Aspirations, possibilities and limitations

Indian middleclass students’ view on future career and related values

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate how middle class, secondary school students in Bangalore view their future in the background context of individualist and collectivist influences, traditionally related to Western respectively Eastern culture. The objectives are as follows:

How do secondary school students view their future in terms of further studies and work opportunities and what possibilities and/or limitations do they identify? What in relation to this are some of the underlying, deciding factors?

What values do secondary school students take into account while considering a future career? To what extent can these values be related to the general distinctions between collectivism and individualism, traditionally related to Eastern and Western culture?

Theoretical terms used in the thesis are the sociological concepts of individualism and collectivism and Krumboltz’s social learning theory, a constructivist career theory. This is a qualitative study, interviews were used to examine eight students’ views about their future as well as values related to this.

The main conclusions of the study are that the students in general are very positive about their future, they believe in themselves and their abilities and rate the likeliness of reaching their goals as high. All of them want to move on to further studies, studying and working abroad is also something that is appealing to many of them. One of the possible limitations is lack of money. Deciding factors include own interests and abilities, family’s opinions, social class and external factors like labor market. Values concerning family, education and work are for the most part collectivist but some strong individualist features can also be seen, such as choosing a vocation based on your interest.

Key words: Culture, decision-making, future, individualism/collectivism, values
Preface

We would like to thank our supervisor at Malmö University, Niklas Gustafson, for his enthusiasm and flexibility as well as our supervisor in Bangalore, without her answering our first e-mail we would have never received the MFS (Minor Field Studies) scholarship. We applied for this scholarship through Malmö University, it’s funded by SIDA and allowed us to stay in a developing country for two months and do research for our thesis. We would also like to thank the interviewed students. Finally, we thank each other for support, both when it comes to the writing of the thesis and for encouraging each other on our stay in India.

In the writing and editing process we have discussed the contents together and given feedback and ideas to each other’s texts, sometimes adding parts. In the end this makes it a bit difficult to say which one of us wrote what part. In general though, Kiran has taken more responsibility for the first objective, concerning views on future among the students and deciding factors, while Sarah wrote about the second objective on values. This means that Kiran has written section 3.2 in the chapter Theoretical framework and section 6.1 in the analysis chapter, while Sarah wrote sections 3.1 and 6.2. Kiran has also taken more responsibility in the writing of chapter 5, and Sarah chapter 4. In chapter 2, Kiran concentrated on Bangalore, Sarah on the information on India and we both took part in writing the section about previous research. Chapters 1 and 7 we wrote together. We have discussed the thesis together and have both agreed on content and conclusions and we both take full responsibility for this.
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1 Introduction

Most of the research concerning career guidance has been made in the Western context and is based on the way of living in these societies, such as northern America and Western Europe (Arulmani, 2011, p. 81). The Western way of career guidance focus on peoples’ individual thoughts and own free will to do whatever they decide to do in life career wise (Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey & Niles, 2009). The Swedish education in career guidance teaches us the importance of making well thought-out decisions based on peoples’ own interests, skills and opportunities. This matches the ideals of our society, but the world is constantly changing, new actors emerge on the global economic market and career guidance is needed in new contexts, such as Eastern countries like India. Eastern cultures are traditionally thought of as more group-oriented, viewing the individuals’ actions in relation to the group or family while in the Western cultures you tend to put the individual in the centre (Ahmadi, 2003, p. 53). When it comes to choices, regarding further studies and work, this means different starting points and frames of references depending on what culture you belong to. For a career guidance counselor it’s important to have knowledge about other cultures when meeting help-seekers with other ethnic background than their own, to have a pre-understanding of the help-seeker’s starting point. Values are the essence of a culture (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 8) and therefore it’s relevant to study these in a different cultural context, both for us as future guidance counselors in a multi-cultural society and for this study.

On one hand India is competing with the economic giants on the world market, experiencing increasing growth, job opportunities and higher living standards for millions of people as a result. On the other hand, a considerably large part of the population is extremely poor. According to the World Bank, in 2009-2010 approximately 32% of the total population of close to 1,2 billion was living below the poverty line (The World Bank, 2011).

India is going through a major transformation, not only demographically as the social structures are changing, but also as influences from the West meets the traditional values of Indian culture.

In the light of these contrasts and of the development situation specific to India we believe it would be both interesting and relevant to study how young students that belong to the growing middle class and the future workforce in one of India’s bigger cities, Bangalore, view
their career opportunities. We are interested in finding out what their opinions on possibilities and limitations for their future career opportunities are and what they value in a future career.

Bangalore is the leading IT-city in India, where a lot of foreign companies are locating their businesses. The city is growing and we believe that these premises can result in more choices for the Indian population, especially the younger Indians that has yet to join the workforce. In making this important choice for their future, we would also like to investigate if it’s possible to distinguish values that can be directed to the general individual based Western culture and the group-oriented Eastern cultures.

1.1 Aim of the study

The aim of our study is to investigate how secondary school students in Bangalore view their future in the background context of individualist and collectivist influences, traditionally related to Western respectively Eastern culture.

1.1.1 Objectives
How do secondary school students view their future in terms of further studies and work opportunities and what possibilities and/or limitations do they identify? What in relation to this are some of the underlying, deciding factors?

What values do secondary school students take into account while considering a future career? To what extent can these values be related to the general distinctions between collectivism and individualism, traditionally related to Eastern and Western culture?

1.2 Delimitations

The purpose with our study is not to compare gender, nor to compare social-, ethnic- or age groups; the students we interviewed belong to the same social class and are the same age. Interesting as this would be, due to limited time we focus our research on the subjective views about future career options from each student’s perspective.
1.3 Definitions

The key concepts in this thesis are culture, values, career, career decision, middle class, socio-economic status (SES), IT and outsourcing. Many of these concepts are extremely broad, culture for example, and may mean different things to different people. We will therefore begin with a clarification to explain the way we use these concepts.

Culture in this essay, in line with Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, p. 2) definition, comprehends the patterns of thinking, feeling and acting that every person carries with him or her. A lot of this is gained in the early years of one’s life, it is learned from the social environment and can contain ideas on world views as well as unwritten rules for social life, such as greeting and physical space in the contact with others.

Values are the core of culture according to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, p. 8). Values are the tendency to prefer one thing over another, they are feelings with a plus and a minus side and deal with matters such as what we consider to be evil or good, forbidden or permitted, ugly or beautiful and so on (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Career, in the words of Arulmani, can be used to describe “…livelihood or occupation or vocation or in its most simple sense: a suitable job…” (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2006: p. 5). In our thesis, we use this term in line with Arulmani’s definition to, like him, include both the wider and the narrow sense of the concept of career.

Career decision is the term we will use to describe our informant’s choices and planning when it comes to their future career.

Middle class - One way of defining middle class is made in the article India has no middle class? from the Times of India from May 2010:

“In socio-political terms, the middle class is traditionally that segment of society with a degree of economic security that allows it to uphold the rule of law, invest and desire stability. They do not, unlike those defined as rich, depend on inheritances or other non-productive sources of income.” (Shrinivasan, 2010)

In our study we will use the term middle class, in line with this definition, to describe people that have a certain economic security, some room in their budget for saving and/or investing and are dependent on work for their income. To further specify, we’ll use the definition of socio-economic status (see 2.2.1) made by Arulmani (2006). In this study, the terms SES group and social class are used synonymously.

Socio-economic status (SES) is used to measure social class.
IT stands for information technology and is a gathering term containing the possibilities emerging from progress in the fields of computer technology and telecommunication.

Outsourcing – the relocation of certain parts of a company’s production to another company in order for the company in question to focus on their main business and increase the efficiency and profit.

1.4 Outline

The outline of the thesis will be as follow: Next chapter includes background information about India and Bangalore to give the reader an understanding about the context in which this study was made. This part will also present information about the previous research in the area. Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical framework used in the study. The sociological concepts of individualism and collectivism will be explained, especially in regards to the three areas family structure, education and work, as well as a career theory of the constructivist school. Next chapter is about the methods used and includes how the informants were selected, the collection of data and ethical considerations. We then move on to presenting the results in chapter 5, starting out from the five themes used in the interviews: About you, Influences, Education, Occupation and Future and ending with a summary. Chapter 6 contains the analysis of the results and intents to give answers to the objectives of this study, relating the data collected to the theoretical framework and previous research. In the finishing chapter we will discuss the results and conclusions made in chapter 6 as well as suggestions for future research in this field.
2 Background and previous research

In this chapter of the thesis, background information will be given about India and Bangalore. Previous research is also presented in this chapter.

2.1 India

The Republic of India is the world’s biggest democracy, recent statistics from the census of 2011 show that the number of inhabitants reaches just over 1,2 billion (The registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011) in this the seventh largest country in the world (National Portal of India-1, 2011). It is one of the oldest civilizations of the world with its origin in the Indus Valley Civilization at around 2500 BC. Over time migrating peoples like the Aryans and the Persians settled here and emperors from different cultures fought for power. Lastly, the British ruled over India for close to 200 years before India got its independence in 1947 (National Portal of India-2, 2011).

Hinduism is by far the biggest religion with approximately 80.5% followers of the Indian population in 2001. 13.4% are Muslims and the Christians constitutes of 2.3%. The smaller religions in India are Sikhism (1.9%), Buddhism (0.8%) and Jainism (0.4%) while other religions and persuasions, such as tribal religions, make up for 0.6% (SASNET, 2011).

