# THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL PRESSURE AND PERCEIVED CONTROL ON CAREER EXPLORATION OF YOUNG ADULTS IN YANGON*

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## Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the influence of parental pressure and perceived control on career exploration of young adults in Yangon, Myanmar. This study involved 20 students, who are within 19 to 24 years old, from University of Yangon. In-depth interviews were performed using a ground theory approach and a qualitative technique to analyze the participant narratives. The results show that participants experienced more parental pressure during their university years compared with years of childhood or high school. Compared to childhood and high school, they also engaged in more career exploration in university. With regard to perceived control, the participants held a moderate to high level of perceived control over their career environments. According to the findings, most participants felt that parental pressure had no influence over their perceived control on career exploration, and few participants experienced positive and negative influence of the parental pressure on perceived control in relation to career environment. In later years, when other factors contributed to the career exploration, parental pressure did not seem to affect career exploration. The findings have implications for vocational psychology and career counseling with young adults.

**Keywords:** Parental pressure, perceived control, career exploration, young adults, Myanmar

## Introduction

In career exploration, parents should encourage their children to pursue the career that the children could enjoy and satisfy. But in reality, the children seem to be pressured by their parents to fulfill the demands of the parents. If the children are being controlled by their parents and chose a career to fulfill the demands of parents, instead of choosing the career that they would like to pursue, the children might not be able to fully enjoy their career in the future (Mapalala, 2018). This might effect on satisfaction and motivation at the workplace which is not good for both organization and employees.

The occupational choice is a vital one, since it is a choice of a way of life (Grady, 1983). If the parental pressure and control influence the occupation and career choices negatively, this could greatly affect the life of a person (Larson, 1995). The negative influence of the parental pressure can lead to depression and anxiety (Chorpita, Brown, & Barlow, 1998). Therefore, finding out if the parental pressure and control actually influence the career exploration, is very important for society. Career exploration has been recognized in the literature as "purposeful activities, directed toward enhancing knowledge of the self and the external environment, that individuals engage in to foster progress in career development" (Blustein, 1992). Career exploration is a dynamic process that occurs in all ages and stages of life, but is most prominent at late adolescence and early adulthood (Super, 1990).

Parental pressure experiences are defined as the felt experience of pressure from one's parent(s) to follow certain career opinions, plans, and/or actions (Cory, 2015). Stambler (1998) found that parents have often been influential in that decision when young people make career decisions. Parents are also the most often reported catalyst for the initiation of decision making (Biggart et al., 2004). The positive side of parental control has been identified in the literature and

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in academic settings as "autonomy support", which minimizes the use of pressures and demands, acknowledges the feelings of others, and is characterized by parental encouragement for self-initiation and choice (Deci *et al.,* 1994). There are also a few studies that discussed parental pressure, indicating that it could have a negative effect on the growth of career autonomy in offspring (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Splete & Freeman George, 1985).

Perceived control was often referred to as control orientation, or locus of control. A high level of perceived control, or an internal locus of control, refers to "perceptions of mastery over one's environment" and a sense of "personal control over one's own fate" (Taylor, 2010). Individuals with higher perceived control were found to be more driven toward achievement and relationships, and are often guided by their own sense of accomplishment (Nowicki & Duke, 1983). Low perceived control, or an external locus of control, is a perception that external events are outside one's personal control (Levenson, 1981). Individuals with low perceived control demonstrated less goal-directed behavior and have sought out communication mainly as an escape (Rubin & Rubin, 1992; Steinfatt, 1987). Some studies have examined the impact of general perceived control on career development. A research found that a higher level of perceived control was a determinant of individuals' motivation to be mindful of their career orientation, helping them to gain entry into the workforce (Findley & Cooper, 1983). Moreover, lower level of perceived control was associated with reduced information-seeking behaviors (Steinfatt, 1987).

Career development was found to be most influential and stressful between the ages of 18 and 22 when young adults experienced a variety of pressures to make career-related decisions (Splete & Freeman-George 1985). Pressure in making a decision can be especially stressful, as career indecision is a common phenomenon in early career development (Feldman, 2003). Despite the abundance of research related to career development in young populations, there seems to be only a few that explored the subjective experiences of parental pressure and perceived control on career exploration in Myanmar. This study aimed to examine the career exploration experiences of young adults in Yangon, with a particular emphasis on the role of parental pressure and perceptions of control. This research focused on undergraduate and postgraduate students from University of Yangon, to include the participants who had already partaken in some level of career exploration due to their proximity to graduation and increased pressure to make a career choice.

