STUDY OF HERD BEHAVIOR IN THE ADOPTION OF CAREER

M.A. Asadullah¹, S. Mirza², S.H. Hussain Awan³
¹ University of Lahore, Lahore Business School (PAKISTAN)
² Air University Multan Campus (PAKISTAN)
³ Lahore Business School University of Lahore (PAKISTAN)

Abstract
Career is an essential part of an individual's life. The development of life is formed by the choices made by an individual during the decisive phases of development. There has been a wide spectrum of influences that affect the decisions of individuals regarding education or career selection. This qualitative study examined that how these factors lead the individuals to become victim of herd behavior. The study was conducted among the candidates of doctoral education from different disciplines. The findings revealed numerous factors that influenced the individual's decisions at different stages of their educational and career life. The influence of such factors led them towards herding and they made their career and educational choices regardless of knowing their personal interests and faculties. This study also highlighted the importance of career counseling that would be helpful to overcome this problem. Implications for all the stakeholders are discussed.

Keywords: Career Selection, Herd Behavior, Career Counseling.

1 INTRODUCTION

“Everyone should have an honest occupation (Borchert, 2002, p.11).”

Career is an enduring process that involves attitudes, behaviors, aspirations and opportunities to achieve career goals (Baruch, 2004). Career selection is the most important decision that an individual makes to determine his future goals (Royal, 2016). The crux of student's today revolves around the ambitions in life. Career choices are generally made to gratify financial needs and sometimes for the social satisfaction by individual (Borchert, 2002). There has been a wide spectrum of influences that affect the decisions of individuals regarding education and career selection (Fouad et al., 2015; Suraya et al., 2015). Alas! Significant number of people in our society makes wrong career choices by following the trend due to the lack of opportunities, counseling, merit limitations, family pressure, and available financial or informational resources (Karaca et al., 2016).

Career is the key phenomenon of individual, organization and as well as the whole economy. As career is multi-level phenomenon, this potentially impacts the individual, organization and society and influenced by multi levels such as opportunities and availability of resources (Mayrhofer et al., 2003). There are numerous factors like economic issues, opportunities, lack of informational resources, and family pressure that influence the decisions regarding career selection one way or another (Kowal et al., 2016). The purpose of this study is to investigate that how these factors lead students to become a victim of herd behavior in career related decisions. Banerjee (1992) proposed a model of herd behavior and explained that people pay heed to the actions and doings of others and consider it rational because the decisions of everyone else reflect the information they have and we do not. Banerjee defined herd behavior as “everyone doing what everyone else is doing even when their private information suggests doing something quite different (Banerjee, 1992, p.798).”

There are numerous situations in our lives when we are influenced by other people around us and make decisions on the basis of herd behavior. We often decide to visit the stores or restaurants or even what school or college to attend and what career to select on the basis of how popular and standard it seems to be (Sun, 2013). Even academic researchers choose to work on a topic which is currently 'hot' (Banerjee, 1992). In literature, herd behavior has frequently been discussed of investors in asset markets. Literature search revealed no research that has examined the herd behavior of individuals while making their career choices.

Recent years have seen an increase in the trend of doing PhD in post graduates in Pakistan. From 1947 to 2002 in 50 years duration Pakistan has produced 3298 PhDs and from 2003 to 2014 in just 11 years HEC has awarded 11846 PhDs (HEC, 2015). According to Pakistan economic survey 2011-2012 conducted by ministry of education, 1439 scholarships has been awarded for PhDs in last 3
The past 12 years have seen a growing trend of doing PhD. Thus far herding has had a profound impact on education. That’s why it deserves investigation that how herd behavior influence career selection of individuals and consequences of herd behavior or the challenges faced by individuals who have selected their career while becoming the victim of herd behavior. The literary works have been done and various studies conducted over the years concerning factors influencing career related decision. All researchers have recognized the impact of family, society, environment, and economic factors on career selection (Palou & Drobot, 2010; Singaravelu et al., 2005 Bolat et al., 2016).