A lot has happened in India in a short period of time. In just the last decade, India has experienced increasing economic growth and has become an important actor on the global market. Millions has managed to pull themselves out of poverty and the middle class is growing rapidly, it’s even predicted to become larger than the entire U.S. population (Sheshabalaya, 2005). India also has one of the youngest populations in the world with 68% being under the age of 35, adding more people to its workforce in the next 30 years than both the EU and the U.S. combined (Sheshabalaya, 2005, p. 25).

Although the recent development has brought economic and social advantages for the country, poverty is still a major concern in India. The adult literacy rate nationwide is also
fairly low, especially among women, with 76% of men and 48% of women being able to read and write in 2008 (The World Bank, 2011). Although slowly, the poverty rate is decreasing. According to the World Bank, 32% of the total population was estimated to live under the poverty line in 2009-2010, in comparison to 37% five years earlier (The World Bank, 2011).

A number of measures are also taken to reduce poverty and social injustice, for example *The right of children to free and compulsory education act* that started from April 1 of 2010 and gives children between the ages of 6 to 14 the right by law to receive education (National Portal of India-3, 2011).

### 2.1.1 The economic growth of Bangalore

Bangalore is the capital of the region called Karnataka, situated in southern India. The city has a population of close to 6 million, which makes it one of the most populous cities in India (National Portal of India-4, 2010). Since the 1980’s Bangalore has seen a major technology boom, one of the reasons because main export during the 1980s wasn’t in software products but people. These talented young engineers and programmers took jobs at firms abroad and they played a big part in helping their firms outsource or move departments to India (Basant, 2006, p. 9).

In 1976 the first Software Technology Park was established in Bangalore which purpose was to facilitate for companies to cooperate (Basant, 2006, p. 7). In 1998 there were around 775 companies in this region which were run by Indian engineers. Under the 1970s or 1980s a lot of Indian people which had worked and studied abroad returned to India with new knowledge which would help build up the economy (Basant, 2006, p. 8-9). These are some reasons why Bangalore is called “Silicon Valley”.

India’s got much media attention because of the IT sector that has developed in Bangalore. Here are firms which produces machine tools, telecom equipment, electronic products and parts for autos. It has also emerged in bio-tech which has made Bangalore to a high-tech cluster of India. Over 1500 IT firms are placed here and even more since there are firms in other sectors as well. Most of the large IT firms in India have their head-quarter here and other international companies such as Motorola and Hewlett Packard (Basant 2006, p. 4).

There are a line of factors that has contributed to Bangalore’s growth. Both federal and provincial policies have played a part in the development. After the independence in 1947, the Indian government decided to move industries to Bangalore, away from borders and coastland due to the uncertain situation in the country after independence. Public sector institutions
were placed here and universities, colleges and institutions in engineering and science as well. Another reason why the government invested in Bangalore was because of educated workforce and that there where cheap electrical power available (Basant, 2006, p. 5). The Software Export Scheme was launched in 1972 which gave approval to export software and at low costs import hardware. However in the mid 1970’s the government introduced the Foreign Exchange Regulation which purpose was to reduce foreign ownership of firms within India. This left many high-qualified people without a job since they either had to leave India to stay within their area of knowledge or they had to do something else (Basant, 2006, p. 5-6).

2.2 Previous research

2.2.1 Socio-economic status
Research that has been made in the Indian context shows that there is a strong connection between SES and career planning (Arulmani, 2006, p. 25). At first it was only the economic factor that was taken into account and the income level. Nowadays there are a number of variables that decides a person’s socio-economic status.

The SES Scale is based on these dimensions:

\[\sum \text{Parents’ education}\]
\[\sum \text{Parents’ occupation}\]
\[\sum \text{Material Possessions}\]
\[\sum \text{Family income per month}\]
\[\sum \text{Type of housing}\]
\[\sum \text{Electricity / water connection}\]
\[\sum \text{Reading material available in the home}\]

Each of these categories is given a score, which can be classified into three SES groups, Low SES, Middle SES and Upper SES.
2.2.2 Previous research in the Indian context

There are a couple of articles we found interesting and have the same starting point as our thesis, especially two scholarly articles regarding Indian high school students’ and their career choices. One is focusing on management students in Delhi and the factors of their career choice. The author of this quantitative study brings out the perspective of individualism – collectivism, which is one of the concepts we are basing our research on (Agarwala, 2008). The author finds that the informants in the study are more oriented towards values connected to collectivism than individualism in their choices. However, the students showed a mix of both cultural values and the author discusses the possibility of the same student valuing both individual and collectivist values but in different contexts. The most important relationship that influenced the career choice was that of the father.

The second article is based on a survey with high school students in India and their career beliefs due to their cultural and socio-economic background. The authors found a connection between low SES groups and negative career beliefs. They use two theoretical views in this study, the social cognitive career theory and the social learning theory. The second one we found interesting for our research as it covers a lot of different aspects of deciding factors, such as environment and genetic abilities (Arulmani, Van Laar, & Easton 2003).

There is also a report on the same topic, directed by Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, consisting of an extensive, regional survey that covered 17 different regions in India and included all the SES groups except the highest one (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2006). A few studies have been made about career choices in the Indian context while there is a lot of research regarding the western countries (Arulmani, Van Laar & Easton 2003). In this report the authors stress the importance of career counseling in the Indian context, different from the West from where most career theories derive. In a recent article from 2011 Arulmani returns to this question. He speaks of the need to integrate local cultural values in career guidance programs outside the Western contexts and describes some key Indian characteristics (Arulmani, 2011, p. 81). The idea that the individual is an undividable part of a greater whole and that life is divided into stages, each with duties to perform, reflects collectivist values of self-concept and putting the group’s interest above one’s own.

The previously mentioned survey from 2006 aims to gather information about young Indians orientations to work and the way they make career decisions in different regions of India. Theories used in the theoretical framework in this survey are career developmental theories, social cognitive theory and social learning theory and the methods used in the survey were both of qualitative and quantitative nature. Some of the conclusions that the researchers
come to are that all SES groups experience some difficulties in decision making, due to lack of readiness and consistent and clear information, but more so in the lower groups. Most students are enthusiastic about their future, however a third of the informants experience distress and apathy. Another relevant conclusion is that the main support in decision-making comes from significant others such as family, friends and teachers.

2.2.3 Individualism and collectivism in India

When it comes to values in relation to the terms individualism and collectivism and where India is today, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, p. 78) present a table rating the occurrence of individualist values of 74 countries. The higher the score, the more individualist the society is considered. United States ranked number 1 with a score of 91 and Guatemala came last with a score of 6. Sweden shares the positions 13 and 14 with France and India ranks just above the top half, position 31. Results were based on an extensive study concerning cultural values among employees of a multi-national company. The results here are generalized and reflect only a certain layer of a society, employees of the multi-national company. The results draw on cultural values of the individuals taking part of the study, and these values may vary between layers of society, however they could still give an idea as to where India is concerning cultural values.

Another chart, based on the previously mentioned study, is presented in the book by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005). It treats another aspect on the subject and measures individualism in relation to power distance. Power distance is described by the authors as:

“…the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Institutions are the basic elements of society, such as the family, the school and the community; organizations are the places where people work.” (2005, p. 46)

According to this chart, India scored high on power distance and lower in individualism. The authors mean that countries with a large power distance tend to be more collectivist than countries with small power distance (2005). This is something that speaks for India as being more of a collectivist country. On the other hand, Hofstede and Hofstede propose that a strong connection can be seen between a country’s national wealth and the level of individualism in its culture:
“The strong relationship between national wealth and individualism is undeniable, with the arrow of causality directed, as shown earlier, from wealth to individualism. Countries having achieved fast economic development have experienced a shift toward individualism.” (2005, p. 114)

In the light of the increasing growth and development that India has seen in recent years, this could indicate that India, generally speaking, is moving towards individualism.

It’s difficult to say where India is today when it comes to values connected to individualism and collectivism considering the extreme differences within the country between social groups. However, above are some results from one research study that could give the reader a general idea on the subject.

We are living in a society where change is a key concept (Peavy, 1998, p. 30). Technology is an area that implies changes worldwide. It can quickly change a person’s habits like learning to use the Internet for example. Habits or practices are described by Hofstede and Hofstede as the visible part of culture, learned later in life and therefore with an ability to change more easily (2005, p. 12). When it comes to change concerning the core of the culture, that is the values, change is slow (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, p. 13). Values are learned as children, by parents who in turn learned it when they were children, which makes basic values of a society very stable (2005). According to Hofstede and Hofstede, “the social game” is not deeply affected by the changes in the society of today, the same unwritten rules continue to exist (2005, p. 13).

2.2.4 Summary

The previously mentioned research by Agarwala and Arulmani and associates all treat career decision making among young people in India which makes them relevant for our study. They are also recently made which further strengthen their relevance given the fast economic change in India in the last decade. Two of the articles above, the ones written by Arulmani, Van Laar and Easton and Arulmani and Nag-Arulmani discuss career decisions and career views from a high-school student’s perspective, focusing on differences related to social class. The informants in these two studies came from different SES groups while in the third article by Agarwala, a majority of the informants came from similar family backgrounds. Agarwala also limits her research to university students. In all three studies the data derives from a larger sample than ours, the methods used were also principally quantitative. However, there is some resemblance between these previously mentioned articles and this study. For
example, we will also focus on deciding factors for career decisions like Agarwala, but instead of viewing their decisions in retrospect like the informants in her study, our informants are looking ahead as their career decisions are yet to be made. Like Agarwala, we focus on values generally connected to individualism and collectivism. What our study has in common with the other two articles mentioned above is the age of the informants and investigating their views on their future career, or career beliefs which is the term used by Arulmani, Van Laar and Easton. However in both these articles the authors emphasize differences between SES groups while we concentrate on the middle SES group. Our study is based on the subjective views and opinions of the informants, as it is a small-scale study we can’t make any conclusions for a larger group as in the articles mentioned above but much of the previous research can help us interpret the results from our study and put it in relation to the bigger picture presented by for example Arulmani and Nag-Arulmani in their extensive survey.

