

# SMART

## JOURNAL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT STUDIES

(An International Serial of Scientific Management and Advanced Research Trust)

---

Vol.6

No. 1

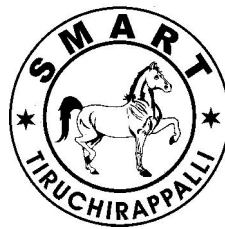
January - June 2010

---

ISSN 0973 - 1598

Chief Editor

**M. SELVAM**, M.Com., Ph.D.,  
Bharathidasan University,  
India



**SMART Journal is indexed and abstracted by Ulrich's Periodicals Directory,  
Intute Catalogue (University of Manchester) and CABELL'S Directory**

SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT AND ADVANCED RESEARCH TRUST  
(SMART)

***TIRUCHIRAPPALLI (INDIA)***

**<http://www.smartjournalbms.org>**

## CIVIL SERVICE AS A CAREER CHOICE : A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

**Ramesh Rao**

Faculty of Economics & Administration, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
email : rameshrao1966@gmail.com

**Mano Verabathran**

National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN), INTAN Main Campus, Bukit Kiara, Jalan 50480  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
email : mano@intanbk.intan.my

### *Abstract*

*The purpose of this paper is to analyze how career choice and factors that influence them differ between female and male. The main research instrument was a questionnaire given to 124 Administrative and Diplomatic Service Officers attending a course. The findings revealed that decisions made on career choice did not differ significantly among different sexes. Indeed, factors that control a person's career choice do not depend on gender. This is consistent with findings which showed that career dominance by a certain sex is a thing of the past.*

### **Introduction**

As the number of women pursuing higher education increases, it is important that role of gender in career development is explored properly in order to find a balance among genders at the work place (Blustein, 1997; Cook, 1993; Perrone, Sedlacek & Alexander, 2001). Despite rapid changes in women participation in the labour force, not much had been investigated on their career choices. Career choices and factors that influence them have been the primary focus on the investigations of women careers (Auster & Auster, 1981; Lemkau, 1983; O'Brien & Fassinger, 1993; Rainey & Borders, 1997).

Many researches on career choice and development were carried out from male perspectives as men were seen as bread winners opposed to women who are traditionally seen as Home Makers. (Long & Ferrie, 2007). Hence, new theoretical models were developed to address women's career development as they are unique and complex (Dodson & Borders, 2006).

Francis (1994) defines a Career Driver as an inner force that determines what one wants

and what one needs from one's working life. A Career Driver begins from within an individual and stimulates action which leads to job satisfaction. In addition, a Career Driver evolves from an individual's personality, abilities, values and self image. An individual's action and thoughts reveal his/her choice.

The various aspects of work related preferences have become a central theme of research in general education and working life (Lowe and Krahn 2000; Hakim 2002; Daehlen, 2005). It has been identified that when it comes to career choice, compared to males, females might perceive a different set of expectations (Marini et al., 1996, Larkin, 1997, Konrad et al., 2000). However, studies by Jourard (1991) and Gouvias and Vitsilakis-Soroniatis (2005), pointed out that there is no significant difference on career preferences among males or females. Reasons for man's and female's preference for a job, differ. For instance, Sicherman (1996) feels that women tend to quit and leave the labour force for non-monetary reasons such as household responsibilities and illness in the family, while men tend to quit for better job opportunities.

Past research in Social Psychology indicates that surroundings, environment, friends and family could influence a person's choice of career. Leonard (2001) in his research has shown that children often consult their parents in deciding their career upon completing their studies. Often parents' opinion is clouded by their personal criteria in judging the worthiness and validity of a career.

Unlike the past, current employees manage their own career path instead of depending on the organization they are working for. They do so by seizing new and different job opportunities. In order to remain marketable, employees increase their human capital by constantly attending training and development programmes (Cheremie, Sturman & Walsh, 2007). Therefore, it is common to see many professionals, having multiple careers and multiple job movements in their career life (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). Among the main reasons identified with the job turnover of professionals is the pull of monetary returns.

Monetary returns such as salary and remunerations used as dependent variables in many studies, have symbolized success of an individual's career choice (Judge et al., 1994; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001; Heslin, 2005). After documenting gender pay gap for full-time workers over the past 25 years, Blau & Kahn (2000) concluded that the gender pay gap is narrowing. Much of this reduction is linked with the increase of female participation in the workforce. Previously women concentrated more on administrative supports and service occupations, but now they have moved into managerial jobs and senior positions too (Solberg, 2005).

