

Attitudes Towards Civil Service of Pakistan: A Perception Survey

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) is generally regarded as a prestigious occupation offering numerous perks and benefits along with administrative power and high social status. Each year, thousands of applicants compete for a prized job in the civil service and only a fraction eventually makes it.¹ Yet in recent years there has been a growing perception that the civil service might be losing its allure for at least three reasons. First, the salary structure of the civil service has not kept pace with the cost of living making it difficult for civil servants to maintain a decent living standard. Second, there has been a growing competition from the private sector which has created a variety of professional jobs in manufacturing and services sectors offering handsome salaries and other fringe benefits. Third, the civil service has faced mounting criticism in recent years for its inefficiency, and for its failure to modernise; and this may have spread a negative image among the potential entrants.² It is important to note that the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) also laments the waning interest of highly qualified students in the civil service.³

Against this backdrop, a survey was conducted to explore the students' attitudes towards the civil service of Pakistan.⁴ This study reports some key findings of that survey. Section 2 provides some stylised facts about participants in the CSS examination based on secondary data. Section 3 spells out the survey methodology and highlights the key characteristics of the respondents. Section 4 examines students' occupation choice in terms of a comparison between public and private sectors. Section 5 highlights student's level of awareness about various aspects of the competitive examination while Section 6 explores students' attitudes towards the civil service.⁵ Some key findings of the survey are summarised in the concluding section.

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¹On average, about 6 percent of applicants were finally selected during the period 2000-2006.

²See, Haque and Din (2006).

³See, FPSC Annual Report 2005, Summary to the President, page vii.

⁴The survey is part of the PIDE initiative on Governance and Institutions, and complements an earlier survey of the civil servants [Haque, *et al.* (2007); Haque and Khawaja (2007)]. The survey was conducted during November 2007-January 2008.

⁵Section 2 exclusively focuses on the FPSC secondary data and Section 4, 5, and 6 exclusively presents the results of the primary data collected.

2. CSS PARTICIPANTS: SOME STYLISTED FACTS

Participation Trend of the CSS Candidates

With the exception of the year 2001 when the number of candidates appearing in the competitive examination fell dramatically by almost one-half as compared with the year 2000, there has been an increasing trend of participation in the competitive examination (Table 1). Interestingly, the proportion of male candidates has declined over the years whereas that of female candidates has increased; and the same trend is observed in terms of selection of males and females.

Table 1

Participation of Candidates in CSS Exams

Years	Total		Male		Female	
	Appeared	Selected	Appeared (%)	Selected (%)	Appeared (%)	Selected (%)
2000	4669	206	4119 (88)	177 (86)	550 (12)	29 (14)
2001	2675	159	2271 (85)	131 (82)	404 (15)	28 (18)
2002	2893	159	2405 (83)	129 (81)	488 (17)	30 (19)
2003	3079	208	2433 (79)	181 (87)	646 (21)	27 (13)
2004	3455	167	2675 (77)	126 (75)	780 (23)	41 (25)
2005	3678	160	2860 (78)	130 (81)	818 (22)	30 (19)
2006	4125	180	3181 (77)	147 (82)	944 (23)	33 (18)

Source: FPSC Annual Reports (2001-2007).

Region-wise Participation of CSS Candidates

During the period 2000-06, a majority of candidates appearing in the civil service examination were from Punjab province. The participation rates of Sindh and NWFP are quite similar despite the fact that the two provinces differ in terms of the size of population, respectively being the second and third largest Provinces of Pakistan by population size.⁶

Participation of Candidates in Relation to Their Family Income

According to FPSC Annual Reports,⁷ a majority of candidates appearing in the competitive examination belong to the middle-income group (i.e., annual income of Rs 100,000–400,000). Disturbingly, however, the proportion of candidates with low-family-income background (i.e., annual income of below Rs 100,000) has declined during the period 2000-2006 whereas the proportion of candidates with high-income background has increased during the same period (Table 2).