According to Hofstede and Hofstede there is a clear connection between the wealth of a country and the level of individualism. They also express that core values of a culture, learned at an early age, are very resistant to change. Although habits may change quickly, the change in basic values is slow. Their research and their definition of the terms individualism and collectivism are valuable for our study when it comes to getting an understanding of cultural context, as well as the importance of values.
3 Theoretical framework

The sociological terms of individualism and collectivism will be presented in this chapter. Focus is on three main areas in relation to this: family structure, education and work. The four influencing factors for decision-making in Krumboltz’s social learning theory will also be presented.

3.1 Individualism and collectivism

Hofstede and Hofstede present a view on differences between cultures containing four dimensions; social inequality including the relationship with authorities, the relationship between the individual and the group, concepts of masculinity and femininity and ways of dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity, related to the control of aggression and the expression of emotion (2005, p. 23). The authors propose that these four dimensions contain basic problems for all cultures in the world, but the strategies used to resolve these are what differentiate cultures.

The way in which we define ourselves as an individual is crucial for understanding our actions and the way we relate to others (Ahmadi, 2003, p. 53). The predominant way of thinking in the Western cultures, such as societies in North America and western and northern Europe is based on values related to rationalism, critical thinking and individualism (Ahmadi, 2003, p. 53). An individualistic way of thinking means to make a restriction between the individual and the surrounding universe, the boundaries are clear between different persons. According to this perspective the idea of the individual has a value in itself.

In Eastern cultures, like Islam and Hinduism, the human being is an undividable part of a greater whole who receives its meaning only in relation to the bigger picture. In this way of thinking, the boundaries between the individual and the group are much less clear. In these societies focus is on the group, such as the family, instead of on the individual (Ahmadi, 2003, p. 55). Most people in the world live in societies like these, called collectivist, while a
minority lives in societies like the ones mentioned above, called individualist (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 74). A range of factors typically distinguishes the two concepts. We will now, with the starting point in Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) present some of the differences traditionally related to an individualist respective a collectivist view. We will focus on three main areas: family structure, education and work. Differences in these areas are to be seen as generalizations and as such, much simplified.

Family structure in individualist societies is typically associated with the nuclear family, the child grows up in a family with two parents and sometimes siblings with less frequent contact with other relatives, while in the collectivist societies the concept of family often includes grandparents and other relatives. Children in individualist societies learn to think of themselves as “I” while in collectivist cultures the children think of themselves as part of something else, a “we”. In these societies, the “we” group, or in-group as it is also called, is the most important source of identity and gives a sense of security and protection. The loyalty to the group is essential, this means for example that economic resources are shared. It is important to maintain harmony within the group, and to avoid conflicts. Should a member of the group do something that brings shame to the group, other group members also feel responsible. On the other hand, children of an individualist society are encouraged to leave home when they can provide for themselves, after that they usually have less contact with the family. They are also encouraged to form their own opinion and may be seen as weak if they always express others’ opinions to avoid conflicts, while this in a collective-society family would be perceived as maintaining harmony and therefore good behavior.

The view on the purpose of education also differs between collectivist and individualist societies. In the latter, education prepares the student for a place in the individualist society. This means to learn how to handle new and unexpected situations. The attitude towards what’s new is generally positive and a main assumption is that you never seize to learn, learning is not limited to school. In a collectivist society it is important to adjust to necessary skills and virtues to be an acceptable group member. Learning is more often seen as something isolated and particular to school and young people, rather than the life learning perspective of the individualist societies. A diploma or certificate provides a sense of achievement for the holder in the individualist society, as well as better economic outcomes. In collectivist societies, a diploma often also has social benefits, like being accepted into higher status groups.

When it comes to work an employee in an individualist culture act in line with his or her own interest. This is expected, and the interest of the employee should be the same as the
employer’s. If this is not the case, it’s a perfectly accepted reason to change workplace. In a collectivist society, an employee is hired not just as an individual but as someone belonging to an in-group and the employee will act in the interests of this in-group even if it may not coincide with his or her own interest. The relationship between employer and employee also tend to be about mutual obligations, with protection in exchange for loyalty. In a collectivist society, hiring new employees also considers the in-group. Hiring a relative of someone already working means less risks and a sort of guarantee as you already know the family while in an individualist society this is less desirable and could lead to conflicts of interests. In collectivist societies sons are also more likely to follow in the footsteps of their fathers than in individualist societies.

3.2 The social learning theory

We were unable to find any first-hand source when it comes to Krumboltz’s work. For this reason we refer to literature where others are describing his theory, for example Amundson and associates (2009) and Patton and McMahon (2006).

John Krumboltz is a Professor of Education and Psychology and specialist in counseling psychology. He is working at Stanford University in California since 1961. He teaches counselors on how to help their clients create better lives for themselves. Krumboltz is one of the leaders of the constructivist approach in career counseling and has created his own learning theory called the social learning theory of career decision-making (Stanford University, 2011). The theory was first founded in 1976 but has since then been extended. Krumboltz believe that a person’s career choices are determined by learnt behavior but he also believes that they can learn new behaviors and habits that in the long run will help them career wise. Every person views the world in his own subjective way and interprets information in a way that has been learnt. To have good role models with behavior to take after and positive reinforcement is also important (Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey & Niles, 2009, p. 27).

Social learning theory takes the importance of context into account, it also describes the importance of not just one influence but several when it comes to career decision-making. According to this theory, there are four main categories of factors that influence the career decision-making process of an individual: genetic endowment, environmental conditions and
events, learning experience, and knowledge of task approach skills (Patton and McMahon, 2006, p. 78).

The first category includes gender and ethnicity, appearance, ability/disability and other qualities. It is possible that some talents, according to Krumboltz, will only develop if certain factors in the second category, environmental conditions, are met. Patton and McMahon (2006, p. 78) give the example of a child in a low income family with a talent for music that doesn’t have the chance to develop because of lack of economic resources. Other factors belonging to this second category are the number and nature of opportunities when it comes to jobs or training, the educational system and influences from the community or neighborhood. Most often these factors are outside of the individual’s control (2006, p. 78). The third category of influence, Krumboltz calls learning experiences. Through experiences over time the individual learns relevant decision-making skills about careers that they think is suitable for them, based on the way they see, or want to see, themselves. Each individual also develops positive and negative attitudes and beliefs about occupations through external stimuli (2006, p. 79). This will be relevant when it comes down to how to choose a future career. The forth influence is task approach skills, including work habits, cognitive processes and emotional responses and is the result of an interaction of the three previous influences.

Four outcomes are discussed by Krumboltz, as a results of the interaction of the four influences. The first outcome is beliefs about the self, these are generalizations that the individual makes of himself based on impressions that has strengthened this view over time. Generalizations about the world are a second outcome. The third outcome Krumboltz calls task approach skills, like one of the influences above. “An individual examines their generalisations about themselves and the world of work, and formulates specific skills to act in relation to career decision-making.” (2006, p. 80) The forth outcome is action, which means the practical measures the individual takes to enter the world of work.

3.3 Summary

As one of the objectives of this study is to find out what values the informants include in their career decisions, cultural context plays a big part in our essay. We will therefore use the sociological concepts of individualism and collectivism to explain the traditional distinction
of Western and Eastern cultures. For this purpose we will use literature by Ahmadi and Hofstede.

When it comes to describing the complexity of decision-making and its underlying factors we will use a career guidance theory, of the constructivist school, as this theoretical direction to a large extent takes into account the social and cultural contexts in which the individual lives. Theories of special interest here are Krumboltz’s social learning theory.
4 Method

This chapter discusses the method used and advantages and disadvantages with the chosen method. The selection of informants and the collection of data will also be presented further on in this chapter that finishes with a description of the ethical guidelines taken into consideration during this study.

4.1 Qualitative method

Since our aim with this study is to investigate secondary school students’ views regarding their future options this will be a qualitative study. We find this method suitable since qualitative research aims to explain a certain phenomenon’s character or traits (Widerberg, 2002). With a qualitative method like interviews you can focus on a person’s thoughts regarding a certain subject, also allowing to explore further and get an understanding for the interviewed persons point of view and experiences (Widerberg, 2002).

The advantage with using interviews for our study is that this will give us the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the students’ perspectives, allowing us to follow up on interesting aspects. As we have a limited time to gather the data for the study it also serves our purpose to use interviews because it will provide us with a lot of materiel from a minor number of students. Another advantage is that it gives both parts opportunities to directly clarify any misunderstandings that are language-related. Even though English is spoken at school by the students, it is still the second language for most of them and for us.

A disadvantage with this method is that it is harder to get an overview of the results than it would be using a quantitative method such as a questionnaire with fixed alternatives. Another disadvantage is the unavoidable risk that the interviewed students will answer in line with what they think we want to hear or that they will not answer as freely as they might have done were they anonymous. This is a risk you have to take when choosing this method, however the topic of our study is not a very controversial one and we also think that this risk, at least
the second one, can be minimized by assuring the informants that they will be anonymous in the study.

