

The Influence Of Parental Career-Related Behavior On Career Anxiety And Career Decision Making

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Article Info

History Articles

Received:

17 February 2023

Accepted:

15 March 2023

Published:

30 April 2023

Keywords:

parental career- related behavior; career anxiety; career decision making.

Abstract

Making career decisions is crucial for students to determine the education or job that aligns with their interests, talents, or opportunities in line with their vocational identity. This study aimed to analyze the impact of parental career-related behavior on three aspects: support, interference, and lack of engagement on career anxiety and career decision-making. It was a quantitative research with a correlational research design and involved 297 twelfth graders at vocational high school (SMK) as the samples. Following the students' data analysis there found that parental career-related behavior, regarding support and lack of engagement significantly influenced career anxiety and decision-making. In contrast, the interference aspect only significantly affected career anxiety, but not career decision-making. Furthermore, career anxiety significantly affected career decision-making. Lastly, this study provides insight into parental involvement (parental career-related behavior) in students' career development. High career anxiety should be reduced to enhance student's ability to make career decisions.

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p-ISSN 2252-6889

e-ISSN 2502-4450

INTRODUCTION

The educational process is one of the individual's steps in achieving a career (Fadilla & Abdullah, 2019). A career is related to the education and work undertaken by a person. Secondary school is a crucial level because students start facing various choices pertaining to their career direction. They must develop job (vocational) identities and choose a career path (Zhang, Yuen & Chen, 2015). Choosing and preparing oneself for a career is one of the essential tasks at this stage (Pratiwi & Irawati, 2020). However, not all students can make the right career decisions. Wahyuni et al. (2018) state that secondary school students need help completing their career development tasks. Making career decisions requires individuals to think deeply about future plans, which can sometimes lead to anxiety.

According to (Jia et al., 2022), career anxiety occurs when negative cognitive and emotional processes outweigh the positive ones and when fear is stronger than hope. This results in doubts, worries, and various irrational thoughts about things that haven't yet happened. Excessive anxiety can hinder career decision-making, as anxious individuals tend to avoid uncertainty, leading to hesitations in making decisions. The stress experienced by students prevents them from achieving optimal career choices. The effects of career anxiety on students include feeling pressured, fearing to face the future optimistically, losing the enthusiasm to learn, dropping out of school or not wanting to pursue higher education, and lacking confidence in their abilities (Mariah et al., 2020).

Career anxiety is influenced by internal and external factors within the individual stemming from the social environment, especially the family and parents. Previous studies found that anxiety is correlated with attachment to parents (Mariah et al., 2020). The role of parents in a child's career involvement is like two sides of a coin, which can have both positive and negative impacts. The involvement of parents can contribute to reducing the anxiety adolescents feel during the career selection

process. However, on the flip side, a child might feel burdened if their desires do not align with the expectations of their parents (Fikry & Rizal, 2018).

The specific involvement of parents concerning their child's career is termed "parental career-related behavior" by Dietrich & Kracke (2009). There are three types of parental career-related behaviors, namely supportive parents, interfering parents, and parents who lack engagement. Supportive parents are more actively involved in their child's career, influencing their child's self-confidence. With supportive parents, a child will feel more certain about their career choice (Widyastuti & Pratiwi, 2013). On the other hand, excessive involvement can be disruptive (interference) to a child's career choices. Overly intrusive parents can lead to a child not having firm convictions about their choices, mainly when parents impose their will without considering the child's desires and capabilities. Conversely, parents who exhibit a lack of engagement can reduce a child's confidence in their ability to handle tasks related to career decision-making. This, in turn, can result in a less stable career direction for the child (Samosir & Suharjo, 2018).

Based on studies related to career anxiety, it can be concluded that it affects high school students in making career decisions. A strongly suspected factor influencing career anxiety is the presence of parental career-related behavior. The limited literature that directly discusses the relationship between parental career-related behavior and career decision-making mediated by career anxiety, as well as the sparse specific reviews examining which aspects of parental career-related behavior most influence career anxiety and career decision-making, necessitated the present study. Thus, the present study aimed to analyze which parental career-related behavior, among the three aspects of support, interference, and lack of engagement, impacts career anxiety and career decision-making in vocational high school students. It was expected that the findings can provide insights into the significance of parental involvement in influencing students' careers and thus benefit

counselors in developing counseling services, especially in the career field.

METHODS

The study population consisted of students from seven public vocational high schools in Bengkulu, while the samples were 297 twelfth-grade students from four schools selected using the cluster random sampling technique.