## Research Questions

### (1) Central Research Question

What are young adults' experiences of parental pressure and control in relation to their career development?

### (2) Secondary Research Question

How does one's experience of parental pressure influence one's career exploration as a young adult?

How does one's experience of parental pressure influence one's level of perceived control in relation to his or her career development?

## Method

## Participants

In this study, 20 (12 females and 8 males) undergraduate and postgraduate students from University of Yangon, who are within 19 to 24 years old, were used as participants.

**Measures**

Using a grounded theory approach and a qualitative technique, we performed in-depth interviews to examine participant narratives. Each interview began with some questions related to the participant's demographic information. Then, the participants were asked the semi-structured interview questions to investigate the following three areas: (1) career exploration experiences, (2) parental pressure experiences and (3) perceptions of control.

**Procedure**

The purposive sampling method was used and participants were selected who are already partaken in some level of career exploration. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained the nature of the study and that the participants' information will be kept as confidential. Participants were reminded that the interview will be audio-recorded, and a verbal consent related to the audio-recording was requested. After the consent had been received, the researcher began the interview session.

**Analyze the data**

After participant records were transcribed, the researcher read each participant's narrative. After this stage, the researcher analyzed the narrative line-by-line, and highlighted and coded possible themes. Throughout this process, the researcher made notes of her interpretations of what stood out as important. Every narrative was analyzed and coded several times to ensure important details about the career exploration views of the respondents were included in the overall theme selection process. Important details and key themes regarding participants' perceptions of parental pressure and control were also top priority. After the data was studied, reduced and saturated, key themes and categories were uncovered.

## Results

**Parental Pressure Experiences and Career Exploration**

**Childhood**

*Parental pressure experiences.* Participants were asked about their experiences of parental pressure. Questions related to parental pressure aimed at addressing parental opinions about career and felt experiences of career-related pressure. A mild degree of parental pressure was defined as pressure that had little to no influence in the participant's development, and was often characterized by statements that reflected that there was little to no felt pressure. During childhood, 85% of participants (17 out of 20) experienced a mild degree of pressure from their parents. For example, when the researcher asked whether she felt career pressure as a child, P4 stated,

"Not really. But they always told me to work hard in everything I do. Because if I'm not good at it, nobody will want to work with me but people will want to work with you if I'm good." When the researcher asked to clarify whether this influence felt like pressure, P4 replied,

"Well, as a child, I kind of felt as being pressured a little bit but that didn't stop from doing whatever I want." Similarly, P14 emphasized that her parents would often tell her to work hard as a child. When the researcher asked about her parents' opinions concerning her career future as a child, P14 stated,

"My parents would always tell me to study hard so that I can do whatever when I grew up." When the researcher asked whether she felt pressure from her parents during this time, P14 replied,

"No, I don't think so. Because other than telling me to study hard, they let me to whatever I wanted to do." A moderate degree of parental pressure was defined as pressure that had a

moderate influence on the participant's development and was characterized by statements that reflected that pressure was felt but was not extreme in nature. During childhood, 5% of participants (1 out of 20) experienced a moderate degree of pressure (P13) from his parents. When the researcher asked him to describe his experience, he stated,

"Since I was child, my parents always pressured me to do my best and focus only on one thing at a time. But I think they did that because they want me to concentrate and to be able to do better at that." A severe degree of parental pressure was defined as pressure that had a severe influence on the participant's development and was characterized by statements that described a level of pressure that was extreme in nature. During childhood, 10% of participants (2 out of 20) experienced a severe degree of pressure from their parents. For example, when the researcher asked whether she felt career pressure as a child, P20 stated,

"My parents were always very over protective to me and never let me go outside alone. They never let me choose what I want to learn or attend and let me attend classes or schools only that is near our home. I think they don't let want me get out of their protection but I felt extremely pressured because of that."

*Exploration experiences.* Participants were asked about their career exploration experiences. These questions targeted time spent searching for information related to one's career future.