⁶Population as of 2006: Punjab plus Islamabad 87.38 million, Sindh 35.86 million, NWFP 21.39 million, Balochistan 8.00 million, and FATA 3.62 million. (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2007-08, Table 12.7).

⁷FPSC, Annual Reports (2001–2007).

Table 2
Family Income of the CSS Candidates

	(Percentage)						
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Below Rs 100,000	42	27	25	13	27	7	8
Rs 100,000–400,000	24	42	41	31	49	56	43
Rs 400,000 and above	4	11	13	34	20	32	27
Income not reported	30	20	21	22	4	8	22

Source: FPSC Annual Reports (2001-2007).

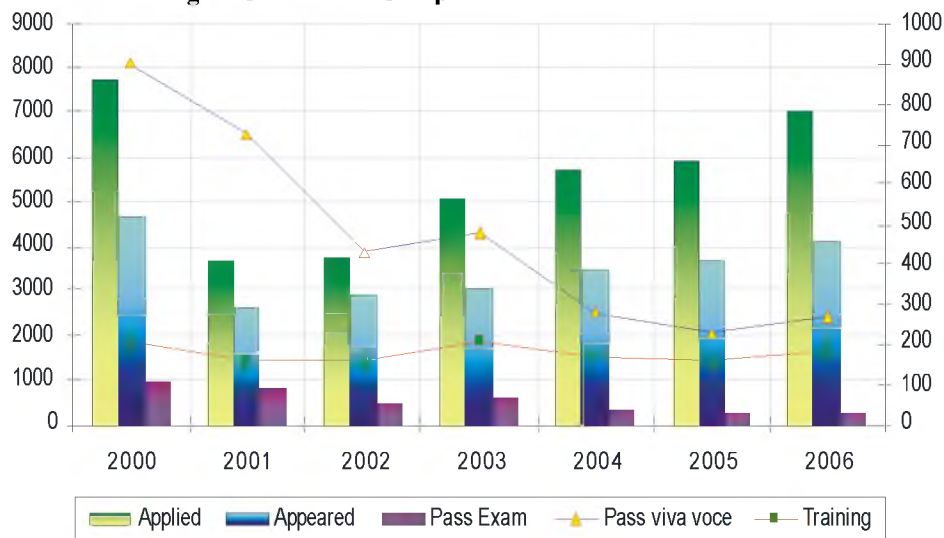
Participation of Candidates in Relation to Their Father's Education

A majority of candidates appearing in the competitive examination were the children of fathers whose education level was under-graduate, majority of them having a graduate degree,⁸ followed by applicants whose fathers were only matriculates. Only a small minority of students were those whose fathers were under matriculates or illiterate.

CSS Exam Results

According to the FPSC Annual Reports, the percentage of applicants passing the written examination has declined sharply in recent years, from about 21 percent in 2000 to only about 7 percent in 2006 (Figure 1). While this trend may be symptomatic of a decline in the overall standard of education⁹ of the applicants, it may also signify a lack of interest among the brighter students.

Fig. 1. Outcome of Competitive Examination 2000-2006



Source: FPSC Annual Reports (2001-2007).

⁸The categories for fathers' education include: PhD, Postgraduate, Graduate, Undergraduate and Professional Degree/Certificate (e.g., MBBS, B.Sc. Engineering, etc.).

⁹Assuming, of course, that the standard of FPSC examination has remained the same.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Survey Methodology

The questionnaire was designed in a consultative process that involved inputs from students, researchers, and civil servants. After pre-testing, the questionnaires were sent to 18 universities (5 in Islamabad, 5 in Punjab, 4 in Sindh, 2 in NWFP and 2 in Balochistan) followed by visits by the survey teams to universities in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi for collection of survey responses.¹⁰ Using the *Convenient Sampling Approach*, a total of 260 students were interviewed from nine universities.¹¹ Of the total respondents, 44 percent were male and 56 percent were female students. The ratio of male to female students is lower in age-bracket of 15-25 (i.e., 39 male, 61 female) as compared with the ratio in the age-bracket of 25-30 (i.e., 67 male, 33 female).

