

## Research Article

# Factors Influencing Trainees Career Choice among Technical and Vocational Training Trainees: Implications for Psycho-Educational Intervention

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The major purpose of this study was to examine factors influencing trainees' career choice among technical and vocational training trainees.

**Materials and Methods:** This study was delimited to see factors influencing trainees' career choice like family influence, peer influence, job opportunity influence and school influence on trainees' career choice in the study area. This study was conducted in Kidus Lalibela and Kobo technical and vocational colleges. A total of 140 (78 male and 62 female) trainees was taken as samples of the study. The Stratified random sampling technique was applied to select these samples. The data gathering instruments used in the study were questionnaire. Cronbach alpha was employed to test the reliability of the instrument. The data were analyzed by using mean, variance; standard deviation and one sample t-test to describe the

characteristics of the sample.

**Result:** The findings of this study revealed that: there was a statistically significant mean difference between peer influence, school influence, job opportunity influence and the expected mean value, but there was no statistically significant mean difference between trainee's family influence on career choice and expected mean value.

**Conclusion:** Family, school, ministry of labor and social affairs and ministry of education should work jointly in providing accurate, timely, and relevant career related information for students at different levels.

**Keywords:** Career choice, Family influence, Peer influence, School influence and Job opportunity influence

## Introduction

Career choice is the most challenging live events for adolescents, especially in this dynamic world. Thus, the main objectives of this study is to see the influence of peer, school, family and job opportunity factors in career choice of technical and vocational institutes. Technical and vocational education and training is an area of study which may be freely chosen as a means by which one develops skills, talents, and interests leading to an occupation [1]. Through this program, TVET colleges and institutes can effectively place or assign trainees who apply for admission based on their talents, interests and ability. These training institutes and colleges are also expected to: provide prior orientation service for trainees before they are going to select their career about the available fields, assigning trainees in different occupational fields based on interest and ability. Alongside, vocational guidance is usually interpreted as the assistance given to trainees in choosing, and preparing for a trainee's career.

Students all over the world are usually faced with the task and problem of career decision making. The choice of careers, subjects, and courses of study in schools and of subsequent paths to follow is always a difficult problem facing prospective undergraduates. Often, choosing the right subject combination leading to the right profession can make the difference between enjoying and detesting the career in future. Dedicating oneself to career choices that are unattainable leads to frustration. Each individual undertaking the process of career choice is influenced

by many factors, including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, and educational attainment [2].

One of the factors that make students to be under difficulty and stress in making career related decision is the fact that the world around us becomes increasingly complicated. Both psychologists as well as personal development specialists claim that the work or job opportunity is nowadays one source of instability and confusion. 'Fast and constant changes' of the available jobs as a result of globalization, are the important words that characterize the present time, which can affect the students' career choice [3].

Technical and vocational education and training was the most neglected areas in the history of the Ethiopian education system. In Ethiopia those people who have vocational skills were not accepted. In relation to these ideas, traditional attitudes in Ethiopia designate the skilled manpower or worker to the status of an outcast. Metal workers, wood carvers, leather workers, and potters and others were despised and excluded from the possibility of owning land which was the foundation of the feudal society [4]. Because of the lack of great emphasis for the expansion of education sector in the history of the nation, many of the labor force of the country in GO & NGO's and different sectors of the economy are not educated and skillful. In relation to these Ministry of Education [5] stated in the following way:

Around 35 million people of the Ethiopian work force are characterized by low skill levels and very low average educational attainment. Only 10% of the urban population has

post-secondary school education. As a consequence, 75% of the workforce is concentrated in low skill employment sectors such as commerce, and services. Less than half of the urban workforce is engaged in wage employment. A significant portion of the urban workforce works for unpaid family business.

In this respect, the introduction of vocational education in the curriculum of formal institutions will help in the future manpower development of the nations. It is aimed at preparing the young to acquire specific skill for employment, i.e. self-employment and to be employed in GO & NGO's in the country. As a result of this, vocational education has become an integral part of educational programs. According to Ainley [6] vocational education is no longer enough unless people are expected to train and retrain throughout their lives in order to keep pace with the new technology that is continually being introduced.

