

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

HOW HR PEOPLE CHOOSE THEIR CAREER?

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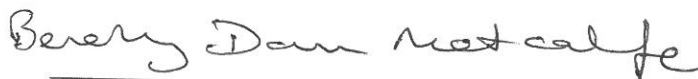
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT OF

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There are many aspects that influence an individual's career choice. One of the career choices that an individual may choose is Human Resource Management. The aim of this project is to study and analyze how and why people choose HR as a career, and what are the factors and influences that affect their occupation decisions or guide them to select this specific choice. Some individuals struggle to achieve their childhood career fantasies, others follow their family members' career paths, act upon their family members will, refer to their peer's experiences and opinions, choose certain occupations that are desirable in the market, or choose career opportunities that are aligned with their abilities, personalities, wants or needs. Some individuals pick certain career paths and at some point discover that this is not what they want to do. In this case, a dilemma occurs with regards to whether they would change their careers or not. Those factors among others are studied and analyzed in this project to see the major ones that affected HR individuals in their selections of this profession. Twenty HR people that are based in Lebanon were interviewed, ten of which are students who chose HR as a major of study and ten who are HR professionals that have experience for at least two years in the market in any field. The finding suggests that Human Resource Management will continue to be a career choice due to the increase of organizational awareness with regards to the importance of this function and the importance of the roles of HR professionals in achieving the strategic aims of organizations. However, certain dynamics and motives may influence individuals' career journeys and may lead them to certain directions that may be not aligned with their capabilities, characters, or wants. Based on this project's findings, family, society, and peers majorly influenced the interviewees decisions in choosing their careers. On top of that, lack of guidance throughout the interviewees' lives caused some of them to shift their majors later on. Experiencing other fields led them to discover their interests and to know more about the available vacancies which directed them to choose HR at a later stage of their lives. Furthermore, chance/luck was a very important factor that majorly impacted the career paths of some participants and led them to unplanned career journeys. On the other hand, the nationality and financial situation of the participants were also obstacles in their way to other majors or career opportunities. Furthermore, HR is associated with certain personality characteristics that are usually linked to women's personality by the society. As a result, gender can affect the career choice of individuals.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

Have you ever wondered how a rebellious of 18 years went into medicine and became a well-known doctor? Or another teenager who chose to become a religious figure? Why would a person choose to become an engineer? Alternatively, why does a doctor choose that field to become a professor? Several factors play a role in determining which profession a person pursues, but the real question is: do they regret their decisions at a later stage of their lives? It is a very hard decision to choose which career path an individual wants to follow. Usually, individuals go through their countries' educational systems that provide various paths for students based on their abilities and interests. In these systems, students are obliged to prove their abilities in the paths they choose by getting high grades to be able to achieve their future dreams and choose the professions they want to do for the rest of their lives. Other countries have educational systems in which they guide their students on the basis their skills, abilities, and interests. Choosing one's future profession needs deep analysis and consideration but students might not even have the time to, because they are busy trying to achieve the results they need for a better future (Lent & Brown, 2002).

There are many impacts and aspects that influence graduates' decisions of what they want to be in the future, as well they affect experienced individuals throughout their vocational journeys. Some people love what they do; they are satisfied with their work and that is reflected in their attitude at their workplace as they arrive to work feeling motivated and energized. On the other hand, some individuals pick a career path,

and at some point discover that this is not what they want, so they face the dilemma of whether they should change their career path or stay in their current job even though they do not like it. The question is: what are the major factors that impact people's decisions and make them love or regret their choices and act accordingly? In the following literature, the factors that play a role in one's decision-making and their impacts will be analyzed and studied to be able to understand how individuals take these vital decisions, and what the influences that majorly affect these decisions are.

B. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to determine and analyze factors that affect individuals' career choices in general, and Human Resources (HR) professionals career choices in specific. Individuals are obliged to take many important decisions in their lives, and these decisions might be influenced by many factors, but what about their careers? Choosing one's career is a significant decision, he/she will bear its results for the rest of his/her life. As a result, studying the influences and the issues that play an important role in individuals' choices and decisions regarding their career choices will help these individuals to take the right decisions in the future and take into consideration the factors that might affect their choices.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Career Choice Theories

As mentioned earlier, several factors affect how individuals choose their careers. Several theories studied the process of career development and the need to go through a career choice to start this journey (Van, Tibos & Zaman, 2005).

1. The Status Attainment Theory

An interesting model called “The Status Attainment Theory” established by Blau and Duncan attempts to explain how individuals choose their paths in the occupational and educational hierarchies. Additionally, Blau and Duncan explain that individuals usually follow their parents’ paths and try to attain the same social status to stay in the same loop (Brown, 2002). This theory shows the linkage between the father’s education and profession and the children’s career destinations. It states that the higher the educational level of the father, the higher the educational level of the children due to higher pressure, expectations, and the support given (Brown, 2002). The more the prestigious level of the father, the higher the expectation level of the family, which creates massive pressure on the children to become like their father. Furthermore, individuals’ parents may have their own business and may want their children to go through a certain field to be able to manage the family business. Parents may oblige these kids to choose certain fields even if they are not interested in that field and without even checking if they are actually suitable for such fields. Parents are

considered part of the influential people that may affect individuals' career choices. Teachers and coaches can also influence individuals' decisions and their future career journeys (Brown, 2002).

2. The Trait and Factor Theory

Setting aside Blau-Duncan theory, other contributors to the field presented different theories filling the gaps that Blau and Duncan's theory had: one of which is the Wisconsin model (Brown, 2002). That particular model added the psychological factor that was missing in Blau and Duncan's theory. It added more valuable variables such as one's mental ability, peer influence, personal characteristics and aspirations, and educational achievements (Brown, 2002). Personality is a very important factor that affects peoples' career decisions. Studies have shown that when the personality of an individual fits the characteristics needed for a certain job, he/she will be more productive and successful in this position and this will lead to higher outcomes. Frank Parsons, who is known as "the father of the vocational guidance", created what is called the trait and factor theory in which he mentioned that employees' satisfaction would be higher if they actually fit the job they are recruited for (Brown, 2002). As a result, a person should be well aware of the requirements of the position he/she is applying for and also should be aware of himself/herself by assessing his/her abilities, aptitudes and interests to know if he/she actually will be successful in this position. However, this theory does not take into consideration the changes that an individual may go throughout his career ladder and his life experiences (Brown, 2002).

3. Holland Career Typology

Other theories, such as the Holland Career Typology, explained that individuals should be well aware of themselves and their characters to be able to choose the environment that fits their personalities. According to this theory, individuals' personalities are one or a combination of these six: investigative, realistic, social, conventional and enterprising and those are called the "Holland codes" (Brown, 2002). Holland explained that when people who have the same personality type work together, they would be more productive because the environment they are working in actually fits their personal characteristics. He also believed that people usually search for work environments that fit their personalities, and in which they have the room to express their principles and values freely and can use their talents, abilities and skills. In this theory, individuals who work with colleagues of the same personality type or a close one and are working in an environment that fits their characters, will be more engaged, satisfied and productive (Brown, 2002). As a result, a person should choose an occupation that fits his/her personality type in order to be more productive. According to this theory, a person should know his personality type and should also be able to know the personality types that fit each career to be able to choose wisely (Brown, 2002).

4. Schruder's Career Choice Theories

Schruder (2006) discussed that there are three theories that explains individuals' careers perspectives and decisions. These theories are reviewed to acknowledge how a person usually chooses his or her career (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2009). First, the Objective Factor Theory; this theory presents the fact that some candidates follow logic

by being objective about their career hunts by looking at the benefits of each and every opportunity they have before accepting any. A candidate will make his/her decision based on the location and the advancement opportunities (training and development) of a certain career opportunity and most importantly the salary. Second, the Subjective Factor Theory; this theory explains that some candidates' hunts are more subjective and their decisions are affected by the sociality along with the psychological factors.

According to this theory, different factors influence the individual career decisions such as the job title along with the reputation of the career represented or the company name.

Third, the Critical Contract Theory, which explains that when the candidate is lost and not able to decide which career he or she should join, the candidate would use his/her observations and relate them to his/her experiences. Experienced employees usually follow this theory. All the previously mentioned theories are usually applied in an environment where the candidates have various career choices in many organizations.

However, in normal working life, when options are limited due to the increase of competition, and due to the limited choices and availability of career opportunities, candidates may choose one of the opportunities that are offered to them (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2009).

5. Social Cognitive Career Theory

The social cognitive career theory is one of the theories that studied the influences on career choice and development. This theory focuses on multiple cognitive variables and how these variables interact with other environmental aspects to shape individuals' career choices and development (Lent, 1996). This theory argues that individuals' cognitive variables such as their goals, expectations, self-efficacy and other

environmental issues such as gender and social support interact with each other and influence individuals career decisions and paths (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2002).

Additionally, some psychological aspects can affect these cognitive and environmental factors and how individuals respond to them. Other studies used to focus on either the environmental or the psychological factors that affect career decisions and did not take into consideration the linkage between both (Brown & Lent, 2000).

