

Original Research Article

Determining psycho-Social Trends on Career Aspiration among Post Graduate Students in the University of Buea, Cameroon

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Abstract

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This study investigated the effect of social influence on career aspiration of students in the University of Buea. The objectives were; to examine the influence of gender roles on student's career aspiration amongst post graduates, to investigate the influence of Compliance on student's career aspirations amongst post graduate students, to determine the role of Persuasion on student's career aspiration among post graduate students. Based on the nature of the research objectives and questions, the research design adopted for this study was the survey research design particularly the descriptive. The study used a sampled size of 30 using purposive sampling technique. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis which required the transcription of interview recordings and followed coding stages. Initially, the authors read and re-read transcripts in order to identify potential themes. The result showed that social influence has a great influence on student's career aspirations. Based on this finding, it was recommended that school counsellors and teachers should try and encourage students to seek information on career choice rather than parading peer advice and also sufficient information about careers should be made available to students. We also recommend that primary schools should have counselors, to mold the students at a tender age, to choose a career path and grow in it. When they are oriented at this gender age, they tend to focus on a career path and cannot be easily influenced out of it. Schools and universities should encourage sensitization on campuses to create their awareness for the need of career counseling. Many students are not aware of the services of a guidance counselor.

Keywords: Compliance, Gender role, Persuasion and Career aspiration

INTRODUCTION

Choosing a career is an extremely important decision that impacts an individual's entire future. Navin (2009) has suggested that exploring career options before committing to a career increases future career success and satisfaction. Sociologists stress the forces in our society as the major determinant of career choice. Some consider the birth right of the individual as a most significant factor in career choice since it establishes the family, race, nationality, social class, gender, residential district and to a large extent the educational and cultural

opportunity for the person. Sociologists argue that the range of occupations that an individual will consider in choosing a career is determined largely by the status expectations of the social class to which he belongs (Friesen cited in Sani, 2017).

Given that career indecision is a major concern for emerging adults, researchers must address from where the inability to make choices and explore one's environment stems. For the scope of this paper, career exploration is the purposeful, active examination process

of potential career opportunities, while career indecision is the inability to commit to or make career-related decisions. Past research has found relationships between career indecision, environmental exploration, self-esteem, and attachment relationships (Ketterson and Blustein, 1997; Vignoli, 2009). Securely attached adolescents are more likely to take positive risks when exploring their environment than insecurely attached adolescents. Secure attachment allows an adolescent to comfortably explore nontraditional career alternatives and opportunities.

This Research currently focuses on the social influence on student's career aspirations. This study is to test the influences families, neighborhood, peers, culture, models or media have on students' career aspirations. According to Bandura, 1977, students observe their peers, parents, models and other significant others and imitate them. Therefore, students tend to follow their peers and significant others to a career part that's not meant for them, they are just following the crowd without a purpose. We want to find out if the students are in their right career path, are they satisfied with their choices of career.

Contextualizing Social Influence

Social influence occurs when one's emotions, opinions, or behaviors are affected by others. Social influence takes many forms and can be seen in conformity, socialization, peer pressure, obedience, Compliance, gender roles, Persuasion. Research now informs us that job choice decisions may also be based on social comparisons and social influence. One cannot separate the individual and society. The young person cannot develop their career without experiencing and reacting to societal influence. And neither is the young person's career something that evolves at the whim of society's pressures alone. The individual receives information from society and processes this to develop personal attitudes. Secondly, wider society creates rules. Members of that society follow these rules to be 'in' the group. So if the young person has a weak personal attitude, society will easily force conformance, effectively limiting options and making decisions for the young person.

Career indecision has become a major concern of career psychologists, practitioners, researchers, and educators (Gaffner and Hazler, 2002; Vignoli, 2009). The inability to make career related decisions is a common occurrence for adolescents and young adults (Braunstein-Bercovitz et al., 2012). Past research has noted that exploring, selecting, and committing to a career choice is a major developmental task of young adults (Erikson, 1968; Vignoli, 2009). Early adulthood is the developmentally appropriate time one must begin to make career related decisions, plans, and choices (Vignoli, 2009). In the past, career indecision was not a

major concern because people were not being pushed to revise their career decisions, as they are currently (Gaffner and Hazler, 2002). For example, today's society strives for success, which is usually tied to wealth. Young adults might be forced to reevaluate their career decisions due to low earning potentials in their future careers.

