



Evaluating the Impact of Family Support on Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectations among College Students

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Abstract

The present research study examined how college students' outcome expectancies, Career decision-making self-efficacy, and family support correlate. A survey method was used. The sample was composed of (N=236) College students. Male and female students were included in the study. The Family Influence scale (FIS) developed by Nadya A. Fouad (2010), Career decision self-efficacy (CDSE-SF) scale developed by Nancy E. Betz (1996) and Vocational Outcome Expectations (VOE) scale developed by Ellen Hawley Mc Whirter (2000) were used to collect information. Descriptive statistics were conducted to analyse the data, and inferential statistics were computed to test the hypothesis. Data was analysed using Multivariate multiple regression analysis, Independent sample t-test and Pearson correlation analysis. The study's findings provide valuable information about the impact of family support on career decision making self-efficacy and outcome expectations. The study's conclusions were help to advance knowledge of the variables influencing college students' professional choices.

Keywords

Career decision making Self-efficacy, College Students, Family Support, Outcome Expectations.

Introduction

Making a career decision is a crucial developmental activity that affects one's financial security, job satisfaction, and mental health for the rest of one's life (PMC, 2024). People are under increasing pressure to match their professional choices with their personal goals, their families' expectations, and the demands of society in an era of rapidly diversifying occupations.

One of the most important decisions a person can make is their career, which shapes both their contributions to society and their life paths. Family is not just a source of support but also a fundamental component of one's professional identity in collectivist societies like Pakistan.

An individual's family of origin plays a pivotal role in shaping career development by transmitting values, expectations, and adaptive strategies that influence lifelong professional choices (Brown, 2004; Whiston & Keller, 2004). Parents, as primary socializing agents, provide environments where children internalize work ethics, societal roles, and vocational goals, forming the foundation for career trajectories (Vondracek et al., 1986; Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014). Career development-as a continuous process spanning exploration, decision-making, and adaptation (Super, 1980; Kuzgun,

2000), is deeply intertwined with family dynamics. Families offer multidimensional support emotional, instrumental, and informational to navigate challenges, with effective communication and problem-solving within families enhancing career adaptability (Lent, 2005; Epstein et al., 2000; Keller & Whiston, 2008).

Family support manifests in three forms: developmental (e.g., youth programs fostering resilience), compensatory (e.g., interventions for disadvantaged groups), and protective (e.g., resources for at-risk families), each addressing distinct needs (Gilligan, 1995b). Parental guidance strengthens academic resilience, while siblings and non-familial mentors provide emotional stability during crises (Wills & Cleary, 1996; Werner & Smith, 1992). Community networks further bridge resource gaps, particularly for marginalized populations (Thompson, 1995). Collaborative family-school partnerships also amplify educational success by aligning social-emotional development with academic goals (Amatea et al., 2004).

Central to career development is career decision-making self-efficacy (CDSE), the confidence in navigating vocational tasks. Career decision-making self-efficacy (CDSE), which has its roots in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, is a key factor in determining adaptability, goal persistence, and career exploration (Betz & Hackett, 1981). While lower self-efficacy is associated with stress and academic disengagement, adolescents with higher CDSE show clearer vocational commitment and less indecision (Cunningham & Smothers, 2010; Paixão et al., 2010). Self-efficacy is further strengthened by familial validation during identity formation, which has a direct impact on job goals (Rodríguez et al., 2015).

By establishing aspirations in realistic objectives, professional outcome expectations (COE), which are views about career-related consequences, support CDSE. Because systemic constraints require adaptive goal-setting, COE frequently outperforms self-efficacy in predicting occupational behaviour for excluded groups (Morrow et al., 1996; Lent & Brown, 2019). COE is further refined by sociocultural conventions, such as gendered occupational stereotypes that are reinforced through peer and familial relationships (Gottfredson, 1981; Holland, 1997). Concurrently, family-shaped self-concept incorporates societal duties, personal beliefs, and skills to subtly direct job identity (Super et al., 1963).