Due to poor response, NWFP and Balochistan were excluded from the analysis.¹² Responses were received from four universities from Islamabad, four from Punjab and two from Karachi.¹³ Of the total students interviewed, 46 percent were from universities located in Islamabad, 43 percent from Punjab and 11 percent from Karachi. The respondents included students at all levels of education ranging from under-graduate to doctorate.¹⁴ However, a majority of students were at the graduate level due mainly to the fact that most of the selected universities offered only graduate programmes of study.¹⁵

Of the total respondents, about 80 percent of the students were enrolled in public universities while the remaining were enrolled in semi-public/private universities. Gender wise statistics show that 73 percent of male and 83 percent of female students were enrolled in public institutions whereas 27 percent of male and 17 percent of female students were enrolled in semi-public/private institutions.

Roots in Civil Service

It is a common perception that students having personal relationships with civil bureaucrats may have a greater preference for the civil service. Hence respondents were asked to indicate whether they have/had a relationship with civil bureaucrats, or whether they know/knew someone who is/was a bureaucrat. Some 52 percent of students knew someone currently or formerly working as a civil servant, 40 percent responded negatively, whereas 9

¹⁰Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam University, National University of Modern Languages, Air University, Bahria University, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah University; Punjab: Government College University, Punjab University, University of Agriculture, University of Arid Agriculture, and Fatima Jinnah Women University; Sindh: Karachi University, Institute of Business Management, Tando Jam Agriculture University, and Hamdard University; NWFP: University of Peshawar, and University of Agriculture; Balochistan: University of Balochistan, and Balochistan University of Information Technology and Management.

¹¹Quaid-i-Azam University, National University of Modern Languages, Air University, Muhammad Ali Jinnah University, Punjab University, University of Agriculture, University of Arid Agriculture, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Karachi University, Institute of Business Management.

¹²In Sindh province, only students from Institute of Business Administration (IBA) and University of Karachi were interviewed which do not represent the Sindh province as whole.

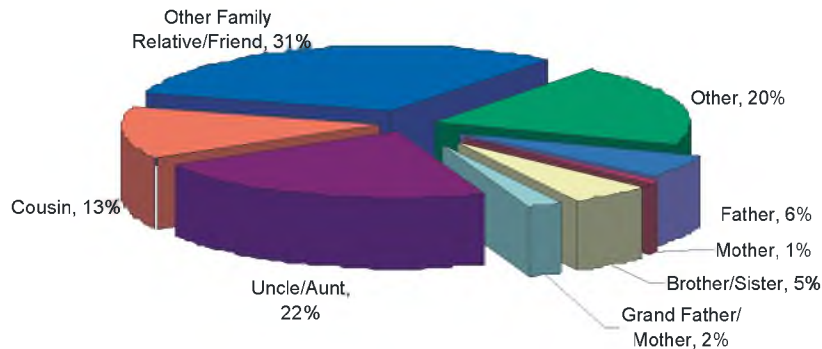
¹³Both Institute of Business Administration (IBA) and Karachi University were treated as one category.

¹⁴Level of education is defined as: Under-graduate (14 years of education/BA/BSc); Graduate (16 years of education/MA/MSc); Post-graduate (18 years of education/MPhil); and Doctorate (PhD Candidate).

¹⁵The only exceptions are Air University, University of Arid Agriculture, University of Agriculture, and Mohammad Ali Jinnah University.

percent were not sure. Only 14 percent of the students indicated having a close relative (father, mother, brother, and/or sister) as a civil servant, whereas 22 percent of the students identified uncle and/or aunt as a civil servant (Figure 2). About one-third of the students indicated knowing a civil servant who was 'other family relative'/friend.

Fig. 2. Roots in Civil Service



4. STUDENTS' PREFERENCE TO JOIN PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SECTOR

This section explores students' job preference for employment in the public sector versus employment in the private sector. As about 10 percent of the students also held jobs,¹⁶ their responses were excluded from this analysis. Of the remaining students, more than half (54 percent) indicated their preference for the public sector while the remaining favoured a job in the private sector. In terms of gender, male students were equally divided in terms of their preference for the public and private sector employment whereas some 58 percent of female students showed a preference for the public sector while the remaining (42 percent) favoured the private sector. Due to their family and household commitments, most of the female students were attracted to the public sector primarily because of convenient office hours and a liberal system of leave of absence.

