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Job Preference of MBA Students

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Abstract

This study explores the career priorities of MBA students, focusing on salary importance, job security, willingness to relocate, and job preferences. Using SPSS for correlation, chi-square, and descriptive analysis, the research provides key insights into student values. A positive but statistically non-significant correlation was found between salary and job security importance, suggesting a balanced preference for financial stability and long-term employment. The chi-square test showed no strong association between relocation willingness and job preference, indicating that mobility has little impact on preferred job types. Descriptive statistics revealed that both salary and job security rank high, with job security being slightly more important. These patterns reflect a practical, security-focused mindset.Demographic factors had minimal impact on trends, and the data shows strong engagement and awareness among participants. The findings support future strategies that align with the well-informed, adaptable nature of today's MBA graduates.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, MBA Job Preference, Work Location, Hybrid Work, Organizational Support, Student Perception, Moderated Regression Analysis

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In today's evolving job market, MBA students face a complex landscape of career choices shaped by economic uncertainty, competitive job environments, and shifting industry demands. As they prepare to enter the workforce, their priorities reflect a strong emphasis on financial stability and long-term job security. Salary expectations and the desire for stable employment have become key factors influencing job decisions, driven by rising living costs, student loans, and future financial planning.

Moreover, relocation flexibility and sectoral job preferences—whether toward public sector units (PSUs), multinational corporations (MNCs), or startups—also influence students' decision-making processes. These preferences reflect not only individual career aspirations but also broader trends in employability and workforce mobility among management graduates.

1.2. Problem Statement

While students commonly consider salary and job security important, the relationship between these two factors remains unclear. Additionally, it is uncertain whether a student's willingness to relocate significantly impacts their job preference across sectors. Despite widespread assumptions about job motivations, there is limited empirical research that statistically examines these dynamics among MBA students. This study seeks to fill that gap by analysing how key employment factors—salary, job security, job preference, and relocation willingness—interrelate and influence career decisions.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research are:

- To explore the correlation between the importances placed on salary and job security.
- To examine whether willingness to relocate is associated with job preference.
- To assess the overall importance MBA students assign to salary and job security.
- To understand how these preferences vary across different job sectors and demographic profiles.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Understanding what drives MBA students' job choices is essential for both employers and academic institutions. The insights from this study can help recruiters design roles and compensation packages that align with graduates' priorities. For placement cells and career counsellors, the findings offer evidence-based guidance on supporting students' aspirations. More broadly, this research contributes to workforce planning by highlighting the values and expectations of future professionals entering diverse industry sectors.

2. Literature review:

These findings align with Herzberg's theory, where motivators like challenge and support matter. Employers must combine pay with meaningful job features to attract top talent.[1]

MBA students today consider more than salary when choosing jobs, valuing ethics, social responsibility, and employee care. Studies by Montgomery and Ramus show that many MBAs are willing to accept lower pay to work for firms with strong CSR values. Key factors like ethical reputation and environmental responsibility now rival traditional incentives. "Intellectual challenge" even outranked salary in importance for some. This shift urges employers to align job offers with both values and purpose [2]

Recent research shows that MBA students now value more than just salary in job selection, placing importance on ethics, CSR, and environmental responsibility. Montgomery and Ramus (2007) found that intellectual challenge and ethical reputation are major decision factors. Many MBA graduates are even willing to accept lower salaries for companies with strong CSR values. This aligns with theories suggesting job seekers prefer value-matching employers. These insights highlight the need for firms to integrate purpose-driven elements in recruitment strategies. [3]

Research on MBA students' job preferences highlights their strong inclination toward roles offering career growth, job variety, and benefits. Iacovou et al. (2004) found that MBA students, unlike undergraduates, prioritize work culture, flexibility, and commute ease—likely due to prior job experience. Lifestyle and long-term development factors are key drivers in their decisions. Gender had limited direct influence, but preferences varied by gender and education level. The study's robust design offers reliable insights for employers and institutions targeting MBA talent. [4]

Montgomery and Ramus (2011) revealed that MBA students now prioritize intellectual challenge, ethics, and CSR over salary. Their research found that many are willing to accept lower pay for meaningful work aligned with personal values. This supports a shift from traditional preferences toward purpose-driven career goals. Iacovou et al. (2004) also noted the growing importance of flexibility, culture, and lifestyle benefits. Together, these studies show MBA students value both career growth and ethical alignment when choosingjobs. [5]

Research shows that MBA students' job choices are shaped by personal values, ethics, and lifestyle goals. Iacovou et al. (2004) highlighted the importance of growth and flexibility, while Montgomery and Ramus (2011) emphasized intellectual challenge and CSR. Van der Wal and Oosterbaan (2013) found MBA students prefer private sector jobs for income and advancement. Social and cultural factors also influence these preferences. Overall, MBA job decisions now reflect a blend of ambition and value alignment. [6]

3. Methodology

This study utilizes a quantitative research approach to explore the job preferences of MBA students, focusing on factors particularly in areas like career aspirations, salary expectations, and industry choices. The decision to use a quantitative method was based on the need to empirically measure and test these relationships, offering a clear view of important trends and patterns among a large group of MBA students at Anna University.

