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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICE OF THEIR CHILDREN: LITERATURE REVIEW.

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##### Key words:-

parental influence, career choice, children, perceptions, achievement related perceptions, career option, career development, congruence, family influence.

#### Abstract

**Background:** Parental perception plays a vital role in the life of children including their academic, professional and personal lives. The objective of this study was to search the literature to determine the influence of parents on career choice of their children.

**Methods:** This is a narrative literature review in which iterative approach was used to detect pertinent literature. It concentrated on literature published between year 1990 and 2018. We ran PubMed searches using a variety of combinations of different search terms, related to parental influence on career choice of their children. The initial search focused on career development process in the light of theories of career development. Later on search was narrowed down by concentrating on parental perceptions and influences on career choice of their children. Almost 100 papers were initially assessed and 47 eventually included in the review.

**Findings:** Different definitions of career and career development were explored and career development theories were read in detail. It was found that career development is a lifelong process dependent on many factors including, basic personality type and self-concept, family influence, social interactions and academic excellence. It was also found that parental perceptions plays dynamic role in childrens' education with respect to academic performance, vocation choice and eventually influence behavior of their children towards career choice.

**Conclusion:** It was concluded from the literature search that parents had a strong influence over the career choices their children make, which can be both intentionally and inadvertently. Their influence can either inspire children to explore a diverse set of potential occupations or to stick to a path they think their parents will approve.

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#### Introduction:-

Parental guidance plays a vital role in the life of children and has a strong influence upon them especially on two significant life events—marriage and their vocational choice<sup>1, 2</sup>. The importance of parental influence upon their childrens' career choice is well established even across gender and racial lines.<sup>3</sup>The literature illustrates, that parents although not necessarily attempting to influence particular occupational choice, are active agents in influencing their children in a broad range of areas in career development pocess.<sup>4</sup> Although schools, peers, and the student's community all have an impact on the young adult's self-identity and career choice, the parental expectations and

perceptions have been found to play a key role in shaping their career choices.<sup>5</sup>The objective of this study was to determine the influence of parents on career choice of their children in the light of evidence-based literature.

This article presents literature review of the conceptual elements regarding the perceptions of parents about the career of their children as a general and then specifically in perspective of Asian parents. Initially this review of literature explains “career” and explores career development theories. Then literature pertaining to the philosophy of career development from multicultural perspectives, highlighting the demographic characteristics of our population, individual and societal values, and previous research about career interests of this population is analyzed. Next, this literature review focuses the available material on family influence and the role of parents in the career choice making process as a general and then specifically in our culture is also reviewed. Finally, this literature review focuses on the minimal research available on influence of Asian parents on career selection of their children.

## Methods:

This is a narrative literature review in which iterative approach was used to search pertinent literature. It concentrated on literature published between year 1990 and 2018. We ran PubMed and Google scholar searches using a variety of combinations of different search terms, related to parental influence on career choice of their children. Moreover, several relevant journals as well as books and some unpublished research work were systematically searched. The initial search focused on career development process in the light of theories of career development. Later, the search was narrowed by concentrating on parental perceptions and influences on career choice of their children. Almost 100 papers were initially assessed and 47 eventually included in the review.

During Google scholar search, the words “parent’s perceptions about childrens’ career” was entered and then first 10 pages were selected for articles selection. Free articles were searched and a total of 12 most relevant articles were carefully chosen for further study. Other words like “Parent’s influence on children’s career choice” and “Parent’s expectations from children’s career” were also used and overall eight articles were drawn. So, a sum of 20 articles was finally selected from Google scholar. The word “Careers” was not itemized during PubMed search (MeSH database), and free PubMed search exposed 7577 articles. Use of alternative words and application of limits (original articles, free full text articles, review articles and last 10 years search), revealed 97 articles and after reading abstracts of these articles 27 articles were finally chosen from PubMed. Out of total 47 articles (20 from Google and 27 from PubMed), 14 were found most relevant to our research work. Rest of the articles referenced in this document, were selected during informal search using Google as search engine.