During Childhood, 65% of participants (13 out of 20) reported engaging in a low amount of career exploration. A low amount of career exploration was defined by participants' beliefs that they engaged in a low amount of exploration. For example, when the researcher asked P9 to elaborate about how she search for information related to her career in childhood, she stated,

"Since I was a child, I always liked teaching to kids who are younger than me and I thought that I might want to become a teacher. But I changed my thought about it when I got a little bit older because only people with bad grades work as a teacher in my hometown and I'm good at mine. So, I did not spend much time to search for information related to it." Similarly, when the researcher asked P14 to elaborate about how she search for information related to her career in childhood, she responded,

"As a child, I always admired teachers about how graceful they are but I did not ask to the elders about how to become one because I wasn't determined about it." During Childhood, 35% of participants (7 out of 20) reported engaging in a high amount of career exploration. A high amount of career exploration was defined by participants' beliefs that they engaged in a high amount of exploration. For example, when the researcher asked P7 to elaborate about how she search for information related to her career in childhood, she stated,

"Since I was child, I learned a lot about plants and observed which plant is best for which season because I love planting. It calms me down and I even thought about becoming a gardener." Similarly, when the researcher asked P7 to elaborate about how she search for information related to her career in childhood, she responded,

"I was always interested in creating arts and learned to paint since I was a kid. I also competed in competitions to get more information about art and get experience."

**High School**

*Parental pressure experiences*. Participants were asked about their experiences of parental pressure. Questions related to parental pressure aimed at addressing parental opinions about career and felt experiences of career-related pressure. During their high school years, 100% of participants

(20 out of 20) experienced a moderate degree of pressure from their parents. For example, when the researcher asked whether she felt career pressure in high school, P8 stated,

"When I was in high school, my parents always pushed me to study very hard so that I can get high marks in matriculation exam and get into professional universities such as University of Medicine." Similarly, P9 emphasized that her parents would often tell her to work very hard in high school. When the researcher asked about her parents' opinions concerning her career future in high school, P9 replied,

"May be because I did pretty well during high school, my parents often pressured me to study harder so that I can be an engineer or a doctor because those choices are the typical ones for Burmese parents. I don't want to be a doctor but I tried hard to get high marks in the exam of the matriculation."

*Exploration experiences.* Participants were asked about their career exploration experiences. These questions targeted time spent searching for information related to one's career future. During their high school years, 60% of participants (12 out of 20) reported engaging in a low amount of career exploration. For example, when the researcher asked P10 to elaborate about how she search for information related to her career in high school, she stated,

"When I reached to high school, all I thought that was that I have to study my hardest to get high marks so that I can make my parents proud and that alone becomes my goal." Similarly, when the researcher asked P17 to elaborate about how he search for information related to his career in high school, he responded,

"My only goal was to pass the matriculation exam at that time so, I didn't really spend much time in searching about my career." During their high school years, 40% of participants (8 out of 20) reported engaging in a high amount of career exploration. For example, when the researcher asked P5 to elaborate about how she search for information related to her career in high school, she stated,

"Since my dream is to become a politician, I searched for the universities and courses that I can attend after high school, made plans and studied really hard for that plan." Similarly, when the researcher asked P12 to elaborate about how he search for information related to his career in high school, he responded,

"I checked a lot of details about the business world while I was in high school and even planned which university I'll attend after high school."

## University

*Parental pressure experiences.* Participants were asked about their experiences of parental pressure. Questions related to parental pressure aimed at addressing parental opinions about career and felt experiences of career-related pressure. At university, 65% of participants (13 out of 20) experienced a mild degree of pressure from their parents. For example, when the researcher asked whether he felt career pressure in university, P15 stated,

"Although they said they'll let me to whatever I want, they often said that it's better for me to inherit their business because it's easier to work on something that is already reached to some level rather than starting up a new thing." Similarly, P16 emphasized that his parents would often tell him to work hard in university. When the researcher asked about her parents' opinions concerning her career future in university, P16 replied,

"My parents want me to study hard and get many degrees from the university so that I can become a civil servant. Since I don't want to, it's a bit irritating that they keep telling me about what they want me to be but I think they won't get mad at me even if I make other choices." At

university, 15% of participants (3 out of 20) experienced a moderate degree of pressure from their parents. For example, when the researcher asked whether she felt career pressure in university, P9 stated,