Factors Determining Students' Preference

Job preferences depend on a number of factors including salary, learning and growth opportunities, and job security etc. The respondents were asked to identify the top three factors from the following list in terms of (1) prime factor, (2) second prime factor, and (3) encouraging factor.¹⁷

- (i) Handsome/competitive salary package.
- (ii) Exposure and better learning opportunities.
- (iii) Performance-based promotion opportunities.
- (iv) Job security.
- (v) Promise for a better living standard.
- (vi) Social status/prestige.

¹⁶16 percent male and 8 percent female.

¹⁷It was a multiple response question; hence the sum in percentage term need not be 100.

Preference for Private Sector

Among the students who preferred a job in the private sector, a majority of students ranked 'handsome/competitive salary package' as a prime factor, followed by 'exposure and learning opportunities', 'performance-based promotion opportunities', and 'promise for a better living standard'. More specifically, 'handsome/competitive salary package' was ranked as prime factor influencing their job preference by 65 percent of the students whereas 17 percent and 19 percent of the students ranked it as second prime and encouraging factor respectively. A look at gender-wise responses shows that this factor was ranked as a prime factor by 56 percent of male and 72 percent of female students; as second prime factor by 25 percent of male and 9 percent of female students; and as encouraging factor by an equal percentage (19 percent) of male and female students. Analysing this response by the level of degree of the enrolled students, the doctoral students as well as a large number of graduate students ranked 'handsome/competitive salary package' as a prime factor. On the other hand, a majority of under-graduate and post-graduate students ranked it as a second prime factor determining their preference for the private sector.

Interestingly, for many students 'job security' did not turn out to be a significant factor determining their preference for the private sector. Only half of male and one-third of female students ranked 'job security' as a prime factor whereas the same proportion of male and female students ranked it only as an encouraging factor to join the private sector. None of the male students ranked 'job security' as a second prime factor whereas one-third of female students considered it to be a second prime factor. An analysis by the level of education shows that all the post-graduate students and a large proportion of students enrolled at under-graduate level followed by graduate level students ranked 'job security' as a prime factor, whereas most of the graduate students ranked it as an encouraging factor.

Preference for Public Sector

A different picture emerges for the students who indicated a preference for the public sector. A majority of these students ranked 'job security' as a prime factor influencing their preference for the public sector. This was followed by factors emphasising 'social status', 'exposure and learning opportunities', 'better living standard', and 'performance-based promotion opportunities'. It is worth emphasising here that, unlike the students who favour a job in the private sector, 'handsome/competitive salary package' did not turn out to be a major factor influencing job preference for the public sector. Thus students who hold public sector as their preferred choice appear to be more interested in social status and future job security rather than the salary structure.

Some 57 percent of the students considered job security as a prime factor whereas only 17 percent of the students ranked it as an encouraging factor underlying their preference for the public sector. The gender-wise distribution of responses shows that 60 percent of male and 55 percent of female students ranked 'job security' as prime factor, 26 percent of male and 27 percent of female students ranked it as a second prime factor, and 15 percent of male and 18 percent of female students ranked it as an encouraging factor. The enrolled degree-wise responses show that about 80 percent of doctoral, 68

percent of post-graduate, 60 percent of under-graduate and 52 percent of graduate students ranked 'job security' is a prime reason to join the public service. A small number of students at all levels of higher education considered 'job security' as an encouraging factor.

In comparison with students favouring a job in the private sector, fewer students (38 percent) considered 'handsome/competitive salary package' as a major incentive for joining the civil service. Gender-wise distribution shows that 57 percent of male and 30 percent of female students ranked it as a prime factor, whereas 36 percent of male and 42 percent of female students considered it an encouraging factor to join the public sector. The enrolled degree-wise responses show that all doctoral students considered salary as the least important factor whereas an equal proportion of students (40 percent) at graduate and post-graduate level ranked salary as a prime factor.

