

**FACTORS DETERMINING THE CAREER CHOICE OF ARTS  
GRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE EASTERN UNIVERSITY,  
SRI LANKA  
(SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BATTICALOA DISTRICT)**

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**Abstract**

The objective of the study is to investigate the preferences of career choices among the Arts graduates in Batticaloa, graduated from the Eastern University, Sri Lanka. For this purpose, 100 arts graduates were selected in Batticaloa District. The primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire and this study employs the Probit model for the data analysis as the discrete choices have two categories in the dependent variable. Career choice was considered as an outcome variable whereas eight control variables such as duration of work Experience, number of complete English and technology courses, distance, job security, motivation, personal interest, income. The results show that except for a variable parallel other seven variables were statically significant in all possible comparisons, but significant levels and magnitude of each coefficient were differed. Empirical results of the model indicate that all the above variables are important factors that determine the career choices. The major findings of the study may assist the eastern university in Batticaloa arts graduates in selecting their specialization preferences on the subjects and the academics to improve their curriculum design in the future.

**Keywords:** Career-choices, Arts graduates, Probit model, Batticaloa, Eastern University, Sri Lanka.

**1.Introduction**

Career choice is a critical for unemployed youths to choose their career path. A precise career choice would be leading to achieve their career goals and prosperity in their life. However, concluding the career choice become vital and sometime give a lot of confusion due to the influence of various factors. Apart from their educational performance, there are number of factors that may have decided the career choice of the youth and unemployed. This issue has not been fresh among the graduates supplied by the universities in Sri Lanka. This has become common issue in the streams except medical and engineering and much observed among the arts stream graduates. Thus, there is a need to investigate what are the factors that influence on the career choice of the arts stream students because it is emphasized in various

forums that there is a mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market in Sri Lanka, and the arts graduates are the solely victims.

There is a keen struggle and competition in the world of job selection, and only the fittest will survive. A right choice of a job is fundamental importance and correct choice may lead to success career life. Generally, job choices are influenced by number of factors such as personality, interest, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and finance. More people are influenced by jobs that their family and parents' favors, others follow their educational choices that have been opened for them whereas some choose to follow their passion regardless of how much it will make them while others choose the jobs that give more favorable remuneration (Dissanayake, 2010).

Each year, many new graduates enter the job market in different fields and different specializations. Management profession is of significant importance in the era of globalization, especially to developing countries like Sri Lanka to be in line with fast economic growth, to provide support for the growing business environment. Arts graduates join private, public, and other organization for different positions and their decisions are influenced by various factors.

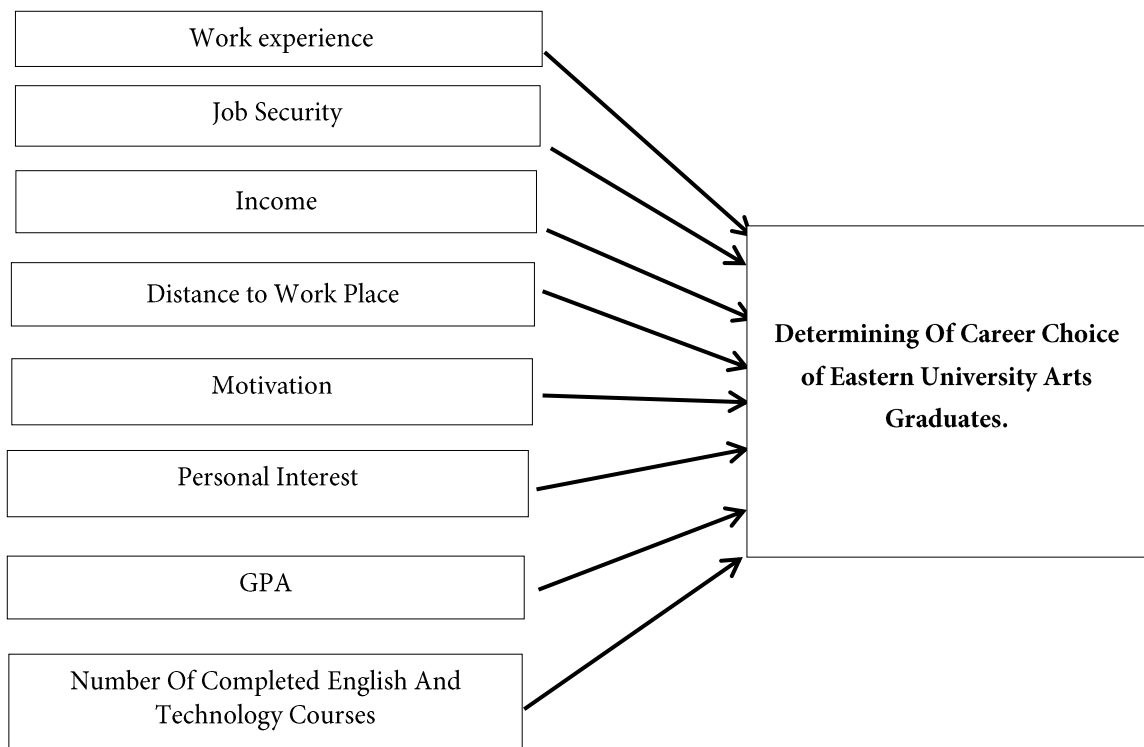
Thus, this study focuses on the arts graduate graduated from the Eastern University, Sri Lanka and the factors that determined their career choice.