6. Super Life Career Rainbow

Donald Super explained that it is not enough to consider the personality of an individual and the characteristics of the jobs he/she is applying for. He highlighted that personal and occupational preferences interact to create what is called the “self-concept” in which a person recognizes what he/she actually wants and that can be affected by the persons’ different experiences that he/she might have faced throughout his/her life, and by the different roles that he/she plays in life over time and the different needs of these roles. Donald Super identified six life spaces that actually structure who we are which includes: workers, citizens, parents, children, leisurite and students (Super, 1990). According to Super, individuals’ choices are affected by how they see themselves and by the changes that occurred in their lives due to different situations and circumstances they might have gone through which create what is called “career maturity” which may or may not be related to the biological age (Super, 1990). Super believed that the career choice should not be seen as a point in time choice, but an unfolding process (Super, 1990).

B. Social Influences That Affect Career Choice and Development

The cross-national differences between the educational systems affect pupils and their future choices. Some studies have shown that due to the lack of guidance by the education structure of a country, individuals might regret their occupation choices that they have taken. Generally, in most countries, students enter the education system in which they are given a wide variety of basic subjects and are required to get high marks to attain a certain General Point Average (GPA) in order to enter a reputable university. On the other hand, other countries guide students and show them various paths that they can take. Students with good scores enter universities and others who perform less are guided toward what is called apprenticeship. Apprenticeship is an assortment of practical and theoretical learning under the supervision of professionals. Students are given practical lessons in technical areas, such as mechanics, electricity, etc., which help students become specialized in a certain field and also prepare them to enter the workforce after a certain period of time. It leads individuals, shape their skills, and create competencies. This process ensures the fit between the educational structure and the market needs. These differences among nations majorly affect individuals' way of thinking and decision taking.

Some studies argued that there is nothing called career choice. Careers are opportunities and these opportunities are affected by gender, religion and nationality (Wigfield, Battle, Keller & Eccles; 2002). For instance, women cannot work in certain types of professions because of their physical capacities. Moreover, they cannot work in certain jobs because of some traditions and societies' opinions that identify certain professions mainly with males, such as working in construction, driving, the army, and economics. On the other hand, certain jobs are identified mainly with females such as

working in personal care services, secretarial work, human resources, nursing, and caretaking. Additionally, religion can affect individuals' behaviors, and as a result, it can limit their career choices. Veiled women are not accepted by many organizations to work in posts that require interactions with others, such as sales or customer service. Some women are banned from wearing their headscarf during working hours due to certain countries' regulations and laws. They face the dilemma of choosing between the profession they want and their faith. Furthermore, the number of immigrants and refugees is increasing due to civil wars and conflicts among countries. Some of these countries put certain restrictions for the employment process of these individuals even if they have the required qualifications and capabilities (Brown, 2002).

Children's behaviors, values and interests are affected by their parents' parenting behaviors. The jobs' characteristics of the parents influence their actions, personalities and values, which as a result is reflected in their childrearing behaviors. For example, if the father works in the military, he will care more about his children's discipline and obedience. However, if the father works in a position that requires self-decision making, he will focus his childrearing majorly on independent decision-making, problem solving and self-direction. This can shape the children's values and interests which in their turn influence their career choices. Additionally, the relationship between parents and their children can affect the latter's characters and personalities. When there is a communicative relationship between both sides, this will foster the children's self-confidence. Some studies have shown that the supportiveness degree of the parents can impact majorly the kids' manners and attitudes which also influence their future work values and their vocational attainment. Other studies also argued that kids are more influenced by the same sex parent. Furthermore, when the mother is part

of the labor force, her occupation's complexities influence her home environment which affects the kids' intellectual development (Brown, 2002).

Lots of students work at some period during their school years. Early employment is considered an introduction to what employment actually is and it can majorly affect the work values, attitudes and career interests of those students. When teenagers enter the workforce during their school years, they face work challenges and obtain an idea of how things work. This can help them know more about their self-interests and discover the things they are mostly good at. Even going through a bad work experience is beneficial, because that will let them seek satisfying careers according to their self-interests and values that they are creating throughout their various experiences. Early work experience can guide them through their educational systems to choose the right paths that they are actually interested in and capable to follow, which will positively affect their vocational choice later on in the future. Moreover, these experiences can help them become more responsible and independent, gain money and time management skills and foster their good work values, manners and habits. These factors can majorly influence the future career decision of these adolescents (Brown, 2002).

Additionally, guidance and counseling is very important to help students choose the right career. Schools should guide their students by helping them be aware of themselves, their wants and abilities, and create future plans to be able to achieve their future goals (Brown, 2002). The first step would be for individuals to know their selves and their abilities and to know more about the available options in the market. This will enable these young people to set their future goals and objectives accordingly. The next step would be to develop plans to achieve these objectives. Guidance is not only the

responsibility of schools; parents play an important role in guiding their children toward the path that fits their abilities and interests the most, and they can also seek the help of experienced counselors. However, parents' guidance should be objective in how they guide their children. They should help their children choose their own path and not choose it for them (Brown, 2002).

Another factor that plays a role on the career choices of individuals is the labor market. Employment probability and salaries range depends on the unemployment rate in the market. Individuals' career choices can vary depending on the existence and the number of industries available in the marketplace. In the last decade, there has been a trend of people moving out from populated areas to the suburbs looking for new opportunities and investments. This led to a decrease in employment opportunities for students and laborers who live in the rural areas. As a result, adolescents may not be able to shape their values, interests and skills through various work experiences and they will not have enough knowledge about what they want to do in the future and what the qualifications needed are. It is worth mentioning that the community and life conditions can influence majorly individuals' values and interests. Moreover, employees who were raised in villages may care about certain things in their jobs more than others do. For example, they may care about corporate social responsibility and to which degree employees are involved in it more than others do, because they like to help others and they are used to be involved in community service. Moreover, they maybe more interested in job security and stability than others do. This influences majorly their career decision-making process.

According to some studies, the positive trait "ambitious" was highly assessed as an important trait that affects majorly individuals' career choices, in addition to other

factors such as individuals' educational abilities and the encouragement available to achieve their goals (Brown, 2002). However, Sewell and Hauser explained that ambitions are created throughout the vocational development journey and not vice versa (Brown, 2002). They added that an individual might fit himself/herself into any available vacancy that he/she is qualified to attain (Brown, 2002). As a result, available opportunities in employment and education can determine a person's career choice and insofar, aspirations might be shaped. Additionally, some studies discussed the importance of prestige and how it plays an important role in an individual's decision-making process. As per these studies, individual's ambitions and goals are important, but they are dependent on the prestige and educational level of an individual's surrounding society (Brown, 2002). As indicated previously, the sociological, educational and occupational prestige of family members impact massively a family member decision-making process as a result of the high expectations set and the pressure one feels.

Career choice and development is a subject that psychologists have been exploring for decades. Certain issues that affect an individual's occupational path grabbed their attention as they focused intensely on certain issues such as an individual's values, interests, orientations, personality types and self-concept. They explained the degree of fit between individuals and their professions and implicated that the greater the fit is, the higher the level of satisfaction. However, interests of psychologists and sociologists are currently emerging, and as a result, recent vocational psychological studies are focusing on the major social factors that influence the individuals' way of choosing their life lasting careers such as the work conditions that are associated with each occupation. Nowadays, individuals are checking the work

environment, working hours, opportunity of development and growth, availability of work life balance and the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards associated with the profession they are choosing before making any decision. They also care about the monetary pay and rewards especially for the new generations whose interests are different compared to old ones. They not only want to secure a stable job; they want to achieve their dreams and afford not only their needs but their wants too.

After discussing the most influential factors that affect individuals' career choices throughout their lives, this study will be focusing on Human Resource Management career choice because Human Resource Management is not one of the usual career options that people dream about when they are kids. Kids usually do not know what HR is, and what HR employees actually do. One of the factors that may affect individuals' career choices is their childhood fantasies, and usually HR is not one of them. Moreover, HR is considered a new domain that started to expand recently after the awareness of its importance in organizations to be able to achieve successfully their long term and short term strategic objectives. As a result, the aim of this study is to know more about this career option and to analyze how and why certain people choose this field as their life career.

C. Human Resource Management

Armstrong (2006) described Human Resource Management (HRM) as the approach to manage the most important assets, the employees, who carry on processes to achieve the targets and objectives of their company. As a result, HRM is a support function in any organization that is important to increase employees' productivity according to the objectives of the company (Johanson, 2009). The main concern of any

Human Resource Department is how to successfully manage employees of the company, while following its rules and regulations and also its systems to achieve its short and long term objectives (Collings and Wood, 2009).

The Human Resource Department is usually responsible for different kinds of activities such as recruitment, training and development, completing employees' appraisals and setting the appropriate incentives to keep the employees motivated (Paauwe and Boon, 2009). Moreover, this department preserves and maintains the industrial relations, which creates the equilibrium between the practices inside the organization along with governmental rules and regulations (Klerck, 2009).

Human Resources Management goes back to the 20th century, when scholars began to build the business value through the strategic management of the employees. The start of Human Resource was through the functions of payroll and administration, but it was developed later on to match the global needs along with the development of technology. Human Resources now work on different strategies related to talent management, planning and labor relations, and most importantly diversity management.

