

# Research on the Influence of Peer Relationship on Students ' Major Choice from the Perspective of Nudge Theory

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## Abstract

**With the emphasis on education, professional choice has attracted more and more attention. The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of peer relationship on professional choice, which has important theoretical and practical significance. First of all, this study is based on the questionnaire of influencing factors of professional choice and through the questionnaire survey data, the influence direction of peer relationship on students ' professional choice is preliminarily judged. Secondly, based on the nudge theory, the theoretical analysis framework of peer communication affecting students ' professional choice is constructed. Finally, the research conclusions are drawn and relevant suggestions are put forward.**

## Keywords

**Major Choice; Nudge Theory; Peer Relationship.**

## 1. Introduction

The choice of major has an important influence on students ' future. Students with a high degree of professional and interest adaptation have better academic performance and higher career decision-making self-efficacy, which is conducive to the balanced and healthy development of universities and majors. Scholars have achieved fruitful results in the study of factors affecting students ' professional choice, but there are still some shortcomings. Peer group provides adolescents with the object of imitating each other, which affects adolescents ' self-regulation ability and moral ability, and is the reference group of adolescents ' behavior. Peer groups play an important role in the formation of adolescent behavior bias. Students in the university in a relatively independent environment, their choice of professional will inevitably be affected by peer relationships.

Therefore, based on the questionnaire of 127 undergraduates ' professional choice influencing factors and the descriptive statistics of the questionnaire survey data, this study preliminarily judges the influence direction of peer relationship on students ' professional choice ; secondly, based on the nudge theory, the theoretical analysis framework of peer communication affecting students ' professional choice is constructed. Finally, based on the above analysis, the research conclusions are drawn and relevant suggestions are put forward.

## 2. Research Object

The research object of this study is the undergraduate students of financial and economic colleges and universities. Students enter the university by following the first score of the college entrance examination report and obeying the principle of adjustment. Since then, they have experienced the diversion of majors or categories, reflecting the students ' willingness to choose majors. According to this survey, 17.07 % and 20 % of the students have the experience or intention to change their majors, which is roughly equivalent to the overall level of colleges and universities in China and has a certain degree of typicality. From January 23,2023 to February 1,2023, this study anonymously distributed questionnaires to 127 students through

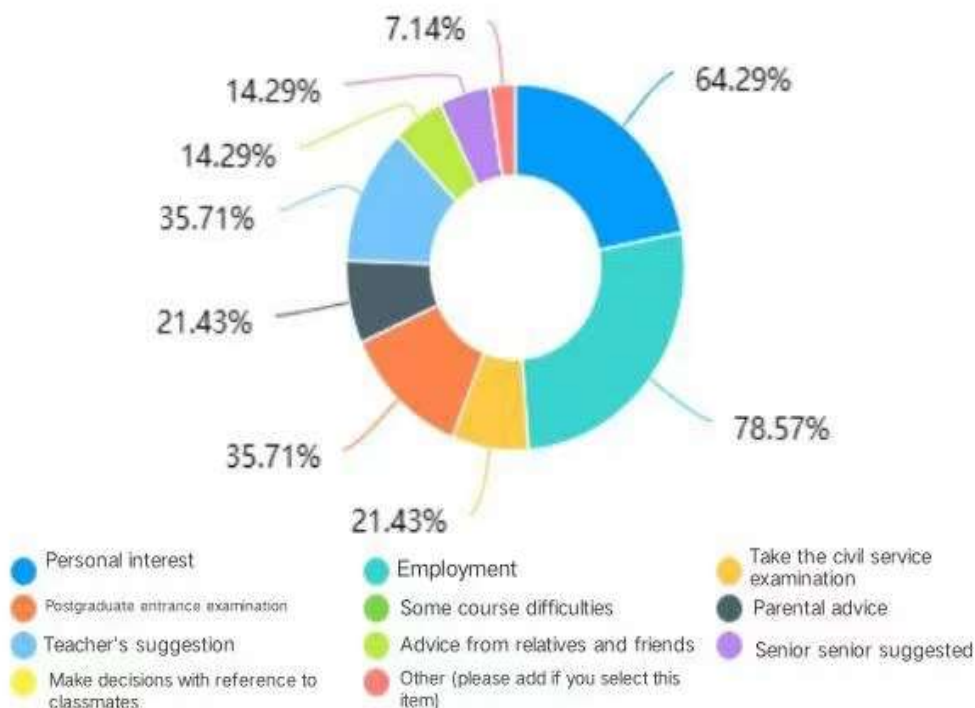
the questionnaire star platform and school social group chat, and processed and analyzed them. The basic situation of the composition of the investigators is shown in the table 1.