Past research has examined the impact of family influences and parental attachment on the career exploration process (Blustein et al., 1995; Braunstein-Bercovitz et al., 2012; Germeijs and Verschueren, 2009; Ketterson and Blustein, 1997; Vignoli, 2009; Wright and Perrone, 2010). Other research has focused on the relationship between career developments and peers (Felsman and Blustein, 1999). This study will focus on the influence of familial and peer interactions and self-efficacy on young adults' career exploration processes.

This research was to investigate how social factors influence the career exploration and decision-making processes of students in the University of Buea.

According to Gaffner and Hazler (2002), between 20 and 60 percent of emerging adults are undecided in regard to college majors and future career choices. Students with a declared major also experience uncertainty with choices made; many college students start their college careers without an idea as to why they have chosen their major (Tinto, as cited in Allen, 1999).

In order to advise students in the career exploration process, there must be an understanding of the factors contributing to students' inability to make career related decisions. One research study examining the risks and benefits of adolescent work found that some young adults graduate from college without any idea as to what their career path is (Mortimer, 2012). Exploring family, social, and individual factors and how these factors influence career exploration will assist in the guidance of young adults struggling with career indecision and exploration.

Career choices are one of the biggest dilemmas and challenges in any student's life. It involves interplay of many factors which are intricately intertwined. It is not a straightforward task and involves a difficult process of decision making. According to Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorell I (2001) an individual's environment talents, skills and academic achievement exert an influence on career choice. In case of a wrong choice, it may lead to resultant failure and disappointment. Research shows homes, schools and the social setup influence an individual's career choices. Financial prospects influence the career choice of students in the University of Buea. It has been proven as determinants of career choice (Ferry, 2006). Educational level of parents, their profession and income are also identified as very important factors (Hearn 1984, 1988). Every student at a certain juncture in their life has to make a choice regarding their career. It is incumbent that students make the correct choice, asserts Oladele (as cited in Nyarko-Sampson 2013). This will make them more poised,

stable, and endowed with a pleasant countenance. Consequently, it will lead to knitting a better fabric for society.

Unfortunately, career choices are made with little awareness of the real world (Caplow, as cited in Bright et al., 2005). Students make crucial decisions at a stage when they may not be fully informed of their choices, or else unavoidable circumstances prevent them from pursuing their goals. Thus, counsellors can play a positive role in guiding them to make informed choices. Being interested in a particular profession is very important in decision making. If a student is forced into a career, he may exhibit low self-esteem and poor performance. Suutari (2003) reports that several studies have indicated a positive relationship between interests and career choice. It has also been investigated that individuals with better academic performance are able to make better judgments about themselves (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). Herbart (2005) opines that a child coming from an environment where he/she receives parental support and lives harmoniously is more likely to be dictated by them. In such a scenario, a child's occupational aspiration is most likely to be influenced by the parents' profession. Research reports career choices are greatly influenced by students' surroundings, society and family etc (Gim, 1992; Leong 1995).

In his analysis, Watts (1996) concluded that developing countries direct their students into careers according to the country's needs. Professions have varying degrees of acceptability in different cultures which also influences an individual's career choice (Kerka, 2003). Socioeconomic factors, therefore, are also important in motivating the students to make career decisions (Sukovieff, 1989). A comprehensive study by Ngesi (2003) reports that students from poor socio-economic backgrounds made wrong career decisions, and chose professions which required a short duration of training, primarily due to financial constraints. As the old adage goes, nothing succeeds like success; similarly, a student who fares well academically has better career prospects and choices as compared to the struggling ones. Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler (2000) assert that a well-read person has more information related to career choice, and reads more to make the crucial decision. Thus, their decisions are likely to be correct and wise. The role of parents in the lives of children is undeniable. Olayinka (2005) asserts that it so happens that parents have pre-determined the careers for their wards, and only serve to steer them in that direction. In other research, it is elaborated that the attitude of parents and the influence of the home environment influences a child's career path. Similarly, parents' education has been proven as a factor influencing career choice (Grissmer, 2003; Ogunlade, 1973).

Research supports the position that parents' education is linked with the students' career choice. Literature reports that parents' educational level is the most

important factor in students' career decisions (Grissmer, 2003; Ogunlade, 1973). The results uphold that parents are a child's first teacher, and thus they have the role of a guide, advisor and counsellor in their lives. Bladeless cited in Nyarko-Sampson (2013) explains that parents exert emotional pressure on their wards regarding the choice of careers. They make independent consultations regarding the career they think is most suitable for their children. The child's preferences are never a matter of concern for them. A study by Mickelson and Velasco (1998) shows that mothers have a stronger influence on their children as compared to their fathers.

