

PEER GROUP AND INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCE AS DETERMINANT FACTORS ON PUBLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' CAREER CHOICES

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ABSTRACT

The study's main goal was to look into peer and institutional influence as determinants of public university students' career choices. Institution-based cross-sectional study design was employed. A self-administered questionnaire with the Likert scale type was used. Stratified sampling techniques and simple random sampling were used in order to select 605 students. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized. The majority of respondents, 347 (57.4%), were male students, while 258 (42.6%) were female students. The result of the study indicated that only 29.3% of the students joined department of their own choice. The remaining students were forced to choose departments. The study found that institutional influence ($M=30.4$, $SD=7.5$) is the most reported factor followed by peer influence ($M=15.3$, $SD=5.1$) to affect students' career choices. Regression analysis results also revealed that peer influence and institutional influence were significant predictors of students' career choice. The government should assess students' career choices whilst restricting peer or institution pressure. Career development centres must be well-established and well-equipped at all levels of the education system.

Keywords: Career Choices, Peer Group Influence, Institutional Influence, University Students.

INTRODUCTION

The pressure of peer groups is advantageous if it transmits correct career data, but damaging if it contains inaccurate information about some occupations, leading other students to some vocations. Students may go college with particular career choices, but may change their career because of their interaction with their peers who provide them with extensive information about their vocations.

The extent to which graduate students affect course selection is determined by a research done by. Students realize they agree that they must be supported by other professional peers. Because their coworkers provide them job advise or encourage them to pursue their goals. In general, kids require peers since they may improve their skills as individuals to have an idea and make a quick decision.

The impact of peers groups on profession choices is essential among students. In their pick of field of study, students encountered different elements that involve decision-making and interest, peer influence, institutional concerns, and future jobs. These factors influenced students in choosing a certain fields study in higher education. The decision on the place, educational facilities and costs and career opportunities in the university incorporates institutional influence.

Career choice is a difficult option for students because it defines the type of employment they choose to pursue in life (Edwards & Quinter, 2011). Making a professional decision is a watershed moment in every student's life. Students must evaluate a number of aspects before

making a career option because it will have a long-term impact on their lives. The factors influencing this decision entail the interaction of numerous factors that are tightly linked (Kumar, 2016). Similarly, Peer group influence on behavior has increasingly become more prominent, with a bigger influence than that of parents; kids learn how to collaborate and socialize according to group norms and group-sanctioned forms of behavior from peers. The student's peer group can impact what he or she values, knows, wears, eats, learns, and chooses as a vocation. The extent of this influence, however, is determined by other contextual factors such as student age and personality, as well as the composition of the peer group (Tope, 2011)

Hashim & Embong (2015) reveal that the group of students is the most powerful source of impact on profession choices. Students are easily swayed by their friends since they rely on friends to validate their job choices. According to Okon & Archibong (2015) it is necessary, then, that students be appropriately directed in their choice of vocation, because such choices are based on encouragement, influence of peers, prestige, professional worth and sex in light of the above. This will help the student to choose the courses in which they have aptitude.

Other investigations have refuted the idea that peer influence on behavior eventually becomes more prominent, and that peer groups have an even bigger influence on students' job choices. Mtemeri, (2020) defines formalized peer group serves as a barometer for students who are assessing themselves and their sentiments about themselves and their families in relation to their profession decision.

The student who has no knowledge of his/her parent's endeavours could well be inspired by his/her student within to try to emulate his/her parent's dreams and aspirations, for illustration, by selecting this same department of Scientific inquiry & gains experience prefers to be either a n ally might very well definitely implement that which his/her companion requested through confusion.

Peers were also impacted by introductions or questions about their objectives.

Research shows that students around the world encounter a number of problems while picking or even deciding on their professional paths. Igbinedion (2011) conducted a research on Nigerian youth suggested that most young people ended up in the wrong professions, because they lacked instruction on how to build their careers.

For most individuals, career growth is a permanent thing that helps them settle in a job they do without shifting to other occupations in quest of the fulfilment they may require or expect in a job, and this has a huge impact on their development in regard to jobs they do.

Igbinedion (2011) defined peer influence as a way in which teenagers talk together and the result can influence the outcome. Peer group impact was one of the elements that influenced the jobs that teenagers pursued rather than the courses that they took at the university level or even middle level colleges. Peers frequently discussed overcrowded curricula in some courses, as well as complexities in topic pairings that led to science-oriented professions that were mostly aimed at men and not intended for women (Mtemeri, 2020).