Data collection was performed using three psychological scales adapted and developed by the researchers. The instruments were measured using a Likert scale with five response options (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

To measure the parental career-related behavior (PCB) variable, an instrument developed by Dietrich & Kracke (2009) was used, consisting of 15 statement items to assess 3 aspects of parental career-related behavior: 1) support, 2) interference, 3) lack of engagement. The reliability value for these 15 statement items was 0.813.

The career anxiety instrument was modified from the instrument developed by Tsai et al. (2017). It has 4 indicator aspects, namely 1) personal ability, 2) irrational beliefs about employment, 3) employment environment, 4) professional education training. Following the trial, there obtained 41 valid statement items with an alpha reliability value of 0.902.

In terms of career decision-making, the researchers developed the scale on their own with the basis of the Assessment of Career Decision Making (ACDM) theory by Harren (1979), covering the dimensions of 1) rational, 2) intuitive, and 3) dependent, with a total of 22 valid items and an alpha reliability value of 0.805 was obtained.

The data analysis test in this study was carried out to identify the results of four pathways of the influence of the parental career-related behavior variable (X) on each aspect, namely support, interference, and lack of engagement, on the career anxiety variable (M) and the career decision-making variable (Y). Moreover, it determined the indirect influence of variable X on Y through M.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data processing results, the mean of parental career-related behavior in the support aspect was 19.24 with a standard deviation (SD) of 4.33, and approximately 89% of supportive parents tended to fall within the medium to high category. For the interference aspect, the mean was 12.78 with a SD of 4.49, with the most dominant categorization being in the medium range at 71%. Then, the mean of the aspect of parents who lacked engagement was 10.76 with a SD of 4.58, where 63% were in the medium to high category, making up 22%.

For the students' career anxiety level, 89% were in the medium category, 16% were in the low category, and 15% were in the high category, with the mean of 109.36 and a standard deviation (SD) of 18.43. The mean of the ability to make career decisions was 97.62, with an SD of 9.67. About 66% of students mastered career decision-making skills in the medium category, 18% were in the high category, and 16% fell into the low category. The data distribution representation for each variable is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Data Description

Variable	Mean	SD
Parental career related behavior (Support)	19.24	4.43
Parental career related behavior (Interference)	12.78	4.49
Parental career related behavior (Lack of engagement)	10.76	4.58
Career anxiety	109.36	18.42
Career decision making	97.62	9.67
N		297

Before proceeding to data analysis, a classical assumption test was conducted to determine the appropriateness of the data used, ensuring it met the requirements for further analysis. The classical assumption test consists of normality, heteroskedasticity, and mediation analysis tests. Mediation analysis was conducted

using PROCESS V.42 for SPSS by Andrew F. Hayes to determine the direct and indirect effects of parental career-related behavior, specifically support, interference, and lack of engagement, on career decision-making through career anxiety. The results of the mediation analysis are presented in Figure 1.