4.2 Selection of informants

We have chosen to define our study to secondary school students of the middle class. Our initial thought was to interview students in their last year, year 12, of secondary school since these students will soon have to decide how to proceed and find a place in society, if they haven’t already. Even if the choice is not what they really want, for one reason or another, these students will inevitably be in a transition, at some sort of crossroads, as they leave secondary school. While in India we learned that the students choose a study direction for their two last years of secondary school in year 10, at the age of 15. We then thought it best to interview students in their 10th year since that is when they actually take a first step towards the direction they want to go career wise. However, establishing contact with a school in Bangalore proved to be a bit more challenging than we thought and once we did find a school where we could do the interviews we went with the vice principals recommendation of interviewing students in the 11th grade, with commerce as their chosen direction, as he found them more suitable for our study. He then chose the students to be interviewed whom he knew could communicate well and would be good at answering our questions, with the thought that they therefore would be of greater help to us than randomly chosen students.

The selection of the informants was made according to non-probability criteria, not meant to be representative for a larger group (Larsen, 2009, p. 77). We had decided beforehand how many students we wanted to interview and that they would belong to the same social class and be the same age. Having presented these characteristics to the vice principal, he then made an arbitrary selection where he chose the students that in his view were the most suitable for the study (Larsen, 2009, p. 77). It’s possible that the fact that the students were chosen by the vice principal at the school has had an effect on the contents of our data. For example all the students were very motivated and it’s possible that they were chosen for this very reason, perhaps leading to less diversity in the material. We will further discuss this in chapter 7. However, it’s of minor importance to the study if the students were not representative for the students in general at the school. Since we wanted to know the subjective views of each
student and since we are aware of the fact that we can’t make any conclusions for a bigger group of students we estimate the material to be valid for our study.

Our reason to focus on the middle class has to do with the previously mentioned fact that it’s growing and will keep doing so (Sheshabalaya, 2005). More and more Indians will in the years to come take part of the middle class and it’s our assumption that in doing so, they will in the future also have the “luxury-problem” to choose between more educations and career opportunities. Considering this and how the social structures are changing in India today, though this is very much a regional question, in these aspects you can say that the middle class is a new class.

In the table below we present the eight students with a made up Indian name to protect his or her integrity but also for the reader to maintain the connection to India. The column for gender and age we added to be more specific about the selection of the group and at last interests so that the reader gets a small picture of who they are.

Table 1 Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender and Age</th>
<th>Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veena</td>
<td>Girl, 16 yrs</td>
<td>Cooking and baking, drawing, watching TV and spending time with friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aishwarya</td>
<td>Girl, 16 yrs</td>
<td>Dancing, watching TV and animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arun</td>
<td>Boy, 16 yrs</td>
<td>Cooking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvind</td>
<td>Boy, 16 yrs</td>
<td>Playing football.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raj</td>
<td>Boy, 16 yrs</td>
<td>Playing cricket, read books, music and movie blockbusters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mira</td>
<td>Girl, 16 yrs</td>
<td>Dancing, interact and socializing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumar</td>
<td>Boy, 16 yrs</td>
<td>Music and playing the guitar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonia</td>
<td>Girl, 16 yrs</td>
<td>Dancing modelling, hockey, cricket and arts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Data collection

Interviews were carried out during our first weeks in Bangalore at a public secondary school. At the school where we did the interviews the grades are divided as follows:

Primary school
  - Junior, 0-3 years
  - Nursery, 4 years
  - Prep, 5 years

Elementary school
  - 1st-8th grade, 6-13 years
Secondary school 9th-12th grade, 14-17 years

In grade 10, at the age of 15, the students can choose between three streams for the last two years of secondary school; commerce, arts or science. Secondary education is very important since it prepares the student for higher education and the labor market. Since India is growing rapidly and develops in the scientific and technological area there is a need to improve lives and reduce poverty and make use of India’s human resources (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2011).

We interviewed a number of eight students, selected by the vice principal. The interviews covered the students’ future study- and job aspirations, how they view their options, possibilities and limitations and what they find important in a career and whom they receive help from while deciding on a choice.

We started out from our aim of the study to decide on which questions to use in the interviews. We were also influenced by the theoretical terms we used. The interview questionnaire is divided into five areas: family background, influences, education, occupation and future (see appendix). In the first one, family background, we asked our informants to tell us a little bit about themselves and their interests. We also asked them about parents’ and siblings’ education and occupation. The second area about influences treated role models and admirable qualities in others, the following area was about thoughts about education and future plans. The fourth area covered future work aspirations and attitudes, own and significant others’, towards this. The last area discussed future in general, including general values and questions such as where the informant would like to be in five or ten years’ time and the likeliness of this happening, according to themselves. Three of the areas, family background, education and occupation can be related to the theory chapter, Individualism and collectivism. Since the questions in the interviews are corresponding with the aim of the study and the objectives, as well as the theoretical framework, we believe them to be relevant for this study and therefore contributing to a reliable material.

The interviews were semi-structured and recorded and took place at the students’ school. The first interview also functioned as a pilot interview to ensure that the questions were understandable and relevant for our study. As the pilot interview worked out fine and we only did one small change to the interview questionnaire after, we decided to include this first interview in our material as well.

After the pilot interview, in the section regarding education, we clarified that we were talking about education in general and not at the specific school where the informants were studying.
4.4 Analysis of data

To be able to analyze the material, first we transcribed the interviews and wrote down a summary according to the themes in the interview guide: About you, Influences, Education, Occupation and Future (see appendix). This was the first step to be able to categorize the results according to important and obvious tendencies that answer the questions of the objectives of the study. We then searched for key concepts, which are words or combination of words that reflect important tendencies expressed by the informants to gather all the relevant information in the data. These key concepts could then be categorized under each of the four themes.

In the first theme, Influences, the key concepts are role models, qualities and background. In the second theme, Education, views on education and further studies are key concepts. For the next theme, Occupation, we found occupational values, occupational knowledge and working abroad to be the most central. In the final theme, Future, the key concepts consists of life values, future life, motivation and limitations/possibilities. We also chose to present the results, in chapter 5, according to this order.

This analyzing process is what Dalen calls “open coding” where the main purpose is to identify concepts that can also be organized into categories (Dalen, 2007, p. 76). A selection was made to present the most important and relevant results. In chapter 6, the analysis, we then related the different key concepts to previous research and the theoretical framework. In the conclusions of chapter 6 we have used “selective coding” to further demonstrate and bring out the essence of the study (Dalen, 2007). According to Dalen, selective coding is the last analyzing faze with the intention to gather all the previously categorized information into a new order with the most important and relevant features of the study (Dalen, 2007, p. 79). These are that the students’ motivation is high and that, when it comes to decision-making, they are influenced by their own interests, significant others’ opinions, social class and external factors which can be related to Krumboltz’s four influencing factors in the career decision-making. The students’ values also showed more features connected to collectivism than individualism.
4.5 Ethical considerations

There are four main criteria that should be fulfilled while doing research concerning social science. These were established by the Swedish research Council, Vetenskapsrådet, in 1990 with the purpose of protecting the integrity of individuals taking part of research (Vetenskapsrådet, 1990). The following four concepts are our own translations of the Swedish terms.

The first consideration is the demand for information (informationskravet). This means that the researcher must inform the participant of what his or her part of the project is and of the conditions regarding these. The participant must also be informed that their partaking in the project is completely voluntarily and that they have the right to interrupt their participation at any time.

The second consideration is the demand for consent (samtyckeskravet) and implies that the participant himself decides over his participation and that he can interrupt the cooperation at any time without negative consequences. Also the participant cannot be pressured into taking part of the research, there should be no state of dependence between the participant and researcher.

The demand for confidentiality (konfidentialitetskravet) means that all personal data of the participants should be kept safe and that no unauthorized person can take part of this information. This is to ensure that the individual cannot be identified and remains anonymous.

The fourth consideration has to do with the use of personal data (nyttjandekravet) and is to ensure that the information gathered will be used for scientific purposes only.

In line with these ethical considerations we made sure our informants knew about and understood their rights concerning their participation before starting with the interviews. We also stressed that they would be completely anonymous, that no names will appear in the thesis and that we will not keep the recorded information, nor let anyone else listen to it. By taking these steps we feel that we have complied with the demands for ethical consideration.

4.6 Summary

Qualitative method was chosen for this study since it suits the purpose to get information about the informants’ individual views. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with
eight secondary school students, chosen by the vice principal of their school in an arbitrary selection. The interviews covered plans and views on future studies and work, limitations and possibilities and what they find important in a career and in life. The interviews were divided into five general themes: family background, influences, education, occupation and future. The analysis of data was made first by “open coding” and then “selective coding” according to Dalen. Key concepts were chosen that reflect important tendencies in each theme. In chapter 6 the key concepts are related to the previous chapters of the thesis.

The four main criteria established by the Swedish Research Counsil (Vetenskapsrådet), to protect the integrity of participants in scientific research were applied to this study. After informing the participants of all their rights we feel these ethical considerations have been met.
5 Results

This part of the study will focus on the results of the interviews. These results will be presented in four themes based on our questionnaire: Influences, Education, Occupation and Future life. Each theme will first be introduced with a couple of key concepts which the results will evolve around. These key concepts are chosen because they not only reflect our questionnaire but what to come in the results and lastly we can see them in relation to our objectives. The themes will be presented in the order they appear in the interview guide (see appendix). At the end of this part there will be a summary.

5.1 Influences

The questions concerning this theme were about role models, qualities and background which are our key concepts in this part.

When it comes to role models the students look up to family members, relatives, friends and Jesus. Some of the students don’t have any role models that they can come to think of but can see qualities in people around them, or say that they believe in themselves.

Qualities that they admire are working hard to achieve goals, perseverance, being social and being honest.

When it comes to background Veena says that it has influenced her, she mentions the grandmother and the mother, pointing to their strength and willpower:

“They show me how to… them being so strong, shows me how to be strong and they always encourage me to do whatever I want so that also inspires…”

She thinks this builds up her character and her family and friends bring out the best in her.

