

Parental Encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy: Empowering Young Adults in Career Decision-Making

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ABSTRACT

Career decision-making (CDM) refers to selecting a profession or vocation out of confident choices to evaluate one's interests, potential, capabilities, values, expertise, and qualifications and to select a career based on these. Young adults may face several difficulties and lack confidence while making a vocational choice, causing them to choose a disadvantageous path. To effectively make career decisions, youth must undergo a career exploration process with support and guidance. Several studies highlight the role of parents and their support in fostering a high sense of self-efficacy and decision-making skills, especially in vocational choice. This study analyzed the correlation between Parental Encouragement and Self-Efficacy in Career Decision-Making among young adults using a sample of 200 individuals aged 18 to 25. The p-value was 0.000 (or $p < 0.01$), suggesting a significant relationship between the two variables. Using Spearman's rho correlation method, the correlation coefficient was found to be .471, depicting a positive significant correlation. On conducting a t-test, it was observed that although males have higher levels of Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Parental Encouragement than females, it is not statistically significant. Understanding how parental influence shapes an individual's career allows us to explore further counseling strategies and interventions to strengthen the bond between parents and their children.

Keywords: Career, Career Decision-Making, Self-Efficacy, Parental Encouragement, Young Adult

“Your work will fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. If you have not found it, keep looking...” -Steve Jobs

Career refers to selecting a profession or vocation out of confident choices by evaluating one's interests, potential, capabilities, values, expertise, and qualifications and selecting a career based on these. Earlier, the term “career” was primarily associated with ‘work,’ earning a living, and making ends meet. The meaning and scope of the term have now evolved, as a career has become an integral part of life and instills a sense of attainment for excellence. Young & Collin (2000) describe it as “the patterns and sequences of occupations and positions occupied by people across their working lives.” A

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Parental Encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy: Empowering Young Adults in Career Decision-Making

career may also be working permanently in a specific profession (Illustrated Oxford Dictionary, 2007).

Vocational choice is a critical decision for every individual. Today, a person's career has become a primary aspect of their identity. "What do you do?" has become a more pivotal question than "Who are you?" (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.).

Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) proposed the Social Cognitive Career theory to explain three interdisciplinary elements of vocational progression. These are how academic and vocational interests are: a) developed, b) made, and c) achieved. Three socio-cognitive mechanisms are crucial to understanding career selection and progression – Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Expected Outcomes, and Goals. These mechanisms set a basis through which individuals convey their agency in vocational decisions. Self-efficacy's influence on professions and their choice has been well-researched (Lent, 1994). Albert Bandura's theory on social cognition is known to have influenced the theory of social cognitive careers.

According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy refers to a person's confidence in their ability to plan and carry out the necessary actions to achieve specific goals or performances. Borgen (1991) underlined that an individual's agency (self-agency) empowers them to frame their career decisions. This aligns with Super's (1980) view that one's career reflects one's self-concept.

Career Decision-Making (CDM) is choosing a profession or career path from a set of options. According to Kaur (2020), the Decision-Making (DM) process entails self-knowledge, awareness of available societal opportunities, and commitment to pursuing a specific role. Arulmani and Arulmani (2004) state that career development results from a complex interplay between a person and their surrounding environment. Career advancement and development have an immeasurable and prolonged effect on youth.

Frank Parsons is widely recognized as the pioneer of guidance and counseling. According to him, vocational guidance is a process that aims to help individuals select a suitable career path, prepare for it, and make a successful transition from school to work. He developed the three-pronged approach to counsel them and offer guidance on Career Decision-Making; he elaborated - "A clear understanding of yourself: aptitude, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes; a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work; and true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of factors." This three-step process is called Trait & Factor Theory.

Younger children often view their ideal career as imaginative or utopian. Conversely, adolescents begin to view their career choices because of their environmental conditions and developmental stages (Howard & Walsh, 2011). While making such decisions, youth may face several difficulties, causing them to choose a disadvantageous path. As children age, the career-making process becomes more challenging (Gati & Saka, 2009).