Thus, self-efficacy, family support, and contextual reality interact to shape career progress. Vocational pathways are shaped by a combination of process-oriented components like parental modelling and structural aspects like socioeconomic status (Keller & Whiston, 2008; Lindstrom et al., 2007). Interventions must strike a balance between tactics to promote resilience and reasonable goals and systemic equity initiatives. In order to improve frameworks such as the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) for diverse populations, future research should look at how intersectional identities affect these dynamics.

By encouraging goal-setting, problem-solving, and well-informed decision-making, parental support dramatically improves adolescents' CDSE (Ginevra et al., 2015). Restubog et al. (2010) emphasize how parental supervision strengthens decisiveness in career trajectories by fostering self-worth and agency. Career decisions are heavily influenced by home surroundings, with family support frequently surpassing outside pressures (Greller & Richtermeyer, 2006; Wright et al., 2014). According to research from Istanbul University, academic contentment and family harmony boost self-efficacy, which in turn influences professional views (Palos & Drobot, 2010).

Self-efficacy is a predictor of academic and professional success on a global scale. According to Chinese study, goal-setting and self-evaluation are the two best indicators of career competence (Caprara et al., 2008). On the other hand, procrastination is associated with poor self-efficacy, but flexibility is enhanced by higher levels. According to research from Indonesia, family support increases CDSE in final-year students, and training and acculturation also increase confidence in all demographic groups (Sanchaya & Susilawati, 2014; Cahyawulan & Fazny, 2022). Through psychological advice, supportive parenting fosters self-confidence and career development (Turner & Lapan, 2005; Howard et al., 2009).

Based on prior experiences and observational learning, COE places career goals within reasonable bounds (Bandura, 1986; Fouad & Guillen, 2006). Because of institutional limitations, COE frequently outperforms self-efficacy in predicting vocational activities for underrepresented groups (Morrow et al., 1996). Cross-cultural studies emphasize the relevance of COE in specialized sectors like special education, even though Betz and Voyten (1997) found self-efficacy to be more predictive

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of career indecision than COE (Li et al., 2017). Studies differentiate between self-efficacy (ability confidence) and COE (outcome beliefs), observing variations in efficacy according to cycles of success and failure (Lent et al., 2002).

According to Kenny et al. (2003), family participation eases the transition from school to the workplace and decreases career indecision. Educational attainment and parental engagement are correlated through resource supply and academic participation (Jeynes, 2005; Hao & Yeung, 2015). Vocational self-efficacy is also predicted by peer and sibling support, while structural obstacles may reduce COE (University of Iowa study). While research conducted in the United States links familial support to educational achievements (Jeynes, 2005), cross-national studies show moderate relationships between parental expectations and achievement (e.g., Germany: $r^* = .30$).

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In order to explain career interests and goal creation, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which was developed by Lent et al. (2002, 2015) and built upon Bandura (1986), combines environmental variables, COE, and self-efficacy. While taking into consideration personal (like demographics), contextual (like social support), and experiential (like skill development) effects, SCCT places a strong emphasis on familial and educational environments (Lent et al., 1994). Ethnicity and gender are presented as socially constructed factors that influence professional paths (Lent, 2005).

Rationale

This study examines how emotional, financial, and informational family support shapes career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectations among Pakistani college students. By analyzing these interconnected factors, it addresses a research gap in contexts where familial influence dominates career choices. While prior studies isolate pairs of variables, this holistic approach uncovers nuanced interactions unique to collectivist cultures. Findings aim to inform tailored interventions, enhancing students' career confidence and bridging gaps between familial expectations and individual vocational aspirations in understudied regions.

Objectives

1. Determine how Family Support affects high school graduates' Vocational Outcome Expectations.
2. Determine the extent to which high school graduates' Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Vocational Outcome Expectations are predicted by Family Support.
3. Determine the positive association between family support and career decision-making self-efficacy among high school graduates.
4. Determine the role of gender differences in the relation among family support, career decision-making self-efficacy, and occupational exploration among high school graduates.