Aishwarya is proud of her background and mentions several relatives who started their own businesses. She hopes that she can also do something like this in the future.

Arvind is well aware of how his background has influenced him. No one in his family has a lot of education and now that he has the opportunity he wants to give something back to them.
“So my parents, like I wanna get educated just to help my parents and give them rest for what they’ve done for all these years.”

According to Mira her background has influenced her to be a sober and calm person.

Kumar says that he has been taught not to fear anything and believe in what he wants to believe. He’s got his own choice to do whatever he wants to do without any pressure to do it for someone else.

Sonia’s parents think it’s important that she is independent and they don’t pressure her for anything, they just say that she should do the best she can when it comes to school.

5.2 Education

Key concepts we start out from in this part are *views on education* which includes both students and their parents’ perspective. *Further studies* refer to what the students’ plans are after finishing secondary school.

The general *views on education* are positive among the students and their parents but in some cases there is a clash between the two of them when it comes to choice of education.

Aishwarya says that “education will have a proper future for you.” Education is important for her parents as well, although they don’t pressure her in getting good results in school. After secondary school Aishwarya wants to either study interior design or law but her passion is modeling and acting. However, her parents’ doesn’t believe in this option, they want her to get a good education. According to her mother “…education is the best support in life and you can’t rely on other things”.

Arun used to not be that interested in school and his results but in the last few years he has become more serious about it because he is more confident now. Some of his friends have already decided what they want to do in their careers and education is an important part in getting there. He says his family is fine with whatever he choose.

To Arvind studying is essential “…if you wanna be something.” He adds that without studies you can’t go anywhere. To his parents education is also very important, all of his family is supporting him so he can get a proper education and “become something”.

Raj is feeling happy about school because the school doesn’t pressure the students, the school wants them to get an education and not force anything on them. He thinks that his family is happy with his choice of commerce since it’s the stream where he can focus on both his sports and his studies. If he had chosen science he says that he would need to study more.
Kumar believes that the study part acquire hard work. His parents just want him to do the best he can in school and are happy if he gets good marks but don’t push him, they just remind him to study from time to time. They believe that it’s more important for him to feel happy instead of aiming for the highest marks.

Sonia really like the stream commerce and thinks it’s really good. Her mother first wanted her to choose science but Sonia thought it would be hard because of the math. Then her mother told her to do what she likes to do so she chose commerce, “I also like it so that’s more important”. Her sister is also studying commerce and her father supports it as well.

Most of the students want to continue with further studies. After finishing secondary school Veena wants to study abroad, her final goal is to get her master degree. Her family is very supportive of her plans when it comes to further studies.

Arun hasn’t quite decided yet what he wants to do but is thinking about a three-year hotel management course, that is his plan so far for after secondary school. After that he would like to start working straight away because he doesn’t feel like studying anymore.

Arvind is going to do his degree in science and parallel to this he plans on studying to become a charter accountant.

Raj is planning to study a three-year course in chartered accountancy at a college.

Mira’s plan is to go to the US to do her pre graduation and then go back home to Bangalore to finish her studies. She tells us that her mother really wants her to go abroad and that’s what she’s planning to do. If she gets a job in the US she will probably stay there she says or if not go back to India.

Kumar’s plan is to go to Singapore to study audio engineering because that is something that is connected to his big interest in music.

Sonia is not sure what she wants to do after secondary school but she has thought of fashion- and interior designing.

5.3 Occupation

Within this theme the students are asked questions about their occupational values, occupational knowledge and working abroad which are the key concepts in this part.

When the students talked about their future occupation we saw underlying occupational values concerning this. For Veena it is important that an occupation is stable so you can support yourself your entire life. It’s also important that you enjoy your work and that it’s not
overly stressful. Veena wants to be a chef and her friends and family supports her in this decision. For her mother however, it is important that she gets her master degree and that is something that Veena herself wants to do.

To Aishwarya, having a job is the only way you can survive by yourself since you can’t rely on the financial aid of your parents forever. Aishwarya’s dream career is within modeling but since her family doesn’t really approve of this and since she is aware of the fact that a career in modeling is not that stable, she has some other alternatives as well. She is thinking of interior designing or fashion designing.

For Arun it’s important to do a good job so that you can be appreciated in your workplace: “…they will like you more also and people communicate with you more.” He is thinking about becoming a chef, his father used to work with this, and he gets help and support from him. People around him, his mother for example, tells him it will probably be hard in the beginning and that in this line of work you have to start at the bottom and work your way up.

It’s important for Arvind to be satisfied with his job and to put in his full effort:

“you’ve got to have a job that satisfy you… if you’re not satisfied then it’s not a job.”

It’s also important that there is a mutual understanding and satisfaction between employer and employee. He’d like to work as a charter accountant or as an entrepreneur and own his own business. It’s important for Arvind that he can give something back to his parents. His family supports him in whatever he wants to do and he says that is what motivates him.

Raj believes that:

“…you should be satisfied with what you’re doing, happy with ourselves, not because of the money…”

Raj thinks that he will work with chartered accountancy, depends on the offers he gets. At first his parents gave him other options in what to do but now he says that his family is happy with his decision in choosing commerce since it’s something he’s interested in. He now learns the basics and then it’s a three-year course to get his master.

Mira tells us that people around her think she should work as a chartered accountant. But she is well assured of that it is her own decision and she doesn’t think her parents would mind what she chooses. Before she had a hope of becoming a doctor but she changed her mind. Mira told us that her mother rather seen her becoming a doctor, “you need to have someone in the family who be a doctor” but today her mother is happy with her decision.
Kumar believes that it is important that you have an occupation that you like, be good at it and do well. “If you can make it big with your interest then that’s the best thing you can do”. He also says:

“…but not do it to an extent where you don’t get any pay and then end up, you know, being a failure.”

Since he’s studying commerce he’s got that as a backup if it doesn’t work out with the music. His parents are really supportive in his decision to study music since it’s something different and something that he really likes.

It’s important for Sonia that she likes her future occupation, earn money and be happy. She’s thinking of becoming an airhostess but she also has the fashion designing in mind. Her mother thought fashion designing is a good decision but it requires patience, you know a lot about it and help. She’s got a cousin who works as a designer that she can take advice from.

Almost all of the students’ have occupational knowledge which shows since they talk about the positive and negative sides with their future occupation.

The positive thing about being a chef, for Veena, is her interest in, and love for cooking. When it comes to the negative aspects she mentions working late hours. As for now she doesn’t know much about these occupations but she intends to find out.

A career in modeling has a lot of negative sides according to Aishwarya, mainly because it’s insecure and can’t support her for the rest of her life. The positive side with modeling, she says, is that she is appealed by the luxurious life models seem to have.

Negative aspects of being a chef could be the possibly tough environment and rivalry between the employees, Arun says. What he sees as positive is that if you do your job well you can advance.

What Arvind knows now about working as a charter accountant is the accountancy part and that you have to learn about how the market goes up and down. Negative parts of working alone and being high ranked is that you get lonely. On the other hand, Arvind thinks that the positive part is that you have money and your family.

Kumar believes the positive thing with his future occupation is that he will learn a lot about music but the negative part is the competition in the music industry.

To Sonia, fashion designing is a good occupation since she can be very creative but she can’t say anything negative about it.
The students can see themselves working abroad, for example in New York, United States and Australia. Arvind can’t see himself working abroad when there is so much that needs to be done in India. He would like to help people that like him come from poor conditions and help funding schools.

Raj has got a few friends that have worked abroad and he believes that life ”is more simple and the people there is much better.”

“I prefer working abroad cause I prefer the life over there but I would like to finish my studies here”

He also adds that the environment is better and there is no problem with anything.

Mira wants to work abroad to achieve a lot “to get all the luxuries in life”, she says “…it would make more out of my life”. She believes that there are more opportunities abroad.

5.4 Future

In this last theme, life values, future life, motivation and limitations/possibilities are key concepts which are reflected by the students.

Within the area life values we asked the student what they believe is important in life. The general view is supporting their families and education as well as doing something that you like, both when it comes to education and occupation.

To Veena he most important thing in life is that she will be able to take care of her mother and grandmother. Second to this comes satisfying her wants and having a good career.

For Aishwarya, family and education is very important, “… you need your family for everything that you do.”

For Arun it is important to get “…a good position in world.” By this he means a good job so he can have some flexibility.

To be happy with one self and to believe in a god is important in life for Arvind. To his mother, marriage is very important but Arvind himself doesn’t believe in marriage.

For Mira further studies is really important. She wants to get a degree, stand on her own two feet and create her own business. Mira says that you have to work to make a living, you can’t always depend on your father or someone else. She wants to do something with her life and don’t want to waste it. Her parents prefer her to get married when she’s 23-24 years old but
she wants to wait until she finish her studies, get a degree and has worked for a couple of years before marrying.

We asked the students how they picture their future life in five or ten years time. Veena’s ideal situation would be to have “the perfect career and stuff” as a chef, a career that is good enough for her to support herself and her family.

The ideal situation for Arun would be to be cooking in his own restaurant.

Arvind sees himself still studying and in ten years he hopes he will have started his own business and that he’ll be able to start helping his family and other people.

Mira would like to try to get in to modeling in the future besides the dance. She pictures herself working, it is also her dream to go abroad.

The students’ motivation is high since all of them rate themselves above 5 on a scale from 1-10. The students discuss their future with family and close friends.

What Aishwarya wants to have achieved in the near future is to have completed further studies, she thinks this is something that’s very possible for her because she thinks she can get there if she has her aim clear and works hard towards it.

Veena doesn’t want to be over confident and therefore get disappointed if she doesn’t make it. To be able to answer with a 10 she says she would need more practice.