5. AWARENESS OF COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION

Students were asked about their level of awareness of procedures and requirements for the competitive examination. Respondents were asked to rank the following on a scale of 1-5 in terms of their level of awareness (1 very low; 5 very high):

- (i) Syllabus;
- (ii) Minimum qualification for CSS;
- (iii) Occupational Group;
- (iv) Application procedure; and
- (v) Age limit.

Though a majority of students were very well aware of the minimum qualifications and age limit, they were poorly informed about the syllabus, occupational groups and application procedures. More specifically, nearly 54 percent of the students indicated high/very high level of awareness about minimum qualifications whereas only 32 percent of the students had very low/low level of awareness. The gender-wise distribution shows that 62 percent of male and 47 percent of female students had high/very high level of awareness whereas nearly one-fourth of male and 37 percent of female students were not very well informed about the minimum qualifications. Some 45 percent of students indicated high/very high level of awareness about age-limit. However, a breakdown of responses by gender shows that nearly 60 percent of male and 34 percent of female students had high/very high level of awareness of the age-limit for CSS examination.

Only about one-third of the respondents were very well aware of the syllabus whereas about half of the respondents indicated very low/low level of awareness. There is some variation in the gender-wise responses: some 34 percent of male and nearly one-fourth of female students were highly aware of the syllabus whereas 44 percent of male and 56 percent of female students were poorly informed about the syllabus. In general, the level of awareness of the occupational groups was also quite low: some 57 percent of the students indicated low/very low level of knowledge about the occupational groups whereas only about one-third of the students were very well aware. In terms of gender-wise responses, 44 percent of male and 67 percent of female students had very low/low level of awareness of the syllabus whereas 41 percent of male and 19 percent of female students indicated high/very high level of awareness.

A majority of students were not very well aware of the application procedures: some 54 percent of the respondents indicated very low/low level of awareness whereas only 28 percent of the respondents indicated a high/very high level of awareness. The gender-wise distribution shows that 47 percent of male and 60 percent of female students had very low/low level of awareness as against 36 percent of male and 21 percent of female students who indicated a high/very high level of awareness.

6. ATTITUDES TOWARDS CIVIL SERVICE

This section explores the question of whether or not civil service still retains its allure among the potential entrants i.e. enrolled university students. In the first stage, students were asked whether or not they intended to join the civil service. The respondents who indicated an intention to join the civil service were further probed to identify the factors that motivate the students to opt for the civil service. In the second stage, all the respondents were asked to characterise their view of civil service as approving, disapproving or indifferent. Respondents who had a disapproving view of the civil service were asked to rank the top five factors that may have shaped such a view.

Career as Civil Servant

The survey explored students' intention to serve the public sector as a civil servant. Some 45 percent of the students indicated their intention to join the civil service, about one-third were not interested in the civil service, and 22 percent were still not sure about their future plans. Gender-wise distribution shows that 56 percent of male and 36 percent of female students were interested to join the civil service whereas 28 percent of male and 37 percent of female students were not interested in making civil service as a career.

Disaggregation of responses by the level of enrolled-degree indicates that about 35 percent of under-graduate, 46 percent of graduate, 52 percent of post-graduate, and 18 percent of doctoral students were interested in becoming a civil servant. On the other hand, 30 percent of under-graduate, 29 percent of graduate, 43 percent of post-graduate and 73 percent of doctoral students indicated no interest in joining the civil service.

Factors Encouraging Students to Join CSP

Several factors play a role in occupational choice decisions ranging from job security to salary and perks. Students who indicated an intention to join the civil service were asked to rate¹⁸ how important were the following factors in terms of shaping their preference for the civil service:

- (i) Job security;
- (ii) Prestige and social status;
- (iii) Good salary package;
- (iv) Authority to make decision;
- (v) Guaranteed pension; and
- (vi) Perks.