Adolescence and young adulthood are a period of development encompassing the cultivation of self-esteem and the determination of life choices. An underdeveloped sense of self-esteem during this stage can lead to difficulties in clarity and poor decision-making skills and career choices (Kim et al., 2014). Although adolescents start to demand independence, self-

Parental Encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy: Empowering Young Adults in Career Decision-Making

determination, and autonomy as they grow older, it was observed that they significantly depend on their parents for career guidance (Sebald, 1989). Sunitha (2022) stated, "Parental encouragement is one of the parental treatment patterns that help adolescents, guide them, so that they may not feel disheartened at a particular point of difficulty." Parental encouragement can be understood as the level of support and motivation parents provide for their children. The guidance, care, approval, and counseling motivate the child to make decisions and unveil hidden potential (Narad & Abdullah, 2016).

In South Asian countries, career decisions are mostly taken as a group, including parents, siblings, and extended family, rather than just by the individual themselves (Asghar & Ajmal, 2022). Tziner et al. (2011) discovered that a strong parent-child relationship and ample support perceived by the child positively influenced the child's openness to receiving career guidance from the parent. A study by Chasanah and Salim (2019) noted that parental support in career-related activities positively impacted self-efficacy in career selection, with exploratory behavior acting as a mediator. The study also suggested that parental guidance in career choices significantly influences children's confidence in the decision-making process. This was similarly observed by Meszaros et al. (2009), who aimed to assess the reasons for women's decline in the IT sector and understand the influence of parental support on career decision-making.

"For all the men I had studied as individuals, the artists and the scientists, work was much more than a means of making a living, and it seemed to me that this must be true of many professionals... I needed some basis for understanding work's possible meanings for the individual." (Roe, 1972)

Anne Roe, a clinical psychologist, shed light on early relationships between parents and children and how it influences the child's career development. Needs Theory, developed by Roe in 1956, suggests that everyone has an innate tendency to showcase and use their abilities. Parental styles affect need hierarchy, which later influences adult decisions and choices. She classified occupations into two categories based on early childhood experiences and interaction involvement, namely - (1) People Oriented and (2) Non-people Oriented. Occupations and services associated with social interaction are known as people-oriented. Examples of these professions are – politics, social work, sales, teaching, journalism, arts, and entertainment. Non-person-oriented occupations involve a limited connection with people and more interaction with inanimate objects. Professions in this category are – IT, engineering, mining, forestry, and science. Moreover, the theory hypothesized that supportive and warm parents raised individuals who lean towards person-oriented occupations. On the other hand, those inclined towards non-person-oriented occupations have a lower level of need and were reared by unaccepting and cold parents.

According to Fayaz (2023), Parental encouragement provides children with a crucial type of reward: attention and attentiveness. This parental style provides care and support to the child during difficult circumstances, leading to intellectual and psychological growth. Career-related parental support refers to parents allowing their children to make their own vocational choices and providing them with an environment to explore their interests and abilities while offering instrumental support (Phillips et al., 2002). A study by Lim and You (2019) opined that attachment and intimacy with parents increase children's confidence in career choices, leading to increased career maturity. Several studies highlighted the influence of the family's position in curating a professional identity and offering adolescent

Parental Encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy: Empowering Young Adults in Career Decision-Making

stability and encouragement, aiding Vocational choice (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Parents must understand their roles as facilitators in enabling children to make independent decisions in the context of their careers; this step is the first in moving toward adulthood.

The current research study aims to understand the correlation between parental encouragement and self-efficacy in career decision-making among young adults. We will use the short form of the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale, developed by Karen Taylor and Nancy Betz in 1996, and the Career-Related Parental Encouragement Scale, created by Amandeep Kaur and Surinder Singh in 2020.

