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encingcareerchoice of management students in India Tanuja Agarwala

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Purpose – This paper aims to explore the influence of a range of factors on the career choice of management students in India. The importance of different individuals in the family and at work in making career choices among these students is also to be explored.

In addition, the study seeks to address the relationship of the cultural values of individualism-collectivism and the protean/conventional career orientations of MBA students from India, with factors as well as people influencing the choice of a career. Design/methodology/approach – Participants consisted of 93 students from India entering management, who were starting their first year of the two-year full time MBA program. Self-administered questionnaires were used to gather data on factors and types of relationships influencing career choice, individualism/collectivism, and protean/conventional career orientation. Findings – “Skills, competencies, and abilities” was the most important factor and “father” was the most significant individual influencing the career choice of Indian management students. The predominant cultural value was collectivism, although the students demonstrated individualist tendencies in some contexts. A protean orientation guided the career orientation of these students. Research limitations/implications – The data were collected only from one management institute in India.

Originality/value - Empirical research on factors and types of relationships influencing career choice, and their correlates, has not been conducted among Indian students. The paper addresses this issue and the study has implications for career counseling. Keywords Careers, Career guidance, National cultures, Students, India Paper type Research paper 362 Career Development International Vol. 13 No. 4, 2008 pp. 362-376 © Emerald Group Publishing Limited 1362-0436 DOI 10.1108/13620430810880844

Introduction Globalization has brought about a radical transformation in what organizations need to do to maintain their competitiveness. As managerial skills become crucial for organizations to achieve success in a competitive and turbulent business environment, there has been a sharp rise in the demand for managerial professionals worldwide. Sturges et al. (2003) proposed that the MBA degree imparts certain key competencies to students. These competencies may be of key significance in the career success of students as "management" has gained in importance over other forms of professions.

Industry demand for new managerial resources in India far exceeds supply. According to one estimate, the total number of entry-level managers needed by corporate India every year stands at 2, 735[1]. But the best business schools in India produce about 1, 740 managers in any given year. This demand-supply gap, amounting to almost 36 percent, has resulted in competition for scarce managerial talent, high levels of attrition, and an increase in the compensation levels of managerial professionals.

For a large number of students in India, a managerial career has become the most preferred career choice. The emergence of management as a formal education is fairly recent, yet the MBA degree has emerged as one of the most sought after higher educational qualifications. There was a 55 percent increase in the number of institutes imparting management education in India between 1999/2000 and 2005/2006. More than 100,000 students are studying towards an MBA degree in approximately 1,200 institutions offering MBA degrees in India.

Business factors coupled with several sociocultural changes have led to changing career preferences among young people in India. An individual's choice of career is likely to be influenced by several factors, including personal and cultural values, family background, career expectations, etc. Studies have been conducted in different cultural contexts to determine the range of factors that influenced students in making career choices (Ozbilgin et al., 2005; Kyriacou et al., 2002; Ozkale et al., 2004). However, a literature review suggests that no empirical study has been conducted among management students in India in order to understand their subjective view about why they choose to pursue a career in management. The main purpose of the present study was to identify important factors that influenced the choice of career of students pursuing an MBA degree in India, and the role that various people and relationships played in their career choice. The study also attempted to explore the dominant cultural values of the students along Hofstede's individualism-collectivism dimension, as well as the strength of their protean career orientation.

An attempt was also made to examine whether there was a relationship between individualism versus collectivism as a cultural value and protean versus conventional career orientation of management students in India with the types of factors, people and relationships that are likely to play an important role in their career choice. Gender differences among the Indian MBA students were also explored. Career choice of management students