People spent major part of their daily life in their professional activities. This not only provides the bread to live but professions are the major source of individual identity and personal evaluation. Bandura et al., (2001) refer the career as an essential part of an individual’s daily routine and basic cradle of individual’s uniqueness and self-assessment. The development of life is formed by the choices made by an individual during the decisive phases of development. These choices regulate that which features of individual’s potentialities folks promote (Kraimer, 2010). Social cognitive theory provides justification for the choices and development of career. Individual’s perceived self-efficacy is more crucial and infusing for human interventions (Bolat & Odaci, 2016; Xu & Tracey, 2014). Social cognitive theory is based on self-efficacy because the belief of high self-efficacy effects the aspirations of individual and the level of commitment and motivation (Kim et al., 2015; Bolat & Odaci, 2016).

Adolescents always look for their parents as major source of information in the field of career selection (Fouad et al., 2015). Therefor parents deliberately influence the decision of their children regarding not only career selection but also their overall life direction (Young et al., 1991). Individuals’ career development is a lifelong process which comprises acquirement of information, personal beliefs, exploration of personal interests, self-efficacy and career aspirations (Singaravelu et al., 2005).

Parenting takes place within the family perspectives and prejudiced by numerous factors including financial resources, family structure, social system and other situations affecting parents (Lustig et al., 2016). These factors indorse the understanding of variance in parenting in adolescents’ career development (Bryant et al., 2006). The role of family varies across cultures so that the influence of family on individual’s career selection also varies across cultures (Fouad et al., 2015). Fouad, et al., 2010, apprehends that apart from financial support the perception of one’s family about a particular career is a significant aspect that influence the decision.

Family culture also has an impact on decision making for career in our Asian society. Numerous researchers have depicted several facets of Asian cultural beliefs and their impression on Asians (Kim et al., 2001). Orthodox cultural norms and values dictate individuals and are strongly allied with the role of family members (Chope, 2005). The father conventionally is the boss of the family in Asian society. Family’s endeavors are strongly tangled with individual family members’ self-esteem and self-recognition (Kim et al., 2001; Ferry et al., 2000).

Gender differences exist in occupational objectives and quests (Bandura et al., 2001; Kulik et al., 2015). While females structure a growing stake of the labor force, most of them do not select careers in logical and practical fields or, in a diversity of other careers that have conventionally been conquered by males. The indication is fairly reliable in presenting that the job securities and quests of females are restricted by the sagacity of inefficacy for measurable abilities and skills obligatory for careers traditions followed by males (Bandura et al., 2001).

Males have correspondingly high sagacity of efficacy for conventionally men-ruled and women-ruled professions. In disparity, females evaluate themselves more efficient for the sorts of careers usually detained by females but require a punier sagacity of efficacy that they can principal the scholastic requirements and work purposes of jobs subjegated by men (Betz & Hackett, 1981). These disparity principles in professional efficacy are particularly conspicuous because the clusters do not vary in their real oral and measurable aptitude on consistent assessments. Furthermore, females have a great sagacity of efficacy for measurable actions but little apparent self-efficacy when these same measurable actions are rooted in precise quests (Betz N. E., 1994).

Sometimes students select their field of education but career in that particular field may no longer exist when the student complete their education. Kerka, (1997) emphasized on the training and managing the skills to become a job entity, which will ultimately create the job opportunities in future. Students should develop themselves as the collection of faculties and attributes (Royal, 2016). To prosper in
career, students should have some key skills like, creativity, suppleness, innovativeness, communication skills and management of time, money and work (Owens et al., 2015; Crawshaw et al., 2012). Change in attitude will increase the opportunities. Timings and localities are very significant as opportunities for the serenity of objectives. Having ambitions, skills and talent required for specific career is not enough. People have to capitalize them at the right time and on the right location. If they do not capitalize them accordingly, they will not have productive career (Wei et al., 2016).

There are three different levels of student’s decision making at the level of higher education: prospectus, domestic and global level (Korir, 2012 ). Student’s choice of institute considerably influence by multiple factors like the reputation of institute, merit, inclination towards the field and near to home (James et al., 1999). Moreover, the research profile of the universities has not been as much important as their teaching reputation in England. Students consider economic factors cautiously such as earning money and financial satisfaction as well as the financial difficulties in paying fees (Korir, 2012 ).

2 METHOD

Phenomenological approach was decided to use to better understand the experience of herding in career selection of Doctoral Candidates. Creswell (2007) explained phenomenological study as to describe the denotation of the lived experiences of a phenomenon by several individuals. The basic reason to adopt phenomenological approach was to strain the experiences of individuals with particular phenomenon to the description of the essence (Demir and Abell, 2010).