## **2. Review of Literature**

Shumba and Naong, 2012 conducted a study to ascertain the exploratory of influencing students' career choice factors in South Africa. The results of the study revealed that income was the primary determined influencing on their career choice rather than others factors. However, Dodourova et al. (2019) conducted a study to ascertain the influence on student career intentions factors and concluded that university students and the graduates choose to work with the type of government and state enterprise analysing the degree of the job security and more attractive welfare and benefits.

The study of Batu (2016) was based on the Analysis of Business and Economics Students' study field and future occupation choice. The case study of Jimma University, surveying 120 students employing Logistic Regression and Administered Questionnaire and the results revealed that family motivation and job security were the most influential factor among the university students in their career choice. Shahzad et al., (2014) in their study found that the level of education is the most important factor influencing graduate's professionalism whereas Wen et al. (2018) in their study taking accounting students in China found that the distance of work is most significant influencing factor on the career choice of the graduates. Eddy et al., (2016) carried out an exploratory study of career choice among graduate management students in Botswana, and concluded that work centrality was found to be an influencing factor. Espinoza (2017) found that postgraduate qualification satisfaction and work experience are the primary influencing factor among the Chilean university students. Differently, Haase et al, (2011) revealed from their findings that career choice motivation is the determinants whereas Khan (2015) conducted a survey study taking undergraduate medical students when selecting specialty of their future careers in Sudan, found that personal interest is most significant influence on the career choice of graduates.

### 3. Conceptual framework



### 4. Data and Method of Analysis

#### 4.1 Data and Sample

The data used in this study were collected based on primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected by questionnaire whereas the secondary data extracted from past research papers, literature, reports and internet. 100 Arts graduates who fall between 2008/2009-2013/2014 academic years living in Batticaloa District were selected as the target group. A structured questionnaire was distributed to collect the data. Table 1 shows a brief profile of the respondent.

**Table 1: Profile of the respondents**

Personal variables	Percentage (%)
sex	
male	62%
female	38%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>
Divisional secretariat	
Koralai pattu	31%
Koralai pattu north	17%
Koralai pattu south	16%
Koralai pattu west	13%
Koralai pattu central	12%
Eravur pattu	6%

Manmunaipattu	3%
poratheevupattu	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>
University study year	
2008/2009	12%
2009/2010	40%
2010/2011	22%
2012/2013	19%
2013/2014	7%
Types of study	
Special	71%
General	29%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>
Subject selection	
Political science	25%
Education	18%
Hindu culture	16%
Sociology	14%
Economics	9%
Geography	7%
History	6%
Tamil language	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (Survey data, 2019)

## 4.2 Econometric Model

In addition to the above statistics, to investigate the factors which influence on career choices, nominal Probit model was applied. The nominal probit model is more applicable and more relevant than other regression models because of the dependent variable are the career choices with two categories.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1wex + \beta_2exq + \beta_3gpa + \beta_4ins + \beta_5 mot + \beta_6jsec + \beta_7inc + \beta_8wcy + \beta_9fmr + U_i$$

$Y_i$  is dependent variable.

