs. Research related to the various aspects of career decision making and factors influencing career choices were reviewed. The current research aimed at studying the factors influencing career decision making in adolescents studying in II year Pre-University in Bangalore, India.

A mixed methods design was used with quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyse data. The research was conducted in two phases. The quantitative study explored the association between perceived parenting style, personality traits, and metacognition with career maturity. It also studied the relationship between socio-economic status, gender, college type, stream of study and decision status with career maturity. The qualitative study explored the personal and family factors in the career decision making of the participants.

The sample for the quantitative phase comprised of 548 participants studying in II year Pre-University recruited from government and private colleges in Bangalore. Data was collected using a socio demographic data sheet, Career Maturity Inventory, Parental Authority Questionnaire, Neo Five Factor Inventory and Metacognitive Awareness Inventory. 30 participants who were part of the quantitative study were selected for the qualitative phase. An interview scheduled designed and validated for this study was used to collect data.

Descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis, t tests and One way
ANOVA was used. Significant negative associations were found between neuroticism and career maturity attitude and planning while significant positive associations were found between career maturity attitude and personality traits openness and conscientiousness. Openness was also significantly associated with self-appraisal. Perceived parenting style was also found to be associated with specific aspects of career maturity. Authoritarian parenting style was found to be associated with lower career maturity scores while authoritative parenting style was seen to be associated with higher career maturity scores. Gender differences were seen in some aspects of career maturity attitude and competence. Students from private colleges and higher socio-economic status were seen to have higher career maturity in comparison to students from government colleges and lower socio-economic backgrounds. Decided students had higher career maturity than students who were not decided about their future careers. Regression analysis revealed that the perceived parenting style, personality traits, and metacognition, socio-economic status, gender, college type, stream of study and decision status had a moderate combined influence on all aspects of career maturity. It highlights that other factors may be influencing career maturity.

In the qualitative phase the data from interviews were transcribed, coded and template analysis was done. Cross analysis was done between cases. Triangulation was done to ensure reliability and validity in the analysis process. Global themes and sub-themes were derived from the data. Academic and career choices and factors influencing career choices were the two global themes that emerged from the data. Satisfaction with career choice, decision status, decision making as a process from eighth standard to 12th standard, sources of information about careers and career expectations were the sub-themes that emerged under the global theme academic and career choices. The sub-themes under the global theme factors influencing career
choices were intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, career related factors and gender and career decisions.

Majority of the participants reported that they had made a career related decision. Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with their choice was influenced by other factors. Decisions had changed over a period of time for most participants. People were seen to be the most common source of information about careers. Minimal use of formal sources of career guidance was noted. Opportunities, satisfaction and financial stability were commonly expressed expectations from careers. Personal interest and need to be different were the intrinsic factors seen to play a role in career choices. Future scope, ease of choice and financial prospects were the aspects of careers most seen to have an influence on an individual’s choice. Family was seen to be a key influence in this regard. Guidance and support from family, role models in the family, family attitudes towards occupations, occupational stereotypes, family communication and family expectations emerged as influences on career decisions. Society and gender were also seen to play a role in this regard.

The results from the qualitative analysis provide a deeper understanding of the results of the statistical analysis. When understood together it was seen that intrinsic factors like personality traits, personal interest, gender and personal expectations influenced career choices. External and contextual factors like socio-economic status, college type, social factors and family factors like family attitude towards occupations, family communication patterns, family support and parenting style influenced career maturity and the career choice process.

The study concluded that both individual, external and contextual factors influence career choices in adolescents in this population. The role of family in this
important decision has emerged from the study. The results of the study can be used to educate and guide teachers, parents and career counselors. Career counseling interventions that will take into account the present results can be designed to make the career guidance process more effective.

**Implications**

The findings of the study have several implications. Specific personality traits were found to influence career maturity in this study. This brings out the need for career counselors to include personality assessment in career counseling to gain insight into the client’s strengths and weaknesses and tailor interventions to help overcome weak areas. For e.g. clients high on neuroticism and a tendency for emotional distress can be helped to deal with their negative emotions effectively while clients low on conscientiousness can be helped to increase self- regulatory behaviour as conscientiousness is a known predictor of several indices of job performance. Similarly, a client low on openness could be steered towards a more active exploration of career options.

