

The experiences of female Sudanese doctors and medical students in career decision- making

Dr Nabtta Bashir Hamad
MBBS (AUW), MIPH (LSTM), MMed (Dund.)
Health Professions Education &
Public Health Lecturer
International University of Africa
Sudan



Introduction

- The intake of female students into Sudanese medical schools reached 64 percent in 2008.
- 51% of the current health-workforce in Sudan are females

(Badr, 2007 & FMOH, 2012-2016)



Main aim

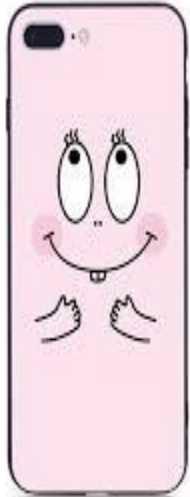
To explore how Sudanese women-doctors construct their careers, their career-decision-making processes and different aspects that may shape career pathways, and form an understanding to suggest how health planners and medical educators can better respond to the increasing number of females in the medical field.

Research questions

1. How do Sudanese women-doctors construct their careers?
2. What are the experiences of Sudanese women-doctors' in career decision-making?
3. What are the factors which may influence medical career pathways of Sudanese women?

Research questions

4. What are the factors which may facilitate or hinder progress of Sudanese women in their selected medical training pathways?
5. How can we utilize information gathered in this study and existing literature to better inform future planning for women's career pathways?



Research Methods

This research follows a Qualitative Research phenomenological approach designed as a case study involving 17 Sudanese females at different levels in their Medical training using story-telling

- In-depth phone interviews
- Face to face focus group discussions
- We recorded, translated and transcribed, then analyzed our data using thematic framework analysis.

Research results



Career decision making processes

- Sudanese women doctors first reduced the number of alternatives they considered to a set of alternatives deserving further attention before determining their choice.

Career specialty choices

- Few were interested in joining Surgery, the majority being more attracted to Paediatrics, Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Internal Medicine
- What were the reasons behind selecting those among others?

Factors influencing career decision-making

- *Intrinsic factors*

- Interest
- Enjoyment
- Perceived good outcomes
- Emotional impact
- Interacting with patients

- *Extrinsic factors*

- The presence of emergency care
- Availability of jobs
- Financial security
- Availability of role models regardless of the role model's gender.

Quotes

Interest and enjoyment

- *“...I was interested in Medicine, I mean I wasn't interested in anything else, not Obstetrics, not Paediatrics, not Surgery, it was Medicine I was interested in...”- Clinical Immunologist*

Perceived good outcomes & emotional impact

- *“....it is the medicine of wellness, there is no real illness, babies are delivered um, in the majority of cases it has a good outcome” – Obstetrics & Gynaecology Consultant*
- *“The first moment a mother sees her baby, I find that very beautiful and it’s something I would always like to see” – Third year Medical Student*
- *“I love seeing children healthy, um.... healthy, smiling, laughing, playing and that’s what I want, to see children all around Sudan, healthy and well...”- Consultant Paediatrician*

Communicating & interacting with patients

- *“For me, dealing with kids is much easier ...they want to play...the moment you treat them they want to play, they want to have fun...but older children, the elderly or even adults...you have to be very formal...personally I love speaking with children...I know how to, I mean how to deal with them, I really like it...I like interacting with kids”- Consultant Paediatrician*

Personality match

- *“I felt that it fits with my personality, becoming a surgeon”- Surgical Trainee*

Emergency care

- *“Surgery and Obstetrics and all those specialties, I discovered my problem with them is the theatre itself” – Internal Medicine Medical-officer*

Availability of training posts

- *“So I went and joined the program on the basis that they offer a job, honestly, I went into it because of that”- Family Medicine Physician*

Availability of role models

- *“...he’s a very ethical person and knowledgeable, and his attitude...he was highly ethical, he likes teaching people and is a very patient individual, and he doesn’t have a problem in teaching juniors and seniors, he likes to show you some skills, follows protocols, so you feel like one day you might become just like him or try and be...I consider him as my mentor” – Obstetrics & Gynaecology consultant*

Career choices & certainty

- Except for students, most of the qualified participants showed reasonable certainty when choosing their
- All qualified participants were satisfied with their specialty of choice and showed resilience in overcoming workplace challenges
- Women leaders displayed positive attitudes towards the feminizing medical field.

