



Career Choice And College Students: Parental Influence on Career Choice Traditionalism among College Students in Selected Cities in Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the influence of parents on choosing career among college students in selected private colleges situated around Bahirdar City, Ethiopia. Choosing a suitable career is a vital part in every student's life. Further, it ignites a person's future life for his/her own job preference and life style. In this context, influence of social members is inevitable; generally the influence of family members and most particularly parents play a major role as an influencer and determiner on choosing a career option. Students in Ethiopia are not exceptional to this phenomenon of selecting right and suitable career. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted and multi stage sampling technique was employed to identify the participants. Totally, 175 participants (Male=99) and (Female =76) responded to Holland Personality Inventory (Holland, 1997) and Career Choice Traditionalism Scale (Hensely, 2003). The collected data were statistically processed using SPSS version 16. Descriptive and inferential statistics was employed to analyze the data. The results revealed that there is a significant influence of parents on career choice among students. Specifically, father's influence is found to be more significant on career choice decision making among students than their mothers.

Keywords:

parental influence, career choice, college students, father-mother occupation, family member's influence

1.Introduction

Career decision making is an important behaviour component take part in one's life to set his/her goal to achieve their career. Particularly during the transitional stage from school to college/ universities, students are forced to choose a particular profession or course of study. During this stage dilemma is inevitable due to various factors such as family members influence, parental influence, peer group influence, role model influence etc. The most common factor is parental influence. Specifically, family members and parents play a major role in the preference of career of an individual. In most of the culture, interpersonal influence, role model influence and significant other's influence are also such factors evident in choice of their career or vocation. Parents are more intensively involved in their children's learning more beneficial are the achievement effects (Wikelund, 2006). Regardless of the potentials, actual needs and ego of the child, education, economic incentives, peer group influence and parental influence are sometimes used as pressures to induce the young adolescent into predetermined careers (Alika, A. H., 2010). Despite, students also tend to approach parents, family members, and experienced persons and peer group members to make clear decision and avoid confusion in this regard. However, characteristics of an individual, socially conditioned through family influence, social positions and relations, and developed social role characteristics also responsible for career choice decision making (Blau, et al...1986; cited in Zunker, 2002). The effect of social institutions on

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career choice and development emphasized the interrelationships of psychological, economical and sociological determinants of career choice decision making. Cultural and contextual support play a significant role in ways individuals make career decisions (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002; cited in Wei-cheng Mau, 2001). Family of origin is probably the single most potent determinants of career development (Brown, 2004). More over many research findings also revealed that interpersonal relationships play a great role for the commitment of career choice. Interpersonal variable was a found to be the better predictor for commitment to career choice than familial variables among Mexicana American and none Hispanic white college women (Caldera, et al, 2003).

Whiston (2004) suggested to students, perceived parental expectations had a stronger influence than socio-economic status, but the influence was indirect through the variables of student's occupational expectation, which in turn affected career choice. The findings of Endicott (1984) indicate that student perception of parental expectations is an important factor in career choice as a parental influence.

Generally, this inquiry lends empirical support to the assertion that student perception of parental expectations may contribute significantly to career choice. Parental influence exerts a lot of influence on the educational attainment of the adolescent especially the socio-economic status of parents. The possibility of re-entry into school is enhanced if the adolescent girl comes from the high socio-economic status family among girl child drop out group (Alika & Egbochuku, 2009). Academic performance is positively correlated with parents who enforce rules at home (Ryan, 2005). Family influences the behaviour or character of a child (Trost & Levin, 2000). Parents play a significant role in laying the foundation of their children's career (Tella, 2003).

Early researches asserted that adolescents articulated most frequently about career issues with their parents (Fend, 1991; Otto, 2000) and reported parents are their major influential numbers during educational and career transitions (Mortimer, Zimmer-Gembeck, Holmes, & Shanahan, 2002).