Ming (2010) also found in various studies that the institution's location and opinions of other people like parents, friends, teachers and others have a considerable moderating effect on the way students decide to study at universities. Mubaira & Fatoki (2012) found that the way students make their choices regarding which university to choose from, had a significant impact on accessibility to educational facilities like ICT, cultural diversity, partnerships in the world, institutional social life, the admissibility requirements, flexible modes of study, and the attractive campus.

Institutional considerations have a major impact on the field choice of students to attend university. The institutional facts demonstrated during the study include the location of the institution, the quality of its staff, the quality of its supply, the image and reputation of the institution, the quality of its training facilities and its job prospects, career fairs and advertising strategies (Rudhumbu et al., 2017).

Graduate unemployment has been steadily increasing, and this trend is expected to continue. Despite the government's efforts to integrate skill-oriented training programs into secondary and higher education throughout the country, the unemployment rate is steadily rising. As a result, young teenagers must make professional decisions that will provide them a competitive advantage. Unfortunately, most students do not have access to career advisers as a result of this circumstance, many students have entered careers for which they lack aptitude, personality, or interest. They lack self-confidence and the ability to make independent career decisions (Mtemeri, 2020). This is the primary goal of this research. It is now vital to explore the function of peer group and institutional influence in career selection.

The entrance of students into different university degrees in the education system depends on the performance of students in the ECSE exam. Those that excel in academics go on to study engineering, medicine, law, finance, and accounting, among other fields. Those who do not perform well, on the other hand, are enrolled in different fields of study. This means that students who do not acquire their first choice of major will be obliged to seek a different subject of study.

As a result, this research attempted to fill the void left by students' poor employment choices. In this regard, the goal of this research was to look into how peer and institutional influences influenced Ambo University students' career choices. In addition, this study tried to answer the following basic research questions; a) what is the level of peer influence and institutional influence on career choice b) Is there any relationship between influence of peer and institutional influence between socio-demographic variables of the students in their career choices c), and is there any predicting variable on peer and institutional influence on career choice?

METHODS

Study Area and Period

The study was conducted in Ambo University from February to April 2018. The university has four campuses namely, Ambo main campus, Awaro campus in Ambo town, Guder campus and Waliso campus. In 2018/19 the university has a total of 16,188 regular undergraduate students. From this 9,678 were male and 6510 were female's students respectively.

Design of the Study

Institutional-based cross-sectional study design was employed to collect data with the purpose of depicting the features of career choice.

Population

All Ambo University undergraduate regular students are the source population.

Sample Size Determination

Sample size is calculated using single population proportion formula with an assumption of confidence level of 95%, margin of error of 5% and 50.6% proportion of career information is taken from the study done in MaddaWalabu University.

Accordingly,

$$N = \frac{(Z1/2)^2 xp(1-p)}{(d)^2}$$

Description:

n= required sample size

z=confidence level at 95% (standard value of 1.96)

p = estimated prevalence of the variable within the research population (50.6%)

m = margin of error at 5% (standard value of 0.05)

Calculation:

$$N = \frac{(Z1/2)^2 xp(1-p)}{(d)^2}, \quad n = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.49)(1-0.49)}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

Because of multi-stage sampling a design effect of 1.5 considered and 5% non-response rate, $N=384*1.5=576$, $576+ (576*0.05)=576 + 29=605$.

Sampling Procedure

These primary participants comprised of regular undergraduate attended Ambo University, while the study sample included of individuals chosen for this research with simple random sampling. The sample size was calculated using a single population proportion calculation with the following assumptions: a 50% proportion of career development, a 95% confidence, a margin of error of 0.05, a design effect of 1.5, and a 10% non-response rate. Finally, the sample sizes of 605 were calculated using the following formula: The respondents were divided into two groups: those who were healthy and those who were not. Seven colleges, two institutes, one and school were randomly selected from the faculty's total of nine non health school / college (main campus) one and medical and health disciplines faculty (main campus). The study's overall sample size was allocated proportionally to the schools/colleges. Samples for schools/colleges were distributed proportionally for the stratified class year under the departments of selected schools/colleges. The proportional stratified sampling principles were used in the sample selection process. This is done by allocating a fraction or percentage of the sample to each acuity that is proportional to their population. Simple random sampling was used to select the departments, with a proportional sample allocated to each department's class year.

Data Collection Methods and Instrument

To obtain relevant and accurate data, the questionnaire was employed that had previously been used by researchers in the field. Self-administered questionnaire was used to gather data. The data collecting was supervised by lecturers from various colleges at the university. The surveys were created in English initially, and then translated into Afan Oromo and Amharic to accommodate the respondents. Facilitators of information collection are proficient in both Afan Oromo and Amharic. Ouano et al. (2019) Self-administered standardized questionnaire were employed with five Linkert scale (1: Agree, 2: strongly Disagree, 3: Not sure, 4: Strongly Agree, 5: Disagree) for Peer influence scale 10-Items and institutional influence scale 9-items. Pilot study was carried out in order to check validity and reliability of the tools. Cronbach's alpha is a

convenient test used to estimate the reliability, the cronbach alpha value of peer group influence was acceptable 0.76 and institutional influence was good 0.8.2.