363 Theoretical background “ Choice” means “ selecting or separating from two or more things that which is preferred” (Webster’s Dictionary, 1998). Career choice” involves choosing one occupation over another. Hence, in order for “ career choice” to take place, two conditions are necessary: (1) availability of alternative career options; and (2) an individual/personal preference between these career options (Ozbilgin et al. , 2005). The numbers of career options/alternatives available to an individual at any given point in time are influenced by external factors (labor market, state of the economy, etc.), as well as individual factors (education, family background, attitudes, etc. . Career choice, therefore, is not unbridled. Rather, career choices are often constrained by sociocultural factors (Swanson and Gore, 2000), individual factors, personal and cultural values, significant relationships, and structural factors such as barriers faced by women in certain careers such as management. Most career choice research has focused on predicting career choice behaviors based on personality or demographic variables (Ozbilgin et al. , 2005). Studies attempting to identify career choice influencing factors have focused largely on individuals’ aptitudes, interests, opportunities, etc. CDI 13, 4 364 Factors influencing career choice Few studies have examined the factors that influence career

choice. Previous studies have identified a number of varied factors that influence students' career choice (Ginzberg, 1951; Super, 1957; O'Connor and Kinnane, 1961; Paolillo and Estes, 1982; Felton et al. , 1994). The most widely used classification in career choice studies is the three-dimensional framework by Carpenter and Foster (1977) and Beyon et al. (1998).

The three factors are: (1) intrinsic (interest in the job, personally satisfying work); (2) extrinsic (availability of jobs, well paying occupations); and (3) interpersonal (influence of parents and significant others). Some research evidence exists to show that sociocultural, economic, and political changes affect the career choices of young people. Bai (1998) found that the market economy changed the values of university students who put self-interest before societal interests, and rated money and power as the primary motivators in finding a job. The relative influence of various factors on the career choice of students has been found to vary across cultures (Ozbilgin et al. , 2005). Most research on career choice has been conducted on occupational groups such as accountants and healthcare professionals (Carpenter and Strawser, 1970; Paolillo and Estes, 1982; Gul et al. , 1989; Bundy and Norris, 1992; Auyeung and Sands, 1997; Morrison, 2004). Barring a few studies (Simmering and Wilcox, 1995; Moy and Lee, 2002; Sturges et al. , 2003; Ozbilgin et al. , 2005; Pines and Baruch, 2007), the career "choice" of MBA students and the factors influencing this choice have rarely been addressed. The subject matter is worth exploring since the MBA degree has raised management to professional status, offering management graduates a gate to a fast-track managerial career. There is no data about the factors that influence career choice of students in India. The influence of

relationships on career choice Relationships constitute an important dimension of human functioning, yet the interest in understanding how relationships and careers are intertwined has increased only in recent years (Blustein et al. , 2004; Schultheiss, 2003; Phillips et al. 2001; Schultheiss et al. , 2001). Most research efforts in the area have focused on how relationships and networks are conducive to career mobility and advancement. The role of relationships in making career choices has been overlooked. There exists a need to direct research efforts to exploring the types of relationships that matter, and why they are significant in making career choices. The present study specifically aims to explore the relative importance and influence of different relationships (mother, father, relatives, colleagues, etc.) in making career choices among Indian MBA students.

Individualism-collectivism, and factors and relationships influencing career choice Culture is an important determinant of how people think and behave, while “ values” are “ broad tendencies to prefer certain state of affairs over others” (Hofstede, 1980). Cultural values are likely to have an impact on the factors and relationships that influence career related choices of students. Studies have focused on the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism (I/C) as an important determinant that influences career “ choice” of students from countries that vary along the I/C dimension.

These studies have examined cultural variations in factors influencing career choice ? (Auyeung and Sands, 1997; Ozbilgin et al. , 2005). The I/C dimension, first measured empirically by Hofstede (1980), describes how individuals relate to others and to society, and represents the extent to

which they are emotionally and cognitively attached to a particular network of individuals. According to Hofstede's empirical index for the dimension, Western countries (the USA, the UK, Australia) cluster toward the individualist end while Asian nations (such as Japan, Taiwan and India) cluster toward the collectivist end. Individualism" refers to the tendency of people to consider their own interests only, to view themselves as " independent" of organizations, and to place a higher value on self-reliance and individual action. " Collectivism" refers to the inclination of people to view themselves as " interdependent" and as part of a larger group, and to protect the interests of group members. Therefore, preferences for social influences in making career choices may also differ in individualistic versus collectivistic cultures. Research examining the differential role of peers, colleagues, mentors, managers, etc. in career decision-making is limited. Related research suggests that there is a positive relationship between collectivism and family relatedness, and individualism and peer relatedness ? n, (Benet-Martinez and Karakitapoglu-Aygu 2003; Kwan et al. , 1997). Some studies have treated I/C as an individual difference variable (Ramamoorthy and Carroll, 1998; Ramamoorthy and Flood, 2002), suggesting that even within a country considerable variability may exist in cultural values at the individual level. These differences may have an effect on individual's attitudes and behavior.

