



Societal Contribution vs. Salary: Job choice priorities among dental students with and without a physician/dentist parent



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Introduction

Previous literature suggests that physicians may be more altruistic than the general population, and that altruistic or prosocial values may be relayed across generations. Aim: to examine whether having a physician or dentist parent was associated with dental students' tendency to prioritize societal contribution over salary when considering future employment.

Methods

A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 5th- and 6th-year dental students from all 8 dental schools in Taiwan. Data on job choice priority, parental economic status, and other potentially relevant covariates were collected. Job choice priority was assessed by asking: "Compared to the salary, how important is making a contribution to society to you when looking for a job?" [1]. Response options were "making contribution to society is more important", "equally important", and "salary is more important". Descriptive statistics and multivariable analyses were used to identify factors associated with rating societal contribution as equally or more important than salary in future job choice.

Results

Among 462 included students (mean age 24.8 years; SD 2.5; 44.9% ♀), 12% had at least one physician or dentist parent, and only 2% reported poor parental economic status. In multivariable analysis, students with at least one physician or dentist parent had 2.29 times the proportional odds of placing greater importance on societal contribution relative to salary than students without a physician or dentist parent (aPOR = 2.29; $p = 0.012$), after adjustment for potential covariates including parental economic status. Students with a dentist or physician parent were 27% more likely to rate societal contribution as equally or more important than salary (adjusted prevalence ratio [aPR] = 1.27; $p = 0.013$). Similar results were found after excluding students rated 1 and 2 out of 5 on parental economic status.

Conclusions

Economically disadvantaged students remained rare among dental schools in Taiwan. Students with a physician or dentist parent were more likely to value societal contribution at least as much as salary when considering future employment, independent of parental economic status and other student characteristics. Occupational inheritance in dentistry may also involve service-oriented professional values.

Reference

[1] Career value from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09), US National Center for Education Statistics.

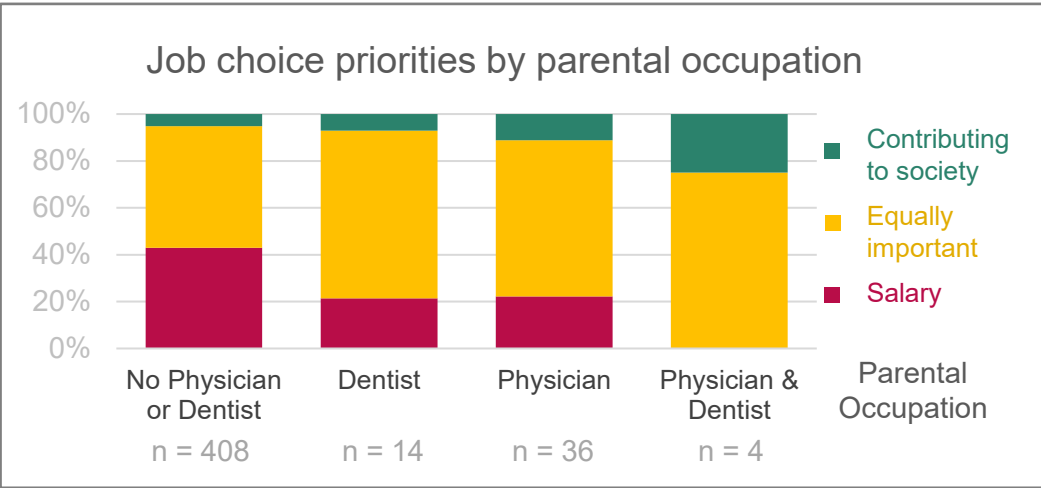


Fig. 1. Distribution of job choice priorities by parental occupation.