¹⁸Ratings are on a scale of 1-3 with 1 as very important, 2 as important, and 3 as least important.

A majority of respondents rated 'job security', 'prestige and social status', and 'authority to make decisions' as very important factors influencing their preference for the civil service (Figure 3). Similarly, 'good salary package' and 'perks' were also observed as considerably important factors in determining students' preference for the civil service.

Fig. 3. Factors Influencing Students' Decision to join CSP



Gender-wise responses show that a majority of both male and female students considered 'job security', 'prestige and social status' and 'authority to make decision' as very important factors shaping their preference for the civil service. However, a majority of female students also considered 'good salary package' as a very important factor. 'Perks' were rated as an important factor by both male and female students.

Preference for CSP-Groups

Students who planned to join the public sector as civil servants were asked to indicate their first three choices from various occupational groups. On average, the following rankings emerged:¹⁹

- (i) Foreign Service of Pakistan.
- (ii) Commerce and Trade Group.
- (iii) Police Service of Pakistan (PSP).
- (iv) Office Management Group (OMG)/Secretariat Group (SG).
- (v) District Management Group (DMG).
- (vi) Postal Group.
- (vii) Pakistan Railways.
- (viii) Accounts Group.

The relatively low ranking of the District Management Group (DMG) is not surprising. Once considered as the most prestigious and the most sought-after occupation group, (DMG) has been stripped of the myriad perks and benefits that its officers used to enjoy, with the introduction of the devolution plan. Consequently, the group is no longer the preferred choice of potential entrants in the civil service: only 22 percent of the students ranked the group as

¹⁹These ranking are worked on the basis of the number of students who indicated the group as their first choice.

their first preference, 37 percent as second preference and 41 percent as third preference. A look at responses by gender shows only 23 percent of male and 23 percent of female students ranked the group as first preference whereas 35 percent of male and 60 percent of female students considered the group as their third preference.

Interestingly, the Foreign Service of Pakistan emerged as the most preferred choice of the students. More specifically, 62 percent of the students ranked the Foreign Service of Pakistan as their first preference, 28 percent as second preference, and 10 percent as third preference. A similar pattern is observed for responses by gender and by enrolled-degree of the student.

In terms of the overall preferences, the accounts group turned out to be the least preferred choice of the students. Only 20 percent of the students rated the group as their first preference whereas 60 percent of the students ranked it as second preference. 20 percent of the students rated the group as their third preference. Gender-wise responses show that an equal proportion of male students (one-quarter) rated the group as first, second, and third preference whereas all female students rated the group as their second preference. Results by level of education show that none of the post-graduate and doctoral students considered the group as their first preference. A majority of undergraduate students ranked the group as their second preference whereas one-half each of the graduate students considered the group as their second and third choice respectively.

Perception towards Civil Service

Some 38 percent of the students held an approving view of the civil service while 27 percent of the students had a disapproving view (Table 3). The remaining 35 percent of the respondents were either indifferent or were not sure about their perception.

Looking at responses by gender, about 39 percent of male and 17 percent of female students had a disapproving view of the civil service while 31 percent of male and 44 percent of female students indicated an approving view of the civil service. In terms of students' age, 41 percent of the students in the age-bracket of 15-25 had a positive view while 27 percent indicated a disapproving view. More than half of the students in the age bracket of 25-30 were either indifferent or were not sure about their views. Interestingly, a majority of undergraduate students (61 percent) had a disapproving view of the civil service, as against 22 percent of graduate, 33 percent of post-graduate and 18 percent of doctoral students.