It may be inferred, therefore, that variability in I/C is likely to exist in the sample of Indian management students, and this variability may have an effect on what factors and relationships are likely to influence these students in their choice of career. Career orientation and career success "

Career success orientation" may be described as " the way people define their success at work and that individual perceptions of career success reflect individual values, attitudes and motivation with respect to both work and life in a broader sense" (Derr, 1986).

This orientation provides a guide to action, and hence is similar to an attitude (McGuire, 1985), which has a cognitive component (a set of beliefs about the career), an evaluative component (a sense of what would be a " good career" or a " bad career" for oneself), and a behavioral component (an action tendency or a predisposition to behave in certain ways). There are two types of career orientations: (1) protean (new career orientation); and (2) conventional (traditional organizational orientation). Hall first described the protean career in 1976.

According to Hall (2004), a " protean" career is one that is managed proactively by individuals (self-directed) according to their own personal values (values driven), rather than by organizational rewards. Core protean values are freedom and growth (Hall, 1976, 2002), and the main criteria of success are subjective (intrinsic/psychological success) and not objective (extrinsic/material). A protean career orientation reflects the extent to which an individual adopts such a perspective to their career (Briscoe and Hall, 2006). Career choice of management students 365 CDI 13, 4 66 A conventional career orientation defined career success in terms of measurable objective factors such as salary, recognition, or number of promotions (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988). The core value of conventional career orientation is " advancement". Even though career success has been

researched extensively since the 1950s, the study of subjective and objective career success did not start until 1988 (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988), and until 2002, none of these studies involved collecting the participants' own (subjective) view of their measures of career success.

The current study aims to explore Indian management students' subjective view of career success and also attempts to understand the relationship of their career success orientation with the factors and relationships influencing career choice. Method Sample characteristics and data collection The sample[2] consisted of 93 management students at the University of Delhi, India, who were starting their first year of a two-year full time MBA degree program. Questionnaire responses were obtained from 99 students, of which 93 were Indian citizens. The other six students were foreign students from Nepal, Sri Lanka and Canada.

For the purpose of the present paper, only the responses of the Indian citizens were analyzed. Hence, the total sample size was 93, of whom 50.5 percent (n = 47) were male, and 49.5 percent (n = 46) were female. Their age ranged from 20 to 27 years, with an average age of 22 years and two months. The majority of the students (31.2 percent) were 21 years of age and Hindu (88.2 percent) by religion. All the students were unmarried. The majority of students (n = 65; 69.9 percent) belonged to families in which the father was serving as an employee in either a technical or a professional capacity.

Only 18 students (19.4 percent) had a business background, with their father being self-employed or an entrepreneur. Of a total of 93 students, 42

students (45.2 percent) had non-working mothers and 43 had working mothers, of which 37.6 percent ($n = 35$) were in the employment of others, 6.5 percent ($n = 6$) were self-employed, and 2.2 percent ($n = 2$) were working part-time. A total of 43 students came from families where both parents were working, either in the employment of others or owning their own business. Each student was asked to complete a questionnaire within the first 20 days of joining the full-time, two-year MBA degree program. The data for the present article was collected in July 2006. Measures of Factors influencing career choice. The 14-item scale developed by Ozbilgin et al. (2004) was used to obtain data on the degree to which various factors influenced the career choice of the students sampled. Each item on the scale corresponded to a career choice factor. The reliability of the scale, as evidenced by Cronbach's α , was 0.66. Relationships influencing career choice. The influence of certain individuals (relationships) such as father, mother, friends, colleagues, etc. on students' career choice was assessed through a nine-item questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.65$). Individualism-collectivism. Cultural values on Hofstede's individualism-collectivism dimension were measured using a 16-item questionnaire developed by Triandis and Gelfand (1998). Cronbach's α for eight individualism items was 0.59, and for eight collectivism items it was 0.62. Career orientation. A 13-item scale developed by Baruch (2006) was used to measure career orientation, with nine items measuring a protean view of a career and four items measuring a traditional view of a career. Cronbach's α for protean items was 0.5, and for traditional items α was 0.81. Responses on all the questionnaires were obtained on a seven-point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree/not at all important, and