"Once, I wanted to learn how to cook because I love doing it and I even thought about opening my own restaurant. I genuinely love cooking and I thought of it as a career in a serious way. But when I told my mother about it, she won't let me do it and told me to start working because she can't support for both me and my brother since he also starts attending university. I was kind of mad because she pressured me to start working just because my younger brother starts attending the university." At university, 20% of participants (4 out of 20) experienced a severe degree of pressure from their parents. For example, when the researcher asked whether she felt career pressure in university, P1 stated,

"Even though I want to become a graphic artist, my mother keeps on telling me to help her and start working at her business. She even wants me to start working at her office after I graduate although I literally have no interest in construction. Whenever I tell about what I want to do or whenever I try to choose the options other than what she wants, she always express signs that she doesn't like it and it is very annoying. She never let me do what I want to do and always pressuring me to work in her business knowing that I'm not interested in it. She keeps bothering me a lot whenever I try to do something and it is very irritating."

*Exploration experiences.* Participants were asked about their career exploration experiences. These questions targeted time spent searching for information related to one's career future. At university, 10% of participants (2 out of 20) reported engaging in a low amount of career exploration. For example, when the researcher asked P3 to elaborate about how she search for information related to her career in university, she stated,

"Since I haven't decided what to do, I don't spend much time in searching information about a career. Just read the news or journals from the Facebook occasionally. That's all." At university, 90% of participants (18 out of 20) reported engaging in a high amount of career exploration. For example, when the researcher asked P8 to elaborate about how she search for information related to her career in university, she stated,

"From the time I decided to become a corporate lawyer, I search a lot about it through websites and social media sites. I also ask my friends' parents, who are corporate lawyers, about what I need to learn if I want to become a corporate lawyer and their experiences. Although the course that I'm attending right now is not very much related to commercial law, corporate lawyer is related with commercial law, I asked for the curriculum from my friends who are taking commercial law courses and study about it." Similarly, when the researcher asked P19 to elaborate about how she search for information related to her career in university, she responded,

"From the day I started attending the university, I studied harder than anyone in class because my only is to become a tutor. I studied basic English courses and computer courses before coming to University of Yangon for master courses because I've never learned when I was attending University of Magway, and those skills are very important to get into University of Yangon. Last year, I also took 2 courses opened by Yangon University of Economics because I was interested in business at that moment. When I realized I'm not right to do business, I refocus on my studies and study harder to become a tutor."

**Perceptions of Control**

**Career**

For the perception of control, 20% of participants (4 out of 20) believed they had a moderate amount of control over their career. A moderate amount of control over career was defined as

believing in having a moderate amount of control over career actions and career choices, and having a decent amount of career choice. For example, when the researcher asked P3 about how much control she felt she had over her career actions, stated,

"Around 30%, I think, because the hope of my parents and the criticism of our social environment are still worrying me." When the researcher asked specifically about what career actions she felt she had control over and what career actions she did not, P3 stated,

"I think I can decide about what I want to do, but I had to listen to my parents and follow their guideline while I'm working on it." Lastly, when P3 was asked whether she felt she had too much control or choice over her career actions, she stated,

"Not too much. Because if my parents tell me to do what I don't want, I will have to do it, even though they tell me to do whatever I want." For the perception of control, 80% of participants (16 out 20) indicated having a high amount of control over their career. A high amount control over career was defined as having a high amount of control over career actions and career choices, and beliefs about having a high amount of career choice. For example, when the researcher asked P5 about how much control she felt she had over her career actions, stated,

"I think 100%, because I have already decided what I want to do since I was a kid and my family is fully supporting me." When the researcher asked specifically about what career actions she felt she had control over, she stated,

"To learn things, to walk on path I choose, my concentration to do the plans I made and me trying best to get what I want. I think those are the actions that I can control." Lastly, when P5 was asked whether she felt she had too much control or choice over her career actions, she stated,

"Yes, of course. Because I solely working my best for my ambition and my family accept whatever I choose to do." Similarly, when the researcher asked about the level of control P7 felt she had over career actions and which actions she had control over, she responded,

"Since I never do things that I don't want to do, may be 70%. Although my mother wants me to become a teacher, I will keep doing what I love to do while working as a tutor because I don't want to make her upset at the moment'. If chances are good, I would only write and paint which I really love to do."