Arun wants to have his own restaurant. His parents motivate him and he thinks that can help him to get where he wants as well as his own creativity. His mother also says that it will be hard in the beginning to reach his goal of becoming a chef. He has to start from the bottom and work the way up.

Arvind is motivated: “I’m all in to what I want to do. I just don’t go half-heartedly.” If he studied in a bigger school he thinks he would have had an even better chance.

Mira’s parents would support and guide her and she is sure that she will reach her goal if she aims high. It’s important that she believe in herself and not let anyone affect her she says.

Kumar picture himself producing music. He believes that you need to work hard and be motivated which are things that can help him to get there.

The students also express their limitations/possibilities. Veena is sure that there will be obstacles but she can’t identify them yet. What can help her to reach her goal on the other hand is a lot of practice, according to herself.

Aishwarya returns to her dream of being a model, she thinks one obstacle to reach this goal could be to get into a good college that has a particular course she is interested in. One possibility Aishwarya can see with the modeling option is her father who knows people working in this field and who might be able to help her.
An obstacle for Arun to reach his goal of having his own restaurant could be lack of money. Arvind doesn’t see anything as an obstacle, if there’s an obstacle he thinks of it as a stepping stone. He believes that motivation that he gets from his friends and from seeing how much his parents do for him, and his faith in his god can help him get to where he wants to be.

Kumar chose to go to Singapore because there are a lot more facilities over there, more opportunities, you earn more money and the lifestyle is better he says and the music industry is not as fully developed in India. After finishing his studies he estimates that he easily gets a job at Universal over there. It was his friend who has studied this course that inspired him to look more in to it. He is hoping to get a good job and work as a music producer, set up a studio and recording in the future.

Mira is sure that there will be obstacles in life but you will have to have the courage to continue. She says:

“If you really, if you really, really want to reach that place you wouldn’t let anything, any obstacle come in your way”.

5.5 Summary

The first theme concerns what influences the students get through role models, qualities in other people and how their background affect them. The students refer to their family members and friends when it comes to role models and takes after qualities that they like in other people.

The views on education are positive in general. The students like studying and are happy with their choice of stream. Their parents were also very supportive and wanted their children to do their best in school without pressure although some parents expressed their feelings in them choosing another path. Over all the students told us it was important for them to choose something that they themselves liked to study and most of them want to continue with further studies abroad after finishing secondary school.

The students have occupational values when talking about future occupation. In general they talk about the importance to like their future occupation and be happy with it. They also mention that they want to be satisfied with it and that they can support themselves. Most of them are sure of what they want to work with while a few haven’t decided yet and weighing between options. They also have knowledge about their future occupation since they easily
mention both positive and negative with it. As in education many of them are interested in studying and working abroad while others wants to go back to India.

To take care of the family in the future is one main thing that is important for these students but also to study, get a good career and position at a company. These are some of the life values the students’ express. On a scale from one to ten on the probability to reach their goal, they rate themselves in the top half. This shows that they are very motivated to reach their goals. In their future life the students see themselves working in five to ten years. The students can see both limitations and possibilities, one of the limitations is the lack of money. They usually talk to their parents and close friends about their future.
6 Analysis

In this chapter the results will be related to the previous parts of the thesis in order to answer the objectives of the study. The first objective aims to give an answer to how the interviewed students view their future when it comes to further studies and work, it will also treat possibilities and limitations according to them. We will use the social learning theory by Krumboltz, presented in chapter 3, as a way to explain the students’ views in the light of a career theory.

The second objective has to do with values expressed by the students, connected to decision-making and thinking about future careers. These values will be presented and then related to the general distinctions between traditional collectivist and individualist cultural values, as defined by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) in the theoretical framework.

6.1 Influencing factors on career decision-making

Krumboltz believe that a person’s career choices are determined by learnt behavior but he also believes that it’s possible to learn new behaviors and habits that in the long run will help career wise (Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey & Niles, 2009, p. 27).

These students were chosen for our interviews because they belong to the SES group middleclass and this classification depends on their parents’ education, occupation and their living standard. The students got influences from their parents and from this specific SES group in the Indian context (Arulmani, 2006). The students are influenced by their parents when it comes to their decision-making career wise. Aishwarya for example wants to do modeling or acting which is two of her passions but her parents want her to get a good education. Sonia says that her mother wanted her to choose the science stream but she chose commerce, “I also like it so that’s more important”. Raj also mentions that his parents gave him other options in the beginning but now he has chosen commerce because he is interested in it. Mira said that her mother rather wanted her to become a doctor than a charter accountant “you need to have someone in the family who be a doctor” her mother said. This shows that
these students have the possibility to change habits to create a new future for them by choosing another path than their parents.

According to Krumboltz social learning theory, there are four main factors that influence the career decision-making process of an individual: genetic endowment, environmental conditions and events, learning experience, and knowledge of task approach skills (Patton and McMahon, 2006). These four factors will be introduced below.

6.1.1 Genetic endowment
This includes gender and ethnicity, appearance and ability/disability. It is possible that some talents, according to Krumboltz, will only develop if certain factors in the second category, environmental conditions, are met. Which means that a person’s abilities may only show when in a suitable environment (Patton and McMahon, 2006, p. 78).

The students were positive and very articulate about future and further studies, all of them had decided to go on with studies either in India or abroad. Some of them expressed the importance of studying like Aishwarya: “education will have a proper future for you”. Studying is essential for Kumar “….if you wanna be something”.

When it came to future occupation most of the students are sure of which occupation they wants to go for. They believe that it’s important to work with something that they like and are happy with. The students are really motivated to reach their goal and express their thoughts in different ways. Mira says:

“If you really, really want to reach that place you wouldn’t let anything, any obstacle come in your way”

Another quote by Arvind is: “I’m all in to what I want to do. I just don’t go half heartedly.” These show that they have the ability, believe in themselves and are not depending on any one else to help them to make it. Abilities can also be genetic, like Kumar who is good at playing the guitar and wants to pursue a career within the music industry. Aishwarya wants to be a model and may have the genetic ability to become the model because of her looks. Krumbolz mean that these abilities are genetic endowments. The students also say that it’s important to work hard so that you later on can be satisfied with your occupation and your life. Krumboltz also mean that ethnicity is an endowment that is a factor in the decision-making. Since Indian culture is more group-oriented one reason to study and get a good job could be to be able to support their parents in the future. This can therefore be linked to ethnicity due to the group
oriented culture in India. Veena says that the most important thing in life is to take care of her mother and grandmother.

Arvind says this about his parents:

“So my parents, like I wanna get educated just to help my parents and give them rest for what they’ve done for all these years”.

6.1.2 Environmental conditions and events

Krumboltz also talk about environmental conditions as a factor for decision-making, which means that the environment that you are brought up in can have an effect on the choices you make (Patton and McMahon, 2006, p. 78). The students come from middle class, which can open up more possibilities like economic resources for further studies. Money can be one factor but other factors belonging to this second category can be the educational system and influences from the community or neighborhood are example of factors that can limit you when thinking and later on make a decision. Influences from community can be associated with the importance of role models which also is a concept used by Krumboltz. Most of the students’ also have role models in their life which are persons that they look up to and pick up qualities from. For some of them it’s their family like their parents but for others it’s their closest friends or both. Veena describes her mother and her grandmother as the “two pillars of my life”:

“… Them being so strong, shows me how to be strong and they always encourage me to do whatever I want so that also inspire…”

Some student’s say they don’t have any role models, they believe in themselves in their own ability to make it.

The students are well aware of that there will be obstacles in their way in pursuing a career they see for themselves. A word that many of them use during the interview is “motivation” and “hard work” which shows how much and how persistent they are to achieve what they want in life.

Arvind says that he wants to see the obstacles as steppingstones and Mira say that there will be obstacles but that you have to have the courage to continue. Arun can actually see that lack of money can be an obstacle to reach his goal. Arvind says that he would easier reach his goal if he had gone to a bigger school. These factors suits the idea of the environmental conditions.
6.1.3 Learning experience
With learning experience Krumboltz mean that individuals can learn relevant decision-making skills about careers that they think is suitable for them, based on the way they see, or want to see themselves (Patton and McMahon, 2006, p. 79).

They all know some facts about the different occupations that they are choosing from because some of them have parents or relatives which are involved in that particular area. There are also others in their surroundings, which inspire them and they can ask about the occupations that they have in mind. Veena for example wants to become a chef and says it requires a lot of practice. She is determined, love cooking and can see herself working in New York in the future. She can see herself as a chef and understands that it requires a lot of effort and which can be learning experience according to Krumboltz.

Each individual also develops positive and negative attitudes and beliefs about occupations through external stimuli according to Krumboltz. The students were asked about positive and negative sides with the occupation they had in mind and many of them had been told about the occupations negative sides by their parents which are the external stimuli in this case. Arun’s mother said to him that it will be hard in the beginning to reach his goal of becoming a chef. She also says that you have to start from the bottom and work your way up. Even though some parents’ want something else for their children most of them are very supportive in whatever the students wants to do. If it’s something that they like, they don’t pressure them to do anything else than to go for what they want in life.

6.1.4 Knowledge of task approach skills.
Knowledge of task approach skills is a combination of the three previous influences. This influence has a stronger connection to act and approach the goal. According to Krumboltz there are four possible outcomes as a result of the interaction of the previously mentioned four influences: Believe about self, Generalizations about the world, Task approach skills and Action (Patton and McMahon, 2006, p. 79-80).

The first outcome is beliefs about the self, these are generalizations that the individual makes of himself based on impressions. Arvind is born in a family that used to have limited economic resources, this seems to affect him since through out the interview he mentions his background. This might indicate that this is important for his beliefs about himself. When he
was younger they couldn’t afford much but as he says he is now in a good school. He also says that he wants to work in India to help funding schools.