1: if art graduates choose government profession.

$Y =$  if art graduates choose other job

$\beta_0$  is the Intercept.  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, \beta_7, \beta_8,$  and  $\beta_9$  are control variables, and  $U_i$  is Error term. The dependent variable is the professionalism of eastern university art graduates. There are two dependent variables, namely government and private jobs that are decided by the professional of eastern university graduates. PROBIT is registered for analysis and on two dependent variables. Here dependent variable is treated as Dummy variables taking arts graduates choosing 1 for government job, else 0 for other job.

## 5. Results and Discussion

Table 2: Results of the Analysis

Variables	Probit coefficient	z value	P value	Probability
Work experience duration (wex)	<b>-2.0800</b>	-3.41	0.001*	0.6097
English and technology courses quality (exq)	<b>0.8877</b>	1.98	0.048**	0.4489
GPA point (gpa)	2.6213	2.66	0.008*	0.9872
Interest (ins)	<b>-1.0997</b>	-1.32	0.188	0.8349
Motivation (mot)	<b>-0.9564</b>	-2.02	0.044**	0.4738
Job security (jsc)	<b>1.0598</b>	2.35	0.019**	0.4505
Income (lninc)	<b>2.5615</b>	4.25	0.000*	0.6026
Distance (lnwcy)	<b>0.8000</b>	4.24	0.025**	0.3565

\*, \*\*, and \*\*\* represent 1%, 5% and 10% levels of significant, respectively.

Source: (survey data, 2019)

The above results show that except for a variable parallel other seven variables were statically significant in all possible comparisons, but significant levels and magnitude of each coefficient were differing. Work experience duration, GPA point and Income are significant at 1 percentage level, but English and technology courses quality, Motivation, Job security and Distance are significant at 5 percentage level.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 wexq + \beta_2 exq + \beta_3 Gpa + \beta_4 inte + \beta_5 motiv + \beta_6 jsec + \beta_7 lninc + \beta_8 lnwcy + U_i$$

$\beta_1 = (-2.0800)$  as other factors remain unchanged, the PROBIT from the eastern university arts graduates' government job decreases 2.0800 units, while work experience from the particular university arts graduates increases by 1 percentage.

$\beta_2 = 0.8877$  as other factors remain unchanged, the PROBIT from the eastern university arts graduates government job increases by 0.8877 units, while English and technology courses quality from the particular university arts graduates increases by 1 percentage.

$\beta_3 = 2.6213$  as other factors remain unchanged, the PROBIT from the eastern university arts graduates government job increases by 2.6213 units, while GPA from the particular university arts graduates increase by 1 percentage.

$\beta_4 = (-1.0997)$  as other factors remain unchanged, the PROBIT from the eastern university arts graduates government job decreases 1.0997 unit, while Interest from the particular university arts graduates increase by 1 percentage.

$\beta_5 = (-0.9564)$  as other factors remain unchanged, the PROBIT from the eastern university arts graduates government job decreases by 0.9564 unit, while Motive from the particular university arts graduates increase by 1 percentage.

$\beta_6 = 1.0598$  as other factors remain unchanged, the PROBIT from the eastern university arts graduates' government job increase 1.0598 units, while Job security from the particular university arts graduates increase by 1 percentage.

$\beta_7 = 2.5615$  as other factors remain unchanged, the PROBIT from the eastern university arts graduates' government job increase 2.5615 percentage points, while income from the particular university arts graduates increase by 1 percentage.

$\beta_8 = 0.8000$  as other factors remain unchanged, the PROBIT from the eastern university arts graduates government job increase 0.8000 percentage point, while work duration from the particular university arts graduates increase by 1 percentage.