The early form of Human Resource Management was under the name of personnel managers, employees' specialists, or personnel administrators. The set of functions and activities related to recruitment, training, selection, appraising, and payroll is considered to be part of the "Personnel Management", which directly affect employees' satisfaction and engagement and as a result influence their performance which is directly related to the achievement of the organization's objectives and targets. The Personnel Management duty was presented first in England and in the United States, and then it moved across the globe reaching Australia and the Asia Pacific countries. Those countries were in the peak of their production times and needed this

position to insure proper arrangement of their workflow. With the development of technology and the introduction of more complex machines that needed knowledge and skills to be operated along with the new systems, organizations were recruiting masses of employees to increase the speed of the production process. This serious need led to the creation of the management team, who were responsible for all the field workers. At that time, the attention was toward how to keep these employees and motivate them to increase their production.

Different movements started erupting in different countries, such as the Humanitarian movements and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's), which led to the start of major conflicts between workers' class and the managers or owners. These incidents started with what is called "the workers unions" that organize the relationship between management and employees and care about the rights of the employees (Nankervis et. AL, 2011). As a result, the United States Government started to set rules and regulations that organizations should follow, such as laws for employees' working hours, minimum wages, paying rates, safety regulations and others. The rest of the world followed this movement by setting different rules and regulations to protect the rights of employees and workers.

D. Human Resource Professionals

Human resource professionals must be engaged strategically in the organizations' plans, policies and procedures. A major factor to organizations' success is the role of the human resources. However, this role cannot be effective if the HR specialists do not possess the required competency. The question is: what does "HR competencies" mean? HR competencies are those features that contribute majorly to the

performance of the HR department and allow the company to apply its tactics in a competitive marketplace smoothly (Long, 2008). The professionalism of these competencies allows the HR manager to book and maintain a place in the “executive board chamber” (Long, 2008). The following study will cover six competencies that were studied by Dave Ulrich, a business professor at the University of Michigan, and his associates (Need, 2006).

- ✓ Credible activist, which means that an HR expert should be credible and active (Grossman, 2007). All employees, from high-level management to low-level staff, should seek the recommendations and instructions of HR experts. They should listen to their opinions and seek their advice and help because they trust them and believe in their influential role. In addition, employees must admire their HR professionals. However, if these professionals are credible but not active, they are useless. As what Johnson said, “You don’t want to be credible without being an activist, because essentially you’re worthless to the business” (Grossman, 2007).
- ✓ Cultural steward, which means that HR experts should be able to affect organizational culture by integrating employees’ practices with organizational strategies to achieve the needed objectives (Grossman, 2007). An HR should prepare the environment for any expected change and help the workforce adapt themselves to it (Need, 2006).
- ✓ Talent manager, who struggle to attract and retain talented employees and manage their talents professionally (Grossman, 2007). Moreover, talented employees should always be trained and developed to stay in the loop (Need, 2006). However, managing talents will not be effective if it was not supported by the organization’s structure (Grossman, 2007).

- ✓ Strategy architect that always integrates HR practices to the strategy of the organization (Grossman, 2007). This competency needs a future vision to be able to anticipate the future organizational needs and trends (Need, 2006).
- ✓ Business ally, which means that an HR must have a deep understanding of all organizational business functions (Grossman, 2007). HR professionals should know the products or services the organization creates the business competitors and customers. They should also distinguish why these clients are buying these products or services. In conclusion, HR professionals should be engaged in all business aspects.
- ✓ Operational executor, which covers the transactional HR activities such as preparing payroll, recruitment, training and development (Grossman, 2007). HR professionals should make sure that they are applying the plans and strategies designed that satisfy the workforce needs. HR professionals can use technology to facilitate completing these tasks (Need, 2006).

E. HR as a Career Choice

Outperforming competitors, gaining a sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace, and achieving goals are what any organization is trying to accomplish. In order to do so, attracting and retaining employees is an essential factor, since employees contribute a lot to the success of any business. Products and services that organizations provide are very important to attract clients, but we are living in a time where imitation is very easy, and people's needs are continuously changing; therefore, without creativity and ingenuity, it would be very difficult for a company to stand out (Wellins, 2009).

Organizations are struggling to sustain their position in the marketplace; they are aware

that this cannot be achieved if they do not manage their scarce resources competently. Talented employees are unique and scarce assets that cannot be copied by rivals. “Talent is an increasingly scarce resource, so it must be managed to the fullest effect” (Wellins, 2009).

Individuals are the most vital asset for any company (Jauhari; Sehgal, R. & Sehgal, P, 2013). Companies must choose their workforces cautiously, and strive to keep them engaged by being able to manage the employees’ talents and skills professionally. Employees must be treated as humans and not as resources. Their needs must be respected and their abilities must be evaluated and used efficiently. Organizations’ success is driven by employees’ engagement, commitment, satisfaction, creativity and innovation. Here comes the vital role of HRM, which contributes vastly to preparing the organizations’ environment and facilitating the employees’ duties to accept change and risk, and to be proactive, creative and innovative (Hayton, 2005). As a result, HRM is the main foundation of the organization’s competitive advantage that does not only lead it to play the market game efficiently, but also to win this game eligibly (Schneider & Bowen, 1993).

HR practitioners are considered as internal consultants that all employees seek their advice and listen to their recommendations. They are responsible for key decisions that majorly affect their organization and its position in the market. As a result, organizations must take into consideration the functions that HRs do, their requirements and needs, and the competencies they should have, and so to prepare a well done HR job description to be able to recruit the right candidates for that position. However, some organizations still do not realize the importance of this department, and as result do not give them the chance to be strategic partners (Barney and Wright, 1998).

Although many studies have shown the importance of HR and how the HR practices can affect directly the performance of the organizations, HR is still considered a cost center and HR professionals are considered to organize employees' data and do the paper work. Consequently, some organizations recruit their HR professionals based on what they think HR professionals do.

F. Shifting Careers

A study was done by the Right Management (2012) on why employees change their careers or look for a new job and came out with the following factors that cause career changing: First, the economic situation of the country or the financial situation of the organizations which are obliged to cut costs, and unfortunately, the first and easiest way to cut costs by organizations is by downsizing. Second, individuals may find better opportunities in the market that give them room to express their skills and abilities more. As a result, they may decide to shift to another career in the same field or different fields to experience something new. Third, the opportunities that are created in the market which may create new jobs in certain fields, and individuals may be encouraged to try these new opportunities, or because they may be something interesting to them. Fourth, employees may leave and change their careers because of their bad work environment, or because of their managers. There is a well known saying that states that employees usually leave their bosses and not their work (Dunnette, Arvey & Banas, 1973). Fifth, as mentioned previously in the in Super's Life Career Rainbow, a person may change over time due to the change in his/her role throughout his life span (Super, 1990). Individuals after marriage, for example, may need to spend more time with the family and as a result may search for a job that cares more about

employees' work life balance and benefits. This study will analyze why some individuals shift from and to HR career? How do they take this decision and why?

G. Career Education and Assessment

In order for an individual to present a proper career assessment, he/she should do some career education. Career education is very beneficial as it gives individuals the ability to discover and know more about certain positions, analyze their strength and weaknesses, and assess their skills to see if they actually fit the requirements of these positions. DOTS is a helpful framework for career awareness and education. The letter D stands for decision learning, O for opportunity awareness, T for transition learning, and S for self-awareness (Law & Watt, 1977). This framework which was found by Tony Watts and Bill Law aims to help individuals plan their career and achieve their career goals (Watts, 1996).

H. Career Guidance

Schools play a very important role in guiding its students towards the profession that fits their abilities and characters. In some countries, the critical importance of leading their new generation is taken into consideration, because they will be the future leaders of the country. Some countries realize the importance of this factor for a better future for these kids and for the country itself. As a result, some governments made it mandatory to provide a program for students starting at the age of thirteen which discusses and explains available careers in the market, their requirements and the qualifications necessary to be successful in these opportunities. Moreover, these

programs help students assess their abilities and be aware of their selves, their interests, their needs and wants.

These programs are obligatory because they are considered a very important part of the educational strategies of these governments. The basic aim of these strategies is to create more effective school systems that promote higher learning standards. These guidance programs focus on all students, without any discrimination, and place more emphasis on students who are at high risk of dropping school. The focus of these guidance programs is all students especially the ones that are at risk to drop learning. All students have the right to have access to this occupational support guidance. However, schools were not applying this because they were claiming that they are not able to meet the requirements and finish the curriculum. As what Morris, Lines and Golden mentioned in their article, “curriculum pressures and timetable constraints appear to have militated against any real increase in status for careers education and guidance” (Morris, Lines & Golden, 1999).

Schools were having difficulty in applying these programs not only because they are not having time to finish the curriculum required, but also because they are failing to link between career guidance, academic guidance and personal guidance that play vital role in these schools’ improvements. Career advisors have significant roles in the success of such programs because it is their job to visit schools and to explain about their fields. However, schools are failing to keep these advisors on track with the plans and the time frame the school has set (Morris, Rickinson & Davies, 2001). As a result, additional work should be done to increase the schools’ awareness of the importance of these programs and how they are not only beneficial for the students themselves, but they are beneficial for the improvement of schools and the educational progress of the

country as a whole. Schools should work to enhance the partnership between them and the career advisors, and to keep them updated with the school plans and timeframes (Morris, Rickinson and Davies, 2001).

