ABSTRACT

Career choice is an important developmental task in adolescence and is influenced by many factors. Using a mixed methods research design, this study aimed to understand career decision making and factors influencing the same in adolescents. In the quantitative phase the relationship between career maturity and perceived parenting style, personality traits, metacognition, socio-economic status, gender, college type, stream of study and decision status was studied in students studying in II Year Pre-University in Bangalore, India. Career decisions, personal and family factors in career decision making were explored in the qualitative phase. Informed consent was obtained from the participants and parents of the participants of the study.

Quantitative data was collected from 548 students studying in Arts, Science and Commerce stream in second year Pre-University in Bangalore. Students from eight private and seven government colleges were recruited for the study. Quantitative data was collected using a socio-demographic data sheet, Career Maturity Inventory, Parental Authority Questionnaire, Neo Five Factor Inventory and Metacognitive Awareness Inventory. The scales were translated to Kannada and back translated. In the qualitative phase, data was collected through a semi-structured interview schedule designed for this study. 30 students who were a part of the quantitative phase took part in this phase. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Statistical analysis was done to analyze quantitative data. Descriptive statistics, correlation, regression analysis, t tests and one-way ANOVA was done. Qualitative data was analyzed by template analysis and themes were derived from the data. The results revealed associations between personality traits neuroticism, openness and conscientiousness and specific aspects of career maturity attitude and
competence. Authoritarian parenting style was seen to have a negative association with career maturity while authoritative parenting style had a positive association with specific aspects of career maturity. Significant differences were observed between male and female participants on some aspects of career maturity. Career maturity was significantly higher in students from higher socio-economic status, students from private colleges and students who had made a decision about their career choice. When taken together 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.

Data from the interviews was transcribed, coded and themes were derived using template analysis. Triangulation was done to ensure reliability and to reduce bias in the analysis process. The global themes that emerged from the data were academic and career choices and factors influencing career choices. The sub-themes under the global theme academic and career choices were satisfaction with career choice, decision status, decision making as a process from the eighth standard to 12th standard, sources of information about careers and career expectations. Intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, and career-related factors also emerged as sub-themes. The role of family in this regard has been highlighted in this study. The findings reveal that individual, external and contextual factors influence career decisions in adolescents. These results can be used to develop context specific theoretical models and career counseling interventions.

Key words: Career decision-making, career choice, career maturity, career expectations, adolescent, personality, family, parenting style, decision making, metacognition, factors influencing career decisions