Statement of the Problem

A career is traditionally seen as a course of successive situations that make up a person's effort life. Students are trying to seek for those careers which would ultimately lead them to achieve fairly in life. Career choice is a major life decision and most students make career choices due to influence from peers, parents and the environment in which they live; and after a long peruse, they eventually discover that the career wasn't meant for them and end not performing well in their academic, some become unstable, others dissatisfied with their choices because of social influence. Therefore, the study aim at investigating the causes and effect of social influence on career choices and measures that can be taken to curb student's indecisions

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the influence of gender roles on student's career aspiration amongst post graduates in the University of Buea.
- To investigate the influence of Compliance on student's career aspirations amongst postgraduate students in the University of Buea.
- To determine the role of Persuasion on student's career aspiration among post graduate students in the University of Buea.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender Role

In the past, gender roles in the workforce have been uneven and unfair (Bronstein and Farnsworth, 1998). Women usually had lower paying jobs than men (Bronstein and Farnsworth, 1998). Currently the playing fields between the two are more even. However, when looking at the workforce you can still find men and women in stereotypical job fields (Greenwood, 1999). Studies have shown that young men and women have

different styles when it comes to choosing a career (Mihyeon, 2009). Men have a more liberal and progressive style of thinking. Women prefer a hierarchical style of thinking (Mihyeon, 2009).

Gender also influences individuals' career experiences. Women face unique barriers in the workplace, which, in turn, shapes their work and organizational experiences. One barrier consists of practices that intentionally or unintentionally exclude women from jobs and developmental experiences based on gender. This includes overt sex discrimination in hiring, being overlooked for high-visibility or high-stakes job assignments, and not being targeted for domestic or international relocation opportunities.

Gender differences are also found in developmental assignments after individuals are hired by organizations. Women are more likely to be hired into staff positions and have less access to line experience, which is often a stepping stone to higher-level management positions. Women tend to report that their initial job assignments are less challenging than men's assignments. In addition, unlike jobs that tend to be held by women, jobs held by men tend to exist in job ladders that lead to positions of greater power and influence.

Gender also influences access to information within organizations. Men tend to be more politically connected and have access to more powerful organizational members than do women. This has posed a problem on student career choice as they are in search of jobs that will suit their gender.

Patriarchy is a social and ideological construct which considers men as superior to women (Rawat, 2014). Walby (1990) describes patriarchy as a social system in which men hold authority over women, children, and property. Patriarchy encourages male leadership, male domination, and male power. It is a system in which women are subject to economic dependence, violence, domestication, and the peripherals of decision-making. It imposes structures that categorize some types of work as 'men's work' and some as 'women's work' (Reardon, 1996).

Generally, gender inequality, sexism, and male domination, *inter alia*, are characteristics of a patriarchal society (Smith, 1990; Sugarman and Frankel, 1996). Consequently, these characteristics have hugely impacted various institutions, including marriage and family (Makama, 2013). In African culture, for example, women, regardless of their status and professions, are responsible for domestic responsibilities such as household chores, bearing and raising children, doing the laundry, cooking, etc. The domestic role of women in African culture is fundamental to the sustainability of marriage. Women play the traditional roles that are recognized by their society as well as other economic and social roles. Harriden (2012) pointed out that women are not confined to domestic roles; rather, they can seek positions of public authority. However, women face many

challenges in their attempts to achieve WLB. They are expected to perform certain roles arising from the religious and cultural obligations that are associated with their gender. This gives rise to conflict between a woman's work and her traditional role in the family. This has a significant effect on male and female presentations in different careers thus, posing a problem on career choice.

Corel (2004) adds that cultural beliefs about gender accord men higher status in society than women. These status beliefs can evoke gender differentiated standards for attributing performance to ability, which provides a differentiated bias of self-assessments that men and women make of their own competence at career-relevant tasks. This situation occurs especially when there are widely held beliefs in culture attaching greater social value and competence with one category of the attribute. For example, men being matched with doctors whereas women are nurses.

Braunstein-Bercovitz et al. (2012) hypothesized that both anxious and avoidant attachment styles are positively associated with career indecision (p. 237). The researchers found that anxious attachment affected career decision-making, which may conflict with one's career experiences. However, avoidant attachment was not associated with career indecision. Participants with insecure-anxious attachment styles were more likely to report feelings of distress and maladjustment in comparison to the participants experiencing insecure-avoidant attachment (Braunstein-Bercovitz et al., 2012).