Market needs change overtime, because sometimes the market becomes saturated in certain areas and fields. Hence, graduates of the least demanded field might be affected by that. They might either end up working in a different field or jobless and spend their time looking for a job that fits their qualifications. Therefore, the unemployment rate of the country will increase. In order to avoid the increase in the unemployment rate, the government can guide schools on the market situation of the country and the most demanded fields, and then schools can create career guiding programs and inform students about the available careers and requirements. As a result, it is very important for the government to guide schools to create such programs that inform students about the available careers, and their needs and requirements. Market evolutions happen and new jobs may appear and students should be informed about these jobs: what they are about and what their needs are. Moreover, due to factors that were mentioned preciously such as family, society, prestige etc., students may choose certain fields more than others. When a student is asked “What do you want to study when you finish school?”, teachers will rarely find an answer of “I want to go to an apprenticeship”. Again, the government or the ministry of education in particular, has to help in creating awareness regarding apprenticeship, its advantages and the outcomes.

I. Career Choice in the Arab World

Individuals' career choices may be influenced and can be affected by many factors which can be explained by many theories mentioned previously. However, there

are certain factors and influences that appear mostly in the Arab countries and affect the Arabs behaviors, decisions, and choices such as gender, religion, parents, and the society. The Arab world used to face many problems and issues that majorly lessened its development such as illiteracy, inequity and discrimination (Sidani, 2005). Nevertheless, it is struggling to find its way to follow the development and expansion of other countries.

Gender, is one of the basic issues that affects individuals' choices and decisions, and this factor can be linked to the society and family expectations, rituals, and beliefs (Sidani, 2005). Women career chances and development have made great strides, but inequity continues in some countries (Sidani, 2005). Some correlate between inequality and religion; for instance, unequal practices may be an outcome of a certain belief such as Islam. Some individuals believe that Islam determines the roles and responsibilities of each gender, and requires the segregation between sexes, and one must act accordingly which affects their behaviors, choices and decisions (Afiouni, 2014). However, the Islamic scripts and guidelines are interpreted differently by people depending on the context and history of each Islamic country (Afiouni, 2014). These interpretations can influence women's roles in the society and in the workplace in general, and can affect the organizational practices and the relationships between employees. This can be shown in Saudi Arabia in which organizations are forced to segregate between sexes, and to implement certain HR practices that are related to certain Islamic issues such as bereavement and long hajj leaves and prayer breaks (Afiouni, 2014).

Childrearing is a very important factor that affects individuals' beliefs, behaviors and personalities. Some studies have shown that children learn about gender and its

definition at an early stage of their lives and are affected by their parents' beliefs and behaviors. At this stage, they will start learning about the role of each gender and the appropriate behaviors of each according to the society expectations and assumptions. When a girl learns that feminism revolves around kindness and politeness, this will bind and shape her behaviors accordingly, and will surely affect her career choices and decisions later on (Afiouni, & Karam, 2017). Additionally, society expectations regarding what women should and should not do, and what the usual duties of women are and which females learn about at an early stage of their lives, might influence their future choices and decisions. These duties revolve around being obedient wives and great mothers, so in order to complete these duties perfectly; they may choose not to work or to quit their professions after marriage. The idea that a woman can be a great mother and wife and a successful employee at the same time is considered a challenge based on the society expectations of women and their "perfect" role. Other factors might revolve around the idea of men's superiority because of which women might not accept certain promotions or work opportunities because they do not want to undermine their partners (Afiouni, 2014).

The Arab world is considered to have a collective culture in which "family" is very important. There are two kinds of collectivism, in-group and institutional collectivism. Societies that belong to the first type majorly value and appreciate their belongingness to their families, and so they are very loyal to the family members and highly depend on them. On the other hand, societies that belong to the second type encourage group loyalty and its members are very interdependent with their institutions. Some studies have shown that the Arab societies that are considered collective have more gender stereotypes than others, because their individuals are obliged to be loyal

and are pressured to follow the traditions and values of their families and peers. In such societies the interests, wants, and needs of individuals are not as important as the group beliefs and values. Disrupting the congruence of this society is not preferable and individuals are encouraged to keep in line with their family and peers' practices. As a result, some women do not speak up and talk about their abilities, wants and rights as they prefer to stay in line with their family values and beliefs that were already mentioned before.

Arabs significantly care about their familial relations and bonds and this might be due to what is called "Asabiya", which was explained by the Arab Researcher Ibn Khaldoun and its meaning revolves around group feelings or loyalty (Sidani & Thornberry, 2013). This term might justify why certain individuals support others and fight for their survivals. This might also be the reason for what is called "Nepotism", in the absence of effective proper governments that fight corruption (Sidani & Thornberry, 2013). Nepotism means to recruit unqualified individuals in certain professions using a "nonobjective measure of employment" (Sidani & Thornberry, 2013). Nepotism in the Arab world is very common and unfortunately some people find justifications to several acts related to it. However, many studies have proved the bad effects of nepotism on organizations and businesses and that it overweighs the advantages (Sidani & Thornberry, 2013). Moreover, certain studies have shown that it is most common in family businesses in which individuals are pressured to recruit relatives or cannot fire relatives regardless of their qualifications or performance (Sidani & Thornberry, 2013).

The society and family expectations regarding women's roles and duties majorly affect the investment rate of these women in education, experience, training and development (Munir Sidani, 2013). Moreover, these expectations affect women's career

choices and decisions because certain careers are usually expected to be occupied by males only and others are considered to be restricted to females. Here comes the role of educating and increasing women's awareness of their importance in the society, which can introduce them to various career opportunities and increase their access to certain positions with higher salaries (Munir Sidani, 2013). Furthermore, the norms of the society can significantly impact individuals' behaviors regarding females' recruitment, selection, compensation, etc.

J. Research Questions

- What are the elements that affect career choices and decisions of HR professionals?
- When do HR professionals usually realize they want to be in this profession, and what are the processes leading to such decision?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to further our understanding of how people choose their careers, what the factors that might alter their decisions and majorly influence individuals' career paths are, and as well the quality of innocence in children along with their innate creativity and humor they tend to acquire which is called "career fantasies". When kids face the question "What do you want to be when you grow up?", spontaneously they answer the most common and known fields such as a doctor or an engineer as they are not aware of the real world and the capabilities available outside. Kids always have what is called career fantasies, as when you ask them about their future career dreams by asking them the usual question "what do you want to be when you grow up?", they usually answer you the known answers such as doctors, teachers, engineers, etc. None of these kids knows what HR means and as a result, none of them would decide or answer that they want to be HRs when they grow up. As a result, this paper focuses specifically on the HR position and studies how and why HR people choose to work in this field.

Gill Musson approach to conducting interviews was carried out in this project, whereby "the method prioritizes individual explanations and interpretations of actions and events, viewing them as lenses through which to access the meaning that human beings attribute to their experience" (Cassell, Symon, 2004). This method was selected since it has various advantages; all unclear and doubtful questions can be explained immediately, nonverbal signals can be used as part of the respondent's answers, and body language signs can be detected and translated immediately (Sekaran & Bougie,

2003). This qualitative strategy was chosen in which twenty interviews were completed: ten of them were with HR Professionals who have at least two years of experience in the HR field or any other field. Requiring that the interviewees have experience in a different field is an important aspect for the study as it aims to analyze the role of individuals' market experiences and their influences on their career decisions and career journeys. Furthermore, ten interviews were made with HR students who chose to be HR recently, and have no experience in the HR field. This requirement is vital as this study also aims to understand the reasons behind why HR students choose to be HRs from the beginning, and what the factors that actually affected their choice are. The ten HR students and the ten HR professionals were approached directly after making sure of their administration approval and permission.

The participants read and accepted the consent and the invitation scripts that were handed to them. The consent form informed the participants that their participation is not mandatory and that they can discontinue their participation at any time without any penalty. Moreover, it asked the interviewees for their permission to record their answers during the interviews. Only two out of the twenty participants accepted to record their answers. During the meeting with those two interviewees, details about their body language throughout the interviews were taken in addition to recording their answers. During the other eighteen interviews, the answers were manually transcribed, and notes about their body signs throughout their interviews were written. The participants were informed about the duration of the interviews in a consent form, which is around thirty minutes, and the place and time of the interviews were decided based on the participants' free time with full consideration of their responsibilities.

Thirty-two interview questions for students and thirty questions for HR professionals were prepared and listed in the appendix, all of which were used to tackle the purpose of this study. Data were gathered and analyzed using the “thematic analysis method”, which includes recognizing, examining and creating patterns within the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This pattern creating process included generating themes and codes, which facilitated the analyzing process of the collected data to be able to get explanations and descriptions to the research question. After completing the twenty interviews (ten with HR professionals and ten with HR students), the data was analyzed based on the themes that were mostly repeated. The participants mostly talked about eight main themes during their interviews. These eight main themes are: Family (parents, brothers/sisters, relatives), Experience (self, family and friends’ experiences), special conditions (financial situation, nationality, market condition, and nepotism), Personality (Self-awareness, personal preferences, personality and job characteristics, and self-expectancy), peers (Friends, role models), gender (Male, Female), guidance (school, university), and chance/luck (available opportunities). These eight themes were analyzed and explained in the analysis below to show what the reasons are for having these eight themes in common between participants and what the main observations are after analyzing all the answers and digging into the subject.

- Table 1 shows the demographics of the HR professionals that participated in this study.
- Table 2 shows the demographics of the HR students that participated in this study.