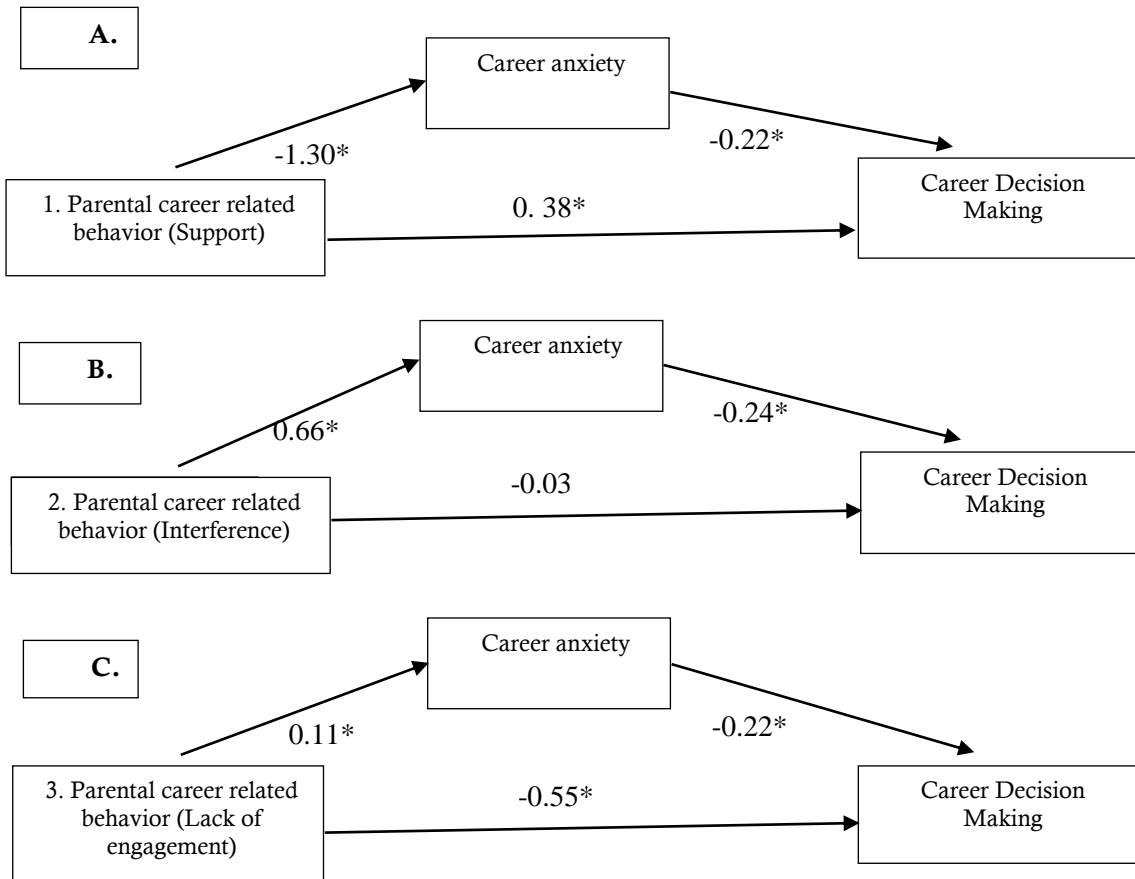


Figure 1. Influence of Parental Career-Related Behavior (Support (A), Interference (B), Lack of Engagement (C)) on Career Anxiety and Career Decision Making
 Note: *) $p < 0.01$

The influence of parental career-related behavior on career anxiety and decision-making is presented in figures 1 A, 1 B, and 1 C. Based on figure 1 A, there found a significant influence of the support aspect of parental career-related behavior on the reduction of career anxiety ($\beta = -1.30, p < 0.01$) and the increase in career decision-making ($\beta = 0.38, p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, career anxiety significantly influenced the reduction in career decision-making ($\beta = -0.22, p < 0.01$).

Next, figure 1 B indicated a significant influence of the interference aspect of parental career-related behavior on the increase in career anxiety ($\beta = 0.66, p < 0.01$). However,

interference seemed non-significant on reducing career decision-making ($\beta = -0.03, p > 0.05$). On the other hand, career anxiety had a significant effect on the reduction of career decision-making ($\beta = -0.24, p < 0.00$).

Based on Figure 1 C, there was a significant effect of the lack of engagement aspect of parental career-related behavior on the increase in career anxiety ($\beta = 0.11, p < 0.01$), as well as a significant effect on the decrease in career decision-making ($\beta = -0.55, p < 0.01$). In addition, career anxiety significantly affected the reduction in career decision-making ($\beta = -0.55, p < 0.01$).

The analysis of the indirect effect test of engagement - on career decision-making, with parental career-related behaviors in the three career anxiety as the mediator, can be seen in aspects - support, interference, and lack of Table2.

TestVariable	Influenceβ	SE	BC (CI 95%)	
			LLCI	ULCI
PCB (<i>support</i>) - CA - CDM	0.28	0.06	0.17	0.41
PCB (<i>interference</i>) - CA - CDM	0.16	0.06	0.28	0.05
PCB (<i>lack of engagement</i>) - CA - CDM	0.24	0.06	-0.39	0.13

Note: PCB: *parental career related behavior*; CA: *career anxiety* CDM: *career decision making*

The indirect influence analysis of parental career-related behaviors on the three aspects, namely support, interference, and lack of engagement, demonstrated a significant effect on career decision making with career anxiety acting as a mediator. This was discerned from the indirect effect values of each parental career-related behavior (support, interference, and lack of engagement) on career decision-making through career anxiety ($\beta = 0.28$; $\beta = 0.16$; $\beta = 0.24$) with confidence intervals (BC CI 95%) resulting from each respective LLCI value (LLCI= 0.17; 0.28; -0.39) and BootULCI for each aspect of parental career-related behavior (support, interference, and lack of engagement) on career decision making through career anxiety (ULCI = 0.41; 0.05; 0.13). These values showed that the BootLLCI and BootULCI intervals did not cross the number zero. Therefore, it can be said that at a 95% confidence level, there was a significant mediation effect. The conclusion from this analysis was that career anxiety significantly mediated the relationship between parental career-related behavior and career decision-making.

