

# A Study of the Effects of Business Training on the Attitude towards Major Selection of Secondary Level Male Students in Iran

Fateme Samiee<sup>1</sup>, Zahra Sadeghian<sup>2</sup>, Nahid Akrami<sup>3</sup>, Mehdi Keikhosro Kiani<sup>4</sup> & Mina Golkian<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Counseling, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

<sup>2</sup> M.Sc. in Educational Planning, Isfahan, Iran

<sup>3</sup> Academic Member, Department of Psychology, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

<sup>4</sup> M.Sc. in Psychology, Isfahan, Iran

<sup>5</sup> M.Sc. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Isfahan, Iran

Correspondence: Mina Golkian, Department of Psychology, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. E-mail: minagolkian@gmail.com

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## Abstract

The present study aimed to study the effect of business education on the attitudes of the secondary school male student towards major selection. The population of the study were all male secondary students in Isfahan in the year 2013/2015. The sample was a group of 44 students were placed in the experimental and 44 in the control group. In this study, the researcher-made questionnaire was used which involved 5 dimensions, i.e., personal interest, usefulness, job market, available facilities and encouragement by society. In this study, business skills were taught during eight 75-min sessions, depending on the students' tiredness, curriculum and general conditions of the schools. The results of the independent samples T-test showed that there is a significant difference between the student's attitudes towards major selection in each of the experimental and control groups ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the experimental group got higher scores in each of the following dimensions: personal interest, usefulness, job market, available resources and encouragement by society. Thus, they can have a more realistic view of major selection and take into consideration more factors.

**Keywords:** business, attitude towards, major selection

## 1. Introduction

Generally, success in achieving an objective requires a positive attitude towards that objective. Attitude is generally composed of one's knowledge, feeling and preparation for an objective. One's attitude changes during the course of life, depending on his/her environment. Knowledge of one's attitude can be used to predict one's social behaviour as well as to interpret it afterwards. Since social changes have originated in schools and the students will form the main structures of the organizations and different institutions of the society, it goes without saying that the students' attitudes towards major selection and career prospect are of considerable importance (Sharifi & Taheri, 2002). Moreover, one of the main reasons to study the attitudes is that it is expected to predict one's behaviour based on his/her attitude. Although one's attitude is influenced by motivation, needs, interests and objectives, they play a very important role in shaping one's behaviour (Khanjani & Dortaj, 1997).

As many experts believe, many studies have shown that the students' educational performance and the related activities are not of good quality. Talented students do not use their ability and the available resources in the proper way. Students do not have enough motivation and instead of increasing their knowledge level they often try to get a higher degree (NazariKatuli, 2005).

Among the factors which lead to inefficacy are the schools' inability to create and improve scientific atmosphere, bad selection of one's field of study and individual characteristics.

Thus, one way to increase work force efficacy is to care for their needs, interests, expectations and attitude during their education. It is necessary to choose the appropriate educational programs and provide the desirable facilities during this period and to increase their enthusiasm for their fields of study, so that the students can

enjoy their education and learn more enthusiastically and become more successful in their education and future career (Viner, 1976, translated by Moghaddam & Maragheyi, 1996).

Among the factors which can improve students' attitude towards their career prospects are paying more heed by the officials to pave the way for the employment of the graduates of different fields of study, creating new job markets, giving information to those who want to continue their education at universities regarding the job market and employment in different fields.

Since higher education is costly and universities are among the most important centers for producing and disseminating scientific information and training experts, it is necessary that students choose different fields of study in which they are interested and have enough knowledge about. Otherwise, it is not possible for them to continue their education and if they do, they won't be successful in their professions. For it has been proven through experience that the students who choose their field of study without studying and getting awareness, waste their time studying to get their degree and this leads to their failure in education (Hejazi, 1987).

Thus, most graduate students are not able to practically solve their problems after graduation. In other words, they are not able to communicate their information and should acquire skill and experience after apprenticeship (Zarifian, 1997). This implies waste of capital, time and workforce. Students' positive and attitude towards their field of study will lead to desirable outcomes and an increase in the graduate students' efficiency and added value of the education. Therefore, this study can help to know the factors which will improve or weaken the inclinations towards fields of study which in turn leads to an increase in the awareness of education and can improve its quality.

Therefore, regarding the challenge of choosing major and the fact that there are scant studies which investigates the effect of business education on the students' attitudes towards their major, the present study aims to find an answer to the following question:

Does business education affect students' attitude toward major selection?

The research hypothesis is as follows:

Business education affects students' attitude toward major selection.

## **2. Methodology**

### *2.1 Research Design*

The present study is semi-experimental. The research population consisted of all male secondary students of Isfahan city in the educational year 2003-2004. Using sms panels 88 students were selected and trained. 44 were placed in experimental and 44 in the control group, using Kukran formula. Control group weren't thought any subject.

### *2.2 Research Tool*

In order to investigate the students' attitude towards major selection, researcher-made questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was comprised of five sections, i.e., personal interest, usefulness, job market, available facilities and encouragement by society. The questions were in the form of a Likert scale. Each response was assigned a score from 1 to 5 based on the response which ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Thus, 21 was indicative of a minimal inclination whereas 105 indicated maximum positive attitude towards career prospect.

