PARENTAL INFLUENCE IN THE CAREER CHOICES OF STEM STRAND GRADE 12 SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine how students perceive parental involvement as an influence in their career choices along the STEM strand. Thirty student-participants from St. Louis University Tuguegarao were selected through purposive random sampling. Data collection was done through interview and the responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. Results showed that students recognized their parents as both an inspiration and support towards the achievement of their career goals. Results further showed that the students felt the pressure of being compelled to meet the career expectations from their parents, having the family line of particular professions.

INTRODUCTION

In a family-oriented country like the Philippines, the career choices of its people are often influenced by what parents or parental figures want their children to pursue, because adherence to family authority particularly to the opinions of parents is a fundamental part that comprises the Filipino values and traditions (Saysay, 2011; Pascual, 2014). Parental opinions in the career decision-making process of individuals are known to constitute a major role in determining one's career development, and while a lot of variables can impact the career decidedness of an adolescent, the parents' perception of the specific vocational fit for their children is still known to yield the most impact in shaping the career path of an individual (Palos & Drobot, 2010; Joseph, 2012; Kumar, 2016).

Familial influences in a student's pursuit of careers have been previously hypothesized in the past. A study by Godwin et al. (2014) explored connections between engineering-related course choices of students and their relatives. It was determined that the history of engineering professions in the families of the participants indeed influenced their career choice of pursuing a profession in line with engineering. A study by Bhattacharya (2013) also concluded that through parent-child interactions of engineering students with their family, the parents were able to assert their influence and convey what they want to their children, thus urging them to disregard their desired vocational path to pick the course that their parents chose for them.

For this reason, parents need to establish an effective influential environment for their children. That is, an emphasis on positive parent-child relationships and supportive parental behavior should be apparent in the process of career guidance for a more efficient career decision-making process (Garcia et al., 2015). Moreover, multiple regression analyses were done in a study conducted by Keller & Whiston (2008) which revealed that when their perceived parental support is positive, students have more confidence in career decision-making and career choices end up being more satisfactory as they mature.

In line with this, career decidedness during senior high school is crucial in establishing course preparedness and the positive academic conduct of a student. Senior high school is comprised of the two final year levels, Grades 11 and 12 of the secondary level under the K-to-12 curriculum of basic education. This program was created to introduce to the students the collegiate courses and develop the necessary skills fundamental for higher-level schooling. Since this is the last step before tertiary education, it is important to know how parental behavior concerning the selection of careers during this period affects the overall career decidedness of senior high school students.

This study was then conducted to assess how Grade 12 Senior High School students perceive their parents' behavior and intervention regarding their career decision-making process.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to determine the parental influence in the career choices of the SHS Grade 12 students.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

1. What is the parental influence in the career choices of the participants in terms of the parents' occupations, career satisfaction in occupational choices, assistance in career decision, and pressure-induced from parental career expectations?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study made use of the qualitative descriptive design to determine the parental influence on the career choices of G12 SHS students. The objective of a qualitative-descriptive study is to obtain a thorough summary of occurrences experienced by people daily.

Participants of the Study

This study was conducted at the University of Saint Louis-Tuguegarao, Senior High School Department. In determining the participants, the researchers utilized purposive sampling method. A pre-survey was given to the Grade 12 students to determine who belongs in the set criteria of having previous experiences with parental influence in their career choices. The researchers then used a sample size generator to determine the sample size from those who answered "yes" in the pre-survey. However, since data saturation was also employed in the study, the researchers stopped the interviews after the responses of the participants started to revolve around similar ideas.

Instrumentation

The study made use of an interview guide as means of collecting data. The interview guide is adapted from the study of Mwaa (2016) in which he had also developed. The researchers revised Mwaa's original questionnaire to an interview guide that is in line with the objectives of their study.

The researchers administered oral interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the responses of the participants regarding parental influence in choosing a collegiate-level course. This qualitative study employed a descriptive research design consisting of questions in line with assessing the influence of parents/parental figures in the career decision-making process of the students. Since the contents of the interview guide aim to satisfy the objectives of the research, the use of open-ended questions was utilized to obtain the free-formatted opinions of the participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers gathered data after the approval of the Vice-President for Academics. After getting consent, the researchers started conducting the interview sessions online. Preliminary briefings and clarifications regarding the study's objectives were done before the

conduct of the interview to ensure the dissemination of clear instructions among the participants. The interview was conducted online by the researchers through Google Meet, Messenger, or Zoom. Direct calls with the participants were also utilized.