7 ? strongly agree/very important. Results Factors in? uencing career choice

The means and standard deviations of the 14 factors that in? uenced the career choice of MBA students in India are presented in Table I, for the total sample and by gender. As is evident from Table I, MBA students from India rated their “ skills, competencies, and abilities” as the most important career choice in? uencing factor, followed by “ education and training” and “? ancial rewards in this career”. Separate analyses by gender showed that male and female Indian MBA students differed in the factors they rated as the most important in in? uencing their career choice (see Table I). Male students rated “? nancial rewards in this career” as the most important factor in their career choice decision followed by “ Quality of life associated with this career” and “ skills, competencies, and abilities”. For female students, “ skills, competencies, and abilities” and “ education and training” were the most important factors. T-tests revealed two factors - “ Quality of life associated with this career” ($t = 1.98; p = 0.05$) and “ Financial rewards in this career” ($t = 2.37; p = 0.05$) - that were significantly more important determinants of career choice for male as compared to female MBA students in India. No other career choice factors revealed significant gender differences. For both male and female Indian management students, as well as for the total sample, “ lack of access to other career options” was the lowest rated factor in their Total sample (n = 93) Mean SD 6.04 5.90 5.82 5.77 5.70 5.58 5.46 5.39 5.13 4.59 4.31 3.71 2.94 2.48 1.07 6.04 1.31 1.30 1.40 1.53 1.52 1.57 1.52 1.47 1.93 1.89 1.66 1.60

Career choice of management students 367 No. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 Factors in? uencing career choice My skills and abilities My education

and training Financial rewards in this career I have a free choice in making my career decisions Quality of life associated Promotion opportunities Training and education My love of this career Success stories of friends, family My knowledge of the labor market My financial/economic condition Ease of access to this career Chance, luck or circumstances Lack of access to other career options

	Males (n = 47)	Mean	SD
Financial/economic condition	5.96	5.77	6.13
Chance, luck or circumstances	5.72	5.98	5.83
Ease of access to this career	5.17	5.30	5.04
Lack of access to other career options	4.36	4.23	3.66
My knowledge of the labor market	3.09	2.10	2.02
My financial/economic condition	1.29	0.82	1.26
My love of this career	0.99	1.15	1.48
My knowledge of the labor market	1.60	1.44	1.54
My financial/economic condition	1.95	1.82	1.47
My love of this career	1.55	1.65	1.55
My knowledge of the labor market	1.60	1.43	1.62
My financial/economic condition	1.34	1.68	1.81
My love of this career	1.52	1.55	1.60
My knowledge of the labor market	1.37	1.94	1.96
My financial/economic condition	1.84	1.65	1.65

65 Table I. Means and SDs: factors influencing career choice of Indian MBA students

CDI 13, 4 career choice. "Chance, luck or circumstances", "ease of access to this career", "financial and economic condition", and "knowledge of labor and/or career market" were also not perceived as having an important influence on their career choice. Role of relationships in influencing career choice Table II presents the means and standard deviations with respect to the influence of individuals and relationships on career choice of Indian MBA students for the total sample and by gender. It is evident from the results that "father" exerted the greatest influence on the career choice of students in India, for both male and female students. For female students, the second most important influence was that of the "mother". However, for male students, "friends", that is, the peer group, played a more important role than the "mother", and was second only to the "father" in their career choice decision. Managers and "relatives" were the least important in influencing the career choice of all Indian management students. t-Tests

revealed no significant differences between male and female students in the influence of relationship types (father, mother, work colleague, etc.) on career choice. Cultural values and career success orientation Table III presents the descriptive results for individualism/collectivism (I/C) and for protean/conventional career orientation. The mean scores on Hofstede's I/C dimension suggest that Indian MBA students were moderately high on both individualism (mean = 52) and collectivism (mean = 42.82), with a slightly higher score on collectivism. No. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Individuals/relationship types