## Parental Pressure and Control

Participants were asked whether they felt that the pressure they had received from their parents influenced their perceptions of control over their career environment. Out of 20 participants, 5 (25%) believed that their parental pressure had influenced their perceptions of control over their career environment at some level. For experiences of parental pressure, 10% of participants felt that the pressure had affected them in a negative way, by limiting their perceptions of control over their career future. For example, P7 stated,

"I feel like living in a frame made by my mother because I worked really hard my whole life to go abroad and study more about the things that I love to do. But I had to let of that dream just because she wants me to prioritize her choices." However, 15% of participants felt that the pressure had affected them in a positive way, by increasing their perceptions of control over their career future. For example, P2 stated,

"Since I haven't decided anything about my career, I even feel thankful to them for making choices for me. It's easier to choose from them rather than thinking of my own." Whether positive or negative, only 25% of participants believed that their parents' pressure influenced their perception of control regarding their career actions.

## Discussion

**Parental Pressure Experiences**

All participants in the present study experienced some degree of career-related parental pressure at one time or another. It was found that career-related parental pressure was more severe in university in comparison to earlier years (i.e., high school and childhood). Although there is no research that has directly examined career-related parental pressure over time, research in the field of parenting suggests that parenting often changes with the changing age of the offspring (Feldman, Wentzel, & Gehring, 1989). It's also likely that as young adults approach their careers, parents can feel a growing sense of urgency about the career development of their child and therefore increase their level of career pressure. In fact, 40% of participants indicated that the proximity to career had a direct impact on the heightened level of career-related parental pressure in university.

***Closeness to Parents, Financial support, Desire to comply, Responsibility.*** In addition to finding that young adults felt increased parental pressure with age, the present study found that closeness to parents was common. This result is consistent with studies showing that parents closest to their children are much more likely to coddle their children and take an intense interest in the lives of their children (Pricer, 2008). Therefore, although this study did not investigate this directly, it is possible that the closeness of the young adult-parent relationship heightens the experiences of pressure. This process could be two-fold, such that a parent who is closer to their child might be more likely to pressure their child and a child who is close to their parent may be more likely to feel the expectations and pressure of the parent.

In addition to feeling of closeness, this study found that young adults received some level of financial support from their parents. In particular, 80% of participants reported that their parents paid for everything (i.e., rent, food, school, phone bills). This result is supported by research that shows that many young people rely for academic and career resources on their parents (Labas & Ljubicic, 2012). That is more valid now than in previous generations; due to the deteriorating condition of the economy and a decrease in emotional and financial security in young adults. This research also revealed that at one point or another, the participants felt a desire to comply their parents' career wishes. This finding is supported by research which indicates that children, adolescents and young adults frequently seek parental approval (Pickhardt, 2011). Since parental approval-seeking is common in Myanmar, it is likely that this phenomenon would increase the susceptibility of a young adult to the career opinions of his or her parents.

According to the findings, it also shows that 20% of participants felt increased pressure because of the responsibility they felt for their family. They had to choose what they have to do rather than what they want to do because they think that they need to put their family first. This finding is supported by research that showed that young adults felt the strongest sense of family responsibility during young adulthood, partially explaining their tendency to live with their families and contributing financially. (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). The traditional culture of obedience to what parents say may also play a role, because studies have shown that cultural values have an effect on the factors that affect young people's career choices (Mau, 2000; Caldera et al., 2003; Wambu et al., 2017; Hui and Lent, 2018; Tao et al., 2018).

Due to the findings from the present study, it is likely that closeness, financial support, desire to comply and responsibility are all inter-related processes that have a relationship with parental pressure experiences. In particular, receiving financial support and wanting to comply to the wishes of the parents are highly related, since a young adult who is supported financially by his/her parents is more likely to feel guilty if he/she decides to take a different route than his/her parents wish. 10% of participants stated that they want to comply with their parents' wishes to avoid feeling guilty for not complying with parental wishes.