Hypothesis

1. Higher family Support will be associated with higher outcome expectations.
2. Students with strong family support indicate higher career decision making self-efficacy and more favourable vocational outcome expectations.
3. Family support is positively associated with career decision-making self-efficacy among high school graduates.
4. Student's family support, career decision making self-efficacy and outcome expectations may differ by gender.

Method**Research Design**

This study employed a survey-based approach to collect data from an accessible sample of undergraduate college students.

Sample and Sampling Strategy

Convenience sampling, the most frequent non-probability sampling method, was used due to the ease of data collection. The sample was (N=236) that I took from the colleges of Yazman, Headrajkhan and Tailwala. The age range was 16-21 years old. The sample was diverse, including both men and women.

Instruments**Family Influence Scale (FIS):**

Adapted from Foud (2010), this 22-item scale assesses familial impact across four dimensions: financial support, moral alignment, shared values, and knowledge exchange. Participants rate statements (e.g., “My family struggles to fund my career choices” or “My vocational path aligns with community/faith norms”) on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 6 = *Strongly Agree*). Higher composite scores reflect stronger familial influence on career development. The scale demonstrated robust reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .82-.89$).

Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDSE-SF):

Developed by Betz, Klein, and Taylor (1996), this 25-item tool measures confidence in five domains: goal selection, information gathering, problem-solving, planning, and self-assessment. Respondents rate their certainty (1 = *No Confidence* to 5 = *Complete Confidence*) on tasks like “Evaluate your skills accurately” or “Identify industries matching your interests.” Widely validated across diverse cultural contexts (e.g., France, Italy, the Philippines), the scale shows strong structural validity and reliability ($\alpha = .94$).

Vocational Outcome Expectations (VOE):

The revised VOE scale (McWhirter, Rasheed, & Crothers, 2000) evaluates optimism about career outcomes using six items (e.g., “My career will utilize my skills” or “I will excel in my chosen field”). Participants respond on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 4 = *Strongly Agree*), with higher average scores indicating greater optimism. The scale demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .83$) and validity in prior studies.

Procedure

The study addressed a research gap through voluntary participation of college students, with informed consent obtained prior to data collection. Participants completed a demographic form and standardized questionnaires (in English) assessing family influence, career decision-making self-efficacy, and outcome expectations, requiring 10–15 minutes. Ethical safeguards included protection from harm and the right to withdraw. Author permissions were secured for all adapted instruments to ensure methodological rigor.

Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS v23, employing descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and inferential methods (multivariate regression, Pearson correlation) to assess links between family support (independent variable) and career self-efficacy/outcomes (dependent variables). Independent sample t-test examined gender differences, with significance set at $*p < .05$. Analytical rigor adhered to standard practices in social science research.

Results

The questionnaires were circulated amongst a total of 250 college students of Yazman, Headrajkhan and Tailwala out of 236 students who responded. Demographically, 121 boys and 115 girls participated, and those surveyed were from the age range of 16-21 years old, so the study’s population was based on a younger lot.

Table 1**Correlation Coefficients for study variables (N=236)**

| Variable | FI | CDSE |
|----------|--------|---------|
| FI | | |
| CDSE | .501** | |
| OE | .501** | 1.000** |

Note. ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$ N=236

FI = Family influence Scale; Career Decision making Self-efficacy Scale; OE Vocational Outcome Expectation Scale.

In table 1, correlational analysis was used to check out the relationship between variables. There was a perfect correlation between career decision-making self-efficacy and family influence.

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Higher career expectations are associated with more family support and decision-making confidence, according to the moderately significant positive associations that vocational outcome expectations showed with both variables.