Some studies have also addressed adolescent attachment styles and how they function in regard to their family decision-making. Petegem et al. (2012) found that adolescents who reported avoidant attachment experienced less self-endorsement, and more pressuring motives, for dependent decision making; anxious attachment was associated with more independent decision-making. Adolescents reporting attachment anxiety also experienced more pressuring motives for both independent and dependent decision-making (Petegem et al., 2012).

Vignoli (2009) investigated the role of adolescent global self-esteem and career indecision on the relationship between mother and father attachment and self-esteem. The global self-esteem aspect was based upon the relationship between adolescents' parental attachment and career indecision. Parental attachment and career indecision were negatively correlated, as were self-esteem and career indecision, while parental attachment and self-esteem were positively correlated. More specifically, the results of the study showed that the more attached an adolescent felt to their mother and father, the easier it was for the adolescent to make career related decisions (Vignoli, 2009). Using longitudinal data collected from high school students, Germeijs and Verschueren (2009) examined how parental attachment security affected an adolescent's process of choosing a

college major. Selecting a college major is an important task in the career exploration process. The results of this study revealed that higher levels of secure attachment relationships benefited an individual's process of choosing a major in higher education. Also, in terms of gender, the researchers found that one's perceived attachment with his or her mother, not father, was a significant predictor of how the adolescent will cope with decision-making tasks (Germeijs and Verschueren, 2009). The results further indicated that the impact of attachment relationships on the selection process of choosing a major is similar for both boys and girls (Germeijs and Verschueren, 2009, p. 478).

A study by Gushue et al. (2006) examined career decision-making self-efficacy of urban African American students. The researchers revealed a positive correlation between career decision-making self-efficacy and career exploration activities. The students that experienced greater self-confidence in regard to career decision-making were more likely to engage in activities related to career exploration (Gushue et al., 2006). Past research has consistently supported the importance of self-efficacy in the career exploration process (Betz and Vuyten, 1997; Rogers et al., 2008). However, self-efficacy is not limited to career exploration and planning. An individual's sense of self efficacy also influences his or her career performance, persistence (Betz, 2004) and interests (Gushue et al, 2006). Given this finding, self-efficacy is a key variable in many aspects of the career selection, decision-making, and performance processes.

Compliance

Family influence is categorized as the explicit and implicit influence of the father, mother, and siblings. Parental influence is greater on undergraduate students who have not completed their degree or lived independently from their parents. Families always have a very strong impact on a person's life (Sarwar and Azmat, 2013). Parents usually tend to believe that their kids must earn a decent salary at a constant employment in order to have a happy and secure future. So, as to accomplish this, the family feels that their children must graduate from a recognized college and a prestigious university. This leads families to push their children to struggle for getting acceptance to a famous school to guarantee that their kids will have a prestigious career in the future (Napompech, 2011).

Other studies have separately examined the influences of each parent on the career choices of their sons or daughters and have found that mothers tend to have more influence on the career decisions/aspirations of their children than fathers. For instance, Mickelson and Velasco (1998) cited their interviews conducted with 70 young adults in 1986. They found that mothers were the most influential and that daughters' occupational aspirations were often similar to their mothers. Most

children accept what parents say in order to please them. Therefore, they take their parents' comments as absolute and neglect to challenge them or to assess their validity. Although parenting styles may differ, parents tend to want to do what is best for their children, and children generally pay attention to what is said by their parents. Thus, children are affected as they battle between what they want and what their parents want for them.

Persuasion

Social Cognitive Theory Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura in 1986, purports that contextual variables such as social support, which includes friends, family and relatives, influence the career choice of an individual (Choo, Norsia and Tan, 2012:22). Social persuasion also affects an individual's choice of career (Lent, Brown and Hackett, 2002:36) because there is dialogue between children and their environment. Similarly, Bandura posited that when individuals watch their peers succeeding, they are likely to believe that they can also succeed (Mills, 2009:9). In this career development model, a person's background (or contextual factors) and individual characteristics influence his/her learning experiences and consequently self-efficacy (Tang, Pan and Newmeyer, 2008:285). According to Bandura (1989:1) and Alexander, Seabi and Bischof (2010:497), because of the bi-directionality of influence between behaviour and environmental circumstances, people are both products and producers of their environment.