### 5.1. Marginal Effects results

Coefficients of each independent variable in the above model will not represent the impact of the variable on the dependent variable in terms of magnitude or size. Thus, marginal effects were used to interpret the results of nominal Probit model effectively and these effects show the probabilities of occurring the dependent variable with respect to the changes in each explanatory variable.

$$y = \text{Pr}(y) \text{ (predict)}$$

$$= .8562964$$

**Table 3: Marginal effects after -Probit**

Variables	Probability	z/p value	Average
Number of experience (wxq)	<b>-0.4712</b>	0.0011	0.4532
English and technology courses quality (exq)	<b>0.2011</b>	0.044	0.99
GPA point (gpa)	<b>0.5938</b>	0.021	3.344
Interest (ins)	<b>0.0836</b>	0.065	0.88
Motivation (mot)	<b>0.0877</b>	0.049	0.72
Job security (jsc)	<b>0.2973</b>	0.047	0.73
Income (lninc)	<b>0.5803</b>	0.001	10.3313
Distance (lnwcy)	<b>0.1812</b>	0.006	2.3983

when the number of occupational experiences increase by 1 unit, the probability of selecting a particular eastern university arts graduate government career decreases by -0.4712, while the average value of the Numbers of work experience duration is 0.4532, while other factors are unchanged. This means that 47% of eastern university arts graduates of 0.4532 Numbers of work experience duration will be less likely to opt for a career in government.

When the number of occupational experiences increase by 1 unit, the probability of selecting a particular eastern university arts graduate government career decreases by -0.2011, while the average value of the English and technology courses quality is 0.99, while other factors are unchanged. This means that 20% of eastern university arts graduates of 0.2011 English and technology courses quality will be increase likely to opt for a career in government.

When the number of occupational experiences increase by 1 unit, the probability of selecting a particular eastern university arts graduate government career decreases by 0.5938, while the average value of the GPA point is 3.344, while other factors are unchanged. This means that 59% of eastern university arts graduate of 0.5948 GPA point will be increase likely to opt for a career in government.

When the number of occupational experiences increase by 1 unit, the probability of selecting a particular eastern university arts graduate government career decreases by 0.0836, while the average value of the Interest is 0.88, while other factors are unchanged. that means that 8% of eastern university arts graduates of 0.0836 Interest will be increase likely to opt for a career in government.

When the number of occupational experiences increase by 1 unit, the probability of selecting a particular eastern university arts graduate government career decreases by 0.0877, while the average value of the

motivation is 0.72, while other factors are unchanged. This means that 8% of eastern university arts graduate of 0.0877 motivation will be increase likely to opt for a career in government.

When the number of occupational experiences increase by 1 unit, the probability of selecting a particular eastern university arts graduate government career decreases by 0.2973, while the average value of the job security is 0.73, while other factors are unchanged. This means that 29% of eastern university arts graduates of 0.2973 Job securities will be increase likely to opt for a career in government.

When the number of occupational experiences increase by 1 unit, the probability of selecting a particular eastern university arts graduate government career decreases by 0.5803, while the average value of the Income is 10.313, while other factors are unchanged. This means that 58% of eastern university arts graduate of 0.5803 Income will be increase likely to opt for a career in government.

When the number of occupational experiences increase by 1 unit, the probability of selecting a particular eastern university arts graduate government career decreases by 0.1812, while the average value of the distance is 2.3923, while other factors are unchanged. This means that 18% of eastern university arts graduate of 0.5803 distances will be increase likely to opt for a career in government.

## **6. Conclusion**

The objective of the study was to investigate the preferences of career choices among the Arts graduates in Batticaloa, graduated from the Eastern University, Sri Lanka. For this purpose, 100 arts graduates were selected in Batticaloa District. The primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire and this study employs the Probit model for the data analysis as the discrete choices have two categories in the dependent variable. Career choice was considered as an outcome variable whereas eight control variables such as duration of work Experience, number of complete English and technology courses, distance, job security, motivation, personal interest, income. The results show that except for a variable parallel other seven variables were statically significant in all possible comparisons, but significant levels and magnitude of each coefficient were differed. Empirical results of the model indicate that all the above variables are important factors that determine the career choices. The major findings of the study may assist the eastern university in Batticaloa arts graduates in selecting their specialization preferences on the subjects and the academics to improve their curriculum design in the future.

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