Parental career-related behavior in the support aspect significantly influenced career anxiety and career decision-making in students. This finding supports the previous study conducted by Samosir & Suharso (2018) that parents who show supportive attitudes regarding their children career will boost the children confidence in their abilities related to career decision-making tasks. El-Hassan & Ghalayini's (2020) study revealed that parental support

affects one's sense of autonomy and capability to exercise personal choice, will, and freedom in career decisions. This aligns with a study by Kesuma, Sugihato & Sunawan (2018:78), which states that parental involvement, both general and specific career-related support, significantly influences students' career decision-making self-efficacy.

Parental support can reduce career anxiety because of its emotional benefits. As illustrated in Muqarram et al.'s (2022) study, anxiety can decrease when receiving social support and can be a strategy for self-motivation. Edward et al.'s (2022) study states that anxiety can hinder an individual's cognitive performance; thus, high familial and social support protects individuals from anxiety's adverse effects.

Conversely, parental career-related behavior in the interference aspect significantly increased career anxiety but didn't substantially decrease career decision-making. This finding is in contrasts to the study by Samosir & Suharso (2018) that parental career-related behaviors in the interference aspect could reduce teenagers' self-confidence and belief in their capabilities to complete tasks related to career decision-making. Nonetheless, children who haven't matured in their careers are easily influenced by their environment, including their parents. The children might accept parents to control their children's career development since the intrusive attitude becomes normalized and is perceived as parental concern for the child's future career.

According to a study by Miski & Mawarpury (2017), adolescents need parental

involvement in decision-making because parents serve as role models or figures of identification. Teenagers consider their parents' expectations to determine life choices in this context. Hence, when it comes to career decision-making, teens tend to follow whatever their parents suggest, feeling that their decisions may not be the best while their parents' choices are.

Parental career-related behavior in the aspect of lack of engagement significantly and positively affected career anxiety and negatively impacted career decision-making. This supports Anastiani & Primana's (2019) study which states that parents who are scarcely involved with their child's career progression contribute positively to the difficulties in career decision-making. As found in the study by Kesuma et al. (2018), parental involvement has a positive effect on increasing self-efficacy in students' career decision-making. The influence of family factors is one of the most potent factors affecting career decision-making, apart from individual factors, career exploration factors, and school factors that have the most negligible impact on students' career decision-making. Parents who are less involved tend to decrease the child's confidence and self-belief. Individuals who do not believe in their abilities will become more anxious about facing their future careers, making it challenging for them when confronted with obstacles related to career choices after graduation.

Further findings indicated that career anxiety significantly affected the decline in students' career decision-making abilities. Anxiety arises from irrational thoughts and beliefs about something happening or about to happen. Anxiety is a negative feeling or thought that can emerge from career pressures caused by career-related activities (Creed et al., 2016). Students might experience anxiety during career decision-making due to its ambiguous nature (Boo et al., 2021). As a result, this anxiety prevents students from thinking rationally and tends to avoid behaviors related to career determination. In other words, career anxiety can complicate students in making the right career-related decisions. This finding contrasts with the study by Mirah & Indianti (2018) which

suggests that career anxiety pushes teenagers to be open to available career choices, thus enhancing the uptake of relevant information in career decision-making.

The indirect influence analysis of parental career-related behavior on career decision-making through career anxiety shows that the aspects of support, interference, and lack of engagement had a significant indirect effect on career decision-making through the career anxiety variable. Eventhough the influence was small, and the value of direct impact was greater than the indirect effect, meaning that aside from parental career-related behavior and career anxiety, other factors could influence students' ability to make career decisions, which were not examined in this study.

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous descriptions, it can be concluded that parental involvement (parental career-related behavior) in the support aspect influences the reduction of career anxiety and enhances the career decision-making of vocational high school students. On the other hand, the interference and lack of engagement aspects contribute to an increase in career anxiety. However, the decline in career decision-making is only influenced by the lack of engagement aspect and not by the interference aspect. Career anxiety also has a significant negative effect on career decision-making, meaning that the higher the student's level of career anxiety, the lower the student's ability to make career decisions.

This study offers practical implications in planning counseling services, especially in the career field, to reduce career anxiety in students and increase their ability to make career decisions. This can be done through individual and group counseling services for students with high career anxiety and those with low career decision-making skills. Furthermore, service planning is expected not only to be directed at students, but also involve the role of parents in supporting the student's career development process.

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