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### Parent's Influence on Career Aspirations in College Freshmen

Katelyn Rily-O'Connor

*Binghamton University--SUNY*

Eliana Moskowitz

*Binghamton University--SUNY*

Asonyu Nshanji

*Binghamton University--SUNY*

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# Introduction

# Parent's Influence on Career Aspirations in College Freshmen

Asonyu Nshanji, Eliana Moskowitz, Katelyn Riley-O'Connor

# Discussion

## Background

From an early age, children are greatly influenced by their parents and their environments (Aubrey, 2019). By the time they move into their adolescence stages and begin to consider their futures, oftentimes they look to their parents, either as role models or for career guidance. Studies have shown that children value their parents' opinions, and only believe in their own career decision-making abilities to the degree to which they think their parents believe in them (Keller et al., 2008). Whether subconsciously or consciously, parents become one of the main influences on adolescent's career aspirations (Stauffer, 2018).

## Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore how parental behaviors influence career development in young adults through the examination of factors including parental involvement, academic support and encouragement, and family pressures.

### Research question:

How do first-year undergraduate students' perceptions of their parents' career-related behaviors affect their career decisions and aspirations?

## Methodology

- ❖ A total of 76 surveys responses were collected.
- ❖ Participants included college freshman attending a U.S. college or university.
- ❖ Data was collected from participants in an online survey (Binghamton Qualtrics). Follow-up zoom interviews were conducted to further understand participant perception of parental involvement. Zoom interviews were transcribed through a free online transcribing software (otter.ai).
- ❖ Patterns found in survey responses regarding strong/weak relationships between childhood dream job and/or intended major with parent careers were observed for the recruiting of interviewees.

### Acknowledgments

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## Results

Subscales	Mean	SD	Chronbach's alpha
Support	1.76	.894	.638
Lack of Engagement	4.25	1.06	.663
Interference	3.38	1.28	.863

### Interference

- On average, student's **neither agreed or disagreed** that their parents interfered with their future plans.
- ❑ Subject 3: "And they sort of just thought that was the way I was gonna go. And that's sort of the way they've been pushing me and I really don't know exactly what I want to do 100%."
- ❑ Subject 2: "My parents basically encouraged me to just try many different things and find which one that I'm most interested in."

### Lack of Engagement

- Students **somewhat disagreed** that their parents lacked engagement in regard to their career aspirations. This suggests that students felt their parents were generally engaged in their career decision process and were not too busy with their own work to help their children.
- ❑ Subject 4: "I don't think I would have been interested in medicine if I hadn't constantly been exposed to it since I was literally born... I would go with my dad on rounds to the hospital and meet patients when I was like six years old... They definitely had a busy work schedule. Like when I was younger, my dad would get home much later than my mom and he would be up all the time. But he would make sure the second he got home to help us with any homework"

### Support

- Students **somewhat agreed** that their parents support their future career decisions and are interested in helping them find career options and talking to them about possible interests.
- ❑ Subject 6: "I'm a big history person. And I talked to my parents about it. And they were like, honestly, do what you want to do. Like if, you know, college is about like finding your career and stuff, but it's also about exploring. So I had like reservations about majoring in history, but they kind of encouraged me to major in it. If I wanted to."

### 1 Interference

**Low** → Subject 1: "she [mom] never pushed me in a specific direction. She told me to do what would make me happy, and she would encourage me to go wherever I felt I belonged."

**Neutral** → Subject 2: "And my dad has most recently been talking to me about-- like "if you're going to choose this major... you have to build other skills and stuff like that to make yourself marketable."

**High** → Subject 3: "so my mom has been trying to steer me away from that [joining the military], because she doesn't want to see me either get injured or killed in duty."

### 2 Lack of Engagement

**Low** → Subject 2: "Occasionally, my parents will bring it up at dinner... we'll talk about career decisions... going to be in demand"... "he [dad] takes me driving like to practice my driving every Sunday. And in the car, we typically talk about career stuff"

**Neutral** → Subject 1: "she wasn't a hoverer, you know, she knew that I would get my work done... she knew it would get done and wasn't concerned... But she did always want to know, you know, my grades."

**High** → Subject 5: "They never check. They just don't know. But they just have full faith that I would just have to do good at school. There's like, Yeah, he does it."

### 3 Support

**Low** → Subject 3: "I had to choose [colleges] because my parents weren't available and they didn't really know anything about colleges"

**Neutral** → Subject 1: "she never pushed me in a specific direction. She told me to do what would make me happy, and she would encourage me to go wherever I felt I belonged."

**High** → Subject 4: "they're happy to hear that I do well in school, and like when I don't, like they're always there to like, help me figure out how I can get better. And, like, reassure me that it is not the end of the world"

## Sub-scales

- ❖ **Low lack of engagement** -Parents, on average, were involved in their child's college/career decisions and schoolwork.
  - ❖ **Mid/High Support** - Overall, students surveyed and interviewed felt support from their parents, whether that came to homework help, college decision-making, major choice, etc.
  - ❖ **Neutral Interference** -Parents did not seem to mind what their children's career aspirations were, however, parent's fundamental expectations set in place for their child caused them to push their children without sitting down and talking to them. On the other hand, high interference was still present with a handful of parents, who were perceived, by their children, to tamper with the child's career decision process by forcing their personal views on them.
- Perceived behavior and perceived stress.**
- ❖ Less stress by parents and more stress that students put on themselves to not disappoint/anger their parents workwise or burden their parents financially.
  - ❖ Students had many external factors that bled into their own career development such as economic status, family occupation, and most importantly pressure students subconsciously put on themselves.

## Limitations

- ❖ Majority of survey participants were from Binghamton University students (although study includes college freshmen nationwide), making a less diverse participant population.
- ❖ Data recorded student perceived parent behaviors, which can lead to bias.
- ❖ Small sample size, can yield different results with a bigger population group.
- ❖ Time constraints.

## Future Research

- ❖ Building upon the findings of external factors such as subconscious stress.
- ❖ Constructing the same study with more population to yield more accurate results.
- ❖ Exploring specific types of support, interference, and engagement parents provide in this area.

### Citations

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