2.1 Research Design:

The phenomenon under study was herd behavior of Doctoral Candidates in education and career selection. Target population was all Doctoral Candidates from all disciplines from Multan region because of geographical realities of this region, as there are lack of job opportunities. The individuals pursuing for PhD from 5 different disciplines: Management Sciences, Agriculture, Biology, Computer Science and Islamic Studies were targeted. Two types of sampling techniques were used to collect the data; criterion sampling to target those individuals who meet the particular criterion for affirmation of quality and snow ball sampling in which initial participant identified and named other individuals who also met this criterion. A sample of 18 individuals pursuing for PhD (11 men and 7 women) participated in this study. Contestants were predominantly from Management Sciences (6), Agricultural Sciences (5), Computer Sciences (3), Islamic Studies (3) and Biology (1).

2.2 Data collection Procedure:

The method of investigation in phenomenology is generally open ended and in-depth interviews (Demir and Abell, 2010). We studied several individuals in the way of psychological phenomenology to investigate and examined the concept of herding during education and career selection. Semi structured, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain deeper understanding of phenomenon and the stories that participants provided. After the approbation from university and supervisor, the individuals who met the criteria were approached and requested to partake. A pilot test of interview was taken by supervisor to comprehend the procedure. All the interviews were conducted over a period of 2 months and were recorded and transcribed precisely. Interviews lasted for 25 to 50 minutes and continued until no new themes emerged. To obtain the greater richness of the data, 18 extensive interviews of the individuals from different disciplines were conducted. Each interview was transcribed at the same day when it was conducted and then analyzed according to the steps described by Creswell (2007). After reading through all of the statements of participants, we located the significant statements of individuals about their experience of the phenomenon. Then those statements were clustered into themes and narrated to describe the essence of their experience.

3 RESULTS

All formulated meanings were arranged into clusters and resulted in different themes, categorized separately at each stage of educational life as well as career. Education was divided into 5 stages from Matriculation to Doctoral Education. Career was categorized as a different stage. At each stage the factors which influenced the decisions of individuals were emerged as themes.
3.1 Herding during Matriculation

Focusing on the course selection in matriculation the respondents responded quickly and spontaneously, concluded as “trend of time,” “imposed decision,” and “parents are the first source of inspiration.” Among 18 respondents almost all reported such factors. The sense of becoming the victim of herd behavior was evident in respondents’ explanation that people suggest you to follow the trend if you want success in your life. They stated:

“It was a trend of the time perhaps... It was a general discussion that you want to prosper in life; you have to go through science.”

“Everybody was singing at that time that if one wants a promising career then you must go for science instead of arts subjects...”

The decision regarding the course selection in matric is associated with multiple factors as “the options available in school,” “importance of arts and science courses,” and “parental influence.” Usually students in school have strong obligation to opt for the courses regardless of their personal interest. The sense of being enforced to select the courses was evident in description as:

“There was only one option in my school and that was science. There was no option for computer or even arts... My school was offering only science and arts subject not computer subjects.”

“You are forced to go to choose science subjects. School has one medium that is science.”

The extensive elucidation of parental influence was evident in the response of a woman from Agriculture. She stated:

“My parents criticized my brother who did matric with arts and when it came to my turn I was not been asked by my parents which courses I had to go for....”

Children often get inspired of their parents and idealize them. Among 18 respondents, 6 participants inspired from their parents and majority was of females who easily got inspired from their parents. In case they stated that:

“I am inspired from my father because of his style, the way he perform his duties...”

A female respondent from Agriculture Sciences stated:

“I am inspired of my father and my cousin who is assistant director in sports board of Pakistan.”

Parents took the decision regarding school selection of their children keeping their ease in mind to pick and drop. All the respondents stated this as a reason behind the selection of school. A woman from Agriculture Sciences explained that parents usually select the school for their children and the main reason behind their decision regarding the school selection is their ease to pick and drop their children. She stated:

“The main reason was that school was near to our home. It was easy to pick and drop me. So they didn’t discuss a lot that which school is good.”

3.2 Herding during Intermediate

For course selection in intermediate, people were focusing on “two streams,” “maximizing future opportunities,” and again “parental influence.” There were only two options given to them. There is a major role of parents in the selection of courses during intermediate. Students are been taught about only two fields to study either medical or engineering. It was evident as participants expressed about their course selection in intermediate that there were only two options for them to opt for. Some views included:

“You have to become a doctor or engineer. These were the two options... And for parents in Pakistan generally they know about two streams either to be a doctor or to become an engineer...”