From many factors that can affect the trainees' career choice, this study was interested to investigate how extent peer, family, school and job opportunity variables have significant influence on career choice of TVET trainees in the Ethiopian context. Particularly, this study was more concerned to investigate the influence of these variables in north wollo administrative zone. The main reason is that there have never been done such kinds of study conducted to find the influence of the above mentioned problems, particularly in the trainee's career choice in the region and the selected area in particular.

Therefore, the following questions are identified as the basic questions of the researcher:

1. Is there any significant difference between family influence, peer influence, school influence, and job opportunity influence on trainee's career choice?
2. Which of these factors highly influenced trainee's career choice?

## **Materials and methods**

The general objective of this study was to investigate factors influencing trainees' career choice in Kidus Lalibela and Kobo TV trainees. The research was delimited to see the influence of peer influence, family influence, school influence, and job opportunity influences on the career choice of trainees. The design of the study was survey, using quantitative methods to gather information on the studied variables and to achieve the desired objectives of the study.

From Kidus Lalibela TV college 86 trainees (37 female and 49 male) of 3571 were taken (1537 female and 2034 male) and from Kobo TV institute 54 trainees (25 female and 29 male) were taken out of 2234 trainees (1030 female and 1204 male). Therefore, the total number of subjects that were included in the study was 140 (62 female and 78 male). Sixty two female and seventy eight male trainees were the sample chosen as the source of information for this study. These samples were selected by using stratified random sampling through lottery method.

These samples were determined by using the stratified random sampling formula  $n_k = \frac{n}{N} N_k$ , where:  $n_k$  = is the sample size of for K th strata,  $N_k$  = the population size of the K th strata,  $N$  = the total population size, and  $n$  = the total sample size [7].

The data gathering instruments used in the study were questionnaire that was developed based on the review of related literature and the intended data to be collected. In order to investigate the study, one measuring instrument, i.e. close ended questionnaire were developed to gather pertinent information relevant to the study.

In order to gather relevant information that are pertinent to the variables of the study, the questionnaire was classified into four parts i.e. questions related to peer influence, family influence, school influence and job opportunity influence.

For questions that were administered to participants that are related to each variable were randomly distributed in order to get relevant information and during the analysis each question were grouped into the major variable. The questionnaire contained both positively and negatively stated items and each were randomly distributed in order to reduce the effects of response bias and after the data were collected negative items were scored by taking their direct opposite response. The questionnaire has two sections. The first section comprised of objectives, purpose and background information of respondents. The second part includes a set of items that can measure the effects of studying variables. All the response formats of the items were Likert scale (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3= unable to decide, 2=disagree and 1=strongly disagree). And before the pilot study, a questionnaire was distributed to senior experts, colleagues and English teachers for critics as well as in order to gather relevant and pertinent information. By taking into account all important information and comments from different bodies, a questionnaire was made ready for the pilot test.

This study was reviewed and approved by college of education and behavioral science research and community service office and ethics committees as well. Before the actual study was done to test the suitability and reliability of data collection instruments, a pilot study was conducted. Meket TV college was selected for the field trial in which 70 trainees (both male and female) in each training year and field of training were selected who were not involved in the actual data collection process.

Trainees were told how to give response for each Likert scale questionnaire that provided them and some vague questions, which forwarded by the trainees, were made clearer during the pilot distribution.

The purpose of testing the questionnaires was to examine the clarity of the items and direction. Accordingly, during the process when trainees show confusions, some modifications and improvements were made on the questionnaires and for clear understanding the questionnaire was translated into Amharic. After the compilation of pilot study, the questionnaire were retyped, duplicated and finally administered to the respondents of the study.

Finally, the responses of trainees were scored and tabulated to compute item correlation and Cronbach-Alpha were used in order to evaluate the reliability of the instrument.

At the very beginning letters for asking cooperation were written for deans of the studied technical and vocational institutes in order to get permission and assistance. After the submission of written letters to the deans, the researcher in collaboration with

vice deans, four assistant data collectors were assigned in each training institute and college for collecting data. And before the questionnaire was distributed to participants, assistant data collectors were given an orientation by the researcher.