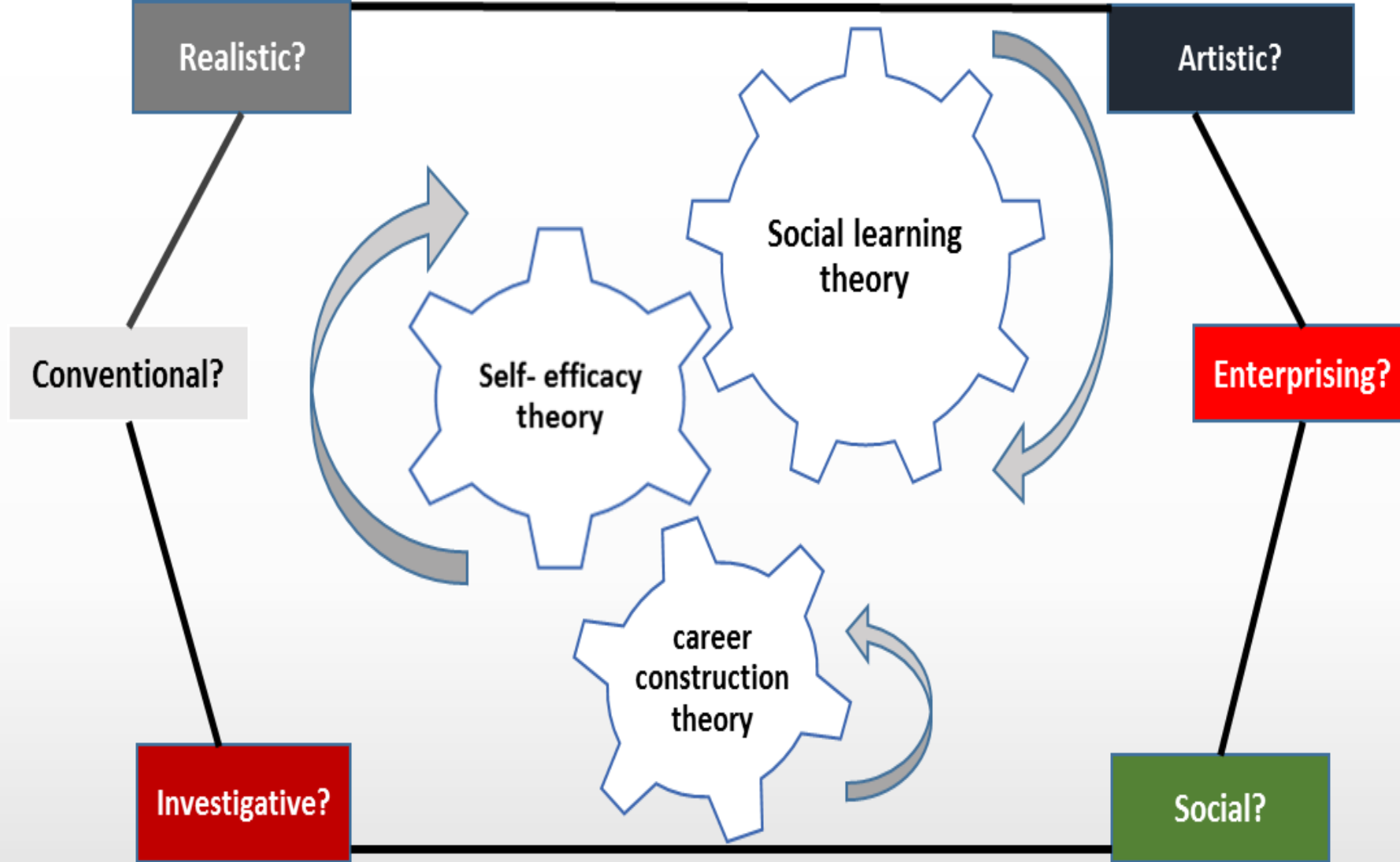


Figure: Summarizing career construction of Sudanese women-doctors & pedagogical underpinnings (with career decision model adapted from Holland's (1996))