	Father	Mother	Friend/s	Fellow students	Teacher/mentor	Work colleagues	Significant other/partner	Another relative	Manager	Total sample (n = 93)
Mean	4.76	4.23	4.13	4.03	3.60	2.94	2.68	2.63	2.63	1.94
SD	1.83	2.03	1.90	2.22	1.83	1.94	1.83	1.68	1.98	1.85
Males (n = 47)	Mean	4.57	4.19	4.32	4.00	3.83	3.20	2.61	2.37	2.63
	SD	1.87	1.83	1.68	1.98	1.85	2.22	1.72	1.98	1.98
Females (n = 46)	Mean	4.96	4.26	3.93	4.07	3.37	2.68	2.75	2.92	2.63
	SD	1.85	1.94	1.95	1.98	2.08	1.94	2.24	1.92	1.92

Table II. Means and SDs: relationships influencing career choice of Indian MBA students

Table III. Means and SDs: cultural values and career orientation of Indian MBA students

	Indian MBA students	Total (n = 93)	Males (n = 47)	Females (n = 46)
Cultural values				
Individualism	Mean	40.52	40.98	40.04
	SD	5.77	5.69	5.87
Collectivism	Mean	42.82	42.63	43.00
	SD	5.77	5.37	6.20
Career orientation				
Protean	Mean	48.85	49.38	48.30
	SD	6.33	5.78	6.87
Conventional	Mean	19.80	20.26	19.33
	SD	4.86	3.85	5.72

collectivism.

A paired t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference on these two cultural values among the Indian MBA students. The paired t-test revealed that the mean score of collectivism was significantly

higher than the mean score of individualism (paired samples $t(22) = 82$; $p < 0.01$). The mean scores of male and female students on the I/C dimension (Table III) suggest that both male and female MBA students in India had stronger collectivistic values (mean scores for males = 42.63; for females = 43.00) compared to individualistic values (mean scores for males = 40.98; for females = 40.04). Mean scores for the two types of career success orientation, protean and conventional, suggest that Indian management students were moderately high on both (protean mean = 48.85, nine items; conventional mean = 19.80, four items). Thus, freedom and growth, as well as position and salary, were important criteria of career success for these students. A paired t-test conducted between the two subscales (protean subscale and conventional subscale) revealed the protean career orientation to be significantly higher among the Indian MBA students (paired samples $t(43) = 56$; $p < 0.01$).

T-tests for group differences revealed no gender differences with respect to cultural values as well as career success orientation, among Indian MBA students. Relationship of factors influencing career choice and relationship types with individualism/collectivism

Apart from an attempt to explore the relative strength of I/C cultural values among Indian MBA students, the present study aimed to examine the relationship between individualistic and collectivistic value orientations at the individual level and the influence of various factors and relationships in making career choices among Indian management students.

Pearson correlations were calculated in order to understand which career choice factors will be more influential for students with a more collectivistic or individualistic orientation. Individualism was found to be significantly positively correlated with the "quality of life" ($r = 0.36$; $p < 0.01$), "promotion opportunities" ($r = 0.22$; $p < 0.05$), and "financial rewards" ($r = 0.35$; $p < 0.001$) available in a management career. High collectivism was significantly positively correlated with "love of a career in management" ($r = 0.26$; $p < 0.05$), and "belief that one had a free choice in making the career decision" ($r = 0.33$; $p < 0.001$). Pearson correlations were also calculated between cultural values and types of relationships that influenced career choice of Indian MBA students to see whether students who differed in their levels of collectivism/individualism also differed in the extent to which they were influenced by different types of relationships (father, mother, friends, etc.) when making career choice. The results showed no significant correlation between individualistic values and influence of relationship types on the career choice of Indian MBA students. However, a high level of collectivism was found to be significantly positively correlated with the influence of "father" on their career choice ($r = 0.24$; $p < 0.05$). No other relationship type was found to have a significant correlation with collectivism. The findings of the present study are supported by studies conducted in other collectivistic societies such as Turkey. Career choice of management students 369 CDI 13, 4 370 Relationship of factors influencing career choice and relationship types with career orientation Pearson correlations calculated between career orientation and factors influencing career choice and relationship types suggested that protean career

