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## FACTORS OF INFLUENCE INTO THE STUDENTS DECISION ON CHOOSING THE DIRECTION OF STUDIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVA

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**Abstract:** Every year, students who complete the high education, and who intend continuing their post-secondary education, are faced with the problem of selecting the direction of studies. The selection process of conducting studies usually starts years ago, and many factors are involved in this process. Identification and analysis of factors that influence the selection process of direction of studies by students was the purpose of this research. To identify the factors that have greater weight in determining the direction of studies by students, 1345 high school students in Kosova were surveyed using a questionnaire prepared for this purpose. These data provided descriptive information, quantitative and statistical interpretation. The statistical analysis of the data is made by using the SPSS software. Findings from this study indicate that a significant number of factors are taken into account by students during this process. Economic factors proved dominant during data analysis. Also a qualified majority of respondents would choose a public institution to further their education. Students in determining the direction of studies are mainly based on their inclinations and less on academic skills they have shown during their High school. A big impact in this process have parents, however the final decision is made by the students. About a third of respondents had difficulty or distraction in determining the direction of studies. About the fifth of them are not sure concerning their decision. At the end of this research we describe the implementation of an application which helps the interested sides; such are the students, parents and mentors in this process of decision making.

**Keywords:** Education, selection, studies, department, student.

### Introduction

Decision making is the essential process in a lot of situations in our live. If the decision for the particular situation is wrong, it can have a lot of negative consequences for us and for the society where we act. One of the most important decisions in our life is the choosing of direction of our studies. Some of the people have clear picture for their profession since they are child, but some others have various difficulties in making final decision concerning this issue (Johnson & Chapman, 1979). In this process of decision making about the future studies the students as well us the community, must be very carrefull and everyone must take big attention for all factors of influence. The lack of such attention, implicates in wrong decision which may have a negative consequence both for the students and the community. This process is followed by a big stress and pressings of different nature (Galotti, 1999). There are different factors of influence in this decision making process. There are done several researches concerning the factors of influence. On this research we are focusing on identifying the main factors of influence, analyze these factors and making conclusions in order to give recommendations for the ways of improving this decision making process in the territory of Republic of Kosova.

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Concerning the results from the ministry of education and science of the Republic of Kosova (MASHT 2012) as well as the state statistical office of the Republic of Kosova (ASK, 2013), only 70% of high school students are continuing their studies in the Universities either in Kosova or abroad. From this number at least 20% of students interrupt the studies for different reasons. Concerning our opinion, one of the basic reasons of interrupting the studies is the wrong decision concerning the direction of studies, the thing which we analyze on this research. Identifying the factors of influence has a big importance for the Universities in order to improve the models of offering and attracting new students, as well as for the government in order to plan the activities for the future. It is known fact that the persons who graduate at the Universities have bigger opportunities in all aspects of their life. One can read the research (Smart, 2008), who have concluded that the graduated people are more happy and they have more fulfilled life. Concerning the same article, graduate persons are more active in the social and political life and consequently they have the bigger chances to influence to the state issues at all. At the same research author concludes that the graduated persons have less chances to be part of unlawful activities. On (Wellman & Hampton 1999) one can find the research that the graduated persons have bigger impact on economical development of the state. So, studying, has impact for improving the life of the citizens and the community.