Parents encouraged the adolescent to explore vocational interests and abilities as well as various occupational options, and facilitated them to reflect on career choice (Schultheiss et al., 2001). These adolescents considered these behaviors enhanced their motivation to engage in career preparation process (Phillips et al., 2002). Moreover, many adolescents felt supported by their parents are found to be engaged more in career exploration activities (Kracke & Noack, 2005). However, some individuals also reported that their parents controlled their career actions and choices too much (Schultheiss et al., 2001). Some of these parents intentionally implemented or enforce their personal ideas about their children's occupation regardless of their wishes (Young et al., 2001). Adolescents in such families were found to be more passive in the process of career preparation (Kracke & Noack, 2005). In addition, some adolescents reported that their parents never involved in the career development process (Altman, 1997; Mortimers et al., 2002; Oechsle et al., 2002). Such parental behaviors were noted to cause reduction in adolescents' progress in career development, resulting in less stable career paths (Mortimer et al., 2002).

Hezlina Mohd Hashim and Abdul Mutalib Embong (2013) among parents, particularly mothers are more influential than peers in career choice of the secondary school students. However, parent's education have no influence over their children's choice of career. Many other factors may affect the career selection of the students, however, the minor factors or other factors can be narrowed down to either parents or peers.

Many Career choice theories indicate that, family plays a role in shaping the values and needs of its members. Social learning theory emphasizes possible influences that the family can have on adolescents' career development. Parents can have an influence on their child's career development by positively developing or punishing certain behaviours that can encourage or discourage certain interests or ability.

In another study in this vein, father's occupation status was less predictive for individuals who were entrant to college (Hendrick and Gonzeboom, 1998 cited in Sharf (2002). Alika (2010) reported that there was no significant relationship between parental and peer group influence on career choice among secondary school students. Contrary to this result a Japanese data from 1975 to 1985 showed that the fathers' occupation was continue to be a good predictor of children's occupational choice (Kanomata, 1998) cited in Sharf (2002).

Nevertheless, data is scant pertaining to the issue since no research attention has been paid in Ethiopian context. Therefore, the present study deems it imperative to investigate the extent to which parental role in relation to parental occupation and expectation plays an important part in career decision making among

students. Generally, this inquiry lends empirical support to the assertion that student perception of parental expectations may contribute significantly to career choice.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The present study focused students pursuing their degree/diploma course in some selected private owned colleges recognized by ministry of education in Ethiopia, found in Bahirdar city enrolled in the year 2005 E.C. before embarking of the major investigation a pilot study was conducted in order to adapt measuring instruments to Ethiopian context. To these effect 21 regular students enrolled in the year 2005 E.C. were randomly selected from the departments of clinical nursing from Gamby College, accounting from St. Marry of the total pilot sample subjects two of them were discarded from the try out analysis due to incompleteness of questionnaire. Thus, the pilot study sample comprised 19 respondents.

The main study was carried out on a representative sample of 177 (100 males and 77 females) students from 6 fields of study in Bahirdar. Of the total participants 2 of them were discarded from the analysis due to incomplete responses to the questionnaire. Thus, in the main study sample comprised of 175 respondents (99 males and 76 females) from six private owned colleges.

2.2. Sampling and sampling procedure

The investigator has employed multi-stage sampling techniques to select representative samples of the study. The total number of private college students enrolled in the year 2005 E.C. According to Amhara National Technical and Vocational Bureau was estimated to be of 15300 from 17 private and licensed colleges in Bahirdar. Since it impossible to manage and include all colleges in the study, the researcher deliberately selected 6 incensed colleges that offer programs /departments from social science and natural science on the bases of purposive sampling procedure.

Then the researcher listed out of entire departments that this respective colleges offering in their regular program, so that the entire departments have an equal chance to be included in the study.

All departments were regrouped into 6 in accordance with Holland's Theme (Holland, 1996, cited in Brown et al, 2002). Simple random sampling technique used to select the representative cluster departments of the present study. Thus the departments of Law from realistic, departments of Laboratory technical from investigative, departments of clinical nursing from social, departments of business administration from Enterprising, department of accounting from conventional and departments of English language from artistic were selected for the main study by using lottery system. These departments were selected regardless of their degree or diploma program. All students of the representative class and department were considered as eligible person to participate in the present study.

