

Influence Of Parents And Counselors In The Choice Of Medicine As A Course Of Study

Adetunji Obadeji

Lateef Olutoyin Oluwole

Department of Psychiatry, College of Medicine, Ekiti State University,
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Abstract: *Several factors have been shown to influence the choice of career of which parents play a significant role. This study investigated the degrees to which parents and counselors influence the choice of medicine as course of study by the Medical students. A cross-sectional survey of all the Medical students in the college of Medicine of the State University was done through a self administered structured questionnaire to determine the socio-demographics, the degrees of influence of parents and counselors in the choice Medicine as career and their opinions on the need for career counseling. The results revealed that most of the Medical students were influenced by both parents and counselors in varying degrees, ranging from no influence to strong ones. Majority of the students did not have counselor or any form of career counseling while in secondary school. Most of the students however felt they could have benefited from the service of a counselor. In spite of influences of both parents and counselors in varying degrees in the choice of medicine as a course of study, majority of the medical students without career counseling felt they could have benefited from career counseling.*

Keywords: *Counseling, Counselor, Parental influence, Medicine, Medical students,*

I. INTRODUCTION

Several factors influence the career path of an individual. These vary from personal attributes such as intellectual ability, personal interests, gender, motivation aptitudes, and one's attitude towards various occupations (Hayes & Farnill, 1995; Shumba & Naong, 2012; Todisco, Obadeji, Olofintoye, Oluwole, 2014). Besides, external influences such as parents, teachers, counselors, peer groups, sex stereotypes and subjects combination while in secondary school are also of great importance (Denga, 2004; Bojuwoye & Mbanjwa, 2006).

Although, several factors affect career decision making, families particularly parents and guidance play a significant role in occupational aspiration and career goal development of their children. Several studies [Wilson, & Wilson, 1992; Knowles, 1998; Mau & Bikos, 2000] have found that college students and young adults cited parents as an important influence in the choice of their career. However, the exact family characteristics influencing career is a subject of

controversies. Research studies (Mau & Bikos, 2000; Crockett & Bingham, 2000) have suggested that both parental education and income influence career aspiration. Others studies (Wilson, & Wilson, 1992; Hossler & Stage, 1992) cited only parental education as an influence. Besides the parental factors, parental occupation particularly father's occupation correlated well with his son's occupation (Blau, 1992).

Similarly, in a comparative study conducted by Ausman et al., (2013) among medical students in the beginning third year, and non-medical students at the same educational level, majority of medical students perceived their parents to have had strong influence on their career choice of medicine. While more medical students chose their career along with their parents, most of the non-medical group made the choice on their own.

Besides parents, counselors also play a significant role in career choice of young individuals. Career guidance and academic counseling have become an integral part of school

system in the western countries with the intention of helping in the choice of right career. Secondary schools however, have been seen as best place to receive reliable career advice. Undoubtedly, career choice occupies important place in teenager's life as many facet of life are associated with it. In a study by Bittaye et al., (2012) only small percentage of medical students had ever received career counseling even though all desire it.

The study was aimed at determining the degrees of influence of both parents and counselors in the choice of medicine as a course of study and how medical students perceived the relevance of having a counselor in their career choice.

II. METHODS

STUDY DESIGN

A cross-sectional survey with the study population consisting of all the 92 students in the school was undertaken. One of the investigators gave questionnaires to all class presidents for distribution to all class members. After reading and signing the written consent, participants self administered a structured questionnaire.

INSTRUMENT

A self designed questionnaire was used to determine their socio-demographic characteristics, degree of parental influence and their opinions on the need for career counseling. The students were asked to rate extent to which they felt their parents and counselors influenced their choice medicine as career ranging from none (no influence at all) to strong one.

To ensure face and construct validity, the questionnaire was given to a senior and experienced lecturer in the department of guidance and counseling for review and provides feedback regarding the clarity of the questions and their relevance to the construct being measured.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Consent was sought from all the participants. Participation was voluntary, participants were assured that data collected from the study would be kept confidential and used only for purposes of this study.