Table 3.1. Demographic Profile (HR-Professionals)

HR Professional	Age	Gender	Nationality	Education	Experience in HR Field (Years)
1	35	F	Lebanese	Public Relation and Advertising	10
2	26	F	Lebanese	Business Management	1
3	35	M	Lebanese	Hospitality	9
4	48	M	Lebanese	Commercial studies	15
5	27	F	Lebanese	Business Management And HR	5
6	25	F	Lebanese	Finance	5
7	27	F	Lebanese/ Canadian	Management	5.5
8	30	F	Lebanese	Business Administration	4
9	28	F	Lebanese	Finance/Banking	3
10	35	F	Lebanese	Computer Science	14

Table 3.2. Demographic Profile (HR-Students)

HR-Students	Age	Gender	Nationality	Education	Experience (Years)
1	27	F	Palestinian/Lebanese	Accountant and HR	4
2	27	F	African	Business Administration	4
3	36	F	Lebanese	Education	0
4	35	M	Lebanese	Mechanical Engineering	10
5	35	F	Lebanese	Finance	9
6	32	M	Lebanese	Political Science	4
7	27	F	Lebanese	Marketing	2
8	25	F	Syrian	HR	1
9	28	F	Lebanese	Hospitality and Tourism	4
10	24	F	Syrian	HR	0

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

A. Main Themes

Through examining the participants' responses, eight main themes were extracted. **Family, Experience, Special Conditions, Personality, Peers, Gender, Guidance and Chance/luck are all considered main premises.** These themes and some examples of quotes that led to them are mentioned in the thematic table mentioned in the appendices. Moreover, the analysis result will be listed below.

1. Family

- The Status Attainment Theory is not fully applicable in this study. None of the participants chose the same career as their parents, but some of them were affected by the expectations of their parents, family members, and society.
- Many participants' career choices were influenced by their parents' view of their future career plan, especially the ones that have their own businesses.
- Super Career Rainbow Theory, by Donald Super, is one of the major theories that explains the career choices of many participants.
- Parents' characters and personalities affect the characters and personalities of their children, which as a result affect their career choices. Most of our HR interviewees were affected by their parents rearing which shaped their characters and personalities, and as a result chose HR as a career.

- Family members may give pieces of advice to others based on their experiences, and this might affect their decision regarding their future occupation.
- Individuals might follow their parents' opinions because of the characteristics of the collective Arab society.

2. Peers

- Some of the participants explained that they were affected by their friends' advice regarding their career paths and choices.
- Other individuals mentioned that they followed their role model career path.

3. Personality

- Some Individuals chose to be HRs because they think that their personalities fit the requirements of this position.
- Management recruits HRs based on their characters and personalities.
- The way parents raise their children is affected by the parents' occupations and their requirements. This may influence these children's personalities which as a result affect their career choices.
- 60% of the interviewees' mothers are housewives. The remaining mothers work as follow: 20% teachers, 5% nurses, 5% managers and 5% assistants, and 5% secretaries. These professions need employees with certain characteristics and qualifications that are close to the needed characteristics and requirement for HRs.
- 20% of the interviewees' fathers have their own personal businesses; 10% of them are dealers, 20% are supervisors, 15% are teachers and 5% are nurses.

These occupations need employees that have certain characteristics and qualifications that are very close to what is needed for a successful HR.

- 30% of the HR students interviewed do not have any experience in the market and they mostly chose HR because they felt that their personalities fit this position.
- The Trait and Factor Theory, by Frank Parsons, explains why some participants choose certain careers or shifted to certain occupations.
- Schools, universities, and most importantly the government play an important role in helping children choose the right career paths.

4. Guidance

- Many individuals decided to change their careers later on because of the initial lack of guidance by their schools and/or universities.
- 70% of the interviewed professionals did not study HR or anything related to this field during their BA due to the lack of guidance from schools and/or universities.
- 65% of the participants were not guided by their schools to choose the appropriate career and 70% of the participants shifted to the HR field. These two percentages are very close, which shows that lack of guidance is one of the major reasons that may cause individuals' career shifts later on.
- The government, schools, and universities should cooperate more to be able to guide students efficiently toward the suitable career path according to their abilities, personalities, characters and the market demand.

5. Experience

- 70% of the interviewed students have had experience in other fields, which helped them be self-aware of their wants, interests, abilities and personalities fit, and to know details about various vacancies. As a result, they chose HR as their major.
- 30% of these students do not have any experience in the market and they mostly chose HR as a major because they felt that their personality fits this position.
- Universities' internships and part time jobs affect individuals' career choices.
- Amendments should be done to the system of the internships of universities to be able to help students choose the suitable occupations at the right time.

6. Chance/Luck

- 70% of the interviewed professionals did not study HR nor a major related to this field during their BA.
- 70% of the HR professionals' answers were that they worked as HRs by chance.
- A major number of interviewees chose HR as a profession because of certain career opportunities that were available.
- The mentality that management has regarding the role of the HR department in organizations and the empowerment of this department plays an important role in how they actually choose certain individuals to be HRs and why.

7. Gender

- 80% of the HR students and professionals that were interviewed were females.

- Social cognitive career theory is applicable where the career decisions, goals, and expectations of some applicants are affected by their gender.
- Female career choices and decisions might be affected by the societies' assumption of their personality characteristics and the careers that fit them the most.
- 60 % of the interviewees' mothers are housewives. 80% of the interviewees were females and 88.2% of these females actually work in the market. This shows a development regarding women role in the Arab society.

8. Special Conditions

✓ Nationality

- The nationality of some participants was an obstacle to them. Certain fields in some countries discriminate among nationalities; hence they did not study the major that they want.
- The political and economic situations majorly affect individuals' career choices.

✓ Financial Situation

- The financial situation of some participants was another obstacle, too. Some universities have high tuition fees; therefore, they couldn't afford to study at a university that carries the major of their interest. They had to accept that fact, get into a cheaper university and a different major than they want.

✓ Market Conditions

- Career choices are based on opportunities. These opportunities are affected by many factors such as market needs and economic situation.

- Individuals may choose to study certain majors that the market does not need, or the market maybe saturated in certain fields, and this can be due to the lack of cooperation between schools, universities and the government.

✓ **Nepotism**

- Nepotism is one of the reasons that can limit opportunities available even if the applicants were well qualified.
- This may also be caused by the instability of the political situation of the country and by having many corrupted political parties.

B. Discussion

Family is one of the main factors that affect individuals' career choices. One of the theories mentioned previously is the "Status Attainment Theory", in which Blau and Duncan explained that individuals usually follow their parents' path and try to attain the same social status to stay in the same loop (Brown, 2002). This theory explained the linkage between the father's education and profession and the children's career destination. However, none of the participants interviewed were affected by the status of their parents or the occupation of their siblings. The interviewees were asked about their parents' and siblings jobs to be able to know if some of the interviewees were affected by their parents' or siblings' occupation. However, this was not the case. On the other hand, some of the participants were influenced by their parents because of other issues such as expectations, or society, and these issues are very common in the Arab world (Sidani, 2005). One of the interviewees mentioned that he studied engineering because his parents pressured him to do so, although he was not interested in the subject. As a result, once he had the opportunity to study something else and to shift careers, he

decided that he wants to study HR and he found a job in this field, which is more interesting to him than engineering. Another participant mentioned that her father impacted her career decision and told her to enter the business field because he has his own business, and he hoped that one day she would be prepared to manage this business with him. These individuals followed their parents' requests without analyzing their abilities and personalities and without being fully convinced that these choices are actually what they want to do for the rest of their lives. This can be due to the collective Arabs society, in which individuals follow the group and care about their families' opinions and judgments. Moreover, in such societies, it is encouraged to stay in line with one's family practices and point of views (Munir Sidani, 2013).

An individuals' career path or career shifting might be a cause of family pressure. The "Super Life Career Rainbow" by Donald Super explained that Family may affect individuals' career paths and may lead a person to shift careers. This is because of what is called "Super Life Career Rainbow" in which Donald Super explained that a person's career choice maybe affected by his/her different roles that he/she plays in life over time because of the different needs of these roles (Super, 1990). Once fresh graduates enter employment and start working, or even when they do their internships before graduating, they are usually very excited and are encouraged to give their time and effort to complete the tasks given to them even if they are obliged to stay at work for extra hours or to work from home. However, once these individuals get married and have children, their needs might change due to the additional roles they would be playing. That does not mean that their old roles would not be there anymore, but additional roles and responsibilities have been added to their lives and now they would be obliged to prioritize (Super, 1990). Now, these persons have priorities in life

other than their work, and will look for job opportunities that actually respect these priorities, and as a result, they care more about their work life balance and flexibility. One of the interviewees mentioned that she is searching for a career that respects her time and responsibilities since she has ten-year old twins who need her support and attention at this stage. Another interviewee mentioned that he is engaged and is thinking about getting married soon. As a result, the salary and the benefits that a company offers majorly affect his decision of whether he would stay in his current job or change his job or even his field.