The information gathered from the interview sessions were collected for evaluation. The reliability of the results was checked using validation. No other information aside from what was being asked in the interview guide was gathered.

Data Analysis

The researchers used of thematic analysis because the data collected from the Grade 12 Senior High School students regarding their views on parental influence was interpreted into different categories. This type of analysis provided the researchers with an effective and efficient method in analyzing and classifying the participants' responses from the interview sessions.

The researchers analyzed the transcribed audio-recorded data from the interviews by focusing on the statements which had bearing on answering the research gap and meeting the objectives. Notable statements were assessed for coding and generation of themes. The answers containing common ideas were then categorized into a theme. The researchers were able to identify the four major themes. These were then used to plot an interpretation of how students view parental influence in their career choices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

THEME 1. Influence from Parental Occupations Serving as Inspiration

Being raised in households where individuals are given multiple opportunities to watch their parents' work can open the students' minds early on the basics of a certain career, thus inducing an influence on their occupational choices. Results of the study revealed that 16 or 53% of the

participants view parental occupations as an inspiration in pursuing a career in the same field.

Parents are among those who hold a major impact on the occupational decisions of students (Howard & Walsh, 2010; Mwaa, 2016). Students having close relations with someone who thrives and is successful in their line of work can induce a positive contribution to their self-efficacy beliefs to pursue a course in the same field (Godwin et al., 2014). The results of this study revealed that students see their parents' occupations as an influence that serves as inspiration in their career choices.

The approach of parents on career decisions affects the decidedness and career aspirations of individuals because family is an important determinant when it comes to variables that can influence a student's choice of profession (Amani & Mkumbo, 2018; Udoh & Sanni, 2012; Restubog et al., 2010, as cited in Xing & Rojewski, 2018). According to the participants, being able to watch their parents and learn about their experiences opened their minds to the basics of certain careers, thus inspiring them to follow the same vocational path. Parental support and encouragement, in general, have been reported to be more prominent in exerting influence on students' career options compared to other vocational-specific conducts (Keller & Whiston, 2008; Palos & Drobot, 2010). They viewed it as a means of having a source of knowledge and background information regarding the line of work they are to pursue in the future. Students generally seek the opinions of their parents for guidance in their chosen career paths (Simmons, 2008). The participants of the study shared that through exposure and influence on the occupations of their parents, they can have an outlet for pieces of advice relevant to their career choices. Occupational behaviors parents exhibit in front of their children affect the adolescents' sequential scheming in pursuing a course, as it is often connected with the students' choice to pursue a career in line with their family firm (Udoh & Sanni, 2012; Schroder & Rodermund, 2013).

THEME 2. Career Satisfaction in Occupational Choices

Perceived parental support and influence affect the career decisiveness of students by inducing personal contentment on their career choices from the evident sustenance of parents. The findings of this study revealed that 16 or 53% of the participants were able to feel satisfied with their occupational choice after seeing their parents' support and influence.

The findings of the study reveal that the participants were able to feel satisfied with their career choices from the influence of their parents' support on their vocational development. They also stated that the parental approval they gain when their parents show encouragement in their choice of career makes them feel secured and satisfied about the profession they are going to pursue. The degree of control parents has over their children may be dependent on the relationship between a parent and a child (Jungen, 2008). Therefore, students who felt parental attachment were reported to find choosing a profession to pursue easier and more efficient (Emmanuelle, 2009; Cenkseven-Önder et al., 2010). The participants were able to see evident career support on the parental influence inflicted on their occupational decisions. With this, a firm resolve and decisiveness towards occupational options and career aspirations are achieved by them. Thus, this research was built on existing evidence of familial influences, particularly that of the parents' significant and dominant impact on their child's decisions, being critical in properly shaping the vocational paths of individuals and ensuring their success later in life (Perry et al., 2010; Sawitri et al., 2014; Guan et al., 2015; Kaur & Singh, 2019; Akhlaq & Kazi, 2017; Ma & Yeh, 2010). With this, motivation, encouragement, and support coming from the parents are said to be directly associated with a person's occupational efficacy and decisiveness in choosing a career. Good parent-child relationships are driven by an individual's positive relations to pursue a career which will gain the favor of further strengthening the familial bond they have with their parents.