Female participants had been told that there are only two professions for them either to become a doctor or teacher. A woman reported:

“Yes that was a trend of time that's why I just thought about becoming a doctor and nothing else. My mother said that there are only two jobs for females, medical and teaching...”
It was seen that people cognitively explained another reason behind their decision regarding their course selection in intermediate as "no. of opportunities in terms of universities, in terms of specialization." Some participants made their decision while looking for the prospects of their course selection as if they select a particular field what would be the opportunities they would have in future. The following excerpt illustrates this:

“If you go for pre engineering you have so many options like engineering courses, computer sciences etc. I could have gone for different branches of engineering.”

It was also witnessed that people explained the strong influence of their parents on their decision making regarding course selection at intermediate level. It was seen that parents enforced their children to opt for the courses just because they associated the success with that field. A man from Management Sciences stated:

“My father actually wanted me to complete my bachelor degree. Then he wanted me to go for CSS…”

Sometimes children don’t have courage to tell their parents that they are interested in some other subjects and they want to do something else. It was mostly seen in case of female respondents. A woman from Agriculture Sciences asserted:

“My parents wanted me to be a doctor. I was not interested in medical. I think I was inspired of my parent’s profession. They had great influence on me…”

3.3 Herding during Graduation

Although social barriers restrain to adopt the field of personal interests, but mostly grades withhold to accomplish aspirations. "Merit problems" and “grades limitations” had great influence on the decisions when it comes to graduation level. A sense of rejection or failure compels some to make blind decisions regarding their further education. A man noted:

“After completing my FSc as I was not able to get admission in engineering college, I was totally blind at that time and couldn’t understand where to go…”

Grades usually restrict people while making decision regarding their further education and that’s why they become the victim of herd behavior. One man reported:

“The major reason perhaps that I was not up to the merit at multiple places and that’s why I was not able to get admission. I wanted to go outside to have an exposure. But I didn’t get admission there because they used to calculate marks from FSc.”

People also become the victim of herd behavior while following the trend. In our society merit has become the symbol. Highest merit is the symbol of brilliant students and low merit represents dull students. Parents compel their children to select the career which represents highest merit. The individuals who selected the field of education which had comparatively low merit, they faced a lot of criticism from their family, friends and relatives. One male respondent from computer sciences described as:

“I got admission in UET but I didn’t join that. Those days there was a craze about computer sciences. Those days, computer science had a boom…”

A female respondent from Agriculture Sciences reported:

“I was not interested in agriculture at all... Merit shows the status and there was high merit for this field that's why I selected this field. I didn’t want to be in that low merit list. I didn’t know even the ABC of agriculture…”

People also focused on the options available for them at the time of admission in graduation. They only knew about 2 or 3 available options which shows their lack of information. When they were asked that did they gather any kind of information regarding the fields which could be opted? They replied about gathering information to get admission in 2 or 3 fields which they already knew rather than exploring about new fields. All female respondents did FSc pre medical and after that they had an image in their mind that the students who could not able to get admission in medical colleges, there are very few options remain for them. A woman from Agriculture Sciences noted:

“At that time only two fields were available for me... There were only two options I had left. I had applied in only these two courses agriculture and pharmacy…”
A woman from Biology explained it as:

“After doing FSc with pre medical if you don’t get admission in medical college there is only option for students to do BS in botany or zoology…”

It was also observed that the decisions regarding graduation centered on the influence of friends. People became the victim of herd behavior while following their friends. One man stated:

“I wanted to go for BS-IT from Virtual University but some of my friends told me that Virtual University does not have that much scope in regular studies. So I joined UCP Lahore for BBA (hons.)… Few of my friends were doing the same BBA (hons.) so I joined with them. This factor was definitely there…”

A respondent from Management Sciences noted:

“I applied for BBA just because my friend said to apply there just to see what the merit is. So I applied just like that on the advice of my friend… He asked me to go with him and I applied for BBA and BBA-IT…”

Although the decisions were first made through herd behavior regardless of personal interests, time became a healer and the interest has been developed. Sometimes there is no option left but to accept and develop interest in it. People try to convince themselves by developing interest in it. People who made their decisions regardless of their interests assessed their coping efforts. A woman from Biology noted:

“When I took that decision I was not happy but satisfied… I didn’t have any other option at that time. I developed interest in this field…”

It has been seen throughout this study that people first took their decision on the basis of situational factors as “merit issues”, “family pressure”, “grades limitations” and “influence of friends” and after that they developed interest in that field. When a man was asked that throughout your life you took the decision first and then developed interest in it, he replied: “Yes it was exactly like that.” Another man stated:

“I didn’t had interest but I had a little idea about those subjects but once I studied those subjects in my college life by good teachers I really enjoyed them. So interest developed there.”