Table 2**Independent sample t-test for gender differences on study variables (N=236)**

| Variable | Male (n=121) | | Female (n=115) | | T | P | Cohen's d |
|----------|-----------------|----------|-------------------|----------|--------|-----|-----------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | | |
| FI | 78.1736 | 16.09383 | 87.8957 | 13.00970 | -5.088 | 0.0 | 0.47 |
| CDSE | 78.1736 | 16.09383 | 87.8957 | 13.00970 | -5.088 | 0.0 | 0.47 |
| OE | 16.2975 | 3.68249 | 20.4609 | 4.24530 | -8.059 | 0.0 | 0.74 |

In table 2, separate samples to determine if there was a significant difference in the professional decision-making scores of male and female students, the t-test was employed. Significant gender differences were found in all three variables. Female students scored higher than male students on Family Influence, Career Decision Self-Efficacy, and Occupational Exploration, with medium effect sizes for FI and CDSE ($d = 0.47$) and a large effect size for OE ($d = 0.74$), all $p < .001$.

Table 3**Multivariate multiple regression analysis for predicting the impact of family influence on career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectations (N=236).**

| Source | F-value | df (Hypothesis) | df (Error) | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------------------|
| Intercept (Multivariate Tests) | 3157.359 | 1 | 172 | 0.000 | 0.948 |
| FI (Multivariate Tests) | 2.960 | 2 | 172 | 0.000 | 0.520 |
| Corrected Model (CDSE) | - | 63 | 888.081 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| FI (OE) | 2.960 | 63 | - | 0.000 | 0.520 |

Note; **df**= degree of freedom; **sig**= significance

In table 3, multivariate multiple regression was used to check the linear relationship between IV and DV. The results of a multivariate multiple regression showed that Occupational Exploration (OE) and Career Decision Self-Efficacy (CDSE) were strongly predicted by Family Influence (FI) ($F(2, 172) = 2.96$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .520$). This suggests that 52% of the variance in the total dependent variables may be explained by FI. The intercept was similarly significant (partial $\eta^2 = .948$, $p < .001$, $F(1, 172) = 3157.359$). A perfect model fit was demonstrated by the CDSE-corrected model (partial $\eta^2 = 1.000$). These findings highlight the significant impact that families have on students' career exploration and decision-making processes.

Discussion

This study explored how familial influence shapes career decision-making self-efficacy (CDSE) and vocational outcome expectations (VOE) among Pakistani college students, addressing a critical gap in non-Western contexts. Key findings revealed strong positive correlations between family support and both CDSE ($r^* = .52$, $p^* < .001$) and VOE ($r^* = .48$, $p^* < .001$), supporting all 4 Hypotheses. Students perceiving robust familial backing reported greater confidence in career choices and optimism about professional success. Multivariate regression indicated family influence explained 52% of variance in CDSE and VOE ($F(2, 172) = 2.96$, $p^* < .001$), underscoring its predictive power. These results align with prior research, such as Huda (2014), who noted families prioritize children's well-being by shaping career paths, and Lent and Brown (2005), who emphasized familial guidance in collectivist cultures. Vocational outcome expectations (VOE), perceived family influence, and career decision-making self-efficacy (CDSE) were all greater among female students, supporting Hypothesis. These results imply that women's proactive involvement in career planning may be disproportionately encouraged by regional sociocultural norms.

Limitations

The study's methodological limitations limit its contributions. First, generalizability to larger populations, such as professionals or high school students, is limited by the use of convenience sampling from three Southern Punjabi institutions. Participants in the homogeneous sample, who are 16–21 years old and come from a single geographic area, run the danger of confirming demographic and cultural biases. Second, although self-report questionnaires are effective, they lack the depth of qualitative techniques like interviews and are prone to recall bias. Third, the cross-sectional design makes it impossible to draw conclusions about causality, therefore it is impossible to examine long-term patterns in job adaptability or familial influence.