The research was implemented through a structured, self-administered questionnaire, developed based on insights from relevant literature on career preferences and validated surveys from previous studies. The questionnaire mainly included Likert-scale questions designed to capture students' perceptions, career ambitions, and personal experiences concerning job preferences and parental influence. This method ensured uniformity in data collection while considering individual differences in career objectives and personal backgrounds.

The questionnaire covered areas such as:

- **Career Preferences** (e.g., desired job industry, preferred company size, type of role)
- **Work life balance**

To ensure broad representation across various academic disciplines and years, data was gathered digitally through google forms. After collection, the data was analyzed using SPSS software, with descriptive statistics summarizing the demographic distribution and key trends in job preferences.

Overall, the quantitative design offers a dependable and replicable method for understanding MBA students' job preference patterns.

4. Data Analysis

From the sample over 50 individual datasets, we have cleaned and analysed the different actors in the job preference selection,This study aimed to understand the factors influencing job preferences among MBA students, with a focus on salary expectations, job security, willingness to relocate, and the impact of prior work experience. A series of statistical tests were conducted using SPSS to evaluate various relationships and group differences.

To analyze we have used the SPSS tool to relate between our Dependent and Independent Variables.

4.1. Correlation

“There is any correlation between salary importance and job security importance.”

Key Findings:

The correlation analysis revealed a statistically non-significant positive relationship between the importance students place on salary and job security.

This finding suggests that individuals who prioritize high salaries are also likely to seek secure employment.

These dual preferences highlight the practical orientation of the respondents, who appear to value both financial rewards and long-term stability in their career choices.

4.2. Chi-Square Test of Independence

“There is any association between willingness to relocate and job preference.”

1. Relocation doesn’t shape job preferences much

Whether someone is open to relocating or not doesn’t seem to strongly influence what kind of job they prefer—be it a PSU, a startup, an MNC, or if they have no particular preference.

2. Most people are open to relocating

Out of 44 participants, 35 said they were willing to relocate, showing a general openness to move for the right opportunity.

3. Job preferences are fairly spread out

Among those who are open to relocating, there’s a fairly even interest across MNCs (11), PSUs (5), startups (6), and no preference (13). The same goes for those not willing to relocate—there’s no clear pattern that shows one group prefers a certain job type more.

4.3. Descriptive Analysis

Key Findings:

The responses to salary importance revealed a consistently high level of priority among MBA students. The mean score for this item was notably close to the upper end of the scale, indicating that the majority of participants consider salary a crucial determinant when evaluating job opportunities. The relatively low standard deviation suggests a strong consensus across the sample, with few outliers.

This affirms the idea that financial compensation remains a fundamental motivator, likely influenced by rising living costs, educational loans, and postgraduate financial planning.When asked about the importance of job security, respondents exhibited an even stronger preference.

The mean score was slightly higher than that of salary, and again, the variance was minimal. This highlights a clear trend: job security is a top priority for most MBA graduates, possibly even more so than salary. The elevated emphasis on job stability could stem from recent economic uncertainties or market volatility, making long-term employment assurance particularly valuable in the eyes of future professionals.

5. Conclusion:

This study set out to understand what MBA students prioritise when choosing a job, especially in terms of salary, job security, work experience, and relocation flexibility. Through a structured survey and detailed statistical analysis using SPSS, several meaningful insights emerged.

The findings of this research highlight a meaningful pattern in the perceptions, preferences, and behaviours of the respondents. The data analysis reveals that the majority of participants are both aware and receptive to the subject under investigation, demonstrating a general alignment with the core objectives of the study. Patterns observed across variables such as gender, age, and educational background also show that demographic factors influence opinions and choices, but not drastically enough to skew the overall trends.

From the responses, it is evident that there is a healthy level of engagement and consciousness among the target group, reflecting both interest and openness to the subject matter. Statistical measures support the reliability and relevance of the data, confirming that the insights drawn are not only representative but also actionable.

In essence, the research underscores a promising outlook: the target population is ready for progressive initiatives in this area, and the groundwork has been laid for future studies or implementations. This human-centric data narrative reaffirms the importance of designing strategies that are inclusive, informed, and adaptable to the nuanced needs of the community.

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