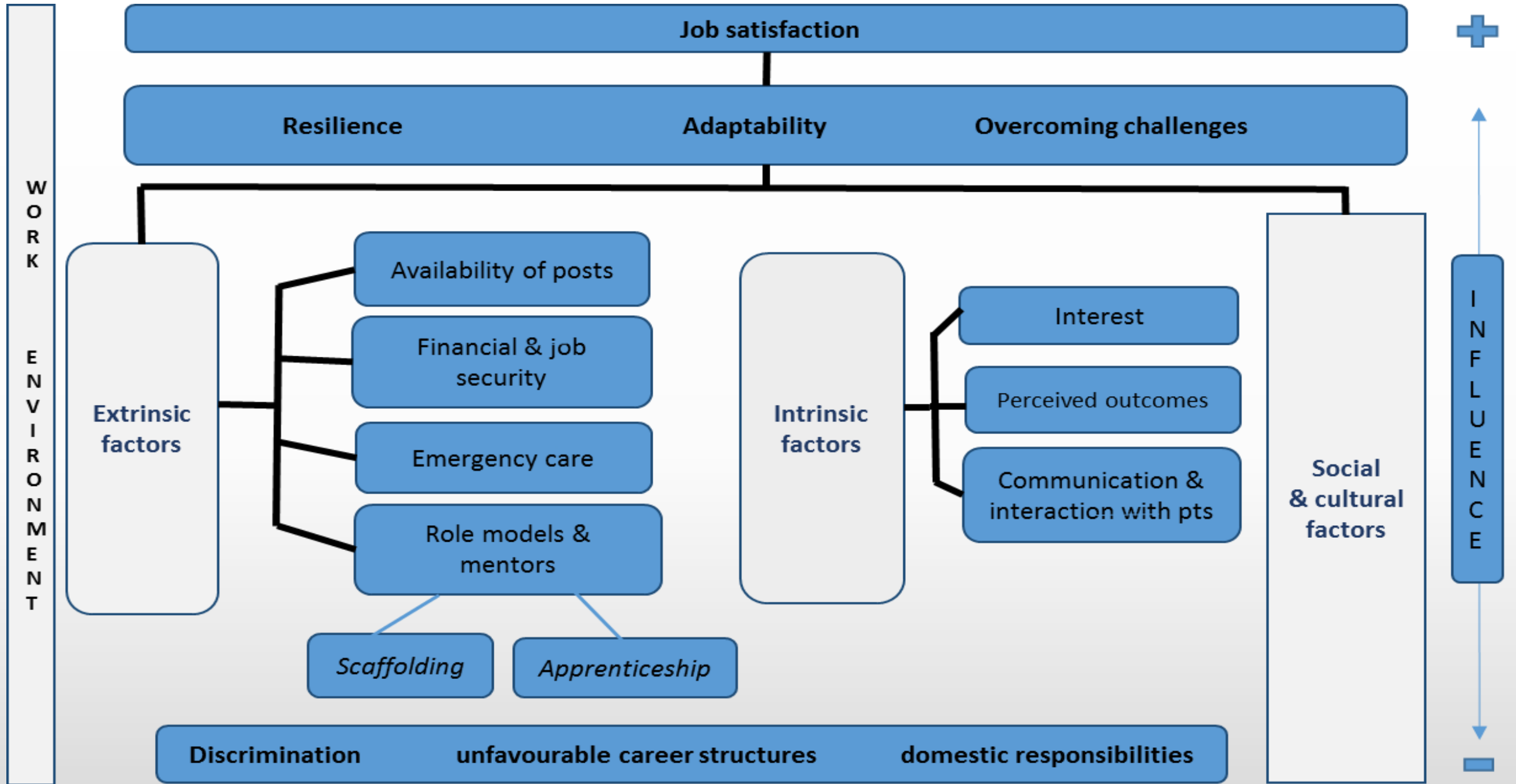


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Conclusion & recommendations

- Initiatives aimed at facilitating vocational progress of Sudanese women doctors through
 - Provision of flexible training opportunities
 - Removal of obstacles
 - Removal of unfavourable career structures such as the
 - Unavailable part-time trainings
 - Absence of role models
 - Non-satisfactory maternity leaves

Conclusion & recommendations

- Introducing financially awarding job postings and training may be promising for attracting women to surgery and other underrepresented specialties.
- Applying proposed initiatives may eventually allow women to reach their full potential and prepare them for holding high leadership positions, and create a positive outlook for the feminizing medical field.

Leadership quote

- *“You have it in you...it comes with the XX...I know you have it...we all have it...it’s just a matter of which line you choose, which battle you fight but every woman can do that...every woman... and when it comes to reality...our grandmothers and even in our homes in our societies...yes the man is in the face...but the actual leader is the woman” – Consultant Surgeon*

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Thank you