Some of the interviewees linked family and parents rearing to children personality creation and shaping, which are basic issues in influencing the children's characters and behaviors (Brown, 2002). One of the participants mentioned that a person who decides to be an HR, he/she should have certain qualifications and interpersonal skills. He/she should be able to solve problems and manage time efficiently. Moreover, he/she should be able to communicate with all people despite their differences to gain their trust and respect. Other interviewees stated that they consider themselves successful in their careers as HRs due to their personality. They explained that they are very dedicated, people oriented, and good listeners. Furthermore, they said that they have a friendly and a helpful character, and that they have passion to help others climb up their career ladder, and they love helping individuals solve their problems. These characteristics and many more are required for successful HR professionals (Grossman, 2007). Studies have shown that the jobs' characteristics of the parents influence their actions, personalities, and values which, as a result, are reflected in their childrearing behaviors, which accordingly can influence majorly their children behaviors, attitudes, personalities, and characters (Brown, 2002). Since the interviews

were done with HR professionals and HR students, we can assume that they actually have the needed personalities and qualifications to be successful in this field.

Participants were asked about their parents professions in order to see if the job characteristic of the parents affected their childrearing behaviors. Table 3 shows the summary of the occupation of the participants' parents.

Table 4.1. The Occupations of the Interviewees' Mothers and Fathers

Interviewee #	Mother's Occupation	Father's Occupation
1	Housewife	Personal Business
2	Housewife	Manager in the Banking Sector
3	Housewife	Painter
4	Teacher	Supervisor
5	Housewife	Visa Officer
6	Housewife	Property Dealer
7	Housewife	Car Dealer
8	Teacher	Personal Business
9	Assistant	Personal Business
10	Housewife	Teacher
11	Manager	Teacher
12	Teacher	Engineer
13	Head Nurse	Sales Supervisor
14	Housewife	Soldier
15	Teacher	Engineer
16	Housewife	Supervisor
17	Housewife	Personal Business
18	Secretary	Supervisor
19	Housewife	Teacher
20	Housewife	Nurse

60% of the interviewees' mothers are housewives, who actually are considered the support system of their families. The remaining mothers work as follows 20% teachers, 5% nurses, 5% managers, 5% assistants, and 5 % secretaries. These professions need employees with certain traits and qualifications, which are close to the

needed characteristics and requirements for HRs that were mentioned by the interviewees and also described in the literature review. All the mentioned occupations need individuals who are friendly, and can communicate with others easily to gain their respect and trust. Moreover, these individuals should be organized, problem solvers, have ethics and integrity, helpful, friendly, hard worker, attentive to details, and observant. This may be linked to why the participants we interviewed chose HR as a profession or as a major. The job characteristics of their mothers influenced their childrearing activities, which as a result, affected these children's personalities and behaviors directly or indirectly. These children might have been affected by the personality of their mothers and that is why they chose this field and that is why they are successful in their careers.

20% of the interviewees' fathers have their own personal businesses, 10% of them are dealers, 20% are supervisors, 15% are teachers, 10% are engineers, 5% are painters, 5% soldiers, 5% visa officers, 5% managers and 5% are nurses. Again, we can also notice that these occupations need employees that have certain characteristics and qualifications that are very close to what is needed for a successful HR. A person who owns a business should be organized, problem solver, friendly and strict at the same time. He/she should also be hard worker, attentive to details, observant, and emotionally intelligent. These characteristics are also needed for the remaining careers. As a result, these children might have been affected by the personality of their fathers too, and that is why they are successful in their careers since they have the needed characteristics. The jobs of the parents affected their characters and as a result affected their childrearing activities, which impacted the behaviors and characters of the children directly or indirectly.

Although the qualifications and requirements for being an HR are many, people usually focus on the needed personality for such position. Our participants proved this point as whenever they were asked about why they consider themselves successful in their career, or about the qualifications and the requirements that are necessary when they recruit an HR colleague, they started talking about the personality factor and how much it is important for the success of an HR professional. Even when these interviewees were asked about the reason they picked HR as a profession, they linked this to their characters and how their characters suit this position as they are friendly, helpful, calm, sociable etc.

Personality is a basic factor for an HR position and for all other positions (Brown, 2002). Some studies have shown the importance of the personality factor in choosing future careers of individuals. Frank Parsons, created what is called “The Trait and Factor Theory”, in which he mentioned that employees’ satisfaction would be higher if their personalities actually fit the job they are recruited for (Brown, 2002). As a result, a person should be well aware of the requirements of the position he/she is applying for, and also should be aware of himself/herself by assessing his/her abilities, aptitudes, and interests to know if he/she actually will be successful in this position. Here comes the role of schools, universities and most importantly the role of the government in helping children choose the right career path. Participants were asked if their schools guided them to choose the right career path by explaining to them the different careers available in the market, and the market situation and needs. Moreover, they were asked if they helped them be self-aware of their abilities, personalities and interests. The results of this question were as mentioned in Table 4:

Table 4.2. Availability of School Guidance in the Interviewees Schools

Interviewee #	School Guidance	Interviewee #	School Guidance
1	No	11	No
2	No	12	No
3	No	13	Yes
4	No	14	No
5	No	15	Yes
6	No	16	No
7	Yes	17	No
8	Yes	18	Yes
9	Yes	19	Yes
10	No	20	No

As per the results shown in Table 4, 65% of the participants were not guided by their schools to choose the appropriate careers.

Table 5 below shows that 70% of the participants shifted to the HR field. This can be related to the lack of guidance by schools and universities (Brown, 2002). Some of the interviewees mentioned that their schools used to invite representatives from universities, but the representatives did not explain in details the majors that were available, the requirements for those majors and what these applicants will be doing in the future when they choose certain fields. However, the representatives were marketing the university they work at, and encouraging students to enroll in it. On the other hand, other schools did not explain anything to their students and this maybe because they do not have enough time to finish the curriculum and guide the students at the same time. The problem is that these schools believe that by finishing the needed curriculum and by encouraging students and supporting them to get high grades, they will win the trust of people and that will improve the income of these schools. On the contrary, schools' income would increase if these schools were able to link between career guidance, academic guidance and personal guidance. People will trust these schools and will be

encouraged to enroll their children in them if they felt that they care about the future of the children and about their success.

Table 4.3. Interviewees Who Started in the HR Field and Who Shifted to this Field

Interviewee #	Started in the HR Field	Shifted to the HR Field
1		X
2	X	
3		X
4		X
5		X
6		X
7	X	
8	X	
9	X	
10		X
11		X
12		X
13		X
14		X
15	X	
16		X
17		X
18	X	
19		X
20		X

Here comes the role of the government in encouraging schools to lead its students not only by finishing the obligatory curriculum, but also by supporting them in their career decision. The government should force schools in informing students about the various careers that are available in the market and especially the new ones. Moreover, it should inform schools about what the majors that are mostly needed in the market are to encourage students to enroll in them. Personality tests and advising sessions should be done to students to help them be aware of themselves and as a result, choose the correct occupations that fit their interests, abilities and needs. The government should also oblige the private sector to cooperate by sending representatives to explain the various career choices that a student may have, and the new opportunities that may be available in the market. The private sector may cooperate

with the ministry of education in setting certain guidelines that can be used to assess students and see if they fit certain jobs.

Some of the interviewees mentioned in their answers that their universities guided them through the internships they offered, and explained the importance of these internship courses that are mandatory. The aims of these internships are many and the most important ones are that these students would be prepared to enter the workforce and to be supervised by professionals. Moreover, these students would have the chance to practice what they have chosen as career. However, these internships are done usually in the last year of studying and as a result it might be too late for students to change their field or to shift majors in case they did not like what they have chosen. Moreover, the student may not have the financial ability to continue and study something else. Furthermore, the internships are usually done for one month or two which is not enough for students to actually practice the majors they have chosen and know their advantages and disadvantages and realize if they actually fit these majors or not. In addition, students at the beginning become very encouraged to work and to earn money. As a result, they may not actually notice the disadvantages of any career or feel that they do not fit in in this short period of time.

Chance is a major factor that was mentioned many times during the interviews that were made (Wigfield, Battle, Keller & Eccles; 2002). 70% of the HR professionals' answers were that they worked as HRs by chance. This can be explained by some studies, which mentioned that there is nothing called career choice. Career choices are based on opportunities and these opportunities are affected by many factors such as market needs and economic situation (Wigfield, Battle, Keller & Eccles; 2002). This can also be related to the lack of cooperation between the ministry of education and the

ministry of labor. Individuals may choose to study certain majors that the market does not need or the market maybe saturated in certain fields. This may lead some individuals to work in certain professions which are not related to their fields due to opportunities that they were offered. This can cause what is called high unemployment rate that has bad influence on the country as a whole. As a result, individuals may choose to work in certain fields even if they do not like them and this will affect their performance and as a result, the organizations' performance.

Some HR students' interviewees who had experience in the market chose to continue their studies in HR because they are fully aware of what HR people do, and they are convinced that they fit this profession. According to the interviews done with HR students and as per the results shown in Table 6, none of the interviewed HR students had experience in this field. However, 70% of the interviewed students had experience in other fields, which helped them to be aware of their wants, interests, abilities and personalities fit and to know details about various vacancies. As a result, after their experiences they chose HR as their major of study with a goal to climb up their career ladder in this specific field. 30% of these students do not have any experience in the market and they mostly chose HR as a field of study because they felt that their personality fits this position.