**Table 1:-Steps used to perform literature search <sup>6</sup>**

Sr No	Steps used to perform literature search	List of search engines
1	Focused on research question and divided research question into series of concepts	Evidence-based The Cochrane Library, Clinical Evidence, etc. Subject specific ERIC, EconLit, EMBASE, Medline, Pubmed, PsycLit, Cinahl, British Nursing Index, AgeInfo And Biological Abstracts. Related disciplines Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA), Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts (ASSIA), British Humanities Index, Web of Science (Science, Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities Citation Indexes).
2	Used alternative terms/key words for each concept	
3	Used key-words and searched each concept separately	
4	Combined concepts using Boolean logic ( OR , AND, NOT)	
5	Made list of data bases	
6	Used different combination of key words in different data bases and search engines	
7	Mutually decided how many studies should be looked at and how many years should be covered	
8	Performed comprehensive search	
9	Reviewed abstracts of related research studies	
10	Used bibliographical references of these studies to locate other relevant studies	
11	Performed focused search/limited search	
12	Used Zotero to save references	

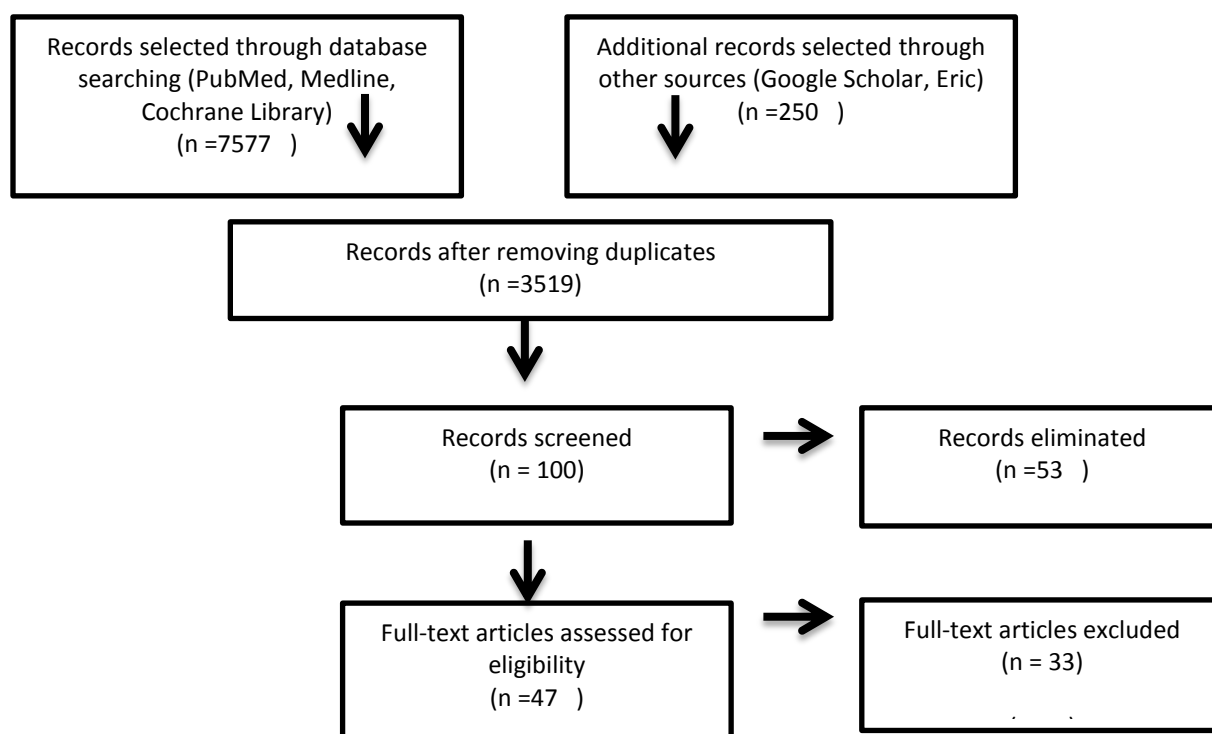
**Table 2:-Search terms used in MeSH (PUBMED) after applying the limits**

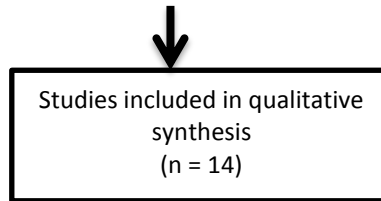
Words used for MeSH search	Number of words found	Number of Synonyms found	Synonym used for further search	Articles found on PUBMED search
Perceptions	21	0	None	459327