VARIABLES

Dependent Variables

Career Choices (Peer group and Institutional Influence)

Independent Variables

Socio demographic factors like sex, age, and family education status, family employment, and year of study.

Data Analysis Techniques

For analysis, data was entered into SPSS Windows version 20.0. The researchers employed both descriptive and analytical methodologies. Statistics have been used to present the descriptive analysis, such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation. To examine the frequent factor of peer group and institutional effects on filed selections. A regression analysis conducted to evaluate the average component related to group & institutional impact in life choice. To identify correlations between variables, bivariate correlation analysis was utilized. To discover the predictors of research variables, multivariable analytics have been used to counterbalance various confusers. A p-value of 0.05 has been used to assess the explanatory and dependent variables.

Ethical Considerations

The Ambo academic research review board accepted these ethical issues. The aims of the study were fully communicated to the respondents before to giving the questionnaire, and oral informed agreement was obtained. All across the study's conduct confidentially was preserved. Participants were informed that their participation was entirely optional, that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they so desired, and that this would have no effect on any service or benefit they received from any institution.

RESULT

S.No	Variable	N	%
1	Gender	Male	347 57.4
		Female	258 42.6
2	Age	18-20	336 55.5
		21-23	269 44.5
3	Education of Mother	Primary	325 53.7
		Secondary	124 20.5
		College	98 16.2
		University	57 9.4
		Uneducated	1 0.2
4	Education of Father	Primary	196 56.6
		Secondary	60 17.3
		College	61 17.7

		University	29	8.4
5	Employment Mother	General Laborer	104	17.2
		Professional	126	20.6
		Self -Employed	274	45.3
		Never -Employed	100	16.5
		Farmer	1	0.2
6	Employment Father	General Laborer	84	13.9
		Professional	238	39.3
		Self -Employed	171	28.3
		Never -Employed	111	18.3
		Farmer	1	0.2
7	Academic Year level	First Year	112	18.5
		Second Year	253	38.8
		Third Year	156	25.8
		Fourth Year	102	16.9

The above table shows the socio-demographic variables of the respondents, 347 (57.4 %) of whom were undergraduate respondents and 258 (42.6%) of whom were female students. In relation to the frequency of respondents aged 18-20, the age range was 336 (55.5%). The remaining students, who ranged in age from 21 to 23, totalled 269 (44.5 %). In term of respondents' family education levels, 325 (53.7%) all mothers obtained primary education, whilst also 124 (20.5%) finished school. The educational status of participants from dads was 196 (56.6 %) finished primary school. In terms of respondents' employment status, 274 (45.3 %) had self-employed, while 126 had professional (20.6%).

S.No	Variables	N	%
1	Before Primary	5	0.8
2	Before Secondary	141	23.3
3	At secondary	222	36.7
4	At preparatory	169	27.9
5	At university	68	11.2
Total		605	100

As depicted in Table 2, students decided about their career they want to pursue at secondary school 222 (36.7%), at preparatory level 169 (27.9%), before secondary school 141 (23.3%) and 68 (11.2%). This implies that majority of the students select their field of interest at secondary school.

Analysing Factors Influencing Career Choice

The first objective of this research was to analyse level of students' career choice. To analyse this objective descriptive analysis was carried out.

Variable	Yes	No
	n %	n %
Career Choice	177(29.3)	428(70.7)

Table 3 indicates that only 29.3% of the students join department of their own choice whereas majority (70.7%) of them joined the field without their choice. This implies that students entered their current department without their choice.

S.NO	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Peer Influence	15.3	5.1
	Institutional Influence	30.4	7.5

As it is revealed in the Table 4, Institutional Influence (M=30.4, SD=7.5) is the most prevalent factor followed by peer influence (M=15.3, SD=5.1) affecting students' career choice.

Factors	High		Medium		Low	
	N	%	n	%	N	%
Institutional Influence	205	(33.9)	226	(37.4)	174	(28.8)
Peer Influence	205	(35.8)	213	(35.2)	187	(30)

Descriptive statistics analysis was conducted to assess of institutional influence which indicates that 33.9% of the respondents perceived highly and 37.4% of them perceived it at medium level. The rest 28.8% had low level of perception regarding institutional influence on career choice (see table 5). In the same table (5), 33.9% of participants considered peer impact on career choice to be at a high level, while 35.2% perceived peer influence for career choice it's at a moderate level.