3.4 Herding during Masters

Females had great influence of their parents on their decisions throughout their life. Males became independent at this stage of their education life. They made their decisions on their own. While females had faced lot of criticism even while selecting the institute for their further education. Parents had serious concerns about the institutes. A female respondent shared her experience and reported that her mother’s role throughout her educational life was reluctant. She noted:

“My mother was reluctant to allow me to get admission in university in early age but she was convinced…”

Females in our society usually cannot take their decision on their own. Parents and relatives have much influence on their decision; who actually are the victim of herd behavior.

3.5 Herding during Doctoral Education

In this cluster of images, people represented the reasons behind decision for doctoral education as “job requirement,” “threat of unemployment,” “attainment of financial satisfaction,” and “friend’s and peer’s influence.” Focusing on the requirement of the job was the pervading reason for persons, who are pursuing for PhD. Responding swiftly and instinctively, it was described as “job requirement,” and “sectorial requirement.” It was evident in the explanation of a man from Management Sciences. He stated:

“There will be a rule that hiring will not be held without a PhD degree and secondly the ranking bodies of the world have one factor to rank a university that how many teachers of the university have PhD degree.”

A woman from Agriculture Sciences started her PhD program few months before the interview, stated:

“There is a job requirement to be an assistant professor you must have PhD degree…”
Respondents focused on the competition associated with the employment. Competition was evident as participants expressed anticipation that this doctoral education would help them in finding a job. One person described it as:

“Yes that is a major factor and people with MPhil have to face a strong competition to get the job so we prefer to get higher education to get job and earn more.”

Threat of unemployment and strong competition in market compel to pursue for PhD and so it become the trend. A man from Management Sciences noted,

“When you look at the things after serving for 3 ½ years in university, if you have decided that you have to stick with this profession then you have to add value in academic profile and the only source to add value is PhD of course.”

People also focused on the financial benefits associated with doctoral education. The sense of attainment of financial satisfaction was evident in explanation of a man. He stated,

“Financial satisfaction, monetary rewards, benefits, they are important. Now a day it has good monetary rewards as well.”

Another stated,

“In Pakistan people impress by only two things wealth and power. When I compare myself with people in academia I feel that to live and excel in academia there is a need to do that…”

People got influenced from their colleagues and friends to pursue for PhD. This was evident in the following responses:

“My friends influenced me a lot while taking the decision for PhD. I was totally not interested and never thought about doing PhD.”

Another man from Management Sciences reported,

“When I saw that there is no good career in industry, I joined Islamic University for PhD program and started as a visiting faculty because few of my friends were doing the same thing as well. They were thorough professionals in teaching.”

3.6 Herding during Career

Females in our society are been taught about only two fields to join as career either medical or teaching. There is no other option for females. This was evident in the following responses:

“In our society there are only two professions for females medical or teaching” and “My mother said that there are only two jobs for females, medical and teaching. I don’t think exactly so but I think these are the two best fields for girls.”

“I was always been taught that after matriculation I have to do FSc pre medical and have to get admission in MBBS or BDS. I was been taught that this is the only life. My dream job at that time was to be a doctor as well.”

Females are taught to dream about only medical. Unfortunately parents restrict their imagination. They only dream about medical and if not medical then they have to join teaching profession and have to make it their only career. Some participants joined teaching profession accidently; otherwise they were not interested in this profession. The following excerpt illustrate this image:

“My inclination was not towards teaching but that was just an accidental decision. I never thought about any job. Lack of information and guidance led me towards this field just like that.”