Careers	0	0	None	7577
Expectations	3	0	None	43477
Preferences	10	0	None	48532
Parents concerns	0	0	None	104
Successful career	0	0	None	1526
Medicine and Dentistry	19	0	None	464155

**Table 3:-**Search terms used in MeSH (PUBMED) after applying the Boolean

S No	Words used for MeSH search	Articles found on PUBMED search	Number of articles selected for review
1	Perceptions OR careers	3409	0
2	Perceptions AND careers	2	0
3	Parent's concerns OR children's career	11	3
4	Parent's expectations OR career choices for their children	8	2
5	Parents AND career of their children	0	0
6	Perceptions of parents OR children's career choices	46	7
7	Perceptions of parents AND children's career choices	0	0
8	expectations of parents AND BDS as career choice	0	0
9	Perceptions of parents AND BDS as career choice	0	0
11	Parents expectations AND career opportunities for their children	0	0
12	Perceptions of parents AND dentistry career	3	3
13	BDS as career AND view of parents	0	0
14	BDS as career AND attitude of parents	0	0
15	Dentistry as career AND concerns of parents	0	0
16	Career options AND parents as guide	0	0
17	Career counseling AND parents AND children	4	4
19	Dentistry as a career AND perceptions	33	5
20	Dentistry as a career AND perceptions of parents	3	3
21	Dentistry as a career AND perceptions of Asian parents	0	0





**Fig 1:-**Flow chart for narrowing down the literature search

### Findings

A career can be defined as “the combination of roles played in a sequence by a person during a lifetime. It is an individual's drive through education, work and other features of life”. Another definition of career development is “the progress and actions taken by a person throughout lifetime, especially those related to that person's occupation to achieve top management appointments”.<sup>7</sup> This multidimensional definition of career and how we understood description of career development is assumed differentially in current scenario. Abovementioned comprehensive definitions of “Career” lure attention to the concept of career development which is being described as a lifelong process of getting ready to choose among many occupations available in our society.<sup>8,9</sup> Numerous researchers have studied factors affecting career development process, including role of parenting style as an active agent in identity and career development process of their children,<sup>10</sup> as well as their significant impact on their career choices. Research conducted previously provides evidence that childrens' career development is stimulated greatly by the family, especially social status and educational level of the parents.<sup>11</sup>

### Career development theories

The theoretical framework of the present research is based on the comprehensive system of career theories initiated in the years of Frank Parson as a trait-factor approach<sup>12</sup>, and slowly progressed to become an established discipline today with a strong abstract and factual underpinnings explained by five most important theories of career development,<sup>13</sup>

1. Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities in Work Environment,
2. Theory of Work-Adjustment (TWA),
3. The Self-concept Theory of Career Development by Super and Savickas,
4. Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise,
5. Social Cognitive Career Theory.

No single theory of career development was found comprehensive. The key principle of all theories was the career guidance as a set of multiple and diverse concepts. Frank Parsons was known as the founder of vocational guidance movement.<sup>14</sup> The concept of talent-matching approach was first introduced by him, which further established to evolve as the “Trait and Factor Theory of Occupational Choice”.<sup>15</sup> The idea of matching was the central point of Parsons' theory.<sup>16</sup> He elaborated the fact that occupational decision making occurs when people have achieved a precise and clear understanding of their individual qualities, nature of jobs and finally relationship between their individual traits, and the job scope.<sup>17</sup>

Holland's theory of career choice was one of the most widely researched theories which advocated the congruence between basic personality type and chosen career as important factor in successful professional life. His theory was largely used by professionals as a basis for career counseling sessions. According to this theory most people were one of six basic personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Some refer to these as Holland Codes or RIASEC. Theory concluded that people working in an environment comparable to their personality trait were more well-to-do and contented.<sup>18</sup>

Another important theory was the Theory of Work Adjustment which was based upon concept of person-environment correspondence.<sup>19</sup> According to this theory the more closely a person's capabilities accorded with the necessities of his role in a particular association, the more likely it was that he will execute the job proficiently. Similarly, the more meticulously the rewards of the organization corresponded to the values that a person finds satisfactory, the more likely it was that the person will deem the job satisfying.<sup>20</sup>