Experience is an important factor that affects career decisions of individuals and may cause career shifts (Brown, 2002). Some students may be working during their studies and this might be beneficial because they are actually in the market, so they may gain knowledge about many available fields and vacancies, and this will help them know what actually they want to study in university and what the careers that fit their needs, interests and characters are. On the other hand, as mentioned previously,

university internships that are done usually by students for one month or two might not be as beneficial as expected. The encouragement and excitement of the students to enter the market and to start earning money may affect their judgments. One interesting answer that I heard during one of the interviews is that “I wanted to study HR and to work as an HR professional to enhance the application of the HR tasks”. After this participant’s bad experience with the HR department in his company, he decided to study HR and to be an expert in this field to enhance the application of the HR tasks and duties. This shows that experience may affect individuals’ career paths and may cause career shifts (Brown, 2002). Internships and part time jobs are very vital to guide students to choose the suitable professions if they are spent in the proper organizations or businesses where students have the chance to deal with professionals and gain the needed long enough various experiences.

Table 4.4. HR Students’ Previous Field of Experience

Interviewee #	HR Students Previous Field of Experience
1	Engineering
2	Research Assistant
3	Students Recruitment
4	NGO Founder
5	No Experience
6	Political Studies
7	Marketing
8	No Experience
9	Accounting
10	No Experience

Regarding HR professionals, we can notice that 70% of the interviewed professionals did not study HR or anything related to this field during their BA. These results are shown in Table 7 below. This maybe because of many reasons, but one of the major reasons that is common between most HR professionals is the lack of school and university guidance and the lack of knowledge in this field. Luck and chance is also

common between most HR professionals, which led them to actually have the opportunity to work in this field. Most of them like what they are doing and decided or have plans for continued studies to get advanced degree in the field. This may draw a question mark on how these HR professionals were recruited in the first place. This maybe because of the mentality that management has regarding the role of HR in organizations and the empowerment of this department (Hayton, 2005). Moreover, one of the reasons maybe because of the idea that people have about HR, which was mentioned many times during this study. People believe that HR is mostly about personality, so if a person has the needed personality regardless of his/her experience, or education, he will be recruited for personality. These observations were also mentioned by some of the interviewees.

Table 4.5.HR Professionals BA Majors

Interviewee #	HR Professionals BA Majors
1	Hospitality
2	HR
3	Management
4	Finance
5	Accounting
6	Business
7	Public Relations and Advertising
8	Management
9	Finance
10	Computer Science

We can notice that most of the interviewees who are studying HR or who are HR professionals are women. 80% of the HR students and professionals who were interviewed were females which is very close to the percentage that was calculated by the US department of labor which stated that “76% of human resource managers are women” (Sutcliffe, 2017). During our search for male participants to participate in this study, we could hardly find three males out of twenty interviewees, and this number is

logical in comparison with the percentage of women versus men in the world, and because HR is considered to be a career choice for females according to the Arab society (Afiouni, 2014). Like what is mentioned previously, some studies argued that there is nothing called career choice. Careers are opportunities and these opportunities are affected by religion, gender and nationality (Wigfield, Battle, Keller & Eccles; 2002). For instance, women cannot work in certain types of professions because of their physical capacities. Moreover, they cannot work in certain jobs because of some traditions and societies' opinions that identify certain professions mainly with males, such as working in construction, driving, the army, and economics. On the other hand, certain jobs are identified mainly with females such as working in personal care services, secretarial work, and nursing. Human resource management is one of the fields that is mostly considered for women according to the Arab society. As per some of the interviews answers, this is because of women's personality. HR is about having soft skills such as empathy which women supposedly are great at (Strayer, 2012). Similar to what is mentioned in the literature review, this linkage between females and these personality characteristics might be because of certain beliefs and assumptions that the Arab society has (Afiouni, 2014). If females are raised by their parents and convinced they should be kind and polite, these females will act accordingly and these qualifications will affect their future career choices and decisions later on (Afiouni, 2014). This mentality started to change as some of the interviews participants mentioned that HR is mostly for women and added that she believes that having both genders in the HR department is very important. She explained that HR people deal with female and male employees, and an HR professional should know how to approach each gender appropriately in a way that is respectful. Sometimes, HR female

professionals know how to deal with and approach female employees more than HR male professionals and vice versa.

Gender is a basic element that might affect individuals career decisions (Sidani, 2005). Interviewees mentioned many statements that talks about gender and how society affects individuals' choices and decisions in their careers and other issues. An observation might be useful which is 60% of the interviewees' mothers are housewives. This has changed if we compared the female children percentage that we interviewed as 80% of the interviewees were females and 88.2% of these females actually work in the market. This might be due to the mentality of the Arab society toward women and their role in the development of the society which has obviously evolved. Organizations started to realize the importance of diversity in the workplace and how this majorly affects their success. Moreover, this might be due to women's awareness of their significant role in the market, and as a result this motivated them to continue their education to be able to have access to many positions in the market which was not the case long time ago.

Table 4.6. The Occupations of the Interviewees' Mothers

Interviewee #	Mother Occupation	Interviewee #	Mother Occupation
1	Housewife	11	Manager at Orders of Engineers
2	Housewife	12	Teacher
3	Housewife	13	Head Nurse
4	Teacher	14	Housewife
5	Housewife	15	Teacher
6	Housewife	16	Housewife
7	Housewife	17	Housewife
8	Teacher	18	Secretary
9	Assistant	19	Housewife
10	Housewife	20	Housewife

Career opportunities are also affected by nationality (Wigfield, Battle, Keller & Eccles; 2002). This issue was mentioned many times during the interviews done. Ten interviews were done with ten HR professionals and we can notice that they were all Lebanese. However, three HR foreign students were interviewed and they mentioned that they are worried about finding career opportunities in this field because of their nationalities. During the interviews, the work permit issue was mentioned and the interviewees explained that certain fields cannot be accessed by foreign nationalities, even if they studied these fields and became professionals. Moreover, if these fields have syndicates, the foreigners will not be allowed to be members such as accountants, doctors or engineers syndicates. This shows that it is not always about majors, opportunities, personalities, or qualifications that affect HR to be a career choice. Sometimes we can talk about other reasons such as discrimination and prejudice as well. As we know, the political and the economical situations are not stable especially in the Middle East and this might cause many citizens to immigrate to other countries trying to survive and have better futures. However, some countries deny them the chances to do so and to prove that they actually have the abilities needed to be equally treated like any other human beings.

Another factor that may affect individuals' career choices is their financial ability. Some of the interviewees mentioned that they did not study HR from the beginning because they had limited options for the universities they can enroll in because of their financial circumstances. HR was not one of the fields that were offered in these universities. Furthermore, nepotism is one of the reasons that can limit the opportunities available even if the applicants were well qualified. One of the participants mentioned that her dream job was to work in a bank and she applied to

many banks but unfortunately she was not accepted because she did not have someone “In her back” as what she mentioned. This may also be caused because of the instability of political situation of the country and because of having many political parties that might be causing corruption where nepotism is part of this corruption.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

HR is a career that is still in its booming stage. As a result, some individuals are still not fully aware of its importance and requirements. Some people choose this career by chance because of certain opportunities that they might have, or due to certain circumstances that may oblige them to choose this occupation (Wigfield, Battle, Keller & Eccles; 2002). Individuals may be influenced by the guidance they may get from their family members, peers, friends or certain role models. They may be influenced by the society and its expectations, too (Brown, 2002). Others may choose this career after they have experience in the market, which will help them be aware of what HR actually is and what HR people actually do (Brown, 2002).

There are many important qualifications and requirements that HR people should have to be qualified and recruited in this position such as education, attention to details, communication skills etc (Grossman, 2007). However, people mostly link this position to the needed personality characteristics because HR is mostly related to humanity and empathy according to them. These characteristics are mostly related to women according to Arab society beliefs and assumptions. Here comes the role of schools to help students be aware of themselves, their personalities and abilities, and be aware of the available vacancies in the market place and their requirements to be able to choose the suitable career paths.

Individuals may want to study certain majors or choose certain careers but they do not do so even if they are qualified to be successful in these majors or careers due to

many reasons. First, the lack of guidance of schools and universities to their students, and the lack of cooperation between these schools and universities and the government. Second, nationality can be an obstacle as many countries ban certain nationalities to work in certain fields regardless of their qualifications. Third, gender due to the society expectations regarding certain careers or fields in which people link these careers or fields to specific gender (Sidani, 2005). HR is usually known to be a female career because it is usually about empathy and humanity, which is known to be part of the women's characters (Afiouni, 2014). Fourth, the financial situation of individuals which may oblige them to study certain fields or enter certain universities that do not have the subjects they want to study. Fourth, the instability of the political or the economic situation of the countries may limit the job opportunities that are available in the market place. This instability may cause corruption and nepotism is considered one of its kinds that can limit the career opportunities available for individuals even if they have the needed requirements and qualifications.

There are many uncontrollable factors that individuals may face once they want to make decisions regarding their future career path. However, whenever we talk about career choice and about HR career choice in specific, we mention the major problem that individuals are mostly facing which is the lack of awareness regarding the vacancies available in the market place especially the new ones, the fields that are needed in the market place, and the requirements and qualifications necessary for the available vacancies. Furthermore, the other problem is the lack of the individuals' self-awareness regarding their abilities, skills and personalities.

HR is considered one of the most important positions in organizations because they work on recruiting and keeping the best employees who actually make these

organizations successful and maintain this success. As a result, awareness should be raised regarding the role that the HR department plays in the success of any organization. Moreover, awareness should be raised towards the qualifications and requirements that a successful HR should have, and as well towards the procedures that organizations should follow to hire successful HRs.