orientation was significantly positively correlated with “ skills, competencies, and abilities” ($r = 0.30$; $p < 0.005$), “ knowledge of labour/career market” ($r = 0.25$; $p < 0.05$), “ training and education opportunities” ($r = 0.36$; $p < 0.01$), “ quality of life” ($r = 0.23$; $p < 0.05$), “ love of this career” ($r = 0.27$; $p < 0.01$), and “ free choice” ($r = 0.23$; $p < 0.05$). Conventional career orientation was found to be significantly positively correlated with “ quality of life” ($r = 0.50$; $p < 0.01$), “ promotion opportunities” ($r = 0.30$; $p < 0.005$), “ financial rewards” ($r = 0.55$; $p < 0.01$), “ training and education opportunities” ($r = 0.22$; $p < 0.05$), “ ease of access to this career” ($r = 0.21$; $p < 0.05$), and “ success stories” ($r = 0.33$; $p < 0.001$). With respect to relationship types, high protean career orientation was significantly negatively correlated with the influence of “ relatives” ($r = -0.27$; $p < 0.05$) and positively correlated with the influence of “ manager” ($r = 0.28$; $p < 0.05$). Conventional orientation, on the other hand, was significantly positively correlated with the influence of “ mother” ($r = 0.26$; $p < 0.05$), “ father” ($r = 0.23$; $p < 0.05$), and “ manager” ($r = 0.26$; $p < 0.05$).

Discussion The study aimed to identify the factors and relationship types that influenced career choice of MBA students in India. The relationship of individualism/collectivism and protean/conventional career orientation with factors and types of relationships that influenced the career choice of these students was also explored. Indian MBA students considered their own “ skills, competencies, and abilities” and “ education and training” (intrinsic career choice factors) as playing the most significant role in their choice of a management career. With respect to relationships, “ father” exerted the greatest influence on their career choice. The results replicate the findings of

the study by Pines and Baruch (2007), and Pines et al. (2002) across 7 ve countries (i. e. Israel, the UK, Turkey, Cyprus, and Hungary). Students opting for a managerial career may be similar in certain respects, irrespective of nationality. The important influence of “ father” in career decision of Indian students may be understood in the context of a largely patriarchal society. The fact that the majority of the students had a professional background, their father being an executive/ professional, may also have influenced their career choice.

Numerous studies have shown similarities between parents’ occupations and their children’s career aspirations (Barling, 1990; Trice and Knapp, 1992). Findings on I/C suggest that even though Indian MBA students had a mix of both cultural values, they showed a definite preference for collectivism, thus supporting Hofstede’s (1980) findings. Several other studies suggest that the Indian culture is collectivist (Sinha and Verma, 1987; Verma, 1999; Verma and Triandis, 1998). Evidence also suggests that Indian students exhibit a mix of both individualistic and collectivistic behaviors when I/C is seen as an individual level variable.

Hence, I/C are not a bipolar dimension (Triandis, 1994). In a dynamic society characterized by economic liberalization and a Western pattern of education, students may be exposed to both I&C value preferences, emphasizing both (Karakitapoglu-Aygu and Sayim, 2007; Ramamoorthy et al. , 2005). It is likely that Indians value both I&C, which coexist and jointly influence the way they define themselves, relate to others, and decide priorities in conforming to social norms (Sinha et al. , 2001). The relative salience of the

situation will determine which of the two - collectivism or individualism - will be evoked (Tripathi, 1988).

It is likely that Indian students who demonstrated high collectivistic orientation may make individualistic choices in situations that related to the individual's career (Sinha and Tripathi, 1994). Similarly, students who showed higher individualism may make collectivist choices in a non-career context. The findings about the relationship of factors and people influencing the career choice of Indian MBA students to cultural values may be explained within this context. In individualistic cultures, individuals are looking for individual advantage, career progression, autonomy and individual financial security (Price, 1997); they believe they are responsible for their own future and are concerned with material possessions and social status (Di Cesare and Golnaz, 2003; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). A higher level of individualism among Indian students was found to be significantly correlated with extrinsic factors (money, status, etc.), suggesting that these students placed a greater value on material benefits, such as money, social prestige, and career advancement. Those students who had a collectivistic orientation emphasized " free choice" and " love of career" as important influences on their career choice.