Theoretical Review

John L. Holland's Personality Theory

John L. Holland's theory theorizes that six (6) personality "types" can characterize both individuals and occupations: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (Holland, 1985). The more closely a person emulates a particular type, the more likely he or she is to exhibit the personal traits and behaviours associated with that type. Holland summarized the essence of his vocational theory is that people flourish in their work environment when there is a good fit between their personality type and the characteristics of the environment. Lack of congruence between personality and environment leads to dissatisfaction, unstable career paths, and lowered performance". (Holland, 1996, p. 397). This theory with respect to our study emphasizes that our personality should match with our career aspiration for personal balance and satisfaction even though contextually wise, we realize that most students do not take into consideration the personality when choosing a career

due to social influence from peers, parents, role models etc. They choose careers that lead them to unstable careers, dissatisfaction, and low performance.

Albert Bandura's theory

Children observe the people around them behaving in various ways. This is illustrated during the famous Bobo doll experiment (Bandura, 1961). Individuals that are observed are called models. In society, children are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents within the family, characters on children's TV, friends within their peer group and teachers at school. These models provide examples of behavior to observe and imitate, e.g., masculine and feminine, pro and anti-social, etc. This theory is important in the study, it explains how student's career aspirations can be influenced by social media, people they admire or look up to as role models. Students observe their peers, parents or model excelling in a career and the students will like to be like them. That is a student chooses a career because her dad is doing great in that career, and the children sometimes say "I will like to be like daddy/mommy. Therefore, most students choose and build their career via observing their influential model and are motivated towards that field.

Empirical Review

Several studies have been carried out on social influence and job aspiration. Jeffrey Mtemeri of the University of South Africa carried out a research in 2017 on the Factors influencing the choice of career pathways among high school students in midlands province, Zimbabwe. He used a survey design which was mainly quantitative in nature and self-designed questionnaire to collect data from 1010 High school students as well as 20 career guidance teachers who participated in the study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 19 calculated the percentages that were used to analyse the data. The study revealed that family members, both nucleus and extended, had an influence on students' choice of careers. The influence of mothers and fathers was rated highly as compared to other family members. The study also revealed that schools had an impact on high school students' choice of careers. Career guidance, especially school career days, was cited as having a positive impact on students' choice of careers.

In another study on The right attitude: gender, conservatism, and career choice carried out by Megan Norene Callahan of the Iowa State University in 2015 on 334 university students from undergraduate psychology courses using questionnaires and cards to collect data as well as the MANOVA and MANCOVA, she found out that gender has a significant effect on male and female presentation in different careers.

A study was carried out by Houcine Meddour and A. H. Majid Factors affecting career choice among undergraduate students in universitas Indonesia in 2016 on 298 students who responded to the questionnaire. Statistical Package software for Social Science (SPSS) Version 22.0 was used to analyse the collected data, and reliability analysis, multiple regressions, and correlation were carried out. The results of regression analysis showed that the factors of family, self-efficacy, personal interest and economic considerations exerted great influence on the choice of career. With a view to investigating a student's career choice that is affected by other important factors, further studies are strongly recommended.

From these three studies just to name a few on the factors influencing the choice of career by individuals, one can realize that most studies highlight other factors affecting student's choice of career, without taking into consideration other major factors of social influence on career choice like: compliance and persuasion, and even at the level of the study of gender role, they look it in the angle of male and female representativeness in job sites contrary to this research will want to study how the cultural beliefs as well as stereotypes about gender role might influence Postgraduate career aspiration. Again, this study contrary to previous will have as main participant the Postgraduate students in the University of Buea (Cameroon) and we will use qualitative research approach, with interview as tool for collecting data as well as use Thematic Analysis to analyse the data.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

Based on the nature of the research objectives and questions, and because we wanted to have more insight on how society influences individual's career aspiration by choosing a qualitative approach, the research design used for this study was the survey research design particularly the descriptive. This design was used for the study because the researcher aimed at collecting data on student's perception, opinions as concerned the phenomenon under investigation. Interview is the main instrument for data collection. This justifies the researcher's reason for using the descriptive research design.

Population, Sampling size and technique

The study targets the Students of the University of Buea and the accessible population are the postgraduate students. We choose the postgraduate students for this study because they are soon moving to the world of work. Again, to avoid bias and have varied opinions, students

were selected purposively. The sampling size was 30. Our participants were 30 in numbers from the post graduate. We choose 14 males and 16 females, this is because females are more than males in the University of Buea.

Methods Used to Analyze Data

This study used thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This required the transcription of interview recordings and followed coding stages. Initially, the authors read and re-read transcripts in order to identify potential themes.