After identifying male and female trainees through their attendance list, i.e. obtain from the department heads lottery in the form of number system was prepared for both sex categories. To increase the quality of the respondents' response and rate of return, time convenient for the respondents were arranged. In order to avoid confusion and facilitate ease of administration, at the beginning of questionnaire administration the researcher and four assistant data collectors did make the objectives of the study clear to all the sample respondents orally. It was also instructed how to give response to questionnaire. They were also told the confidentiality of the data they would give by the researcher and assistant data collectors. After all this process, the researcher ask their agreement and gained oral consent from the participants to be fully and voluntarily engaged on the study and this oral consent was approved by the college research ethics committee simply because of large size of samples. A close follow-up was also made for immediate return of the questionnaires.

Mean, variance and standard deviation were used to describe the characteristics of the sample population, such as sex and studied variables. In line with the way of data analysis: One sample t-test was utilized to examine the level of significance difference on the studied variables of peer influence, family influence, school influence and job opportunity influences on the career choice of studied samples. The above mentioned statistical analyses have been computed by statistical package for social science (SPSS) Version 20.

**Result and Discussion**

As shown in Table 1, the sample mean 44.39 is less than the expected average which is 51. This inequality shows the existence of the difference between the sample mean and the expected mean scores of trainees' family influence on career choice. But this value indicates that there is no significant difference between the average score and the expected mean. Thus, as indicated in Table 1, the calculated t-value which is 0.865 is less than the value of t- critical i.e. 1.96. The result showed that there was no statistically significant mean difference between trainee's family influence on career choice and expected mean value (t=0.865, 139, α = 0.05/2).

These suggest that trainees seem not to be influenced by family pressure, which is significantly less than the expected average on career choice. And thus, it can be realized that trainees were not tending to be influenced by their family during career choice more than the average.

There are different research findings that can show the influence of family on career choice of students. The findings of this study are inconsistent with the work of Super ; as cited in Hayes [8,9] who were emphasized the family related issues such as family size, educational status, socioeconomic status (SES), Psychological and economical support, as well as source of role model and occupational information.

On the other hand, according to Puffer, Felsman and Blustien, [10] also investigated the influence of parent-child relationship, attachment and parenting style on the vocational choice and development of trainees.

Unlike the findings of this study family can influence the trainee's career choice. Lyons investigated that students select natural science careers not because their talent and interest, but as a result of family pressure by providing science career related information's through books and magazines, documentary films and discussion about the importance of each career [11].

June and Bergen examined that family can influence students' career development and selection by providing resources, financial and emotional support and they also transmit values, goals, and expectations to their children that are important for students future career development [12].

According to Super as cited in [12] family plays an important role in shaping the values and needs of its members. The Family can facilitate the development of student's self-concept, which shapes their abilities, interests, values, expectations and career choices.

As shown in Table 1, the samples mean (39.879) is greater than the expected mean of 39. Since t-obtained / 9.039/ which is greater than the t-critical /1.96 /, the study shows that there was a statistically significant mean difference between the observed and the expected mean value (t=9.039, df=139, α = 0.05/2). This indicated that trainee's look likely to be pressurized by peers which were significantly greater than the expected average value. And from this the author can recognize that the studied trainees tend to be influenced by peer pressure during the process of career choice.

Even though there were no enough and updated research findings in the area of peer pressure on the trainee's career choice some research results go in line with this finding result. For instance, this study result showed consistent with the research findings of Abraham, Abraham finds out that peer pressure has substantial influence on academic achievement and subject or field choice of students [13].

This finding also coincides with the findings of other researchers. During and after the age of adolescence peers can be influential on the career choice of trainees by sharing their interests,

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics and one sample t-test value for the significance level of family influence, peer influence, school influence and job opportunity influence on trainee's career choice.**

Variable	N	X	μ	S <sup>2</sup>	SD	df	t- obtained	t-critical
FAI	140	44.39	51	70.598	8.402	139	0.865	1.96
PEI	140	39.879	39	40.78	6.386	139	9.039	1.96
SCI	140	51.129	51	62.72	7.919	139	9.064	1.96
JOI	140	56.3	45	76.89	8.699	139	22.17	1.96

attitude, and value for each occupation. Senior peers can be a role model for trainee's occupational choice. As a result of these, the student's vocational choice is positively related to their group membership. Peers are an important source of occupational information for students; they can encourage trainee identify their ability and interest and to make a career related decision based on the competence level [10,14-16].