DATA ANALYSES

Data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software; version 16 for windows (SPSS Chicago Inc.). Appropriate data presentations including frequency distribution and cross tabulations were carry out where appropriate.

III. RESULTS

GENDER AND PARENTS' PLACE OF WORK

Table 1 shows the distribution of participant's gender and parental place of work. Majority 45 (64.3%) were males while the remaining 25 (35.7%) were females. Most of the fathers and the mothers 62(88.6%) work outside the Hospital.

Variables	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	45 (64.3)
Female	25 (35.7)
Fathers' place of work	
Hospital	8 (11.4)
Others	62 (88.6)
Mothers' place of work	
Hospital	8 (11.4)
Others	62 (88.6)

Table 1: Participants' gender and parents' place of work

THE DEGREES OF PARENTAL INFLUENCE

Table 2 shows the degrees of influence of parents in the choice of medicine as career. Majority of the participants were influenced in varying degrees by their parents. Twenty eight (40.0%) described having minor influence, 21(30.0%) were moderate influenced while 10 (14.3%) described parental influence as strong. Only eleven (15.7%) had no form of influence from their parents in the choice of their career

Degrees of Parental influence (%)	Frequency
No influence	11(15.7)
Minor influence	28(40.0)
Some influence	21(30.0)
Strong influence	10(14.3)

Table 2: The degrees of Parental influence

INFLUENCES OF COUNSELOR

As shown in table 3, thirty two (45.7%) of the respondents had a counselor while in secondary school, and out of these 8(25%) described the influence they got from a mentor as minor, 14(43.8%) as moderate while only 10(31.2%) described theirs as strong. Among the 38 who did not have any counselor, 71.1% thought looking back they could have benefited from the service of a counselor while 28.9% did not see any need for such.

Variables	Frequency (%)
Have counselor while secondary school	
Yes	32 (45.7)
No	38 (54.3)
Degree of influence of a counselor	
None	0 (0)
Minor	8 (25.0)
Moderate	14 (43.8)
Strong	10 (31.2)
Need for Counselor	
Yes	27 (71.1)
No	11 (28.9)

Table 3: Influences of Counselor

IV. DISCUSSION

Studies have demonstrated the influence of parents and counselors in the choice of career among young ones. This study looked at the degrees of influence of these two factors (parent and counselors) in the choice of medicine as a career by medical students. Of the seventy students interviewed two-thirds were males while the remaining were females; similar to what was reported by Omigbodun and Omigbodun, (2003) among medical students at the University of Ibadan. However, the male-female ratio in this study differs from that reported in the Middle-East by Ausman et al., (2013) where two third of the participants were reported to be females. The higher proportion of males found in this study may be due to job stereotyping effect, where many believe that medicine is a man's jobs. It may also be due to the fact that mathematics, which many girls do not prefer (Meece et al., 1982) in addition to other core science subjects, is a prerequisite entry requirement to study medicine at the undergraduate level. Even though studies (Hin Ko el al., 2007; Obadeji, Olofintoye & Oluwole, 2014) have shown that personal interest is the most important factor influencing most medical students in the choice of medicine as a career, majority of the students still reported one form of parental influence or the other. Indeed, the study by Obadeji et al., (2014) among population of Medical students revealed that only 4.3% of them signified parents as the most important factor influencing their choice of medicine as career or course of study.

This study found out that despite the fact that parents may not be the most determining factor influencing the career choice of their children, they still have varying degrees of influence on them. This is consistent with finding reported by Shumba and Naong, (2012) who reported that the family, particularly parents, is a significant factor in determining a child's career choice. There are varying opinions and findings, however, as to which specific family variables influence career aspiration. For examples, conflicting data exist regarding the influence of socio-demographic variables. Another study (Mau & Bikos, (2000) suggested that both parent's education and income influence career aspiration while Wilson and Wilson, (1992) reported that only parental education is important.