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between each associated factors and students' career choice of Ambo university students. In order to determine whether there is significant relationship between each associated factors and students' career choice, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis was performed as presented in Table 6.

The analysis results demonstrates that there was statistically significant and strong relationship between Institutional influence and students' career choice $r=0.755^*$, $p < 0.001$ and also there was statistically significant and strong relationship between peer influence and students' career choice $r=0.672$, $p < 0.001$.

	Sig.	Constant	R
Peer influence	5.272	0.672	0.000
Institutional influence	5.544	0.755	0.000
** P < 0.001			

Regression Analysis of Associated Factors and Career Choice

One of the objectives of this study was to analyze which factors of career choice had more influence on students' career choice among students of Ambo University. Linear regression analysis was conducted to ascertain the extent to each factors of career choice can predict students' career choice. Table 7 indicates ($R^2=0.043$) 43% variation in students' career choice was due to Peer influence. Regression analysis results also revealed peer influence was positive

and significant predictor of students' career choice, $\beta=0.021$, $p<0.001$. The beta value reveals that for every unit increase in peer influence, the model predicts a decrease of 0.021 in students' career choice. Variation due to Institutional influence in students' career choice was ($R^2=0.57$)57% and for every unit increase in Institutional influence, there is an increase of 0.77(β) in students' career choice.

	Constant R	R²	B	Sig.
Peer influence	5.272	0.672	0.451	0.634
Institutional influence	5.544	0.575	0.57	0.77
** P < 0.001				

DISCUSSION

When students enter a field of study that they do not want to be in, they will be unable to perform effectively and thrive in their academic or future job lives. Similarly, as Kweyama (2016) points out, if erroneous and forced choices are made from the start, it is highly unlikely that a learner will be satisfied with their career path.

This means that the most fundamental element in influencing student job choices is institutional influence. The findings are aligned with Joseph (2010) arguing that institutional elements which affect the choice of career of more students in universities are relevant for the planned labour market for the recruiting of students from different higher educations.

Based on this finding, we can conclude that students regarded both elements approximately equally, despite the fact that peer influence was higher relative to institutional impact. This result is contradict with Brown (2002) study, which said that the essence of who the student wants to be in the future revolves around what the student wants to do with their life-long employment.

The necessity for adequate career advice and development are recognized by parents, teachers, peer pressure, society and the government as a whole. Similarly, a study conducted in 2014 by Hashim & Embong (2015) indicated that the effect of peers influenced students in the choice of job and in most cases the decision of their area depends on the perception of students that most people who believe they should be behavioral or not.

This is supported in Igbinedion's (2011) claims that peer groups were the least positioned element influencing students' profession choices. As students communicate, they exchange critical information about job options with peers and friends. Friends or other students inspire students to continue their careers. The survey also showed that peer group influence on career choice is an important element when students choose their field of study.

According to the findings of this study, students' career choices are influenced by their classmates. This is compatible with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which asserts that peers are sources of social learning because they model and sanction behaviors and serve as comparing standards for assessing and validating personal efficacy (Getachew & Daniel, 2016). Other classmates and friends were viewed as giving career education that had the potential to impact their peers.

The preceding assumption is compatible with earlier research, such as Hashim & Embong (2015) in Malaysia and Mtemeri (2020) in Kenya, which established that career

education is influenced by peers. This finding is congruent with the findings of Abbasi & Sarwat (2014) and James & Denis (2015) in Uganda, who claimed that friends and peers impact students' job choices. This study result was relevant to the study conducted by Hashim & Embong (2015), which found that (82.65 %) of students believed that their peer group has a greater influence on their profession decision.

CONCLUSION

From finding of the study the following conclusion was made. Few students join different field of study by their own interest. However, majority of the respondents forced to join different field. More than half of the students were influenced by institutions. Regarding the prevalent factor, the most prevalent was institutional influence play a great role in students' career choice. In addition, peer influence was found to be prevalent factor which influences students' career choice. The findings indicated that there was statistically significant and strong relationship between peer influence and students' career choice.. The further revealed that, peer influence was positive and significant predictor of students' career choice. Students' careers choice was under the influence of certain factors that are ideal to their occupational lives.

RECOMMENDATION

The study result implies that effective career guidance and counseling could help students to be free of peer influence and this enabled them to be able to make right career choices. The study recommended that university counselors should provide a systematic approach in helping all students with the career choice process.

Development of well nurtured career counseling department should be established in Ambo University to help our students with career counseling.

1. Provide training on career choice that enhance students minimize level of peer and institutional influence.
2. The government educational policy should consider peer and institutional influence on student's future career life.
3. There must be well established and furnished career development centre from elementary school to higher institution.

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