Lack of opportunities was also observed and people focused on the limited opportunities they had while taking the decision regarding their career. People in our society are often worried about the unemployment. They usually don’t bother about their personal interests and faculties they have, but try to avail the very upcoming opportunity. It was evident in the explanation of a man from Management Sciences. He stated,

“When I joined a bank and before joining the bank there was orientation training in NIBF national institute of banking and finance Islamabad. The person who was conducting the training was asking everyone where you want to go. It seems me irrelevant question at that time that why he is asking this what does it mean actually. And I had no idea at that time that why he is asking this question. This is Pakistan, everybody knows the ground realities and we are in
search of job that is why we had applied for the job and we got the job, thanks God. So I believe this is not an ideal society where you have objectives in life and you want to follow your objectives and you don’t bother about other jobs. One needs to be very realistic so I really didn’t know at that time why he is asking me this sort of question where do you want to go?”

It was also been observed that people joined the career just because of the compulsion. The sense of being under compulsion was evident in the description of a man from Management Sciences. He stated,

“I went to my teacher Mr. G.M Malik to get a letter of recommendation. He said why not you start teaching here, and I said it’s not my temperament. He said if you want this letter you have to teach, so I started teaching there.”

Some made their decisions without planning which could be seen in following excerpt:

“I never planned to enter into this field of teaching. On the basis of my performance my HOD called me and gave me the appointment that you have to teach the course. I discussed it with my supervisor and he asked me to take that opportunity.”

It was been observed that people made their decision throughout their life regardless of their personal interests and faculties. Some social, economic or situational factors affect their decisions. Firstly they were unaware of herd behavior in career selection, but when they were asked that do they think they became a victim of herd behavior, they simply refused. Sometimes they misinterpret herd behavior. They think that just following people is called herd behavior not doing things regardless of personal interests. It was evident in the explanation of a man, who stated,

“It’s not a herd behavior… It is perhaps requirement of our profession.”

People associate herd behavior with failure and they avoid admitting that they had become a victim of herd behavior.

Lack of career counseling was experienced and the participants were asked to focus on the importance of career counseling. Respondents were never provided counseling throughout their life.

People associate herd behavior with failure and they avoid admitting that they had become a victim of herd behavior.

Lack of career counseling was experienced and the participants were asked to focus on the importance of career counseling. Respondents were never provided counseling throughout their life. The sense of not being provided counseling was evident in the description of a respondent. He stated:

“Unfortunately we don’t have career development cells in schools, colleges and even in universities. We don’t have culture to provide counseling especially in public sector.”

Another man from Computer science reported,

“Counseling should be there and if I had been given the counseling I would have some other options as well…”

Participants focused on the need and importance of career counseling in our society.

3.7 Similarities and Differences

Among 18 participants, all of them became the victim of herd behavior either during their educational tenure or career or in both. But I have observed some similarities and differences amid the participants who became the victim of herd behavior either during their education or career. At different stages of educational tenure as well as during career some reasons affecting the decisions of individuals remained same.

Among 18 respondents, 8 respondents became the victim of herd behavior in education as well as career. During their educational tenure, parental influence, social culture, friends and family influence and opportunities were the factors majorly influenced the decisions of individuals. I am quoting the response of a respondent from agriculture acknowledging parental influence as an example:

“Parents forced me to get admission in agriculture. I had never heard this word agriculture before. I was not interested in this field…”

Another respondent responded about friends influence as:

“Just a friend told me that admissions are also open for business education… Our one class fellow was also doing BBA from BZU…”

When it came to their career, again opportunities, social culture and economic factors influenced their decision and led them to herding. While in case of females, parents and society played important role
in the selection of career. They were enforced to select the specific career by their parents and society so, it led them to herding. A female respondent from agriculture reported:

“In our society there are only two professions for females, medical or teaching…”

9 respondents have been observed, who became the victim of herd behavior in education but not in career. Similar factors like parental influence, social, friends and family, opportunities and in some cases economic factor influenced their decisions during their educational tenure. But when it came to career, they weren’t influenced by such factors and identified their personal faculties and capabilities and select their career accordingly. Among 7 females only 2 females became able to hinder the influence of such factors in the selection of their career. A woman reported,

“I did job for 2 ½ years. It was 17th scale officer in Lahore. I was more interested in doing job because I don’t have brother. I wished to support my family financially. My parents didn’t influence my decision.”