A. Recommendations

- Schools and universities should do awareness sessions to students to help them be aware of the available vacancies in the market and their needs and qualifications to be able to choose the suitable careers.
- Schools and universities should cooperate with the government to be able to know the market needs to guide students accordingly.
- Schools and universities should help students be self-aware of themselves and their personalities by doing personality tests that can help them know their personalities' types and the various careers available that fit these types.
- Universities should re-consider and re-structure their internship programs in a way that helps students practice their chosen field of study in an early stage.
- Organizations' managements should be more aware of the strategic role of the HR department in making the organizations successful and maintaining this success.
- Organizations' managements should recruit HR professionals based on certain job descriptions and not based on the qualifications they consider necessary for HR professionals.

- Parents should help their children know more about the market, its needs and the available fields and should help them choose according to their wants, abilities and personalities and not according to their expectations, opinions and wants.
- Companies should recruit individuals based on their qualifications and abilities according to the job descriptions available for the vacant positions, and not based on their nationalities, gender, religion etc.
- Governments should fight corruption and all its aspects such as nepotism, which does not only affect the organizations income but also increase the unemployment rate in these countries in general.

B. Limitations

- The sample size is relatively small, so we can interview more participants in future researches.
- Religion is a basic issue that might affect career choice of individuals and management recruitment process, too. Interviewees were not asked about their religion and its influence on their career choices and on their recruitment process. This might be studied extensively in future researches.
- We assumed that the HR professionals who we interviewed are successful in their profession.
- We assumed that the HR students who we interviewed have the needed characteristics and qualifications for Human Resource Management.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

a. Interview Questions for students:

1. How old are you?
2. Where have you been raised?
3. What is your nationality?
4. Did you stay for more than two years outside Lebanon? Where?
5. Did you earn your high school in Lebanon?
6. Which route did you choose to do to during school, the scientific or the humanities route?
7. Did your school guide you to choose your educational path, how?
8. What is your university major?
9. Why did you choose to study this major?
10. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
11. What are your long-range career objectives?
12. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
13. What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career?
14. What do you expect to be earning in five years?
15. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
16. Which is more important to you, the type of job or the salary?
17. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
18. How has your college experience prepared you for a business career?
19. What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will be successful

in the field you chose?

20. Why did you select your college or university?
21. What led you to choose your field or major study?
22. What college subjects did you like best? Why?
23. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
24. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
25. How would you describe the ideal jobs for you following graduation?
26. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
27. What does your father work?
28. How many siblings do you have and what do they do in their lives?
29. Have you ever worked during your university years? Was he experience beneficial?
30. Have you ever felt that you were unfairly treated in the market because of certain issues? What are these issues? How?
31. What was your dream job when you were a kid?

b. Interview Questions for adults and HR professionals:

1. How old are you?
2. What is your nationality?
3. Where have you been raised?
4. Did you earn your high school in Lebanon?
5. Which route did you choose to do to during school, the scientific or the humanities route?
6. Did your school guide you to choose your educational path, how?
7. What was your major at university?
8. What does your father work?
9. What does your mother work?
10. Do you have siblings? What do they do in their lives?
11. Did you stay for more than 2 years outside Lebanon? Where?
12. Why did you pick HR as a profession?
13. Who was the person or persons who most influenced you in your choice of major or in your intended career choice?
14. How many years of work experience do you have in your HR field?
15. Do you have work experiences in fields other than HR? If yes, what are they?
Why did you switch to the HR field? When did you take this decision? How did you do this shift and what was the major motivation to do so? Who supported you in this decision?
16. What are your long-range career objectives?
17. What was your dream job when you were a kid?
18. When did you decide that you would study HR? How did you learn more about

this field?

19. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
20. For how long have you been working in your current position?
21. Please advise the most important factors that made you stay in your job for this time?
22. What qualifications do you have that made you successful in your field?
23. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
24. What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career?
25. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study and career path differently? How?
26. What are your favorite components of the overall HR role? What do you enjoy doing the most?
27. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
28. What do you like most, least about this job? What kind of stress do you deal with?
29. What qualifications, experience, do you look for when interviewing new people in this field?
30. What advice would you have for someone like me, who is considering this field?

APPENDIX B

THEMATIC TABLE

Theme	Sub-Theme	Quotes	Theory Supported	Relative Weight (1-8)
1. Family	1.1 Parents	"My friend who was an HR in Aramex-Lebanon".	The Status Attainment Theory	7
		"The role of the family and how it raises its children (Life Principles), which affects the children's characters".	Super Career Rainbow Theory	
		"My dad was the main support of the decision of being an HR professional".	Social Cognitive Career Theory	
		"The person who impacted me was my father who has his own business".	Social Influences	
		"My father influenced me to join the business field".		
		"My HR friends and my father supported me in my career shift".		
	1.2 Brothers/sisters	"I asked my sister, relatives and friends about their opinion and they told me to go for it".		
"My sister and her friend".				
1.3 relatives	"I asked my sister, relatives and friends about their opinion and they told me to go for it".			
2. Peers	2.1 Friends	"My friend who was an HR in Aramex-Lebanon".	Social Cognitive Career Theory	2
		"My friend who used to work as an HR member in the same company and he encouraged me".		
	2.2 Role models (teacher, manager)	"The HR Manager of Crown Plaza hotel impacted me".	Social Influences	
		"My first employer".		

3. Personality	3.1 Self Awareness	"Personality tests used to be done by my school to know what majors are close to my character".	Holland Career Typology	5
	3.2 Personal Preferences	"I love to be a leader and HR is being a leader without actually leading".		
	3.3 Personality and Job Characteristics	"I wanted to work in a position that suits my character".	The Trait and Factor Theory	
		"HR is a very nice profession that suits my character as am a friendly and helpful person who likes to guide others".	Social Influences	
		"HR should have certain characteristics as he should be patient, presentable, friendly, and supportive".		
		"The role of the family and how it raises its children (Life principles), which affects the children's characters".		
		"I am successful in my career because I have a friendly character".		
		"If you are people oriented, do it".		
		"Interpersonal skills because the employee will have to deal with people all day, teamwork skills person".		
		" I have good communication skills" .		
4. Guidance	4.1 School	"They used to hold career fairs when different universities visited us".	Social Influences	6
		"When I entered university, I didn't know what I will chose".		
		"They gave us presentations about different educational fields and universities came for visits to our school to explain the majors that are offering".		
		"The school had influenced my decision in choosing the route".		
		"My school didn't explain to us the different routes that we can take and didn't help us know exactly the majors that		

		suits our abilities and passion".		
		"We had career fairs in which universities' representatives used to come and explain about the majors they have".		
		"Personality tests used to be done by my school to know what majors are close to my character".		
	4.2 University	"They used to take us tours to different universities".		
		"I learnt more about the field due to university and due to conversations I had with my father".		
		"Actually no pieces of advice were given to me during my studies about this field. In the contrary".		
		"Not at all, the presentations we had were mostly about which university to enter and not what major to choose".		
		"Public schools used to take students tours to universities but these tours were as if they are marketing for these universities".		
		"They didn't explain much about the concentrations they have and about the market and its needs".		
5. Experience	5.1 Self experience (Good-bad) in the market	"I wanted to study HR and to work as an HR to enhance the application of the HR tasks".	the Critical Contract Theory	4
		"I had a bad experience with my management in the company I used to work at".	Social Influences	
		"I didn't like what I was doing".		
	5.2 Friends experiences in the market	"My HR friends and My father supported me in my career shift".		
	5.3 Family members' Experiences	"My HR friends and My father supported me in my career shift".		

6. Luck- Chance	6.1 Available opportunities	"It happened to me by chance".	the Critical Contract Theory Social Influences	8
		"I had the opportunity to be an HR in the same company".		
		"The HR of my company sent an email to all employees for an opportunity in HR".		
		"I was ready to apply to any position that might be offered but I am very lucky to have this HR position as the first opportunity that was offered".		
		"This HR position was one of the options for me and I took it".		
		"Actually it happened by chance and it wasn't planned at all".		
		"This was one of the career opportunities that I had at that time and I chose to take this opportunity".		
		"Because I had the opportunity to begin my career in the HR field".		
7. Gender	7.1 Female	"I had problems in my work due to gender and race issues".	Social Cognitive Career Theory The Trait and Factor Theory Social Influences	3
		"Mostly all my HR colleagues are girls and don't know why this profession is known for girls only. I believe that any HR department should have both genders to be successful".		
		"but as we know HR employees are mostly women".		
		"I am a woman and usually women have more empathy and are more successful in such careers".		

8. Special Conditions	8.1 Financial situations	"I was obliged to choose one of these two universities"	Social Influences	1
		"For financial reasons".		
		"Good salary made me stay that long in my career"		
	8.2 Nationality	"As a Palestinian, I can't work in all fields"		
		"You know the situation in the country regarding Palestinians and their work permit in certain fields".		
		"HR wasn't a competition for you and we wished we could recruit you with us but this is the situation here in Lebanon".		
		"It is very hard for you to find a position in this country or in the middle east in general for Palestinians".		
	8.3 Market conditions	"I am having difficulty finding positions as an HR due to my nationality"		
		"We don't have many opportunities in Lebanon".		
	8.4 Nepotism	"I applied to many banks, and because I had no one in my back I wasn't hired"		

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