Career related variables that influenced career choices that students made emerged in the study. The absence of in-depth exploration about career choices and opportunities and lack of use of formal career guidance programs was noted. This is a significant finding and parents and school authorities can be sensitized about the need to expose and educate adolescents regarding options available to them to facilitate effective career decision making.

The role of family and parental influence on career decision making has been a significant finding in this research. Several family variables and their strong impact on career decisions of adolescents were highlighted in the results. Parenting styles were
seen to have a relationship with career variables. These findings can be used to sensitize parents of the enormous influence they have on the career decision-making process of their child thereby impacting the future opportunities and accomplishments of their child. During career counseling, parents can be taught how to aid career exploration and facilitate better decision making.

This study highlights the presence of certain biases in the society which favour certain occupations while putting down some other occupations. These biases are seen to influence the career choices of individuals which may lead to ineffective choices. There is a need to address these biases and bring in an attitude of tolerance towards all professions. Awareness about career beliefs and social cognitions that are present in the family and society can help the career counselor educate the family and individual about the need to make decisions based on individual interests and aptitudes. This finding may be incorporated in career counseling programs to involve activities towards the reduction of these biases leading to more effective choice making.

It also brings out the need to explore parental expectations and aspirations and see how these are in line or oppose adolescent aspirations to enable effective career decision-making. Bringing a balance between the two in cases where there is a lack of congruence between parental and adolescent plans is crucial in making the guidance process useful.

The findings can help counselors assist students in identifying their goals early and clarify needs before making choices. The major findings of this study can be used as a starting point for further research. The propositions arrived at in the qualitative findings can be used as hypothesis for further quantitative research. Further researchers can utilize the results of this study to build comprehensive career guidance
programs which are tailor made to this population and which recognize the influence of family and involve the family in vocational guidance programs.

**Limitations and Suggestions**

The present study aimed to explore the factors that influence an adolescent’s career decision making. There are limitations to the present study which need to be kept in mind when interpreting the results of this study. Some of the limitations and suggestions for future research are as follows:

Being an exploratory study, the findings need to be interpreted keeping this in mind till other studies replicate the results. The present study was conducted on students from an urban area. The career choices and career paths of urban students may differ from those of students from rural areas. Hence the results of the present study are limited to an urban population. In future, research can be conducted with students from rural and semi-urban areas to find out the differences.

In the quantitative phase, self-report measures were used to collect data. While this method allows for easy administration, the possibility of a respondent's responses being influenced by social desirability resulting in a response bias exists which should be kept in mind.

The study design for the quantitative phase was primarily correlational. Hence causal relationships cannot be assumed.

The qualitative phase focused on student’s perspectives of factors that influenced their career choices. Parents’ perspectives of the career choice process can also be looked into in future studies.

This research focused on the role of personality traits, metacognition and perceived parenting style in career maturity and also the role of personal and family
factors in career decision making. Other personal, social, and environmental factors are known to influence career development. They can be explored in future research.

Multiple groups across age and field of study can be used to explore the career maturity levels and career decision-making process.

The findings of this study expand and elaborate on personal and external correlates of career decision-making in the Indian context.

**Conclusion**

The major results of research were associated with the examination of the relationship between personality, metacognition and perceived parenting style with career maturity and the role of personal and family factors to understand the career decision making of students studying in Pre-University in Bangalore, India. This study aimed to add to the empirical literature on career development by exploring how these factors might influence the career decision-making process of adolescents individually and in combination.

Personal and contextual factors were seen to influence academic and career choices in adolescents in various ways. Several parental and family circumstances played a role in this aspect of an adolescent’s life.

While the present study delves only into a part of the large phenomenon of career decision making, the importance of the results lie in the assistance it can provide to parents, teachers, authorities and career counselors to better understand the career decision-making process of adolescents in India. It brings out the need to develop and conduct career counseling interventions to ensure effective decision making in this population.