Collectivists tend to subordinate personal goals to group goals, and emphasize values of harmony, cooperation, and low levels of competition. Hence, high levels of collectivism may be associated with a desire to demonstrate that one had chosen the career out of free will, and not out of competition or pressure to conform, thus emphasizing harmony. Indian

management students who were high on individualistic values were not influenced by their family or significant social networks in their choice of career. However, students who were high on collectivism were influenced by their father in their career choice decision.

Similar findings were reported by Karakitapoglu-Aygun and Sayim (2007) in a study of Turkish MBA students. Since the I/C dimension emphasizes separateness versus embeddedness in social relationships, it is expected that a collectivistic person may value support from others, especially from family members, in his/her career decision-making process, thus suggesting a positive relationship between collectivism and family relatedness (Kwan et al., 1997). On the other hand, an individualistic person might not value the involvement of others, especially family members, in an important decision such as career choice.

Indian management students demonstrated both protean and conventional career orientation, but were predominantly protean. According to Reitman and Schneer (2003), MBA graduates enjoy both self-managed and promised (conventional) career trajectories. Except for one career choice factor - i. e. "quality of life" (extrinsic) - all other factors ("love of the career"; "skills and competencies") that were positively correlated with protean career orientation in the present study were individual-centric.

Studies have shown a protean career orientation to be positively related to subjective career success (in terms of career satisfaction) while the findings with regard to objective career success (in terms of salary and promotion rate) have been inconsistent (Briscoe, 2004). Since the protean career

orientation reflects self-directedness, people/relationships may not influence career choice of protean individuals. The influence of manager on a protean individual's career choice in the present study may suggest the protean individual's desire for growth, and the perception of manager as a symbol of success.

Career choice of management students 371 CDI 13, 4 372 Individuals with higher conventional orientation, unlike those with protean orientation are not likely to be self-directed or in charge of their career. Therefore, factors like ease of access and success stories of others may play an influential role in their choice of career, as among Indian students. These individuals are also likely to be influenced by others, such as father and mother, in their career choice. These findings may be viewed in conjunction with the predominantly collectivistic orientation of Indian students.

Gender differences In terms of the “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” classification of career choice factors, it appears that intrinsic factors (such as skills and competencies) were more important for female students in their choice of management career, while extrinsic factors were more important for male students. The results may be explained with reference to the traditional view of “managerial career” as being a “male” profession. Women face barriers to career success not faced by males (Simpson, 2000) and are assessed under stricter criteria than men (Morrison et al. , 1987).

To progress women must prove that they have the competence to succeed. Hence, the inputs of education and training are more objective merits that help women to enhance their credibility and credentials (Melamed, 1996).

The study revealed no gender differences on any other variable. Hall (2004) proposed that a person's career orientation was unrelated to gender. Regarding the study of sex differences, Baumeister (1988) proposes that this is no longer necessary, while Eagly (1987) and Lefkowitz (1994) advocate the investigation of sex differences in organizational behavior.

If obtained consistently across studies, even null findings are important (Lefkowitz, 1994) since these would help establish that women and men are similar in many respects. Implications The findings of the study may have an implication for vocational guidance and counseling among Indian students aspiring for a career in management. By gaining an insight into how students make their career choices, an effort can be made to guide students towards more realistic career choices. However, the findings of the study have limited generalizability. Notes 1. See www.india-today.com/btoday/07051998/cover5.html/12/28/2007 2. The data presented in the article were collected as part of the multicultural research study on career choice. References Auyeung, P. and Sands, J. (1997), "Factors influencing accounting students' career choice: a cross-cultural validation study", *Accounting Education*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 13-23. Bai, L. (1998), "Monetary reward versus the national ideological agenda: career choice among Chinese university students", *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 525-41. Barling, J. (1990), *Employment Stress and Family Functioning*, Wiley, New York, NY.

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