THEME 3. Assistance in Career Decision

Parents often know what is best for their children, and in this case, parental influence assisted the career decisiveness of the students. The findings of the study revealed that 25 or 83% of the participants have a common perspective where they saw the advantages and disadvantages of parental influence as factors that helped them in deciding what course to pursue in the future. Participants find parental influence to assist them in their career decisions by helping them to weigh out the career options, listing the courses they can take, and know what is good and bad for them.

The weight of career decisions must not be disregarded in an individual's life as it depicts the future of the said person. Parents can exert influence over their children's career paths by using positive influences or enforcing certain behaviors that can either assist or dissuade their children's specific desires and/or skills (Kumar, 2016). Results of the study have shown that parental influence has helped the participants in deciding the career they want to pursue. Whether it may be advantageous or disadvantageous, it helped them to weigh out the pros and cons of choosing a certain career and whether that career is truly for them. This finding supports the study by Godwin et al. (2014) which states that the influence of family relatives in a specific line of work exerted a positive influence on the career choice of interviewed participants by serving as their "role models" in the course they planned to take. This is also in agreement with the study of Hashim and Embong (2015), where it was revealed that the parental and peer influences help students in their career decision in the field of accountancy although the parents' influence had more of an impact and importance. Parents, led by other family members, offered meaningful learning opportunities through their role models and supportive practices that aided in exploring career desires, according to Ferry (2006). Parents have a strong influence on the career choices of their children (Jungen, 2008; Tziner et al., 2012 in Tillman, 2015) which means that parents should keep in mind that they have a big role in the overall career development of their children and that they should exert a positive influence on their children.

Furthermore, the active engagement of the individual's parents in their career decision-making process contributes to creating stable and precise career choices. This means that the involvement of parents in the career development of their children is rather significant in helping them arrive at a career decision. The support and advice of their parents also made it easier for students to arrive at a career decision and become satisfied with their choice of collegiate courses. The study of Sebald (1989), as cited by Clutter (2010), supports this idea wherein adolescents turn to their parents most of the time when in need of information about career planning and preparation.

THEME 4: Pressure-Induced Decision from Parental Career Expectations

The career expectations of parents can induce pressure on the career decisions of students especially if they come from a family with a specific occupational background and history of professions. Fourteen (14) out of 30 participants stated that they often feel inclined and pressured to pursue the same course as their family and relatives to meet parents' expectations.

The outcome of the study indicates that a burden is placed on the participants on meeting the expectations of their relatives especially if they come from a family with a history of professions in a specific line of work. Participants shared that since they come from specific family backgrounds, there is already a set of expectations on the career they are to pursue in the future. Adolescents tend to not want to disappoint their family's expectations of the career path they are going to take by choosing a profession that is liked to their business instead of following a personal interest that may lead to a course outside their family's firm (Rodermund & Schroder, 2013; Edwards & Quinter, 2012; Alika, 2010).

However, this influence affected the participants' career choices by inducing pressure to meet the expectations of their parents and/or relatives. It can create a problem as it may result in the chosen career contradicting their interests. Many individuals feel pressured to choose the profession of their parents/relatives for them to be acknowledged or to meet the family's expectations. A study by Zellweger et al. (2011)

revealed that students are inclined to choose courses that show a relation with that of their family members' history of professions. With this, it is inferred that adolescents may feel pressured to disregard their ambitions and instead pursue a course that is in line with the career path of their family members (Koech, et al., 2016).

CONCLUSION

Students viewed parental influences on their occupational options as an inspiration to pursue a course in a field similar with their parents. With this information, the researchers discerned a connection between the professions of parents and the career choices of students, wherein early exposure to the basics of a certain career resulted in the participants' motivation in taking the same career path. Results of the study also showed that the interviewed students see parental influence as an aid in achieving career satisfaction on their occupational choices. Participants have said that they saw the approval of parents from the influence of their support as a means of feeling secured and satisfied on their chosen career path, thus, increasing their occupational efficacy and decisiveness in choosing a profession to pursue in the future. With this, researchers were able to conclude that participants feel satisfaction over parental intervention on their choice of career, a variable which increased their ability to form a firm resolve on occupational decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Parents and students may take the foregoing effects, both positive and negative, of parental influence in advising and coming up with a career choice to ensure proper vocational development among adolescents.
2. The parents may utilize the results of the study as a guide for their roles in students' career decision-making such as proper communication and support whenever discussing career aspirations

and opportunities with their children which must be done as well to avoid unfit professions later in life.

3. Future researchers may consider expanding the research by considering factors that affect career choices. The findings could be used as a baseline for future researchers in assessing the factors of parental influence that affect the career choice of students and its possible effects.

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