**Table 1.** Distribution of student survey respondents

Variable	Option	Number of people	Proportion(%)
Gender	Male	59	46.46
	Female	68	53.54
Grade	Freshman	82	64.57
	Sophomore	27	21.26
	Junior	10	7.87
	Senior	8	6.30
Major	Humanities&Social Science	45	35.43
	Science and Engineering	66	51.97
	No division of subject	16	12.60
Area	Cities and towns	51	40.16
	Village	76	59.84
Sum		127	100

### 3. Data Analysis

#### 3.1. The Influencing Factors of Students ' Major Choice



**Figure 1.** The map of factors affecting the professional choice of the investigators themselves

According to the existing literature, scholars have achieved fruitful results in the study of factors affecting students ' professional choice. Personal interests [1] preference and gender, differences in future economic benefits of different majors [2], students ' family background, family socioeconomic status [3], gender differences [4], information intervention [5] and so on

will become factors affecting professional choice. However, there are still some shortcomings. From the existing research, students' professional choice is mainly influenced by family concept and social concept. Peer group provides adolescents with the object of imitating each other, which affects adolescents' self-regulation ability and moral ability, and is the reference group of adolescents' behavior. Peer groups play an important role in the formation of adolescent behavior bias [6]. Students in the university in a relatively independent environment, their choice of professional will inevitably be affected by peer relationships. Figure 1 shows the factors that influence the respondents' response to their professional choice. It can be seen from the chart that the number of people choosing employment options is the largest, accounting for 78.57% ; followed by personal interest, accounting for 64.29% ; the third is the teacher's advice and postgraduate entrance examination, accounting for 35.71%. These four items account for the majority of the survey population's choices.

### 3.2. The Influence of Peer Relationship on Professional Choice

Peers, different from the predecessors and the younger generation, are a group of people with similar age, experience, emotion and pursuit, which have an important impact on the college students who have just left their families. In the professional choice of college students, the peer relationship that affects the factors of professional choice is mainly composed of roommates ; members of the Youth League Committee, the Student Union, the Youth Volunteer Association and other organizations ; community members ; friend ; it is composed of five aspects, such as senior students and sisters. In order to evaluate the influence of peer relationship on professional choice, it is divided into three aspects : roommate relationship, organization member relationship and community member relationship. According to the actual life situation of students, the following questions are put forward : ' Do you think you are united with roommates ' , ' Do you think your roommates are trustworthy ' , ' Do your roommates affect professional choice ' , ' Do you think the members of the league committee, student union and youth volunteer association are united ' , ' Do you think the members of the organization are trustworthy ' . 'Whether the members of the organization you join will affect your choice of major ' , ' Do you think the members of the community are united ' , ' Do you think the members of the community are trustworthy ' , ' Do the members of the community you join will affect your professional choice ' , as a measure of the influence of peer relationship on college students' professional choice. It can be seen from the results of the questionnaire survey in Figure 1 that the senior sister-in-law's advice and relatives and friends' advice each accounted for 14.29%, and the influence of peer relationship accounted for 28.58%.

### 3.3. The Performance of Nudge Theory in Professional Choice

**Table 2.** mind space

Mind space	behavior
Information support	We are greatly influenced by the organization that transmits information to us (the reliability, authority and self-similarity of the organization).
Motivation	Our response to motivation is shaped by foreseeable psychological shortcuts, such as a strong propensity to avoid loss
Social norms	We are deeply influenced by the behavior of others. This kind of boost affects people's choices by passing on the behavior norms of others.
Emotions	Our emotional associations can powerfully shape our behavior .
Highlighting	Our attention is attracted to novel affairs related to us. This kind of boost mainly affects people's behavior by shaping salience through label information.
Self-Image	Our actions make us feel good about ourselves
Starting	Our behavior is often influenced by the subconscious.
Commitment	We seek to be consistent with our public commitments and reward behavior.
Default Options	We follow the process of default options

The MIND SPACE proposed by Dolan et al. divided the boosting method into nine dimensions : information support, motivation, social norms, default options, highlighting, priming, emotion, commitment and self-image[7]. The connotation of each dimension is as follows.

In the professional selection scenario, the main methods involved include information support and social norms.

Information support means that people will respond to the message itself and the source of the message. Many phenomena show that information intervention will have an impact on college students ' professional choice, especially the more authoritative sources. For example, Zhang Xuefeng 's suggestions on professional choice have a significant impact on the college entrance examination. For college students, the information given by peers interferes with the professional choice to a certain extent, and the role of peer relationship middle school elder sisters has both the friendliness of friends and the experience of ' passers-by ' ; students ' organizations and associations have strong reliability and authority due to the nature of the organization itself. The suggestions and choices they give boost the professional choice of college students.

Social norms mean that the behavior of others will affect their own choices. People are social people, and people will inevitably be influenced by others in social life. Peer relationships such as classmates or friends have a greater influence. When they make professional choices, they will feel pressure from the surrounding and drive themselves to act ; or influenced by the consensus in the peer relationship, under the influence of the herd mentality, it caters to social norms and promotes professional choice.

#### 4. Conclusion

This project carries out the research on the influence of peer relationship on students ' professional choice, clarifies the influence path of peer relationship on professional choice, and constructs the theoretical analysis framework of students ' professional choice based on the theory of light push, which not only expands and enriches the application of the theory of light push, but also makes up for the research gap of peer relationship affecting professional choice. Friends and relatives outside the school, classmates in the school, senior sisters and various student organizations have a boosting effect on the professional choice of college students. Therefore, an information support mechanism based on students ' peer relationship should be constructed to promote students ' better choice of majors, so as to provide a new path for improving college education services and students ' satisfaction.

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