### **Statement of the Problem**

With the advancement of education in terms of quality and accessibility, career composition by gender has been changing. For instance, female participation in the labour force in Malaysia is on the rise, thus changing the labour

scenario. As an example, Figure 1 shows that percentage of female workers in the "Administrative and Managerial Workers" and "Clerical and Related Workers" has increased.

However, whether this trend is occurring in every career needs to be investigated. Advocates of gender equality are happy with some initiatives taken by the Malaysian Government. Abolishment of gender discriminative rules in career has produced encouraging results. For example, gender composition of employment in the Public Services Department of Malaysia, especially in the Administrative and Diplomatic Services (ADS) has changed since Malaysia gained independence (See Figure 2).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The current study proposes to investigate not only the significant Career Drivers for different genders but also relative importance of them. Hence this study could shed some light on why the Malaysian Civil Service, ADS, in particular has become a career choice for many. The objective of this paper is to examine the similarities and differences in the career paths of male and female of a chosen profession i.e ADS.

The main aim of this empirical research was to investigate gender-related differences in the civil service. This was done by analyzing and examining the importance of career choice of an individual. By doing so, the results could add to the literature on the importance of Career Drivers by gender. The study will address the following two research questions:

1. Are Career Drivers important? If yes, which one is the Career Drivers?
2. Is the importance of each Career Driver significantly associated with gender?

### **Research Methodology**

Participants in this study were one hundred twenty one members of ADS, attending a

Compulsory Diploma in Administrative Course at the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN). The number of male participants and female participants were equal (n=62). The ethnic composition of the sample was 86% Malays (n=107), 3% Chinese (n=4), 5% Indians (n=6), and others 6% (n=7). Majority of participants (approximately 92% or 114 respondents) had worked elsewhere before joining the ADS.

Non-parametric methods were utilized to test the research questions in this paper. This method was preferred because of its ability to estimate and quantify the trends within and between groups, minus the peril of misspecification danger (Dacuycuy, 2006). At the same time, assumptions which are required for parametric test, such as normality of data, is not necessarily fulfilled (Alvo & Park, 2002; Mumby, 2002).

#### **Analysis And The Statistical Tools Used**

ETA Statistics was used to investigate the strength of the association between gender and changing of jobs and the effect size was 0.178. When one variable is nominal, in this case, gender, ETA Statistics is ideal. In measuring the strength of a relationship, a value greater than 0.45 is considered much larger than typical; 0.37 is considered large; 0.24 as medium; and 0.10 as small (Cohen, 1988). The small effect size in this study indicates that neither males nor females were more likely to change jobs.

This could be attributed to the fact that the ADS offers job security. However, almost half of the respondents, who were working previously, held a permanent job which cast doubt on this proposition. To test this proposition on gender, the Mann-Whitney U Test was employed. A Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in job tenancy, i.e permanent and non-permanent for males (md=1, n=60) and females (md=1, n=54), U=1596, z=-.164, p=0.870, r=0.01. This clearly

denotes that job security does not influence job changing between genders. In this study, it can be identified that both males and females would change jobs as the status of their previous job does not matter (**See Table 1**).

This could be because some perceive ADS to be a better job than their previous one. Other than job security, people change jobs because of monetary reason. To test this, previous job's salary was compared. An ADS officer would receive a starting salary of RM2843.63. **Table-2** shows that more than 82% of ADS officers who were working previously, were drawing a higher salary. Yet at the same time, the officers still preferred the ADS. A Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in monetary aspect, i.e salary of males (md=1, n=60) and females (md=1, n=54), U=1533, z=.749, p=0.454, r=0.07. Thus, importance of monetary returns in career choice looks doubtful for either gender.

On the other hand, the selection of an individual to join the ADS could be attributed to perks that come along with it. For example, the ADS is often seen as the apex of civil service in this country as all decisions and policy making bodies in the country are headed and assisted by the ADS. In addition, majority states in the Peninsular Malaysia are administered by the ADS who are appointed as District Officers, Chief District Officers and Assistant District Officers. Thus, being an ADS is privileged in the society and wields a lot of power and this provides great satisfaction which is rather difficult to quantify.