The decision making passes through two basic steps. The first one is decision to continue the studies and the second one is choosing the direction of studies. There is a lot of research done on this direction. In (Kotler & Fox, 1995) one can find that the choosing the direction of studies is followed by big sacrifices both on personal and on economical aspect. In (Porter & Umbah, 2006) one can see that the culture of the department has the impact on the motivation of the students the success and satisfaction. Some of the studies confirm that the decision process is influenced from the subject that students like more (Malgwi, at et. al 2005). The influence of the family on this process is analyzed at (Litten, 1982). Concerning the impact of the friends and the community, there are diversities on the opinions. At (Kealy & Rockel, 1987) one can find the research of the impact on this decision making. On the other hand on (Hossler, at et. all 1989) one can find the research that such the impact from the friends and the community doesn't exist. On (Yazici & Yazici, 2010), one can see that one of the most influencing factors of this decision process is choosing the direction which offers more possibilities for employment after graduating. There are some proposed models which determine the directions on this process of decision making. One of the models is the so called econometrical model (Hossler, D., 1999). This model means detailed analysis for advantages and disadvantages of each direction. Making decision using this model means that students must have perfect information about each direction in order to make the rational decision. Sometimes gathering such information is impossible and very difficult process. One of the other models is based on intuition and emotions (Murtagh at et. all., 2011). Another important model is based on academicals skills and abilities of students (Paulsen, 1990). The students which are more abilities for some particular subject tend to choose profession which is related to that subject. On (Cabrera & Nasa, 2000) one can see the research that even parents give bigger support to children which have shown better results during the high school. Another interesting research is done by (Ihlanfeldt, 1980) where one can see that students from the families where the parents haven't graduated, tend to choose faculties near to the place where they leave. The community, especially the friends has an interesting impact in the process of decision making concerning choosing the direction of studies. On (Paulsen, 1990) one can see that the probability to continue the studies on Universities is bigger if the person has a friend with the same decision.

## **Methods**

The population of the study is consisted of the pupils from high schools located at five cities of Republic of Kosova. During the academic year 2014-2015 we surveyed 1345 randomly chosen pupils. For this purpose we have prepared the questionnaire consisted of questions categorized in three basic categories: On the first category were informative questions concerning gender, the class, the type of school, the city etc. On the second category were questions concerning the direction of studies they have chosen and the factors of influence in this decision. The third categories of questions were the so called open questions concerning their opinion, comments, suggestions, etc. Below we give the table of connection between the factors of influence and the model of questions from which the information is gathered:

Table 1: Correlation between the factors of influence and the model of questions

<b>The factor of influence in the decision making</b>	<b>Questions from the questioner</b>
<b>The abilities, skills and the success from the high school</b>	The grades from the high school The results from the mature exam
<b>Economical status</b>	The cost that they should pay The possibility of getting money from the institution Employment after graduation To have the carrier which will create bigger opportunity for benefits
<b>Expectation from the institution (University)</b>	Reputation of the institution
<b>Opportunity for employment after graduation</b>	To have bigger chances to be employed after graduation
<b>Parents</b>	Parents
<b>Friends</b>	Friends

In order to get a clear illustration concerning the interpretation of the gathered data, making conclusions and decisions, we have used the Statistical Analysis Software SPSS.

At the beginning we analyzed some elements from the descriptive statistics concerning some characteristics, and then we continued with an analysis concerning some other statistical values and dependencies. For analyzing the obtained data in this research we have used Cross Tabulations. This is done with the purpose to get the clearer picture for the topic of discussion. We have used the chi-square test, in order to get the significant value of dependence between different factors.

## Results and Discussion

From the processed data we can see that the gender distribution of the surveyed students is as follows: 42.5% of them are male and 57.5% female. From the total number of surveyed pupils the very big majority (87.5%) have declared that they will continue with the studies by choosing one of the Universities. From this number, 95% have answered that they will choose University in the Republic of Kosova and just 5% of them have answered that they will try to register in some international University. Concerning the direction of their studies on the future we give the table below:

Table 2. Direction of studies that students have declared to choose

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Economy	245	18,2	18,2	18,2
Social sciences	45	3,3	3,3	21,6
Natural sciences	57	4,2	4,2	25,8
Arts	39	2,9	2,9	28,7
Engineering	103	7,7	7,7	36,4
Medicine	133	9,9	9,9	46,2
Sports	105	7,8	7,8	54,1
Languages	93	6,9	6,9	61,0
Others	286	21,3	21,3	82,2
I am not sure	239	17,8	17,8	100,0
Total	1345	100,0	100,0	

From the table one can see that the most preferable direction for the future studies is the economy, and also the big percentage have declared that they will choose another profession which was not mentioned in the options numbered on the questionnaire. On the additional comments gave from the students we can conclude that the most preferable profession from the part others is education and military. Also, there is a big percentage of students who have answered that they still are not sure concerning their profession on the future. Concerning the factors which have influence on the choosing of the direction of the studies we give the following table:

Table 3. Factor of influence on the decision making for the future studies

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Distance of the institution to the living house	173	12,9	12,9	12,9
The cost of the studies	73	5,4	5,4	18,3
Reputation of the University	94	7,0	7,0	25,3
Possibility of financial support	116	8,6	8,6	33,9
Bigger chances of employment after graduation	889	66,1	66,1	100,0
Total	1345	100,0	100,0	

Logically the biggest percent of students tend to choose the profession which will offer them bigger chances for finding job after their graduation. Another interesting result is that students also tend to choose Universities which are near the location of the houses where they leave. Concerning the influence of the community in choosing the direction of studies we have the following table:

Table 4. Distribution of the influence of parents and community in decision making

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Parents	343	25,5	25,5	25,5
Teachers	49	3,6	3,6	29,1
Friends	32	2,4	2,4	31,5
Magazines and brochures	27	2,0	2,0	33,5
I am not influenced	894	66,5	66,5	100,0
Total	1345	100,0	100,0	

From the table 4 one can conclude that except parents the community has no big impact in this process in Republic of Kosova. Interesting thing is that a very big percentage of pupils in Republic of Kosova (66.5%) think that they are not influenced at all from the community. Concerning the type of carrier we have the table below:

Table 5. The type of carrier they want to choose

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
To have the carrier which will allow to have big profit	376	28,0	28,0	28,0
To have the carrier for which you have a talent (profession that you like to do)	463	34,4	34,4	62,4
To have the carrier which will serve to other people and to the community	344	25,6	25,6	88,0
To have an interesting carrier for you	162	12,0	12,0	100,0
Total	1345	100,0	100,0	

From the table 5 we can conclude that there is not dominant tendency using the categories from this table and that each category is approximately equally distributed, with the mode which tends to the talent they have. Concerning the basic references that pupils takes when they think about their decision the following table is given:

Table 6. The references on before the decision making

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Expectations	995	74,0	74,0	74,0
Results from the mature exam	165	12,3	12,3	86,2
The grades from the high school	125	9,3	9,3	95,5
Influence from the other people	33	2,5	2,5	98,0

Other reasons	27	2,0	2,0	100,0
Total	1345	100,0	100,0	

From the table we can see that the pupils on their decision making are not based on the success from the high school and the mature exam, but the decision is mainly based on their expectations for the profession they are choosing. From the students who have answered that they will not continue the studies the main reason is the economical. By the cross tabulation we have confirmed that there is a significant dependence between the place where they leave and decision making. Students from the cities and the capital have bigger opportunities to make the positive decision concerning the studies. Another interesting fact is that the students with better results during the high school (students with the average 5.00) tend to choose the directions of engineering, especially computer sciences. Concerning the choosing the direction of studies with the probability of being most profitable, the chi-square test shows the significant factor which is 0.01. this number is less than 0.05, which means that we reject the null hypothesis of no dependence and conclude that there is a significant dependence between the decision and the profitability of the profession. The significant factor between the expectation and the direction is 0.05 which is equal to the referent value. This means that again we can reject the null hypothesis of no dependence between the expectations and the direction of studies. The significant factor between the probability of employment and the decision is 0.01 which means that again there is a strong dependence between these two factors.

## Conclusion

From the obtained results one can see that the economical factors have dominant influence in choosing the direction of the future studies. On the process of decision making the pupils basically are based on their abilities and less of the success achieved during the high school. Although the significant percent is influenced from the parents, generally they take the decision without being influenced from the community and the others. The hypothesis that the pupils are not sure about their future profession is failed concerning the percentage of just 17.8% who were answered that they still didn't decide. The compatibility between the trade request and the decision making is an important factor and they are correlated significantly. Some of the conclusions are mentioned in the part of results as well. In general, by this research we wanted to analyze the general situation of this process of decision making in the Republic of Kosova and to help responsible institutions in better planning of their activities in the future.

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