Table 3

Students' Attitude towards Civil Service

		(Percentage)			
		Approving	Disapproving	Indifferent	Not Sure
Gender	Male	31.09	38.66	17.65	12.61
	Female	43.97	17.02	21.99	17.02
Age Group	15-25	41.15	27.27	16.75	14.83
	25-30	24.39	24.39	36.59	14.63
	31-40	40.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
Degree	Under-grad	13.04	60.87	13.04	13.04
	Graduate	43.01	22.04	17.74	17.20
	Post-grad	30.00	32.50	27.50	10.00
	Doctorate	36.36	18.18	45.45	0.00
Total		38.08	26.92	20.00	15.00

Factors Contributing to a Disapproving View

To explore the factors that may contribute to shaping a disapproving view of the students towards civil service, the respondents who indicated a disapproving view were asked to rank the following factors in terms of their importance on a scale from 1 to 5; with (1) critically important, (2) very important, (3) important, (4) less important, and (5) not important:

- (i) Recruitment system is not fair;
- (ii) Less attraction in CSP after the devolution of power;
- (iii) Political influence;
- (iv) Less competitive salary package;
- (v) Limited vision and creativity; and
- (vi) Limited freedom of action and initiation.

A majority of students considered 'recruitment system is not fair', followed by 'political influence' and 'limited freedom of action and initiation' as most important factors contributing to a disapproving view of the students. One-third of the students considered 'less competitive salary package' and 'limited vision and creativity' as important factors influencing a disapproving attitude towards the civil service.

Strikingly, an overwhelming majority of students (70 percent) indicated the reason 'recruitment system is not fair' as a critically important or very important factor influencing their disapproving view of the civil service.²⁰ Similarly, gender-wise analysis shows that 76 percent of male and 59 percent of female students regarded the lack of fairness of the recruitment system as a critically important/very important factor shaping their negative view of the civil service. Roughly a similar picture emerges when looking at responses by the level of education as a majority of students at all levels of education²¹ considered the lack of fairness as very important factor shaping their disapproving view.

The perception of political influence also turned out to be a major factor underlying a disapproving view of the civil service: some 68 percent of students considered that there is less attraction to the civil service due primarily to political influence in the civil service. Gender-wise distribution shows that 66 percent of male and 73 percent of female students indicated political influence as critical/very important in shaping their views. In terms of the level of education of the students, 67 percent of under-graduate, 76 percent of graduate, 46 percent of post-graduate and all doctoral students believed political interference to be a major factor contributing to their disapproving view of the civil service.

It is interesting to note that the reason 'less competitive salary package' did not emerge as an important factor in shaping a disapproving view of the civil service: only one-third of male students (and an equal proportion of females) indicated it as critical/very important factor. The responses by the level of education show some variation though: some 56 percent of under-graduate, 30 percent of graduate, and 30 percent of post-graduate students believed 'less competitive salary package' as a critical/very important factor contributing to their disapproving view of the civil service.

²⁰A bit of caution is advised here. This question was revisited in a validation exercise in which 39 respondents were contacted randomly. A majority of them had a poor knowledge of competitive examination process while other believed that influential people have links with FPSC and they capture the key positions for their favorites.

²¹Doctoral students were evenly divided.

7. KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

- Contrary to the recent concerns about diminishing popularity of the civil service among potential entrants, a majority of students indicated the civil service as their preferred occupation choice. Among those who preferred civil service as a career, a majority viewed 'job security' as a prime factor influencing their preference for the public sector, followed by factors emphasising 'social status', 'exposure and learning opportunities', 'better living standard', and 'performance-based promotion opportunities'. Interestingly, the salary package did not appear to be a major factor influencing job preference for the public sector. Thus students who considered public sector as their preferred choice appeared to be more interested in social status and future job security rather than the salary structure.
- The 'Foreign Service of Pakistan' emerged as the most preferred choice of the students and the 'Accounts Group' the least preferred. Also, the 'District Management Group' (DMG) no longer enjoyed the coveted position; not least because of the system of local government which has resulted in stripping of the DMG of its powers and privileges.
- More students had an approving view of the civil service than those having a disapproving view. A majority of students considered 'lack of fairness in recruitment' followed by 'political influence' and 'limited freedom of action and initiation' as most important factors underlying their disapproving view towards the civil service.
- On the level of awareness about competitive examination procedures, though a majority of students were very well aware of the 'minimum qualifications' and 'age-limit', however they were poorly informed about the 'syllabus', 'occupational groups' and 'application procedures'.

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