Effects of Parental Contextual Influences on Adolescent Career Aspirations and Career Actions in a Collectivist Cultural Setting

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ABSTRACT

Using a series of three studies, this research program had three objectives: (1) to develop a new measure to assess congruence between parents and their adolescents regarding career matters, (2) to test the cross-sectional associations between selected proximal parental contextual variables (i.e., parental career expectations and adolescent-parent career congruence) and career aspirations and career actions of planning and exploration within the social cognitive career choice model, and (3) to investigate the longitudinal relationships among the study variables. All studies were based on children from a collectivist cultural context (i.e., Indonesia). This research program has been structured around three empirical studies reported in three journal articles.

Study 1 presents the development and initial validation of the Adolescent-Parent Career Congruence Scale. This study involved focus groups, generation of items, and an expert review to develop 20 items considered suitable to assess adolescent-parent career congruence. In the second phase, the items were administered to 1062 Indonesian high school students. Item analysis and exploratory factor analysis were conducted on the first half of the randomly split sample (550 students: 53.1% girls, mean age = 15.94 years, $SD = .52$). These analyses reduced the number of items to 12, which represented two reliable subscales. Third, a confirmatory factor analysis with the hold-out sample (512 students: 55.9% girls, mean age = 15.92 years, $SD = .49$) confirmed the initial structure of the new scale. Last, construct validity of the newly devised scale was assessed by testing the correlations between the Adolescent-Parent Career Congruence Scale with measures of parental support, living up to parental expectations (academic achievement subscale), and life satisfaction. Following a standard pattern for psychometric instruments, these stages produced a valid and reliable 12-item scale, which includes (a) a 7-item complementary congruence subscale to measure how well the adolescents perceive their needs to be satisfied by parents in the career field, and
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reciprocally, perceptions of how happy or satisfied the parents are with their adolescent children’s career-related progress, and (b) a 5-item supplementary congruence subscale to measure the similarity in career-related values and direction between the adolescent and the parents.

Study 2 reports the cross-sectional associations between parental career expectations and adolescent-parent career congruence and career aspirations and the career actions of planning and exploration. The study was informed by the social cognitive career choice model and involved a sample of 351 Grade 10 Indonesian high school students (53.3% girls, mean age 15.93 years, $SD = .51$). Social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994) holds that proximal contextual variables have direct effects on individuals’ career goals and career actions, whereas Bandura’s (1999, 2000) general social cognitive theory proposes that these variables influence career goals directly and indirectly by way of self-efficacy, and influence career actions indirectly by way of self-efficacy and goals. Bandura’s and Lent’s approaches were integrated in developing hypotheses. Findings demonstrated a variety of routes by which parental career expectations and adolescent-parent career congruence linked to adolescents’ career aspirations and the career actions of planning and exploration. Partial mediation effects were found for the relationships between parental career expectations and career aspirations and career exploration, and full mediation effects were found for the associations between both parental variables and career planning, and for those between adolescent-parent career congruence and career aspirations and career exploration.

Finally, Study 3 reports the longitudinal relationships among the study variables. This study involved a sample of 954 Indonesian high school students (55.8% girls; mean age = 16.43, $SD = .49$), who were surveyed in Grade 10 and six months later when they were in Grade 11. The results revealed that the reciprocal model was the best-fitting model. This model showed that parental career expectations explained
significant variance in later career aspirations and career planning, and together with career aspirations, adolescent-parent career congruence was found to be associated with future career exploration. While self-efficacy and outcome expectations were reciprocally linked over time, self-efficacy served as an across-time correlate of both parental variables, and career exploration was found to be correlated with later self-efficacy. In addition, career planning was found to be associated with future outcome expectations. The implications of these three empirical studies are highlighted and recommendations for future research are discussed.
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and beliefs, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

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Dian Ratna Sawitri

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS RESEARCH PROGRAM

Journal Articles
(Listed in order in which these Articles Appear in this Thesis)


Posters


STATMENTS FROM AUTHORS
CONFIRMING THE AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION OF THE PHD CANDIDATE ON THE JOURNAL ARTICLES

Paper 1
As co-authors of the paper entitled “The Adolescent-Parent Career Congruence Scale: Development and Initial Validation”, we confirm that Dian Ratna Sawitri has made the following contributions:

a. Designing the questionnaire items with direction and feedback from co-authors.
b. Collecting and entering the data into the statistical software package.
c. Analysing and interpreting the data under the direction of co-authors.
d. Writing the paper with direction and feedback from co-authors.

Furthermore, we agree to the inclusion of the paper in this doctoral research program submitted for examination.

Dian R. Sawitri

Peter A. Creed

Melanie J. Zimmer-Gembeck
Paper 2
As co-authors of the paper entitled “Parental influences and adolescent career behaviours in a collectivist cultural setting”, we confirm that Dian Ratna Sawitri has made the following contributions:

a. Collecting and entering the data into the statistical software package.

b. Structuring the paper with direction from co-authors.

c. Conducting the data analyses with direction and feedback from co-authors.

d. Writing the paper with direction and feedback from co-authors.

Furthermore, we agree to the inclusion of the paper in this doctoral research submitted for examination.

Dian R. Sawitri

Date

Peter A. Creed

Date

Melanie J. Zimmer-Gembeck

Date
Paper 3

As co-authors of the paper entitled “Longitudinal relations of parental influences and adolescent career aspirations and actions in a collectivist society”, we confirm that Dian Ratna Sawitri has made the following contributions:

a. Collecting and entering the data into the statistical software package.
b. Structuring the paper.
c. Conducting the data analyses with direction and feedback from co-authors.
d. Writing the paper with direction and feedback from co-authors.

Furthermore, we agree to the inclusion of the paper in this doctoral research submitted for examination.

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