The theory by Super has received much attention among the many theories of career choice and development. Super proposed that developing person's self-concept was a process leading career choice and development.<sup>21</sup> He also

suggested a developmental framework with different stages (age groups).<sup>22</sup> In each stage, one is required to successfully manage occupational developmental tasks of that particular age group.<sup>12</sup>

Gottfredson's theory of career development was a latest contribution in the framework compared to the more established career development structures. Gottfredson reasoned career choice as a process demanding a high level of cognitive ability, and elaborated on "dynamic relationship between genetic makeup and environment."<sup>23</sup>

All above mentioned career development theories paid heed to career choice by exploring different angles of congruence between personality type, individual traits, nature of work and vocational environment. The big-five career theories offered a collection of frameworks on which notion of career guidance and career choice could be anchored. However Nancy Arthur and Mary McMahon concluded their work by emphasizing that theories of career development need to explain consequences of cultural influence and provide direction for multicultural career development.<sup>24</sup>

Keeping in view the lack of research on career development in context of Asia, it was difficult to explore differentiating factors influencing career choice of Asian population and other diverse populations. Majority of Asian people however like to pursue any one of the five major professions, i.e. medicine, engineering, management, pharmacy and agriculture.<sup>25</sup>

### **Parents as agents of career development**

For a child, the most influential people in life are parents. Right from the beginning of childhood they have a persistent and robust influence on their children's personality and career development.<sup>26</sup> Results of one of the studies publicized family factors that influence career aspirations as parents' perceptions, occupation and social economic status. It was found that students pursue career guidance and sanction most often from their parents.<sup>27</sup>

Parents with different demographic and psychographic characteristics have different expectations from the education of their children which eventually effect behavior of their children towards career choice. The common insight of parents about their children's education is to earn more respect and money rather than as a source to bring positive change in the society. Extensive research has been done in this regard internationally and influence of parents on undergraduate and graduate students' especially entering the STEM disciplines and STEM careers<sup>28</sup> was explored, but few studies have explored the insights of Asian parents about career of their children.<sup>29</sup>

A number of other researchers have also explored influence of parents on their childrens' career paths,<sup>30</sup> and parents views about children's career education. Studies have also found parental influence from children's perspective<sup>5</sup> and it is found that that teen age students especially female students cite parents as an important influence on their choice of career.<sup>31</sup> One of the studies concluded that parent's influence on career choice of their children was strong enough to be utilized as effective career counseling technique.<sup>10,32,33</sup>

Many other studies examined in depth parent's behavior and influence on their children's career development process, as well as perception of "students" about parental influence on career choice. Results of these studies illustrated that children also perceived their parents as having high expectations about their studies as well as influencing choice of their future career.<sup>34, 35, 36</sup>

In most of Asian countries students live with their parents in joint families, so this clash of social influence in career choice seemed to be especially prevalent in Asian families. This state of affairs was comparable to studies conducted by Eesley C, Wang Y.<sup>37</sup>, Karibeet al.<sup>38</sup> Marino et al.<sup>39</sup> Jover et al.<sup>40</sup> and Tangade et al.<sup>41</sup>, who testified that parents were very persuasive among Asian students. In a study by Amit Aggarwal and Sonia Mehta<sup>42</sup>, it was reported indirectly that majority of students were stimulated by their parents to follow a professional course.

In contrast, one study concluded that parental influence did not significantly affect the career choice of adolescents and they have some form of independence in making career choices against the wishes of their parents.<sup>43</sup>

Present study has provided comprehensive information about parental influence on career selection of their children from various perspectives. Study will help to support and advise student to get enrolled in a program according to current trends and personal interest and not as backup plan from their parents. Hence it may be a good idea to establish educational programs in colleges to educate students on their career choices, and career counseling should

be an important part of teen agers educational curriculum. One of the limitations of this study is that it is based on the literature so empirical qualitative and quantitative studies are required in our context to test and verify these theories. Another limitation was inability to analyze and evaluate comprehensive work done on this topic by multiple researchers globally, due to lack of access to some of the relevant full-text articles.

### Conclusion:

It is concluded that parents have a strong influence over the career choices that their children make. This influence may be positive or negative depending upon the moral values, educational level and financial status of the parents.

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