The ADS appeals to many people. Although there were some ADS officers who worked in other civil service (see Table 3), many of the officers worked in non-government sector before accepting the post as an ADS officer. As seen in **Table 3**, the attractiveness of ADS lured many to this job. Majority of the respondents in this study knew of the present job i.e ADS through their acquaintances such

as family and friends (See Table 4). Given that personal acquaintance was the prominent way by which respondents knew about this job, shows that they were on the look out for a career change.

### Scope For Further Research

Several limitations limit the validity of our results. In particular, the sample represented only one type of occupation. In addition, the selected occupation was one particular service or profession from the Malaysian public sector. Projecting these results to other services in the public sector or occupations in different sectors and attempting to generalize, may not be advisable.

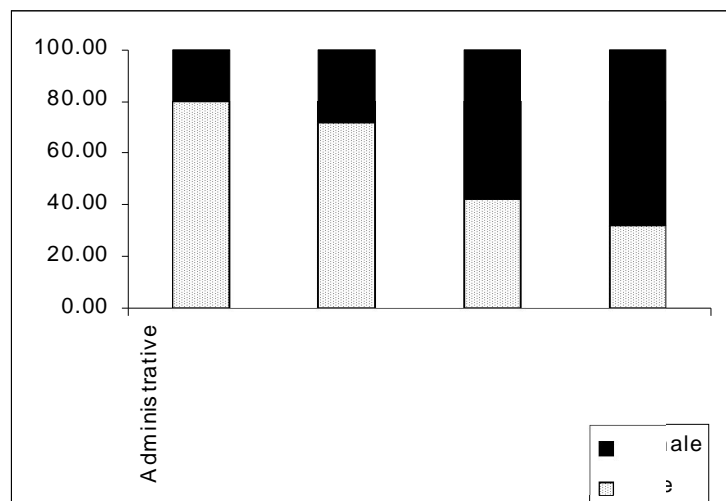
### Recommendations

Our findings suggest that notions such as limited career choice for females could be disputed. Career counsellors, especially at school level, should encourage and inform their female students that conceptions such as male dominated career are no longer applicable and does not necessarily hold true in the present era.