METHODOLOGY

This research aims to examine the correlation between Parental Encouragement and Self-Efficacy in Career Decision-Making of young adults using The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Betz and Taylor (1996) and the Career-Related Parental Encouragement Scale developed by Kaur and Singh (2020). A Google form was created with the scales and distributed among 200 individuals between ages 18 and 25 (82 females and 118 males), including students and working professionals. The study aims to correlate the results obtained from these scales to determine the relationship between the two variables.

Hypotheses

The current study was examined to verify these hypotheses:

- A significant positive relationship exists between parental encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy among young adults.
- There exists no difference in the correlation between parental encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy among males and females.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the IBM SPSS version 27.0. For the current study, correlational analysis and T-test were employed. The following tools were used:

- **Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale Short-Form (Betz & Taylor, 1996):** The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale was developed to assess confidence levels in Career Decision-Making by observing specific behaviors relevant to the process. It comprises five areas of competency: accurate self-appraisal, gathering occupational information, goal selection, making plans and problem-solving. Betz, Klein, and Taylor (1996) developed a short version of the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (CDSE-SF) scale. It consisted of 25 items with the same sub-areas as the extended version, with responses ranging from one = not at all confident to five = totally confident. The internal consistency of the tool was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, ranging from 0.73 to 0.83 for the first three sub-areas and 0.94 for the total score of 25 items.
- **Career-Related Parental Encouragement Scale (Kaur & Singh, 2020):** This scale assessed adolescent career-related parental encouragement in four aspects: Emotional Support, Verbal Encouragement, Decision Making, and Resource Provision of Parental Encouragement about their career. The scale consists of 45 statements, with respondents selecting the option that best reflects their experiences for each statement. Strong test-retest reliability indicates a low variable error in the obtained scores, according to Kumar (2016). A two-monthly interval between the test and

Parental Encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy: Empowering Young Adults in Career Decision-Making

retest was provided to ensure sufficient time separation. The resulting r-value of 0.75 was considered high enough to confirm the scale's reliability. All reliability coefficient values exceeded 0.60, confirming the scale's high reliability.

RESULT

Table 1: The correlation between self-efficacy and Parental Encouragement

	Self-Efficacy in CDM	Parental Encouragement
Self-Efficacy in CDM	1	.471**
Parental Encouragement	.471**	1
N	200	200

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The table highlights the relationship between Career Decision Self-Efficacy and parental encouragement of young adults. The p-value was 0.000 (or $p < 0.01$), suggesting a significant relationship between the two variables. Using Spearman's rho correlation method, the correlation coefficient was found to be .471, indicating a positive significant correlation.

Table 2: The Correlation between Self-Efficacy in Career Decision Making and each subscale of the Related Parental Encouragement Scale

	Self-Efficacy	Parental Support	Verbal Encouragement	Decision Making	Resource Provision
Self-Efficacy	1				
Parental Support	0.39	1			
Verbal Encouragement	0.46	0.81	1		
Decision Making	0.50	0.71	0.75	1	
Resource Provision	0.42	0.67	0.74	0.72	1

The table depicts the correlation between the Career Decision Self-Efficacy scale and each Career Related Parental Encouragement Scale subscale. It was found that there was a low-positive to high-positive correlation between each subscale. Decision-Making and Self-Efficacy had the highest positive correlation of 0.5.

Table 3: The gender-wise difference in Career Decision-Making self-efficacy and parental encouragement.

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P value	Mean Difference
Self-Efficacy	Males	82	99.35	12.691	0.093	3.439
	Females	82	95.61	13.328		
Parental Encouragement	Males	82	143.52	25.69	0.83	0.963
	Females	82	142.56	31.28		

Since the sample of males and females was unequal (M-118, F-82), we randomly took 82 females' and 82 males' responses to test the gender-based difference in Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Parental Encouragement. From Table 3, we can see that although there is a

Parental Encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy: Empowering Young Adults in Career Decision-Making

difference in both variables, with males having higher levels of Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Parental Encouragement, it is not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