FINDINGS

After interviewing 30 postgraduate students of the University of Buea (16 females and 14 males) from different faculties, and analyzing the individual themes after transcription of the interview using the thematic analyses, we had the following findings:

Career aspiration

Most of the postgraduate students expressed their aspirations to various careers or job such as becoming a teacher, psychiatrist, Engineer, Educational psychologist, Women and Gender Activist, Nurse, Journalist, Translator, Botanical Scientist, Social Worker, Counselor, Administrator, Business Lawyer, Special Educator, researcher and medical Doctor.

Gender role

For the 30 postgraduate students interviewed on the influence of gender role, that is how cultural beliefs about their role as male or female influenced their career aspiration, 20 out of 30 postgraduate students said their gender did influence their career aspiration in the following terms: Of the 20 students who agreed that their career aspiration is influenced by their gender, we have 11 females and 09 males.

They said using terms like: *"In my culture, they look at Engineering as a job for men"; "So I did it, to challenge that"; "It is best for women as it gives them enough time to take care of their household"; "Men are the breadwinners in our family and culture"; "Being a male did not affect my career"; "The role of men in my community is to carry out task which requires enormous man power which most of our women cannot do"; "Men are leaders in my community, so I took upon the task to be a leader in my field".*

We Thus realized from our finding that most postgra-

duate women's contrary to men are influenced to choose certain careers because of their gender and that most of them want to do various jobs in future either to challenge the gender stereotypes about career or to conform to these beliefs.

Compliance

Investigating how various students under study were influenced in their career aspiration either at the request of others, or following others in their choice we found out that 20 out of 30 students were influenced by others in their career aspirations; 12 of whom were female and 8 males. They expressed this in the following terms: *"I was asked by my mom and sister are nurses to choose this career"; "I want to do this career because, my aunt is a translator"; "It is the job done by most people in my family"; "It was not my dream career. My parents and background influenced my career choice"; "My parents persuaded me"; " My father was a teacher"; "It was what was what was affordable"; "My father was a medical doctor";" My uncle told me be a teacher in a technical school, as it is more lucrative"; " people in my neighborhood are lawyers"; "My grandfather encouraged me".* Again, for the influence of compliance on postgraduate job aspiration, we realize that more female students want to do careers out based on social influence at the detriment of their individual and dreamed career aspirations.

Persuasion

For postgraduates aspiring to do a future career influenced by a role model, convinced by someone or social Medias, 24 students out of 30 acknowledged that persuasion played a great role in their present aspiration. Of the 24, 13 are females' student and 11 are males. They expressed this in the following terms: *I was convinced by my father; by someone to choose this programme; by a friend, but I later loved the programme; by someone, it was my dream career; "I was persuaded by my mom"; "I was convinced by my uncle and aunt"; "I was convinced by a documentary I saw on tv on psychological disorders"; "My aunt convinced me to be a teacher"; "I admired a female journalist.*

Media also had a great influence on my career aspirations"; "I admired a Botanical Scientist lecturer. Media also influenced my career aspiration"; "I was motivated by a Gender Activist. I admired a gender Activist. Media greatly influenced my career aspiration"; "I was convinced by someone, and I admired a Social Worker Media affected my career aspiration"; "I was convinced by my elder brother and father"; "The poem in twenty frogs in Evans is the source of my inspiration"; "Nigerian movies on law is the source of my motivation";