In order to investigate the validity of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was examined by 3 experts and face validity and content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed. In order to examine the internal reliability of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was given to 30 subjects. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for all the questions was 0.781 and for each of the dimensions, namely personal interest, usefulness, job market, available facilities and encouragement by society the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was 0.652, 0.702, 0.664, 0.766 and 0.507, respectively.

### *2.3 Sampling Procedures*

In order to have educational treatment of business management skills, 88 students were randomly selected. After getting the parents' consent and observing all codes of ethics, 88 students (the experimental groups) received educational treatment in eight 75-min sessions based on the speed of learning, students' tiredness, school conditions and curriculum. Since the students receive the treatments in groups, the conditions are the same for all students. Thus, the fundamental business skills were taught using role-play via practice and repetition and the

students got familiar with business concepts, different types of companies, work flow, job duties and production planning and finally, the students hold a fair for their products ( Key Chains) and sell them.

In this study, statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS20 software and data was analyzed through independent samples t-test.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1 Descriptive

Table 1 shows the frequency, mean, median, standard deviation and variance of the experimental and control groups regarding each aspect of major selection.

Table 1. The students' score on the attitudes towards major selection in the two groups

Dimensions	Group	Frequency	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Variance
Personal interest	experimental	39	20.128	20	3.162	10.009
	control	44	19.363	20	4.666	21.772
usefulness	experimental	39	16.256	17	2.642	6.985
	control	44	15.068	16	3.781	14.298
Job market	experimental	39	11.256	12	2.721	7.406
	control	44	8.636	9.50	4.784	22.888
Available resources	experimental	39	17.076	18	3.673	13.494
	control	44	13.772	15	7.923	62.784
Encouragement by society	experimental	39	7.794	8	1.435	2.062
	control	44	7.545	7.50	1.620	2.626

#### 3.2 Inferential

The results of the Levine's test regarding the students' attitude towards major selection for each of the experimental and control group are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The results of the Levine's test regarding the students' attitude towards major selection for each of the experimental and control group

Dimensions	Levine's Test to Assess the Equality of Variances	
	Significance	F-test
Personal interest	0.088	2.973
usefulness	0.070	4.603
Job market	0.068	2.247
Available resources	0.071	3.631
Encouragement by society	1.066	0.305

Since Levine's test is significant at  $p > 0.05$ , it can be concluded that there is equivalence of variance for all dimensions.

Table 3 shows the results of the independent samples T-test regarding the students' attitude towards major selection for each of the experimental and control groups.

Table 3. The results of the T-test regarding the students' attitude towards major selection for the experimental and control groups

Dimensions	T-test for the equality of means				
	Standard Deviation	Difference	Significance	Degree of Freedom	T Value
Personal interest	0.886	0.765	0.003	81	0.862
usefulness	0.725	1.188	0.001	81	3.014
Job market	0.869	2.620	0.03	84	0.176
Available resources	1.385	3.304	0.01	81	2.386
Encouragement by society	0.337	0.249	0.004	81	0.738

The in depend samples T-test was significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, the research hypotheses are confirmed. That is there is a significant difference between the attitude towards major selection of the experimental group and that of the control group. In other words, it can be concluded that business education had an effect on the students' attitude towards major selection. Therefore, when choosing their major, the students who were trained took into consideration the following dimensions personal interest, usefulness, job market, available resources and encouragement by society.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of business education on the attitudes of the secondary school male students' towards the job market in Isfahan. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the experimental and that of the control group ( $p < 0.05$ ) and that the experimental group, when selecting their major, paid more heed to the following dimensions: personal interest, usefulness, job market, available facilities and encouragement by society. Business education makes the individual more familiar with the real business world and makes him/her more realistic. Thus, it can affect the students' attitude towards major selection and in their major selection; students take into consideration more real-world factors.

Regarding the effect of the business education on personal interest, the findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Fattahi et al. (2004), Nasr et al. (2008), Abdi and Aghababa (2009), Hussler et al. (1999), Davis et al. (2001), Wide (2000) and Daily (2003).

As for the effect of business training on the usefulness of the major selected, the findings of the present study are consistent with those of Namju, Derakhshan, Karimi and Asefzadeh (2011).

Regarding the effect of business training on the job market of the major selected, the findings of the present study are consistent with those of kanton (2008) and Maxwell et al. (2000).

Regarding the effect of business education on the available resources for the major selected, the findings of the present study are consistent with those of Novin Far, Dorani and Karamdoost (2011).

Finally, regarding the effect of business education on the encouragement by society, the findings of the present study are in agreement with those of Davis et al. (2001), Ritz and Mozan (2002), Halitan and Williams (1990), Pearson and Delmanjkiz (1997) and Frisbee et al. (2000).

The findings are indicative of the fact that business education helps the individual find out about his areas of interest and take them into consideration while selecting a major. Therefore, the individual can study his/her favorite major and the possibility of quitting education, change of major, poor performance, dissatisfaction, lack of motivation reduces. Moreover, as business training make the individual familiar with the real business world, he/she takes into account the major's usefulness, job market and encouragement by society.

Another important factor affecting major selection of students of engineering is the available resources. Academic education is costly and requires that the families have good financial conditions. Thus, the individuals who can afford the expenses can choose them. Therefore, business education makes the individual more realistic and this is of great importance.

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