2.3. Measures

An instrument and a questionnaire were administered in class under the supervision of the investigator and the instructor of the representative class. The instruments had five parts. And the questionnaire also was two parts. The first was about background information and departments. The second parts were obtained 8 questions 6 of them were multiple choices and 2 of the questions was allowed students to add an individual responses.

The remaining 2 parts were scales and adapted from different scholars:

1. Holland Personality Inventory (Holland, 1996).
2. Career Choice Traditionalism Scale (Luaren, Hensely, 2003).

A 12-item questionnaire design to measure traditionalism of career traditionalism (Lauren Hensley, 2003) was administered. Additional effort was made to administer in Ethiopian context and to find the reliability and validity of the construct. To this effect, the scales were given to two senior experts in social and developmental psychology to examine each item in the scale. Each consisted of a 5 point likert scale asking subjects to rate their agreement with a statement concerning career choice traditionalism (ranging from strongly agree=1 to

strongly disagree=5). Reliability was calculated, and the obtained Kuder Richardson-20: $r=0.68$ was obtained. The investigator found it tolerable, since it measures personal attitude and it varies person to person.

2.4. Procedure of Data Collection

In the pilot study, all instruments were administered in one session. The subjects were voluntarily to participate in their free time. Based on the data obtained the instruments were subjected to change. Permission was obtained from all classes to administer the main questionnaire during class time. Arrangements were then made to visit six classrooms, at a six compass location over a one week period in a mid-march, of 2005 E.C. ones introduce to the class, the researcher outlined the purpose of the survey, requested the class participation, and reviewed the completion instructions. The students were well assured that their anonymity would be preserved and that their participation was voluntarily and asked before completing the packets and remained by instructions within the packet to be honest in response to all questions.

2.5. Procedure of Data Analysis

The collected data were entered into SPSS 16 version for Windows for statistical processing. Descriptive statistical measure: percentile, and correlation coefficient (in order to show the magnitude of the relationship among variables in the study and to see the relationship of career choice traditionalism) were calculated.

To explore the extent to which parental occupations and student perception of parental expectations influence on the commitment of career choice among college students on career choice traditionalism one way ANOVA was performed.

Finally, in order to see the dual attribution of students' perception of parental expectation and parental occupation on career choice traditionalism two -way ANOVA was employed.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Variables		N	(%)
Sex	Male	100	56.49
	female	77	43.51
Religion	Orthodox	101	57.06
	Muslim	31	17.51
	Protestant	36	20.34
	Others	9	5.08
Career	Realistic	25	14.12
	Investigative	37	20.90
	Artistic	20	11.29
	Social	37	20.90
	Enterprising	30	16.94
	Conventional	28	15.81
Ethnicity	Amhara	128	72.31
	Oromo	10	5.64
	Tigrie	20	11.29
	Others	19	10.73

To see the Diversity of the present study and representative departments' descriptive statistics were performed. The total numbers of respondents in the present study were 177, out of which 77(43.51%) were female subject and 100(56.49 %) were male subject. The mean age of the respondents were found to be 20.47 and with a standard deviation of 2.603 and age ranged from 16 to 33. And there was a total of six career preferences included in the present study were Realistic (Law) 25 (14.12%), Investigative (Laboratory Technician) 37 (20.90%), Artistic (English Language) 20 (11.29 %), Social (Clinical Nursing) 37 (20.90 %). Enterprising (Business management) 30 (16.94 %) and Convectional (Accounting) 28 (15.81%).

The respondents were also from different religious background of the total sample.101 (57.06%) Orthodox Christians, 31 (17.51 %) Muslim, 36 (20.34 %) protestants, and 9 (5.08 %) were others. The respondents were also having different ethnic background of the total sample of the present study, 128 (72.31%) Amhara, 10 (5.64 %) Oromo, 10 (5.64 %) Tigre, and 19 (10.73 %) were others.