The only respondent from Agriculture, who didn’t become the victim of herd behavior during his educational tenure but in career, was influenced by job requirement during his career. He stated as,

“I thought that biology is close to nature, that’s why I was interested in this subject… Then the selection of entomology as the course of specialization was again because it’s close to nature…”

And

“There is a trend of doing PhD especially in agriculture so we face competition here…”

Participants became the victim of herd behavior majorly during Matriculation till Graduation. Parental influence was observed during Matriculation and Intermediate. At the stage of Masters, the ratio of becoming the victim of herd behavior was low. During Graduation individuals already had become the victim of herd behavior. Although they were not interested in that particular field of education but they developed their interest in it. That’s why during Masters they didn’t think about anything else and just followed the same path. But when it came to career 8 participants became the victim of herd behavior particularly females. Females were obliged to opt for only teaching profession. All the participants became the victim of herd behavior while pursuing for PhD whether they selected teaching profession while becoming the victim of herd behavior or not. This was the job requirement of their profession.

4 DISCUSSION

In this study, persons pursuing for their doctoral education focused on the factors affect the decisions taken throughout their educational as well as professional life. As James et al. (1999) found that easy access to home is the factor influence the institute selection of an individual. In the early stage of education all the decisions regarding the school selection, course selection or even college selection were taken by their parents. Theme Easy to pick and drop emerged as the major reason for the school selection. Parents were following the trend and becoming the victim of herd behavior. As mentioned earlier, Young et al. (1992) identified the influence of parents as children consider their parents the source of guidance. Many participants considered their parents the first source of inspiration. School also had limited options regarding courses so the students were obliged to opt for those courses.

Grades restricted the opportunities for participants. Merit has become like a symbol. Some people opted for the field just because that field belongs to brilliant students and it would show their status. Aligned with James et al. (1999) study, repute and status emerged as an image. Repute and prestige associate with the course or even institute influence people and shows a status. A respondent explained it as,

“When you pass out from good institute you get good job. An educational degree becomes like a brand.”

People relate the success with the repute associated with the institute or career. Social satisfaction played an essential role in the selection of career.

Females were more dependent on their parents throughout their educational as well as professional life. Their parents influenced all their decisions. Females were supposed to select only two professions either medical or teaching. Images of obligations for females from their family were strong in themes; Two streams, Females are more dependent and Only option for females. Consistent with Kim et al.
(2001) study, strong obligations from relatives enforced individuals while taking the decision regarding education and career selection.

Theme, *Job requirement of the sector*, emerged as the main reason for pursuing PhD. Participants in the current study experienced the competition in context and the threat of unemployment so they moved towards doctoral education to secure their future. Friends and peers also influenced their decision regarding their doctoral education. Aligned with Borchert (2002) study, individuals were influenced by their friends during the selection of their career. Some participants gave more weightage to the factor of financial satisfaction that influenced their decisions. Ferry (2006) identified economic factors and financial difficulty as major reasons students consider carefully.

It has been observed that people throughout their life made their decisions regardless of their personal abilities and competencies but when they were asked if they became a victim of herd behavior in their life, they simply denied. Some people were unaware of that term but others relate that with failure so they had fear to admit. All the participants stressed the importance of counseling throughout the educational tenure. Aligned with Lindh & Dahlin (2000); Martincin & Stead (2014) study, career counseling has the importance and can hinder the factors which lead individuals towards herding.

A pattern of decision making was observed throughout the educational tenure. Parental influence was observed during matriculation and intermediate but not during graduation and doctoral education. Suraya et al., 2015 observed friend’s and peers’ influence during graduation and doctoral education. Economic factor also influenced the decisions of participants during doctoral education. Lack of opportunities led individuals towards herd behavior during career.

5 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

These findings have the implications for educators who are expected to play an insistent and positive role to assist students in career selection. Family has great influence on the decision making of students regarding their career selection. So, educators should engage parents in understanding the herd behavior, they or their children would become the victim of, while taking the decision regarding career selection. Further the findings of this study suggest the implication for educators to provide career counseling to students and designing career development programs.

HEC should set the criterion for screening of the students, who do not become the victim of herd behavior, during the allocation of scholarships so that they would reduce this herding phenomenon in doctoral education.

From this research, it can be posited that how a person images herd behavior might influence the decisions regarding field of education and career selection. Would a person who belongs to a big city where opportunities are more be likely to become the victim of herd behavior? Do the persons who do not become the victim of herding during career selection have better quality of life and are more satisfied? What parents and organizations can do to support the discovery process which could provide solutions in the mentoring and counselling area? Study about the comparison of the existing process of career selection, and what change we can bring to better fulfil the needs of students wanting to improve their career selection.

REFERENCES


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