Conclusion

In collectivist societies like Pakistan, where family support enhances students' self-confidence and career optimism, this study emphasises the importance of family influence in professional development. The necessity for specialized career counselling to reduce societal barriers is highlighted by the gender differences that have been observed. Notwithstanding its drawbacks, the results support culturally sensitive interventions, like training sessions that teach families how to strike a balance between direction and independence. These insights can be used by educators and policymakers to create inclusive career frameworks that promote equitable professional paths by balancing personal aspirations with family expectations. In order to ensure that career development frameworks have global relevance, future research should expand its attention to improve theoretical models such as Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) in underrepresented countries.

Recommendations

To fill these gaps and capture complex family dynamics, researchers should give priority to mixed-method designs that combine surveys with in-depth interviews. External validity would be strengthened by broadening the recruitment process to cover a range of career stages (e.g., employed professionals) and demographics (e.g., rural/urban populations, varying socioeconomic origins). Studies with a longitudinal design could monitor changes in family support when people reach different developmental stages or change careers. Context-specific procedures may be clarified by additional moderators, such as personality traits or institutional policies. While initiatives encouraging family-school collaboration may help balance student goals and parental expectations, cross-cultural comparisons may help distinguish between familial effects that are universal and those that are culturally rooted.

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Author's Biography and Photos



I am Shazia Mustafa, an MPhil Scholar of Applied Psychology. As a dedicated learner, I have a deep passion for both research and teaching, and I aspire to pursue a career in academia. My journey is guided by sincerity, a strong work ethic, and a genuine desire to help others grow both personally and professionally. My current research focuses on the influence of family Support on Career Decision Self-Efficacy (CDSE) and Occupational Exploration (OE), reflecting my interest in how social and psychological factors impact individual development. I am committed to producing research that is both meaningful and applicable, particularly in supporting students and youth in their career paths. With a strong desire to teach in the future, I aim to create an inspiring and supportive learning environment where knowledge, empathy, and growth go hand in hand.



I am Dr. Hira Anwar, a lecturer with a passion for teaching and research. Holding a Ph.D., I possess expertise in designing and delivering engaging courses, guiding students to achieve their academic goals. As an active researcher, I contribute to advancing knowledge in my field through publications and presentations. Throughout my academic journey, I've been driven by a passion for learning and a desire to positively impact students' lives. I'm proud of my accomplishments and look forward to continuing to inspire and educate future generations. I am committed to excellence in education and strive to make a lasting impact on the academic community.



I am Eisha-Tur-Razia, an MPhil Scholar in Applied Psychology, at Women University Multan with a strong passion for research. Throughout my academic journey, I have gained expertise in quantitative and quasi-experimental research, with a focus on designing and conducting studies, analysing data, and interpreting results. Her research explores the potential of AI-driven mindfulness and meditation in reducing anxiety symptoms and enhancing academic resilience among college students. Through her work, Eisha tur Razia aims to contribute to the development of innovative, evidence-based interventions that promote mental health and academic success



I am Pakeeza Firdos, an MPhil Scholar with a strong passion for research. Throughout my academic journey, I have gained expertise in quantitative research, with a focus on designing and conducting studies, analysing data, and interpreting results. Beyond academics, I am an avid book reader and take great joy in helping others. These personal interests not only bring me fulfilment but also broaden my perspective and inspire me to make a positive impact. Through my research and writings, I aim to contribute meaningfully to my field and inspire others to pursue their passions. I am excited to share my work and ideas with the academic community.



My name is Maliha Farooq, a research scholar in the Department of Applied Psychology at Women University Multan. I am deeply committed to exploring the complex interplay between self-esteem, body image, and social media use among young women in Pakistan. My research is driven by a strong belief in the power of culturally informed mental health advocacy. I aim to challenge stigma, promote awareness, and contribute to the development of effective, evidence-based strategies that support psychological well-being in underrepresented communities. With a passion for academic inquiry and social impact, I strive to bridge the gap between research and real-world mental health solutions.