The research question in this section was to test the influence of parental occupation and student perception expectation on the commitment to career choice.

Table 2. The Influence of perceived parental expectation and Father/Mother Occupation on career choice

Variables	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig
Father preference	1.117	1	1.117	4.717	.035*
Mother preference	.031	1	.031	1.19	732
Father occupation	2.222	1	2.222	10.399	.002*
Mother occupation	1.786	1	1.786	8.015	007*

* p<05

In order to answer these questions a one-way ANOVA was performed using Father's preference, Mother's preference, Father's occupation and Mother's occupation were treated as independent variable and career choice was treated as dependent variable.

As can be seen from table 2 respondent's perceived expectation of their father was statistically significant effect on career choice [F (1,175) = 4.717, p<05]. Furthermore, statistically significant main effect was further investigated between father occupation and career choice of respondents [F (1,175) =10.399, p<.05]. This means that the occupation of respondent's father and the expected father's preference of respondents are found to be statistically significant influence on career choice decision making among respondents. This result is similar to the report of Kanomata (1998). Whereas, Hezlina Mohd Hashim & Abdul Mutalib Embong (2013) reported among parents, particularly mothers are more influential. Father's occupation is less predictive among college entrants (Hendrick & Gonzeboom, 1998).

In contrary, as depicted in table 2, there was no statistically significant contribution of respondent's perceived expectation of their mother on career choice [F (1,175) =1.19, p>05]. However, statistically significant main effect was investigated between mother occupation and career choice of respondents [F (1,175) = 8.015, p<05]. This implies that, even tough, the influence of the occupation of respondent's mother was statistically significant. The perceived expectation of respondent's mother is found to have no influence on career choice of respondents.

There was research question to test the influence of parental occupation and student's perception of parental expectation on the commitment to career choice. To this effect, two-way ANOVA was employed to see the interaction effect of parental occupation and student's perception of parental exceptions on career choice.

Table 3. ANOVA Summary Table

Variables	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig
A x B	1.219	2	610	2.544	.089
C x D	1.945	2	1.473	7.259	.002*
A x C	2.681	2	1.340	6.430	.003*
B x D	1.792	2	.896	3.939	.026*
A x B x C	2.883	3	961	4.607	.007*
A x B x C x D	3.317	4	829	4.072	-.007*

Where A- Expected Father's Preference-Expected Mother's Preference, B. Expected Mother's preference, C- Father's Occupation, D-Mother's Occupation

In order to answer these questions a two way ANOVA was performed using father preference, mother preference, father occupation, and mother occupation as independent variable and career choice as dependent variables.

As depicted from Table 3, father occupation and mother occupation found to be good attributor from choosing a career [F (2,174) =7.259, $p < .05$] and it was statistically significant. The joint interaction effect of perceived expectation of respondent's father and the occupation of their father on career choice was statistically significant [F (2,174) =6.430, $p < .05$]. This implies that respondents have no chance to see other alternative careers, or the major source of their vocational identity is their father. Even though, as can be seen from table2, the perceived expectation of respondents from their mother is not statistically significant [F (1,175) =1.19, $p > .05$], the joint effect of perceived expectation of their mother and occupation of their mother were found to have statistically significant influence on career choice [F (2,174) =3.939, $p < .05$]. Since the attribution of both the perceived expectation of respondent's father were found to be statistically significant, one can reach at conclusion that children give priority to fulfill the perceived expectation of their father, since the interaction effect and main effect of father's occupation and perceived expectation of respondents father were found to be statistically significant, as revealed in Table 2 and table 3.

As Table 3 above depicts, perceived expectation of both the father and the mother, and the occupation of their father were found to have statistically significant influence and interaction effect on career choice [F(3,173)=4.607, $p < .05$]. Similarly, as revealed in Table 3 above, the interaction effect of perceived of their father and mother, and the occupation of their father and mother were found to have a statistically significant influence to career choice [F (4,172) =4.072, $p < .05$].

In contrary, as can be seen from Table 3 no statistically significant attribution was found. Attribution between respondent's perceived expectation of their father and respondents perceived expectation of their mother [F (2,174) =2.544, $p > .05$].