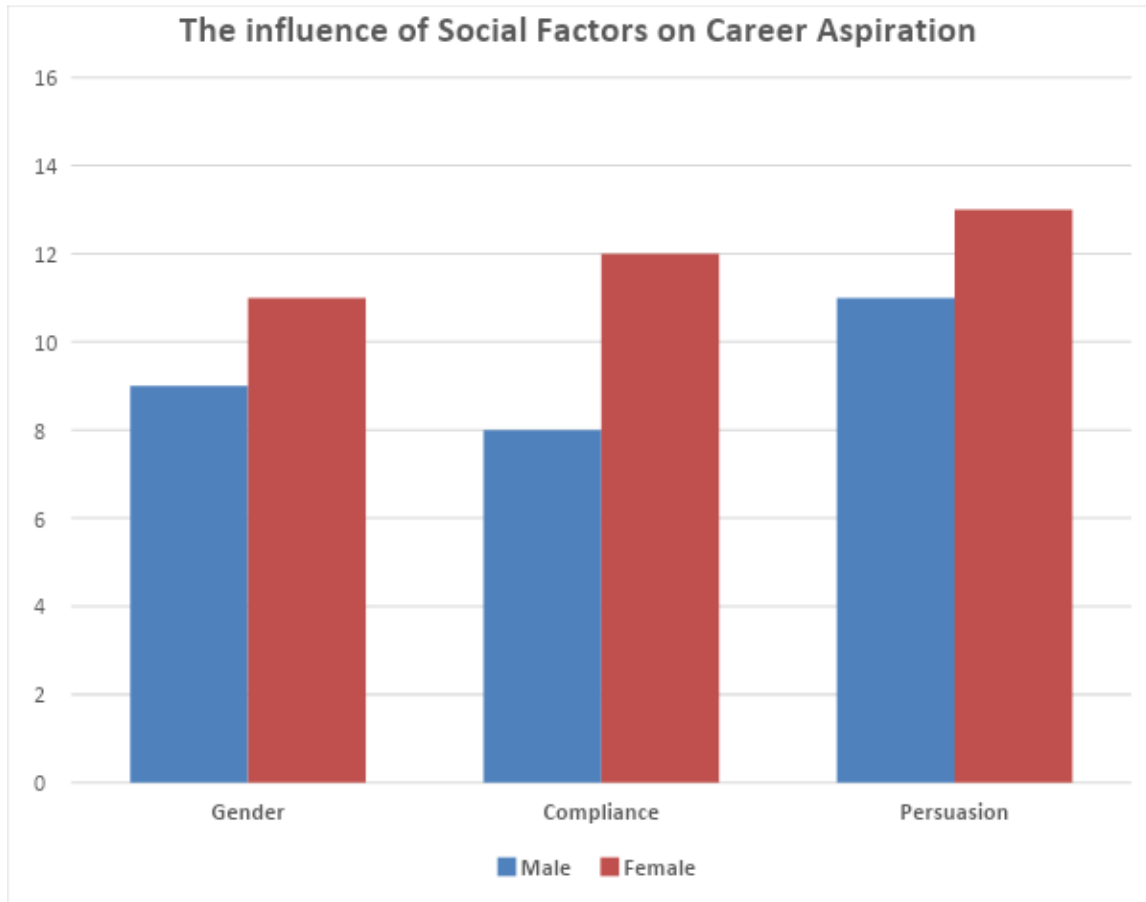


Figure 1.

"I want to be like one of my primary school teacher I admired"; "Was convinced by my brother and a lecturer. I listened to a successful story. Media has influence by providing information and connecting me to other specialists"; "Media played a role. I watched the news and admired a journalist I saw"; "I was informed about this career online".

Even for the study of the influence of persuasion on post graduate students' career aspiration, female outnumber males as far as career aspiration is concerned and it still reveals that persuasion more than any other factor of social influence makes students to aspire to choose the career they intend to do in future.

The summary of our thematic analysis on the social influence and career aspiration is illustrated in the Figure 1 above.

DISCUSSION

From the analysis that was done, most of respondents supported the fact that gender roles have influenced their career aspirations. This was supported by Puja, 1981 and Mlama, 2001, they said that Women are under-

represented in engineering and technical education due to unconscious influences in the home from parental/family opinions, cultural and social norms. The ability of girls and women is called into question: girls are discouraged from taking engineering and technical courses, since it is generally thought that these are too difficult and therefore appropriate only for men (Evans, 2006). In Africa for example, the attitude of society towards women is not supportive of women scientists, and there are stereotyped images of engineering and technical careers being incompatible with a mother's role and which, therefore, jeopardizes women's chances of getting married. These negative social attitudes create a lack of self-confidence among girls and women in their ability and motivation to opt for engineering or technical courses (Mapfumo et al., 2002). According to Bhalalusesa (2003) the school system is still dominated by gender bias. Not only are girls disadvantaged when it comes to access to education notably in the technical and engineering fields, but also in terms of the quality, relevance and appropriateness of the education and training received which reinforces the negative attitude of girls towards engineering and technical subjects and related