The study also found out that less than half (45.7%) of the respondents had a counselor or career counseling while in secondary schools. Of those who had a counselor while in secondary school, about three quarter described the influence counselors had on their choice of career as either moderate or strong similar to what was reported by Hin Ko et al., (2007). Among the 54.3% who did not benefit from any form of counseling while in secondary School, 71% felt looking back they could have benefited from the services of a counselor. Similar observation was made by Bittaye et al., (2012) in their study among Medical students in the Gambia where all the respondents recognized the need for career counseling. This study also substantiates the need for counselor or counseling units in our secondary schools so as to provide career guidance and counseling opportunity for the young ones and subsequently preventing them from wrong choice of career or vocation.

V. CONCLUSION

This study revealed parents as major factor in influencing medical students in the choice of Medicine as a career of Medical students, though in varying degrees. It also identified the need to provide career guidance and counseling to student before a career path is chosen. Parents are major factor in career decision making of student pursuing Medicine as course of study, therefore career guidance and counseling should incorporate parents.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ausman, J., Javed, A., Ahmed, S., Abdul-Samad, M., Salehi, A. (2013). Social Factors Influencing Career Choice in a Medical School in the United Arab Emirates. *Education in Medicine Journal*, 5(1): 14-20.
- [2] Bittaye, M., Odukogbe, A. A., Nyan, O., Jallow, B & Omigbodun, A. O. (2012). Medical students' choices of specialty in The Gambia: the need for career counseling. *BMC Medical Education* 2012; 12(72): 1-9.
- [3] Blau, P. (1992). Mobility and status attainment. *Contemporary Sociology*, 21: 596-598.
- [4] Bojuwoye, O. & Mbanjwa, S.(2006). Factors impacting on career choices of Technikon students from previously disadvantaged high schools. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 1: 3-16.
- [5] Crockett, L. J & Bingham, C. R. (2000) Anticipating adulthood: Expected timing of work and family transitions among rural youth. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 10: 151-172.
- [6] Denga, H. (2004). The influence of gender on occupational aspirations of primary school children in Cross River State. *The African Symposium*, 4(2): 26-31.
- [7] Hin Ko, H., Tim, K. L., Yvette, L., Bruce, F., Elena, V., Eric, M. Y (2007). Factors influencing career choices made by medical students, residents, and practicing physicians, *BCMJ*, 2007; 49(9): 482-489.
- [8] Hossler, D. & Stage, F. K. (1992) Family and high school experience influences on the post-secondary educational plans of ninth-grade students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 29: 425-451.
- [9] Knowles, S. (1998). Effects of the Components of Parent Involvement on Children's Educational and Occupational Aspirations. Doctoral Dissertation, Unpublished. Alfred University, Alfred: USA.
- [10] Mau W.C & Bikos L.H. (2000) Educational and vocational aspirations of minority and female students: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 78: 186-194.
- [11] Meece, J. L., Parsons, J. E., Kaczala, C. M., Goff, S. B (1982). *Psychological Bulletin*, 91(2): 324-348.
- [12] Obadeji, A, Olofintoye, T. T., Oluwole, L. O. (2014). What factors influence medical students? *J Contemp Med Edu*, 2(4): 218-221.
- [13] Omigbodun, O. O & Omigbodun, A. O (2003). Influence of gender on undergraduate performance in psychiatry at Ibadan, Nigeria. *Medical Education*, 37(12): 1091-1093.

- [14] Shumba, A & Naong, M. (2012). Factors Influencing Students' Career Choice and Aspirations in South Africa. *J Soc Sci.*, 33(2):169-178.
- [15] Todisco J, Hayes S, Farnill D. (1995) Career motivation of male and female medical students. *Psychological Reports*, 77:1199-202.
- [16] Wilson, P. M & Wilson, J. R. (1992). Environmental influences on adolescent educational aspirations: A logistic transform model. *Youth and Society*, 24: 52-70.

IJIRAS