In order to show the magnitude of the relationship among variables in the study, correlation coefficient was calculated.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix of perceived parental expectation, father/mother occupation, and career choice

	1	2	3	4	5
1.Father preference	-	0.434*	0.269	0.316*	0.258
2.Mother preference	-	-	0.202	0.067	0.030
3.Father occupation	-	-	-	0.360*	0.411*

4.Mother occupation	-	-	-	-	0.357*
5. Career	-	-	-	-	-

As depicted in table 4 in the interaction matrix, father preference and mother preference correlate significantly ($r=0.434$, $p<0.05$). Furthermore, mother preference and mother occupation were found to be significantly correlated ($r=0.316$, $p<0.05$). Father occupation and mother occupation also have been a significant relationship ($r= 0.36$, at $\alpha 0.05$). Father occupation and career were that the respondents are pursuing also have a significant relationship ($r=0.357$, $p<0.05$).

However, there was no statistically significant relationship between father preference and career ($r= 0.258$), expected father preference and father occupation ($r=0.269$), expected mother preference and mother occupation ($r=0.67$), expected mother preference and career ($r=0.30$). This indicates in general, no significant relationship is found between student's perceived expectation of mother and what the career the respondents are pursuing. Expected father preference to their children and father occupation were found to be unrelated. This implies that fathers are willing to see their children's career beyond that of their occupation even though father's occupation and career were found to be correlated.

From the above findings it is clearly understood that career decision making among college entrants is influenced by parents. Specifically, fathers play a major role in choosing career of their offspring. Generally in developing countries male parents are the primary bread winner of the family and considered as head of the family are mostly educated, experienced, have more social exposure, contacts and knowledge on current affairs than women that maneuver career decision making in their offspring. In most of the culture women are considered as secondary family decision maker though they are educated and employed or academically and economically powerful. Compared to developed nations this is quite opposite where students are making their own decision independently. In some of the developing nation on-site campaign, counseling, educational fairs are being executed by government and private bodies to create awareness about the courses and its scope, intra and international opportunities on job and further studies and also identifying student's abilities and skills that best suitable to their career of interest.

Ethiopia is one of the developing nations in sub Saharan countries where such programs are also being followed. Mothers play a subordinate role in most of the culture this is also evident in this study area. In recent days students in developing and developed countries are much aware of the scope of the courses. Since the decision making behavior in career choice is much better than the students in under developed and developing countries. This may be due to personal autonomy, economic status, exposure to technological advancement and media. This is quite contrary in underdeveloped countries due to poverty, un-accessibility to educational institution, less awareness etc., cause to get influenced by parents.

4. Limitations

1. Only parental influence was taken as independent variable, other variables were excluded from the study.
2. The result is limited to the present geographical location and it cannot be generalized to other population.

5. Conclusion

Parental influence exists in career decision making amongst students and also there is an interrelationship between father preference and mother preference; father preference and mother occupation; father's occupation and mother's occupation; father's occupation and career and mother's occupation and career. Autonomy in making career decision making amongst students is restricted to parent's preference, further this finding is limited to the present study area. However, findings revealed from other studies evident that students in developed countries are found to be much better in making career decision independently than the students from developing and under developed countries. This may be due to factors such as culture, exposure to multimedia, access to technological development, peer group members and significant others influence. Further, an indepth investigation may help future researchers to find solution to such problem and formulate sound theoretical and empirical evidence for counseling and guidance activities and policy developing.

6. Recommendations

1. The Educational department may appoint counseling psychologists and establish counseling cell in every school to deal this problem.
2. Teachers, school counselors, academic resource persons can engage in creating awareness and resolving such problems prevailing among students.
3. School administrations can focus on arranging counseling and guidance activities, educational fairs and campaigns, parental counseling and provide resource materials to enhance knowledge and awareness among students.
4. Parents and students can approach counselors or experts in the specific field to choose right field of study/profession and overcome from career choice dilemma.

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