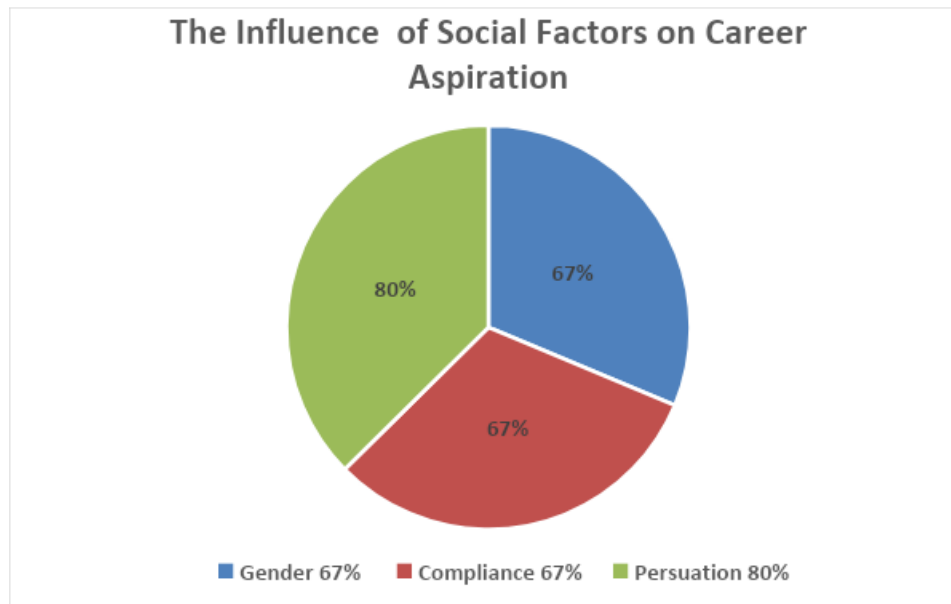


Figure 2.

According to the results which were obtained in relation to objective two, it was observed that compliance played a great role in influencing student's career aspirations. This finding is in agreement with, (Bergen, 2006). Factors such as influence from friends, siblings affect students' career aspirations. Also a study conducted by Walmsley, Wilson, and Morgan, 2010, explains that family earnings, parents' profession and work status at the time, parents' last education can influence student's career aspirations. Adeleke (2005) disclosed that peer influence appears to take the upper hand and to be determining factors that push peers to their career aspirations/occupations. Thus, peer influence can provide many positive elements in an adolescent's life. It is important, however, to remember that peer influence can potentially have a deadly impact or other various negative effects on career aspiration.

Almost all of the respondents agreed that persuasion has influenced their career choice. Some students were influenced by people they admired (models), others through social media etc. This finding is supported by Bandura, 1961, children observe the people around them behaving in various ways. This is illustrated during the famous Bobo doll experiment (Bandura, 1961). Harris (1986), also found that characters that were portrayed to be heroic and popular on television were more likely to be imitated by children because they admired them. Admiration encourages children to achieve similar status and authority. This positively shapes students in wanting to achieve this same status and authority.

From the analysis of data and interpretation of results, one can conclude that social influence individual's career aspiration most especially for our specific case study of postgraduate students of the University of Buea. Many

students find themselves in careers they never dreamt of just because of social influence. For those that the society influenced their career aspiration and eventual choice of future career, they risk finding themselves in a mess and great dissatisfaction in their job sites as Holland in his theory of personality will explain to us in his personality theory as each type of personality matches with a particular job environment. We however recognize the fact that so can manage to cope in some careers they do not fit in it, but at what cost, and for which amount of outcome? Holland (1996) Studies show that people flourish in their work environment when there is a good fit between their personality type and the characteristics of the environment. Lack of congruence between personality and environment leads to dissatisfaction, unstable career paths, and lowered performance". Many students do not perform well in their academics, some are unstable, others dissatisfied with their choices because of social influence. Even at that, some of the respondents were satisfied with their career choices, social influence influenced their career aspiration positively. We can therefore conclude that 71 % of the respondents were negatively influenced towards their career aspiration while 29% were positively influenced and are satisfied with their choices. Figure 2

Educational Implications

Based on the above findings, we suggest the following solutions:

1. The University should think of making various conferences, seminars and workshops to sensitize postgraduate students not only on the different careers

but also to encourage them to choose the career for which they are suited based on their personality, aptitude and interest.

2. There is a need for the University of Buea to employ professional career counselors in the various faculties to carry out appropriate tests before the admission into a university programme as choosing a programme already orients your choice of future career. Again, these counsellors should be there to follow up this student and enlighten them on their future careers at each stage of their studies.

3. The counsellors and Lecturers of the various faculties should try and encourage students to seek Career information or orientation to get sufficient information on different careers, in order not to choose the wrong path in career. Also, Students should also be sensitized on the influence of social factors which influence their choice of career so as to curb its negative impacts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We also recommend that primary schools should have counselors, to mold the students at a tender age, to choose a career path and grow in it. When they are oriented at this tender age, they tend to focus on a career path and cannot be easily influenced out of it.

2. Schools and universities should encourage sensitization on campuses to create their awareness for the need of career counseling. Many students are not aware of the services of a guidance counselor.

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