

Factors influencing choice of career in special education: a descriptive analysis

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ABSTRACT

Background: Choice of career is one of the significant decisions' one makes to determine his/her future. It is a procedure of choosing a career path which can include choices regarding education and training for preparing a given career. It has been proven by a few researchers that an individual's choice of career is influenced by numerous factors. That's why a right career choice is very important for an individual that leads a secure future and remarkable productivity. **Objective:** The aim of the study was to find out the different factors that influencing the teacher trainee's choice of career in the field of special education. **Sample:** B. Ed. and D. Ed. Special Education (MR/ID) teacher trainees [n=85] have been selected for the present study from Govt. Rehabilitation Institute for Intellectual Disabilities, Chandigarh. **Design:** Descriptive analysis by using qualitative method was used to achieve objective of the study. **Tool:** With opinion of experts from the field a questionnaire was developed by the researcher to know the responses/opinions of the subjects. **Results:** Findings of the study indicates that there is an increasing interest in the field of disabilities. The aspirants want to earn more, job security in government sector are the major factors that influences the teacher trainees choice of career in the field of special education. Person with disability in family also affects the trainee's choice towards career in special education. **Conclusion:** Based on results, it may be suggested that to take more samples from other institutes in nearby states or can be conducted among the teacher trainees of other disability field. A comparative study can be carried out among teacher trainees of special education field of two or more than two states of India. This will help the educational administrators or institutions to plan for future training programs for pre-service teachers in the field of special education. This study emphasized at limited factors which influence career choice decisions, whereas there are many factors. It is therefore recommended that a similar study be conducted in which many factors influencing the career choice decisions can be explored.

Keywords: Choice of Career, Teacher Trainees, B. Ed., D. Ed. (MR/ID) Special Education

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Career is an integral part of a person's life. Every person is engaged in career making activities so that he earns some livelihood. Every person has to face the problem of career choice. Alam (2014) says, "A career includes different roles related with work such as, those of students, employees and pensioners together with complementary a vocation, civic and familial role. Careers exist only as people pursue them; they are person-centered." A career choice is important because it determines an individual's success in his future life. Career selection or choice of a good profession is one of the significant decisions, which is essential in determining student's or an individual's future. This decision affects the whole life of the students. Career choice is the selection of a specific vocation or path in terms of career. Many factors influence career choice of an individual. Generally, it is influenced by personal preferences, abilities, aspirations, goals, interests, opportunities, parental guidance, vocational counselling, socio-economic status etc. Thressiakutty & Rao (2001) says, "making occupational choice involves coordination between personal demands and the opportunities available besides limitations, challenges and strengths. The factors that influenced the vocational or career choice are family, ability, personality, economic factors, industrialization etc."

Active involvement of the Government is very important in ensure quality teacher education. There have been many evidences reporting ineffective and very expensive teacher education despite several promising steps and commitment. However, tremendous changes have been noticed in last one decade in the field of teacher education in special education (Ahmad & Nazli, 2012). Special educator plays an important role in the success of special education field irrespective of placement options. The setting of work place has not much to do with. It also has been noticed that among all the disabilities intellectual disability is the most challenging when it is compared with other disabilities like sensory, locomotor etc. (Ahmad et al., 2015).

Making choice of career is an important decision which requires serious considerations. How to get education or to go to a professional educational institution, all this must be decided so that there is no problem in future life. Various elements come in determining the career which affects its selection. The form of career the youths engage in can affect their lives in different ways. The objective of this study was to know about the factors which influencing student's choice of career in the field of special education and what happen before students make their choices. This would help instructors and strategy-makers take informed decisions on how frameworks or strategies can be improved to increase student's participation and persistence in the field of special education. This study will be important for strategy-makers, educators, counsellors, and other partners as they can control the factors that affect student's choices of special education to encourage more student's participation and persistence in the field of special education.

Objective

The present study was conducted to find out the different factors that influences the choice of career in the field of special education.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

For this study, researcher have selected (N=85) teacher trainees of B. Ed. and D. Ed. Special Education (MR/ID) from Govt. Rehabilitation Institute for Intellectual Disabilities (GRIID), Chandigarh, India. Subjects were selected by using population sampling method. The subjects were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: Only those who are

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undergoing Regular B. Ed. and D. Ed. Special Education (MR/ID), willingness of the subject to participate in present study, both the genders were included.

Design

Survey design using descriptive analysis with qualitative method was used.

Tool

With opinion of experts from the field a questionnaire has been prepared by the researcher to know the responses/opinion of the subjects. The questionnaire was divided into two parts- Part A and Part B to look for the perspectives of the teacher trainees towards the career in special education. Part A has 14 items. Each item was provided with five options as: Strongly agree, Agree, not sure, Disagree and Strongly disagree. Part B has 8 open-ended questions related to different factors which influenced the choice of career in special education field of the teacher trainees.

Procedure

The questionnaire was given to teacher trainees of B. Ed. and D. Ed. Special Education (MR/ID); prior to the collection of data a written permission followed by written consent was sought from the authorities and the subjects respectively. After establishing a good rapport with the teacher trainees, tool had been given them and explained about the aims, objectives and purposes of the study. It was made clear to the participants that their identity will be kept confidential and the data collected will be used only for the purpose of this study. Researcher was available to the participants to look for their queries. The administration of the tool has been scheduled as per the convenience of the subjects and after the completion of the data collection; subjects were thanked for their cooperation.