From Table 1, it is clearly observed that the sample mean (51.129) is greater than the expected mean, i.e. 51, which can illustrate the difference between the sample mean and expected average. The results of the study show that  $t$ -obtained /9.064/ is greater than the Table value of  $t$  i.e. 1.96 this means that there was a statistically significant mean difference between trainees, school influence on their career choice and expected mean value ( $t=9.064$ ,  $df=139$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05/2$ ). This signifies that trainees seem to have been faced with school related influences during their career choice which is significantly higher than the expected average. And hence, it can be understood that trainees tend to be affected by the school influence in their career choice than the average trainees.

In relation to this, there are different research findings, which grant the importance of school influence on vocational development of trainees. The findings of this study showed consistency with Hayes, and Daws; Adams; Erickson; and Woolnough who were recognized the influence of the school on student's career choice. Because of their relationship and exchange of information with teachers and other administrative bodies, students can develop an interest in a particular occupation. The availability of adequate and quality teachers and their interest and talent towards any field of study also facilitate student's vocational development. In addition to guidance and counselor's duty, school teachers or trainers have also roles in providing occupational information, helping to identify talents and interest and encourage them to make career decisions in line with their talent and interest, and specific requirements and future job possibilities of particular careers [17-19].

This research finding is also consistent with the work of Hayes and Daws. Hayes, Daws [8] also stated that the nature and the means of implementation of the curriculum and the kind of information that the school delivered to students also could affect the student's vocational choice.

The availability of school related extra-curricular activities in the school and active participation of them based on their talent and interest contribute to develop interest for the specific vocational development and choice [19-21].

Addis Ababa city government TVET strategy states that schools should open occupational training fields based on the results of need assessment and tracer study that are going to be done around the training institute and national level [22].

School Vocational guidance services have an impact on career choice and development. Through guidance, students; obtain prior career orientation service, can identify their talent and interest, can develop decision making competency and understand individual problems, can alleviate psychological problems, and can make career choices based on their talent and interest [5,23].

As shown in Table 1, the sample mean (56.3) is greater than the expected average, which is 45, which shows the difference between the sample mean and an expected average score of job opportunity influence on career choice.

In Table 1, data which states the significance level of the difference between the main influences of job opportunity in the career choice of trainees and expected average score was presented. Since  $t$ -obtained /22.17 / is highly greater than the critical value /1.96 /of  $t$ , and thus, the study shows that there was a statistically mean difference between the sample mean of trainees, job opportunity influence and the expected mean value ( $t=22.17$ ,  $df=139$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05/2$ ).

This also suggested that trainees appear to be influenced by factors of job opportunity which is drastically higher than the expected average value. From this, it can be understood that trainees be inclined to be influenced by job opportunity factor in their career choice more than the expected average.

The results of this study showed that more than other studied variables; job opportunity was the most influential factor in determining career choice. Even though, there was no enough literature available in the area, the current study is inconsistent with the findings of Gati, Krausz, and Osipow as cited in Berhanu and Abraham from 2,500 students they found that almost all students were selected or ranked job opportunity in the second determining factor to select their occupation. On the other hand, Borchert stated that opportunity for jobs and for further education was important factor that were taken into account by high school students during their career choice. Generally, the finding of this study shows the influence of job opportunity on the career choice of trainees like the result of Gati, Krausz, and Osipow and Borchert [24,25].

## **Conclusion**

There was no statistically significance mean difference between trainee's family influence on career choice and expected mean value. There were statistically significant mean differences between the sample mean of trainees, job opportunity influence, school influence, peer influence and the expected mean value. Among other factors, job opportunity influences highly than family, peer and school influences

## **Recommendation**

Trainees should identify their peer who can foster and inhibit their academic success in general and career choice in particular. Professional guidance and counseling service should be given at each educational level. Trainees should assess their talent and interest before they select their occupation. The Trainee's family should discuss with their offspring about the characteristics of their peer in relation to their children's interest and future career plan. ministry of labor and employment office, ministry of education, and investment offices should work jointly in order to provide future job opportunity or career related information for trainees and students at different levels. Trainees should have a future career plan and make a career related decisions by: clearly identifying their talent and interest, using career related information, and identifying their strength and weakness.



## Acknowledgment

I deeply acknowledge the participants and data collectors for their cooperation and commitments to the success of this study.

## Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

## Conflicts of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

## Author contribution

All work was done by the researcher

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Submitted: March 11, 2021; Accepted: April 21, 2021; Published: April 28, 2021