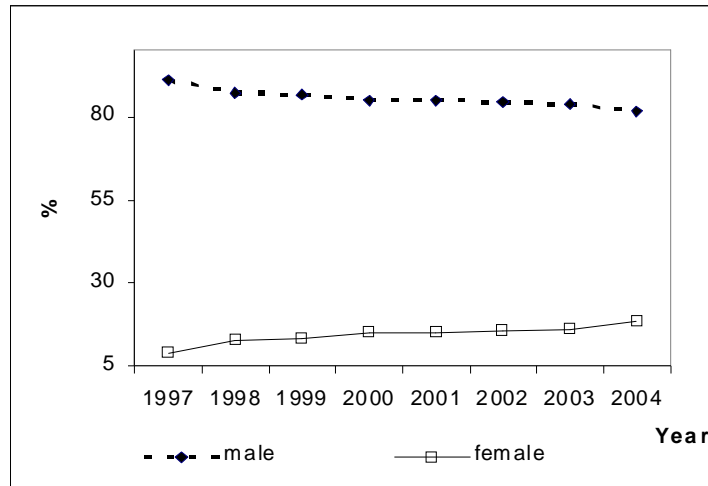
### References

1. Alvo, M., & Park, J. (2002). Multivariate non-parametric tests of trend when the data are incomplete. *Statistics & Probability Letters*, 57(3), 281-290.
2. Auster, C. J., & Auster, D. (1981). Factors influencing women's choice of nontraditional careers: The role of family, peers, and counselors. *The Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, 29, 253-263.
3. Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2000). Gender Differences in Pay. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14(4), 75-99.
4. Blustein, D. L. (1997). A context-rich perspective of career exploration across the life roles. *Career Development Quarterly*, 45, 260-274.
5. Cheramie, R. A., Sturman, M. C., & Walsh, K. (2007). Executive career management : Switching organizations and the boundaryless career. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 71(3), 359-374.
6. Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power and analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2 ed.). Hills Dale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
7. Cook, E. P. (1993). The gendered context of life: Implications for women's and men's career-life plan. *Career Development Quarterly*, 41, 227-237.
8. Dacuycuy, L. (2006). Explaining male wage inequality in the Philippines: non-parametric and semiparametric approaches. *Applied Economics*, 38(21), 2497-2511.
9. Daehlen, M. (2005). Change in job value during education. *Journal of Education and Work*, 18(4), 385-400.
10. Dodson, T. A., & Borders, L. D. (2006). Men in Traditional and Nontraditional Careers: Gender Role Attitudes, Gender Role Conflict, and Job Satisfaction. *Career Development Quarterly*, 54(4), 283-296.
11. Francis, D. (1994). *Managing your own career* (2 ed.). London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.
12. Gouvias, D., & Vitsilakis-Soroniatis, C. (2005). Student employment and parental influences on educational and occupational aspirations of Greek adolescents. *Journal of Education and Work*, 45(4), 421-449.
13. Hakim, C. (2002). Lifestyle preferences as determinants of women's differentiated labour market careers. *Work and Occupations*, 29, 428-459.
14. Heslin, P. A. (2005). Conceptualizing and evaluating career success. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26, 113-136.
15. Jourard, S. M. (1991). *The transparent self*. New York: Van Nostrand.
16. Judge, T. A., Boudreau, J. W., & Bretz, R. D. J. (1994). Job and life attitudes of male executives. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79, 767-782.
17. Konrad, A. M., Ritchie, J. E., Lieb, P., & Corrigan, E. (2000). Sex differences and similarities in job attribute preferences: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(4), 593-641.

18. Larkin, J. M. (1997). Upward mobility in public accounting: A gender-specific student perspective. *Journal of Applied Business Research* 13(2), 109-119.
19. Lemkau, J. P. (1983). Women in male-dominated professions: Distinguishing personality and background characteristics. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 8, 144-165.
20. Leonard, B. (2001, January). Most Job-Hunting College Grads Listen to Their Parents. *HRMagazine*, 46, 31.
21. Long, J., & Ferrie, J. (2007). The Path to Convergence: Intergenerational Occupational Mobility in Britain and the US in Three Eras. *Economic Journal*, 117(519), 61-71.
22. Lowe, G., & Krahn, H. (2000). Work aspirations and attitudes in an era of labour market restructuring: A comparison of two Canadian youth cohorts. *Work, Employment and Society*, 14(1), 1-22.
23. Marini, M. M., Fan, P. L., Finley, E., & Beutel, A. M. (1996). Gender and job values. *Sociology of Education*, 69(1), 49-65.
24. Mumby, P. J. (2002). Statistical power of non-parametric tests: A quick guide for designing sampling strategies. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 44(1), 85-87.
25. O'Brien, K. M., & Fassinger, R. E. (1993). A causal model of career orientation and career choice of adult women. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 40, 456-467.
26. Perrone, K. M., Sedlacek, W. E., & Alexander, C. M. (2001). Gender and Ethnic Differences in Career Goal Attainment. *Career Development Quarterly*, 50(2), 168-178.
27. Rainey, L. M., & Borders, L. D. (1997). Influential factors in career orientation and career aspiration of early adolescent girls. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 44, 160-172.
28. Sicherman, N. (1996). Gender differences in departure from a large firm. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 49, 484-505.
29. Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2001). A social capital theory of career success. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44, 219-237.
30. Solberg, E. J. (2005). The Gender Pay Gap By Occupation: A Test Of The Crowding Hypothesis. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 23(1), 129-148.
31. Sullivan, S. E., & Arthur, M. B. (2006). The evolution of the boundaryless career concept: Examining physical and psychological mobility. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69, 19-29.



**Figure 1: Employment by Occupational Group and Gender, 2005**



**Figure 2 : The number of Top Managers in Public Sector by Sex, 1997-2004 (%)**

**Table 1 : Job Status**

	Permanent	Non- permanent	Total
Male	38	22	60
Female	35	19	54
Total	73	41	114

**Table 2 : Previous Job's Salary**

	Less Than ADS's salary	More than ADS's salary
Male	9	51
Female	11	43
Total	20	94

**Table 3 : Job sector in the past**

Sector	N	%
Government	20	17.5
Non-government	94	82.5

**Table 4 : How Respondents Knew About Their present job**

From	N	%
Internet, advertisement and electronic media	16	12.9
Individuals such as family, friends, lecturers & Career Counsellors	103	83.1
Career Fair	5	4