***Anxiety from pressure.*** The present study found that parental pressure lead to feelings of anxiety in young adults. Research on the impact of career-related parental involvement has mixed results. Although some research has found that parental involvement is a positive experience for young adults (Sickinger, 2012), other research has found it to affect young adults negatively (Splete & Freeman George, 1985; Dietrich & Kracke, 2009). Although the present study did not focus on whether the impact of parental pressure had negative or positive outcomes, the results indicate that 25% of participants felt anxiety as a result of parental pressure in their university years. This creates awareness that parental pressure can adversely affect offspring's emotional wellbeing. But, 5% of participants noted that their experience of parental pressure was positive. Therefore, these findings explain that each young adult can have their own unique experience of parental pressure, which can range from positive to negative.

## Career Exploration

The current study found that young adults appeared to engage in a lower amount of career exploration in childhood and high school, if compared to career exploration in university. Most participants indicated directly that they were not engaging in thought about a future career in high school. It may be due to the fact that career indecision is common in the early stages of career development (Feldman, 2003), causing exploring a specific career path impossible. Furthermore, participants often noted that their exploration efforts in high school were focused mainly on matriculation exam.

A factor that influence the career exploration in university, which was stated by P6, is peer pressure and a supported research on the influence of peer pressure on students choice of career indicated that many peers act as role models in their group and influences the decision made for other members of the group (Badura, 1986). Most students rely on the information given to them by their peers in making decision and the peer group perception about life will ultimately affect their choice of career (Steinberg, 2008).

The results indicate that the social network often plays a part in the exploration of careers during university years. 35% of participants explicitly stated that social networking influenced them in exploring about their career. Anderson and Jiang (2018) supports this finding, as social networking broadens a person's reach and connecting with people who are expert and quite professional can tend to be highly helpful in terms of skill advancement.

***The role of parental pressure in career exploration.*** Interestingly, young adults engaged in more career exploration when parental pressure was most extreme (i.e., university years). This result contradicts other research that indicates parental pressure may have a negative impact on career exploration (Kracke & Noack, 2005). Since the present study finds that many participants' willingness to obey has diminished with age, it is possible that increasing independence from parental wishes facilitated increased career exploration, especially in cases of exploring a particular career path contrasts with the career wishes of their parents.

***Methods of exploration.*** The findings of this study indicate that young adults have utilized a variety of approaches to explore career paths. Out of all methods of exploration, searching online was the most common. Young adults have used a number of other channels including conversation with parents, peers, teachers, relatives and the social environment. These methods have been documented in other research investigating the career exploration of young adults (Sharf, 2010). A fewer number of participants used other sources for information including volunteer experience, work experience, job extern opportunities, extra-curricular activities, and networking with alumni and professionals in the field. The investigation that young adults differed in their methods of career exploration complements the finding that individual difference is a strong component in explaining why people often differ in their methods of exploration (Blustein, 1995).

***Dream career***. This study found that the majority of young adults thought it was necessary to find a job they enjoy. Many participants noted that being interested in their job and enjoying their job were the most important factors in career selection. These findings fit with other research that highlights one's occupation as a central component of one's life (Porfeli & Lee, 2012). Other participants noted helping others, learning new things, pay, control, authority, stability, and a flexible schedule to be important in their idea of a perfect career. Although research has suggested that enjoyment and interest play a large role in career desirability (Creed & Blume, 2013), there is no support for the other factors in considerations of dream careers. Therefore, this finding sheds new light on the factors important to young adults' desirable career situations.

Some participants indicated specific dream careers (i.e., chef, artists) that differed from the career that they had chosen to pursue. This finding is supported by other research which shows that career compromise is a common phenomenon among young adults (Creed & Blume, 2013). Career compromise occurs when one chooses a less desirable career option due to the particular circumstance or to obtain other valuable career characteristics (i.e., career opportunity, stability). Since this study did not investigate the relationship between parental pressure and career compromise, it is unclear how parental pressure influenced decisions to compromise.

***Experiencing stress.*** The current study found that 10% of participants noticed that the career decision making process induced feelings of stress. This finding is supported by other research that demonstrates that stress is often a concern for young adults during career exploration (Splete & Freeman-George, 1985). The most common factor involved in the experience of stress expressed by participants included pressure from others to make a decision and career indecision. Pressure from others has been cited as a large component of stress (Rowh, 2003) as has career indecision (Feldman, 2003).