Adolescence and young adulthood are a period of development encompassing the cultivation of self-esteem and the determination of life choices. One of the significant decisions an individual must make in this developmental stage is selecting their career choice. A career is a professional line of work an individual selects based on various factors, such as interest, aptitude, strengths, passion, values and available opportunities. However, suppose an individual has underdeveloped self-esteem during this stage. In that case, it can lead to difficulties in clarity and poor decision-making skills when choosing an occupation (Kim et al. 2014). Yasmin and Hossain (2014) found that parents' guidance, support, and unconditional positive regard could enhance an adult's self-esteem. As individuals age, the career-making process becomes more challenging (Gati & Saka, 2008). Tziner et al. (2011) discovered that a strong parent-child relationship and ample support perceived by the child positively influenced the child's openness to receiving career guidance from the parent.

In this research, we aim to analyze the correlation between Parental Encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy among young adults using The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Betz & Taylor (1996) and the Career-Related Parental Encouragement Scale developed by Kaur & Singh (2020) and determine the correlation coefficient using IBM SPSS 27.0. We employed Spearman's rho correlation method. The p-value was 0.000 (or $p < 0.01$), suggesting a significant relationship between the two variables. Using Spearman's rho correlation method, the correlation coefficient was found to be .471, indicating a positive correlation among the two variables. Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Decision Making, a subscale of the Career Related Parental Encouragement Scale, showed a significant correlation of 0.5. This indicates that Hypothesis 1 has been proved correct.

On conducting a t-test to analyze the male and female difference for both the variables, it was seen that although males had greater CDSE ($\bar{x} = 99.3$ males and $\bar{x} = 95.91$ females) and Parental Encouragement ($\bar{x} = 143.52$ males and $\bar{x} = 142.56$ females) with the p-value of Career Decision Self-Efficacy was 0.093 and of Parental Encouragement was 0.83, it is not statistically significant. Yasmin and Hossain (2014) similarly observed that parents' guidance, support, and unconditional positive regard could enhance the adults' self-esteem, especially for both men and women. This study helps us understand how parental encouragement influences an individual's belief about their capability to make effective and confident vocational choices:

Self-efficacy is vital in shaping motivation, goal-setting, and decision-making. Individuals must enhance their confidence and self-concept to deal efficiently with difficult circumstances. A positive and significant correlation between the two variables allows us to delve deeper into this understanding and create counseling strategies, interventions, and educational programs to strengthen the bond between parents and their children and aid parents in developing an environment and parenting style that fosters self-confidence and clarity.

Parents and School teachers can collaborate to foster an environment of support to enable the child to uncover their interests and potential. Parents are emotional guides and referrers in developing our self-concept (Hay & Ashman, 2003). Emotional support from parents

Parental Encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy: Empowering Young Adults in Career Decision-Making

encourages an individual's decision-making skills and determination to achieve career-related goals. Parents must work with their children on their decision-making skills.

CONCLUSION

The current research examines the correlation between Parental Encouragement and Self-Efficacy in Career Decision-Making among young adults. It utilizes the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Betz and Taylor (1996) and the Career-Related Parental Encouragement Scale developed by Kaur and Singh (2020) to assess these constructs. IBM SPSS 27.0 was utilized to collect all the data using Spearman's rho correlation method.

The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of .471**, indicating a positive and highly significant association between Parental Encouragement and Self-Efficacy in Career Decision-Making at the 0.01 significance level. Moreover, a significant correlation of 0.5 was observed between Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Decision Making, a subscale of the Career Related Parental Encouragement Scale. The t-test results indicated that males exhibited greater Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Parental Encouragement; however, these differences were not statistically significant. Through the results of this study, we can further understand the various parenting styles and how they play a role in fostering self-efficacy and career decision-making. Additionally, parents can collaborate with teachers to identify areas of strength and aptitude to guide them through the tedious career selection process successfully.

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Parental Encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy: Empowering Young Adults in Career Decision-Making

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Parental Encouragement and Career Decision Self-Efficacy: Empowering Young Adults in Career Decision-Making

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Conflict of Interest

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