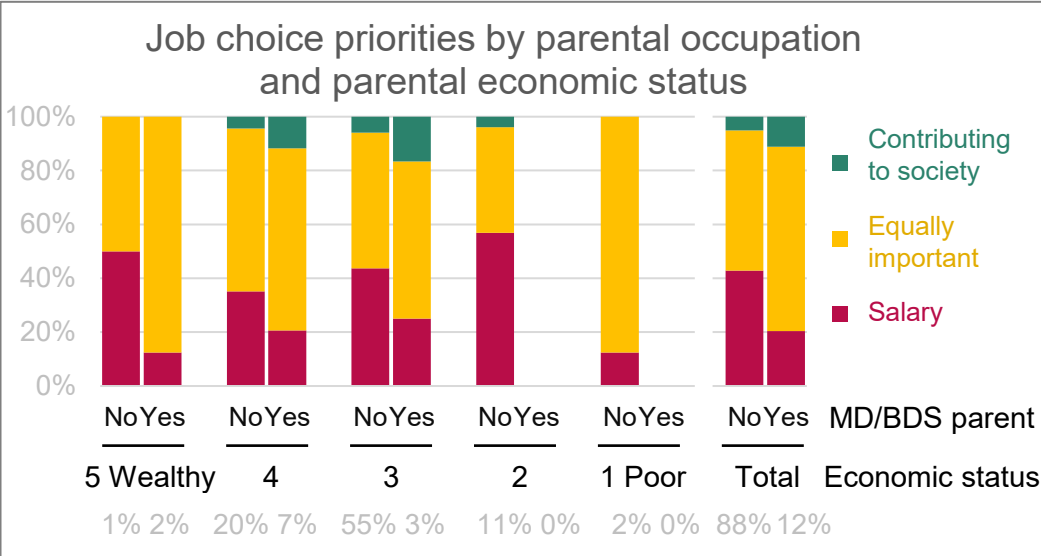


Fig. 2. Distribution of job choice priorities by parental occupation & parental economic status..

Prioritization of contributing to society related to salary		
	Adjusted Proportional Odds Ratio (95% CI)	p-value
Parental occupation		
≥1 physician/dentist parent	2.29 (1.20–4.35)	0.012
No physician/dentist parent	1 (Ref.)	
Seniority at dental school		
6th year	1.96 (1.17–3.28)	0.011
5th year	1 (Ref.)	
Importance on personal growth	1.36 (1.07–1.71)	0.011
Perceived value of 2-yr GP training	1.31 (1.07–1.61)	0.010
Unnecessary tasks	0.83 (0.73–0.95)	0.006
Friendship satisfaction	1.22 (0.92–1.62)	0.167
Life satisfaction	1.00 (0.84–1.19)	0.992
Family cohesion	1.15 (0.83–1.61)	0.401
Parental economic status	1.12 (0.84–1.48)	0.444

Fig. 3. Multivariable ordinal logistic regression of factors associated greater prioritization of societal contribution related to salary in future job choice (n = 462)

Rated societal contribution as equally or more important than salary		
	Adjusted Prevalence Ratio (95% CI)	p-value
Parental occupation		
≥1 physician/dentist parent	1.27 (1.05–1.54)	0.013
No physician/dentist parent	1 (Ref.)	
Seniority at dental school		
6th year	1.16 (0.96–1.40)	0.118
5th year	1 (Ref.)	
Importance on personal growth	1.14 (1.03–1.25)	0.012
Perceived value of 2-yr GP training	1.10 (1.01–1.20)	0.036
Unnecessary tasks	0.95 (0.90–0.99)	0.025
Friendship satisfaction	1.09 (0.97–1.22)	0.138
Life satisfaction	1.02 (0.95–1.09)	0.596
Family cohesion	1.07 (0.94–1.22)	0.323
Parental economic status	1.06 (0.95–1.19)	0.315

Fig. 4. Multivariable modified Poisson regression with robust error variance for rating societal contribution as equally or more important than salary (n = 462)

Goal - Life Satisfaction

**Physician
Parent**



**Dentist
Parent**



**Other
Parent**



VS



VS



**What is more important to us?
Contributing to society or salary?**



Goal - Life Satisfaction

**Physician
Parent**



VS

**Dentist
Parent**



**Dentist
Child**

VS

**Other
Parent**



What is more important to us?
Contributing to society or salary?