RESULTS

Total 85 (58 females and 27 males) teacher trainees of B. Ed. and D. Ed. Special Education (MR/ID) responded and the qualitative analysis had been done for the analysis of collected data in order to find the factors which influenced the choice of career in the field of special education. The findings indicate that more than 87% of respondents whether agree or strongly agree that they joined the special education field because of raising interest of people in the field of disabilities and 52.94% strongly agree and 21.18% agree that special education is one of their personal interest and the joined this field. 60% participants joined the field by their own choice. 84.71% participants agreed with they want to start with a good job in the future whether it is in government sector or private sector. It was also found that 50.59% participants agreed with they were join special education field because of the job security in government sector. These are the major factors which influenced the participant's choice of career in the field of special education. One of the interesting finding is that more than 94% respondents want to join this field because teaching students with special needs is one of the best humanitarian professions while around 47% respondents choose is because they will earn more. Arising out from the study findings 74.12% participants encouraged or advised by their family members and friends or relatives. 50.59% participants strongly agree, and 12.94% participants agree that their parents wanted them to join this field and 21.18% participants strongly agree or agree that their friend(s) join the special education field that's why they also join this field. Some of the participants praised their previous class teachers for assist them to choose career in this field. The results showed that 34.12% participants influenced by their previous class teacher.

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The findings revealed that among the selected participants 54.12% agreed and 31.76% strongly agreed with they can do well in the field of special education. More than 81% participants said that they have a passion with teaching as professional and they can do well in teaching profession. 49 (57.65%) participants got information from their families, relatives, newspapers, counselors, etc. whereas 7 (8.24%) participants came to know about the special education field during admission counselling at university and join this field. 21.18% participants joined this field because their friend(s) joined the field. Result indicates that person with disability in family also affects the trainee's choice towards career and new opportunities in special education field. There were 8 (9.41%) participants who have persons with disabilities in their family, and they joined the field of special education. 10 (11.77%) participants join the field because they didn't get admission in general education field. None of the participants felt that their gender was influence their choice, but It is also found that out of total participants 68.24% were females, which is more than double of the male participants.

DISCUSSION

The study found that raising interest of people in the field of disabilities, job opportunities or job security in government sector and teacher trainee's personal interest or choice are the most common factors which influenced their choice of career in the field of special education. These factors suggest that people have greater job opportunities in the field of special education. The similar findings reported in a study carried out on factors influencing student's career choices among secondary school students. More than 71% students strongly agreed or agreed that their career choice was influenced by their interests, 71.6% of participants whether strongly agreed or agreed that availability of jobs influenced their career choice and job security reported by more than 50% students (Edwards & Quinter, 2011). The analysis of data reveals that maximum participants thought that teaching students with special needs is one of the best humanitarian professions and they also want to earn more after the completion of their course.

Findings agree with the study which was carried out on the factors influencing choice of special education as a major subject of 394 students. The study reported that 98% of participants choose to work with persons with special needs because it is good manner, highly rewarded, work by the Almighty while 38% of participants choose special education as a subject just because there is a possibility of good salary (Alnahdi, 2020). Most of the participants reported that they opted this field on the advice of their family, friends, or relatives. A similar study was conducted by Deshpande (2018) in Pune, India on factors influencing career choices of first year M. Com. Students revealed that 56 (56.57%) students out of 99 admitted to being greatly influenced by their parents and other family members, 13 (13.14%) students followed their friend's advice and 13 (13.14%) students said that previous teachers too influenced them in their career choices. Some of respondents joined field because their friends joined. In a study conducted on factors affecting student's career choice reported that students are more self-assured when they are with their school or college mates (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Another study reported that parents, relatives and means of media also help trainees to choose this field. The media also have a major impact on learners in career choice (Kweyama, 2016). Results also indicates that participants thought that they can do well in the field and they have a passion with teaching profession. It shows trainees passion and positive attitude towards the field. Study conducted by Alnahdi (2020) lends credence to the factor. Mabula (2012) reported that financial status can influence subject and career decisions. The result of the study conducted by Alnahdi (2020) found that respondents hold positive attitudes toward teaching children's which played a major role in

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choosing special education. It also reported that respondents had high interest in the field of special education. Another study reports that culture, parental impact, sex, ignorance, culture, size of family, type of school attended, financial conditions and student's ability and interest were the factors that affected student's choice regarding a career (Ikweiri, 2016). Findings of the study conducted by Kweyama (2016) suggests that mothers and the mass communication mediums played a great role while choosing career. Students also agreed that the home played the biggest role in selecting a career. Investigator also states that variables such as age, sex and race did not play a major role in career choice.

Study conducted by Ahmad & Chavan (2015) found that the teacher trainees of B.Ed. special education have greater achievement motivation than those teacher trainees of B.Ed. general education. However, the study carried out by Kumar et al., (2020) suggest that teacher trainees of B.Ed. general education have advantage over the teacher trainees of B.Ed. special education with regard to academic achievement and emotional maturity.

CONCLUSION

Teacher trainee's career choices are influenced by numerous factors. The present research work was designed to find out the different factors which influenced the choice of career in special education field. Using a descriptive analysis, 85 B. Ed. and D. Ed. Special Education (MR/ID) teacher trainees completed a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The study confines with a small sample therefore generalization of the findings may be difficult. It is recommended that to take more samples from other institutes in nearby states or can be conducted among the teacher trainees of other disability field. A comparative study can be carried out among teacher trainees of special education field of two or more than two states of India. This field has become popular enough not only among the core professionals of special education field but other fields like social work, psychology, medical, etc. This will help the educational administrators or institutions to plan for future training programs for pre-service teachers. The study emphasized at limited factors which influence career choice decisions, whereas there are many factors. It is therefore recommended that a similar study be conducted in which many factors influencing the career choice decisions can be explored.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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