The second outcome is generalizations about the world. Almost all of the students see themselves study and some of them also stay and work abroad. They express different reasons why they want to stay and work abroad like more opportunities, the environment is better, the people is better and that there are no problems are some of the comment that’s been said about working abroad. A few students don’t want to stay abroad because they prefer to come back to India and work. Arvind says that he can’t see himself work abroad because there’s so much to do in India. These are some of the generalizations the students do. They interpret the world from generalizations they make and see in the society. This can be one reason why they rather go abroad to study because of their belief in more opportunities abroad.

The third outcome is task approach skills, which in this context means that individual take a cognitive approach and investigate their own generalizations about themselves and the world of work. From that they develop skills, which will be at help when decision-making for example Kumar who says that it’s not so hard to get a job over there, which he means by abroad. Kumar is making a generalization when thinking it’s easier to get a job. Veena say if she can perfect a cake that she has been working on she knows she’s improved.

The fourth outcome is action, which means what you practically can do to enter the world of work. Veena mentions she’s planning to start preparing for her SAT’s which will take her closer to her goal, to take a degree. Arun doesn’t feel like studying so much more. After secondary school he just wants to take a three-year management course and then start working. He is certain of what he wants to do and don’t like studying so he knows exactly how he should act after finishing secondary school

6.1.5 Summary and conclusions
The general believe about education and work is that you should do something that you like and we got under impression that even though some of the parents have another opinion about work other than the student they support them in anything they do.

When it comes to genetic endowments, which have to do with a person’s abilities/disabilities, the students express their feelings about their future in a very positive and motivated way which shows that they have the will-power and also the ability that requires. We believe that many of the students’ abilities in relation to their environment matches and therefore can come to the conclusion that they have the possibility to reach their
goals. Disabilities can be a limitation like in Mira’s case she believes that she can’t take the science stream because she thinks math is hard. Lack of money can also limit you and these two are examples when the two factors ability and environment doesn’t match.

Their ethnicity that also can be linked to culture point out that it’s a factor for these students since almost all of them mention they want to support their parents in the future. This is more of a group oriented feature and could be a reason why they are so motivated and wants to succeed in life.

As mentioned above, environment is a factor when making a decision, it can have an effect on the choices you make. We believe money is one important factor when it comes to thinkable possibilities for these students, since they belong to the middle SES-group they have other starting points than students from a lower SES-group. Role models are also an important influence in this category, which almost all of the students mention. We think that these persons are very important in these students’ life since some of them say they get really motivated by them and can go to them if they need any help.

Learning experience means that from how you see yourself you can learn decision-making skills which are suitable for a specific career. The students know a lot about their future occupation and what they require. Through their role models and other people around them which they can ask about the occupation in mind they get external stimuli, which can have an effect on how they decide and how much effort they need to put to make it.

Task approach skill is the last influence and contains four outcomes as a result of the interaction of the previously mentioned influences. The first outcome is beliefs about the self. And the second outcome is generalizations about the world. The third outcome is task approach skills, which in this case means investigation in oneself in relation to the world of work. Like Kumar who is sure that it is easier to get a job in Singapore. One conclusion is that Kumar may be more certain of his choice to go and study abroad because he knows that he easily will get a job after the studies. The fourth outcome is act which here means what you can practically do to enter the world of work. Veena for example plans to practice for her SAT’s. This last influence will have more effect on them when they are closer to finish secondary school although we experience that they have a good base for making a decision since all of them seem to have people around them that supports and doesn’t pressure them. Some of them are also very good at expressing what they want in life which we can see as a good thing because it shows that they have come a long way in their thinking.

According to Krumboltz social learning theory, there are four main categories of factors that influence the career decision-making process of an individual: genetic endowment,
environmental conditions and events, learning experience, and knowledge of task approach skills. These are all influences which affect the students when thinking about their future possibilities, it will also affect them when later on moving on to the practical part of the decision-making like taking action and do instead of think. The student sees a lot of opportunities for themselves irrespective of studying, working abroad or staying in India. We experience them as motivated, positive with a lot of will power. They have the abilities and they are in an environment that allows them to pursue their careers. To support their families in the future can be a reason to pursue a career and can also be linked to ethnicity and culture. We experience role models as important influence in the students’ life since they are persons in their life that they look up to and can get experience from.

6.2 Values connected to thoughts of a future career

While considering a future career it’s important for the majority of the students that the job is something they like doing. This is in line with the views on work according to the traditional distinction of an individualist society where interest typically is an important deciding factor (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Kumar says: “If you can make it big with your interest then that’s the best thing you can do.” In fact, some of the students bring out work as a way to reach happiness and self-satisfaction, which is also an individualistic feature and can be seen as an extension of building your career on your interest. The students use words like “…it would make more out of my life”, “…you’ve got to have a job that satisfy you… if you’re not satisfied then it’s not a job.” and “…you should be satisfied with what you’re doing, happy with ourselves, not because of the money…” However, there is an awareness that it might not be possible to survive on a job that builds on your interest. The same student that was quoted first above, Kumar, also say that you should do what you like “…but not do it to an extent where you don’t get any pay and then end up, you know, being a failure.”

Making a living and earning money is very important for some of the students, they mention money parallel to interest on the question about what is important in an occupation and they especially emphasize the importance of a stable job to support themselves and their family, including the parents, for a long time. This can be related to the values of a collectivist culture where the family is of main importance and resources, including money, are shared. Aishwarya and Mira express independence in this question by pointing out that earning
money is the only way you can survive by yourself and that you can’t rely on your parents forever for financial support.

6.2.1 Values connected to family and future career

The view on family among the students also reflects collectivist values among the most of them. When asked to give some information on their families, the students describe their parents and siblings as well as the siblings of parents and their families, and grandparents. This could mean that their concept of family is wider than in an individualist culture where the same concept normally covers only the immediate family with parents and siblings. This can also say something about where you place yourself in the world, in relation to others, according to Hofstede and Hofstede, the children in collectivist societies are primarily brought up learning to think of themselves as part of a group and the loyalty to the group is essential. Aishwarya brings up the importance of family in a wider life perspective, saying “…family is very important, you need your family for everything that you do.”

The opinions of the family in choices of education and career seems to be important for the students, all of them in some way describe that they have the support of their families. The words they use range from high commitment and involvement of the family such as “very supportive” and “encouraging” to words that express a lower degree of agreement between student and family: “my parents wouldn’t mind” and “they’re fine with it”. One of the reasons this might be important in the light of collectivist values could be that in societies where these predominate, what the individual does also says something about the family as the identity is affected by the group. Of course, for a student in an individualist society, the opinions and support of the family could be equally important while making a decision, however as Hofstede and Hofstede points out it’s generally more important in a collectivist family to maintain harmony while in an individualist family the children are encouraged to form their own opinion to a higher extent. There are also other reasons as to why it could be more important for these students to have the approval of the parents in these matters, one of them being that the parents pay for their childrens’ education. This is not something typical for collectivist societies, in many countries in the West parents also finance their childrens’ education. However it’s a factor for these students since education is so important for them. The important role of the family for these students is further strengthened by the fact that when it comes to serious questions like the future they talk to members of their family, mainly parents and siblings. This can be related to the study made by Agarwala (2008), which is
mentioned in section 2.2.2. One of her conclusions is that for all the students in her research, the role of the father had the most influence in their career choices, a fact that she relates to collectivist values. Several of the students in our study also talks about resources in the form of connections among their relatives that can help them forward, as an example of the loyalty and mutual sense of security of the in-group in a collectivist society.

On a question concerning general values about what is important in life, half of the students interviewed expresses strong feelings of affection towards the family as well as a sense of responsibility. There is also a mutual feeling of support, most of the students say they feel that they have the support of their parents in their choices and they in turn want to support them when they get older. This idea is connected to a collectivist culture according to Hofstede and Hofstede where the in-group, the family, gives the members a sense of security and protection. Veena says that for her, the most important thing is to take care of her mother and grandmother. She wants to always be able to be there for them for support, like they have been for her and she calls them the two pillars of her life. After that, she puts satisfying her own wants. Arvind says he appreciates what his parents have done for him and wants to give something back to them, that’s what motivates him. Again, the loyalty to the in-group that characterizes a collectivist family is clear in these examples.

The opinions of others are also sometimes taken into consideration when thinking about a future career. Like mentioned before, Kumar talks about how you don’t want to be seen as “a failure” for not earning enough money. Arun says that to him it’s important to get a good reputation at work to receive appreciation from the co-workers. If they know that he is doing a good job “…they will like you more also and people communicate with you more.” Yet another student, Aishwarya, brings up the social benefits about a good job when she says that education and work can make you an attractive marriage partner. To be an acceptable group member, like the students mention in the examples above, is important in a collectivist culture since what one person does also reflects back on his or her family.

6.2.1.1 Difference of opinion between generations
There are quite a few examples among the interviews of when the opinion of the family differs from the opinion of the students, which can be seen as a change of generations and an expression of a more individualist view among the students. For some parents of the students marriage is an essential part of life. Mira shows her disagreement by saying that she would at
least postpone getting married with a few years from what her parents think is the appropriate
time for her to marry, to have these years for herself and for her career. She is also very
determined to not stop her career when she gets married. Another student, Arvind, says he
doesn’t believe in marriage and the idea that two people can cooperate like that, he prefers to be
on his own. For Aishwarya the dream job is to become a model and although her parents are not
against her doing this as a side thing for a limited period of time, they don’t think this is
the best way for her and she has another possible career option which could give her more
stability. Raj says his parents gave him a few options for the future other than his own idea
that’s based on his interest, but left it to him to decide as they trust in his ability. Mira says
that for her mother, it was a dream to have a doctor in the family but like in the previous
example, she lets her daughter decide for herself.