## Perceptions of Control

***Career.*** In terms of career environment, young adults were found to also have moderate to high levels of perceived control. It was reflected in the experiences of the participants that they had moderate to high control over their career decisions and career choices and a moderate to high amount of career exploration. Vocational identity theory encompasses the following four statuses of vocational identity: diffusion, moratorium, achievement, and foreclosure (Vondracek, Schulenberg, Skorikov, Gillespie, & Wahlheim, 1995). Out of 20 participants, 2 participants are fit in diffusion category because of a lack of concern for the future, while also not having made a commitment. While 11 participants can be considering as moratorium who are activity exploring in an attempt to establish an identity, but have yet to have made any commitment, 8 participants are matched with achievement which is knowing what one wants and taking action toward it. Foreclosure refers to a situation in which someone has made a career decision without having participated in prior career exploration. None of the participants are in foreclosure and one possible reason is that they couldn't accepts what others have chosen for him or her.

***Opinions about parental pressure on control***. Results of this study suggest that according to participants' statements of indicating moderate to high levels of perceived control over career explorations and choices, 75% of them believed that their experiences of parental pressure had no influence on their perceptions of control over their career environment. Only 25% of participants believed that their parental pressure had influenced their perception of control over career environment. With regard to parental pressure having little effect on one's career-related perceived control, a reason for this is that young adults' perceptions of control over their career environment could be influenced by other factors that do not involve interactions with parents (e.g., work opportunities, education opportunities) (Selander, Marnetoft, Asell, & Selander, 2008).

According to Yang (2011), there are only three major groups of occupations in the mindsets of Asian parents, and doctor, lawyer and engineer are considered to be a society's top careers because they are the 'smartest' and are well earning. This stereotype of professions could have originated from the poor background history of many Asians, if compared to the Westerns and most of the families in Asia want their children to become a member of that society. For some Asians, they still don't know any profession other than doctor, lawyer and engineer. May be because of the lack of career awareness in parents, they cannot guide properly to their children and let the children have a control on their own career decision.

With regard to parental pressure having a positive influence on career-related perceived control, it is possible that young adults' perceptions of control over career are heightened in the face of parental pressure. There has been no research to date on the positive effects of parental pressure on career-related perceived control. However, one possible reason for this finding could be that parents who have higher career expectations for their children might also have more financial resources to offer to that child to be successful in his or her career. This increase in financial support may allow a young adult to feel that they have more control over their career, considering they most likely have more education and work options from which to choose (Caplan & Schooler, 2007). Another possibility is that parents with high career aspirations for their children that also instill a sense of confidence in their potential to succeed in their career.

The findings of this study do not match the literature, indicating that parental pressure may have a negative impact on perceived control (Perez & Cumsille, 2012; Perlmuter, Scharff, Karsh, & Monty, 1980). One explanation is that young adults get mistaken about the effect of their parental pressure on their perceived control levels. This would mean that the assumptions related to the findings in the section above (i.e., parental pressure does not influence or positively influences perceived control) would stand. Another explanation is that if they are not mistaken, and the impact of pressure on control is manifesting in ways this research may not be identified. This would mean that parental pressure does harm perceived control, but that was undetected in the present study. Thus, further research is needed.

***Relationship between perceptions of control and career exploration.*** Since this study did not examine levels of perceived control over time, it is difficult to determine the interaction between career exploration and career-related perceptions of control. However, since career exploration improved with maturity, and levels of perceived control were examined at that heightened state of maturity, it is possible that increases in career exploration contributed to moderate to high feelings of control and vice versa. In other words, the findings may suggest that career exploration and perceived control are intricately linked. This is an idea that is supported by a number of researches. For example, Super, Savickas, and Super (1996) found high perceptions of control to be related to more exploratory behaviors in career development. Furthermore, career maturity was found to correlate with high perceived control among male university students (Perrino, 1985). Lastly, Luzzo, James, and Luna (1996) found college students to engage in increased career exploration after watching a video on connecting internal control to external events. Therefore, it is possible that developments in career exploration facilitated increased levels of perceived control in the present study.

## Conclusion

As discussed above, findings relating to three main areas are significant for this study: parental pressure experiences, career exploration experiences, and perceptions of control. With regard to parental pressure, this study found that young adults experienced more parental pressure as they aged. Furthermore, young adults described feeling close to one or both parents, received financial support, had a desire to comply with the wishes of the parent(s), and described feeling

anxious as a result of the pressure. In terms of perceived control, young adults demonstrated having moderate to high levels of perceived control with regard to their career environments. These results have significant theoretical implications for career studies.

Within the career exploration arena, it is found that young adults today are engaged more in academic exploration than in career exploration in the early stages of career development, and are placing more effort on career exploration in later stages. Furthermore, they are often considering academic pursuits as a stepping stone to future career goals in university. Therefore, theoretical models of career exploration should also aim to combine academic exploration with career exploration. Integration of this sort would increase the validity of various measures aimed at examining career exploration and related career development activities during these critical years.

The findings of parental pressure and career exploration also stated that the parents' lacking in career awareness can also affect the young adult's career development. Although the young adults explored careers throughout their lives, they explored too many fields without a proper career decision because the parents lack the knowledge of the career and could not give guidelines the young adults. Therefore, theories of career should also aim to point out the importance of the parents' career awareness and career knowledge.

In perception of control and career exploration, it is found that the young adults think that they have a control on their career because they can choose what they want to. With that thought in mind, the young adults engaged in moderate to high level of career exploration within their control but without decisiveness. This finding is questionable because most of the findings stated that the career exploration starts when the young adults have already decided in what they will be doing. Therefore, theoretical models of the perception of control and career exploration should also aim to consider the career decisiveness.

In this study, the parental pressure has almost no influence on the perception of control over career environment but the reason is unknown. Although there are literatures about the negative influence of parental pressure on perceived control, there is no clear theory to explain the result of the current study. Therefore, the theories about the perceived control should also contemplate about this result. Even though the parental pressure, perception of control and the amount career exploration are high in University, the career maturity of the young adults is low. So, the career exploration should also aim to reflect about career maturity.

Furthermore, this study has some implications for professional practice in the fields of vocational psychology, counselling for youth, career guidance for young adults, and family therapy. Young adults would benefit significantly from seeking career counselling, given the prevalence of stress and indecision during these early years of career development (Splete & Freeman-George 1985). According to the findings, career counselling is needed to consult about the career choices to improve the career maturity and decisiveness, and to educate about healthy coping strategies to deal with the anxiety emerged from parental pressure. Family therapy is also needed to help the family members improve communication, to understand and handle the family situations.

In addition to career counselors, there are school-based services that aid students in making academic decisions. In particular, academic advisors or teachers are often provided to students. These advisors often work with students to make choices about courses and majors of study. The results of this study have implications for academic advisors working with young adults. First, since the results indicate that career-related parental pressure is common for young adults, academic advisors should be aware of this when working with young adults. For instance, advisors might probe students about the reasons behind their academic decisions while emphasizing the

importance of balancing one's own needs with the needs of one's parent(s). Furthermore, advisors should be aware that academic and career choice processes are often stressful for young adults, and provide coping strategies and therapeutic resources when appropriate.

There are various limitations to the present study. The first limitation is concern with the samples' scope that all of the participants are students from University of Yangon. Since this university is arts and science faculty with many varieties of subject matters available to study, their options for career is broader than the subjective experiences of young adults from vocational universities. Therefore, it is better to spread the scope of the sample to get more information about the experiences. The second limitation is concern with the samples' size because total participants are only 20, more information can be attained if the sample size is larger. The third limitation is that subjective answers of the participants. Since the participants answered with their subjective point of view, some of their perceptions of parental pressure experiences might be biased. Therefore, quantitative research is also needed to avoid the biases of the subjective answers.

The final limitation is the biases of the researcher. Since the interviewing, transcribing, coding, analyzing, and reporting the data rely on the researcher's own understanding and interpretation, they are likely influenced by the researcher's personal assumptions and biases. In an attempt to reduce these biases, during the interview process, the researcher asked participants for clarification and included quotes from participants in the reporting process to provide evidence for key themes. The quantitative research design or mixed method research design might well reduce this limitation.

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