6.2.2 Summary and conclusions
When it comes to choices for the future, as mentioned before, the students exclusively talk to
their families and close friends. None of them uses the assistance of a professional in the area,
like a career guidance counselor. We believe there could be several reasons for this. First of
all, career guidance is not easily accessible for the students, there’s not a career guidance
counselor at their school. From what we have learned from our study, career guidance is a
growing area and some research has been made in this field by for example Arulmani and
Agarwala, but it seems to only be provided by private actors which inevitably makes it harder
for a larger number of students to naturally get in contact with counselors. Second of all,
although the need for career counseling is growing in India today, according to Arulmani
“The nature of economic development today has caused the emergence of new occupational
opportunities…(2011, p. 84)”, the students receive a lot of help in this area from home.
Relating this to the many collectivist features they show, career decision-making seems to be
a business for the whole family. The students are in a different social context than in Sweden,
the family is to a higher extent a social safety net and the mutual dependence is obvious. The
students are dependant on their parents to pay for their education, as well as the parents are
dependant on their children for supporting them when they get old, it’s possible that this
mutuality gives the other family members a natural sense of participation in the teenagers
career choices.

When thinking of a future career, the values these students communicate through the
interviews reflect on the most part values that would coincide with a collectivist culture.
These includes the mutual feelings of support and loyalty to the family as well as the mutual dependence, that the choice of an individual reflects back on the family, “career guidance” is mostly kept within the family and the wider concept of family to include the extended family as well. On the other hand, there are some strong individualist features such as interest being the main deciding factor for a job, there are also some differences in opinions between generations where the students tend to express more individualist values than their parents, like choosing a vocation based on interest and choosing an untraditional way of living like preferring to be on your own rather than being married. Their self-confidence is characteristic for the interviews, on a scale from one to ten they all rate their chances of reaching their goals in the top half. Whether this is an expression for an individualist or collectivist value is hard to say, what it does show is that these young persons are extremely motivated.

The general tendencies of the results of this study points to a predominant preference for collectivist values among the students. Like in Agarwala’s study, the students showed both individualist and collectivist values but had a definite preference for collectivism (2008). Agarwala refers to other studies by Verma (1999) and Verma and Triandis (1998) that finds the Indian culture collectivist. However, she makes an important point that can also be valid for the results of our study. Individualist and collectivist values are not a question of either the one or the other, though the collectivist values are more visible, the individualist values may be just as important in other aspects. The collectivist values are especially noticeable when it comes to family, which according to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) is not surprising. They state that since values are at the core of the culture and are learned at an early age, this makes them extremely stable and not very sensitive to change (2005). Especially a very basic value like the view of family would be hard to change. The motive for choosing a career can, in the light of this reasoning, be related to trends or practices that are learned later in life and therefore much more easily changed as they don’t go as deep as basic values.

As mentioned, Agarwala finds the Indian culture collectivist. As a result of the research of Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), the Indian society is mainly collectivist. Considering the diversity of India however, we believe this should be taken as a pointer only and not a fact. The same authors also point out the strong relationship between economic growth and individualism, saying:

“Countries having achieved fast economic development have experienced a shift toward individualism.” (2005, p. 114)
This conclusion that India is moving towards individualism can be supported by the one of our result that shows a difference in opinion between parents and children, where the children take on a more individualist view.

In considering a future career, the students interviewed expresses collectivist values to a higher extent than values that can be connected to individualism. However, individualism and collectivism should not be looked at on a bipolar scale meaning it’s one or the other. While the students prefer collectivist values, especially when it comes to deep-rooted values like the part the family plays in choosing a career, this doesn’t mean the students will think in similar ways concerning other areas. In fact, one of the most common individualist values was the one of basing your choice of occupation on your own interest.

The students almost exclusively talk to their family members about career decisions, professional career guidance counselors are not very common, nor easily accessible for the students. It’s also possible that the students are not in need of a counselor’s services since they receive help and support from home. This can be related to the collectivist values of the family as a social safety net as well as the mutual dependence of the family members, which makes career decision-making a matter for the whole family.

One of the conclusions Agarwala comes to in her study, also basing this on other researchers (2008), is that India is a collectivist culture. This is also what Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) proposes although according to them countries that are experiencing increasing wealth, like India, are moving towards individualism. Among the interviews made it is possible to make out a difference in opinions between parents and children where the children tend to take on a more individualist view.
7 Discussion

The aim of this study is to investigate how students of the middle class in Bangalore, India view their future in terms of further studies and work, what opportunities and limitations they see and what they value in a career. Krumboltz social learning theory was used to examine some underlying, deciding factors for making decisions while the values expressed by the students were related to the sociological terms of individualism and collectivism which can also reflect Western and Eastern cultures in general.

Qualitative methods were used. To get the information needed interviews were carried out with eight students at a public high school in Bangalore. The most important conclusions are that the students interviewed are very positive about their future. They expressed that the most important thing in a future occupation is that you like what you do and interest is an important deciding factor. We experience that they have the abilities it takes for them to achieve what they want in life and create possibilities and they also have positive role models, which many of the students say inspires them. The environmental conditions such as the fact that they belong to the middle class also contributes to possibilities. The underlying factors for decision-making correspond well to Krumboltz’s four influences which can contribute to better understand the process of deciding on a career among the students in their cultural contexts. When it comes to values, we found that to the most part the students expressed values connected to a collectivist culture, although there were also a few strong individualist features. However, it’s important to consider that it’s not a question of one or the other, individualist and collectivist values appear in every culture. In real life a society, of course, consists of a wide range of persons, all with their own personal values. Some of these may have individualist values concerning one thing and collectivist values regarding another. This is a wide and multi-dimensional area and to be able to do research concerning it, simplifications are necessary.

We also found that the students don’t receive any professional career guidance in school, however they get a lot of support from home in these matters that can satisfy their need for career guidance. Having said this, this doesn’t mean that they don’t need professional
guidance. It’s always good to talk to someone objective, like a career guidance counsellor, because this can give you new perspectives and lead to new possibilities.

After having done this study we have understood the importance of cultural knowledge in our profession. Every person is a product of their cultural context and this means that you see the world from your cultural references. We became aware of our own preconceived opinions about Indian youths when we made the interviews. We didn’t think that they would be that focused and motivated and able to express their thoughts about their future careers. One conclusion that we make from this is that we could use more of this cultural knowledge in our education. It’s easy to presume that both the counsellor and help-seeker have the same values and point of references as the society they live in even though they may have different ethnic background.

Since we only interviewed eight students we are well aware that the conclusions are valid only for the persons interviewed and not as a group. While the results could have some transference and validity for other students with similar background, they cannot be representative for a social group as a whole due to the limited number of informants. Neither was this our purpose.

To verify the students’ social class we asked the vice principal who knows the students well about his opinion in this. We also asked a few locals who know the particular area in Bangalore well. The answers ranged from middle to upper middle class, the later definition made by the vice principal. We find both the definitions middle and upper middle class to be acceptable for the study’s purpose as they are varieties of the same basic class. The fact that the vice principal chose the students to be interviewed for us can have an effect on the data, this might lead to less variety in the answers. He is in a leading position and might have an interest in choosing students that reflects well on the school. We think this is of minor importance for the study since our interest is each one’s subjective thoughts. The choice of school however was random, we came in contact with a local who suggested this school. The choice of Hofstede & Hofstede’s description is a general view of collectivism and individualism but in real life society is more complex. We also chose to only use their model that gives our study a general view. Our study may have gained a more nuanced picture and possibly more reliability if we had used an additional source. In the limited amount of time and guidelines for this study we had to keep it on a general level and had no possibility to go deeper into this.

We chose to do our study in Bangalore because we thought it’s a city with a lot of possibilities work wise due to its leading position in IT. First we thought that this would have
an affect on the views of the students’ future careers since the whole city seems to be looking forwards, new buildings replace the historic ones. We thought that this could have an effect on the students’ views concerning their future but the possibilities that the students see are not linked to the city itself, most of them would rather study and work abroad. It’s also possible that the location is not as important as social class, maybe students of the same social class in any big city in India would have the same start out points.

There are so many aspects in this field where you could do further research, it would be really interesting to do a comparative study on differences in gender and social class. We saw some clear differences in the answers between the girls and the boys that would have been interesting to follow up, for example the girls were in general more talkative. This could depend on various things, maybe the girls opened up more to us since we are of the same gender. The differences between social class in India are visible and it would be interesting to look at how and if the conditions are different. It would also be interesting to investigate what the career guidance in India look like in its cultural context.
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Appendix

Questionnaire

About you

- Tell us a little bit about yourself - Interests
- Family – siblings
- Parents and siblings occupations and previous education

Influences

- Do you have any role models?
- What do you admire about them?
- How do you think your background has influenced you?

Education

- How do you feel about studying in general?
- What do your family and friends think about education?
- What are your plans after finishing secondary school, and why?
- How do you feel about further studies?

Occupation

- What is important in an occupation?
- What do you want to work with?
- What’s your family’s opinion about this?
- What do you know about this occupation?
- What is positive and negative about this occupation?
- Do you picture yourself working in India or abroad?

Future

- What is important in life?
- How do you picture your life in 5 to 10 years?
  How possible is this to achieve on a scale from 1-10?
- Why this number?
- What would it take for you to answer with a higher number?
- Are there any obstacles?
- What can help you get there?
- Who do you talk to about your future? (friends, family, other person)