

**THE DYNAMICS OF PARENTAL INFLUENCE: EXPLORING CAREER DECISIONS WITH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AS A MODERATOR**

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Ismail

<sup>2</sup>Sakina Bibi

<sup>3</sup>Maheen Yaqoob

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Science, International Islamic University Islamabad Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Science, Bahria university Islamabad

<sup>3</sup>Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Science, Post graduation college for women satellite Town Gujranwala

[ismailpsychologist51@gmail.com](mailto:ismailpsychologist51@gmail.com), [bsakina898@gmail.com](mailto:bsakina898@gmail.com)

[maheenyakoob2000@gmail.com](mailto:maheenyakoob2000@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

Background: Parental influence is a significant factor in the career decision-making process of young individuals. The primary aim of this study was to investigate the impact of Parental Pressure on Career Decisions, with a particular focus on how academic achievement moderates this association. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective career counseling strategies that balance parental expectations with individual aspirations. Objectives: The purpose of this study was to explore and investigate the impact of Parental Pressure on Career Decisions and the moderating role of Academic Achievement. Method: The study used a quantitative approach, with data collected through a questionnaire administered to the participants through online google forms and through questionnaires. The study sample comprised 346 participants. Sociodemographic data was collected, Perceived Parental Academic Pressure (PPAP) and Career Decision Scale (CDS) were administered through online and onsite surveys. Results: The results show that Perceived Parental Pressure has a major impact on students' Career Decisions, highlighting the important role parents play in directing and forming these choices through both explicit and implicit Pressurizing. However there wasn't any moderating effect of Academic Achievement found on this association between parental pressure and career choice. Conclusion: In conclusion, this study contributed to the existing literature on the impact of parental pressure on career decisions and the moderating role of academic achievement. Furthermore, these findings highlight the significance of actively including parents in career talks and planning for the fields of developmental psychology and career counseling. By comprehending the dynamics of parental influence, professionals can create more effective plans to assist young adults in choosing careers that take into account their families' advice without being swamped by it.

**Article Details:**

Received on 12 Sept 2025

Accepted on 09 Oct 2025

Published on 11 Oct 2025

**Corresponding Authors\*:**

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

The significance of parental influence upon their children's career Decision is constantly important, even across gender and racial lines. Although the young adult's self- identity and career choice are influenced by schools, peers, and the student's community, it has been discovered that the parent's expectations and perceptions of a child's vocational fit play the most important roles in determining those choices (Ferry, 2006).

Research indicates that parental participation has the biggest influence on students' academic progress and future ambitions. According to Harris and Robinson (2016), the benefits of parental involvement in school appear to start early in a child's education, specifically in grades one through five. According to Froiland et al. (2012), children are more likely to succeed in school if parents are involved early on. The most frequent type of parental involvement at the elementary school level is school-specific, which includes assisting with homework and going to parent-teacher conferences.

Once students enter high school, the need for autonomy and more complicated educational institutions erect obstacles that hinder daily parental involvement in academic matters at the secondary level. Despite a drop in their daily involvement, parents are still crucial to their children's academic achievement, according to research. According to Wang, Hill, and Hofkens (2014), academic socialization—such as promoting independence and emphasizing the connection between schooling and future success—became crucial as kids matured and communication between family and school decreased. High school adolescents require the structure of parental engagement despite their desire for independence as an open parent/child interaction becomes important.

Parents' involvement in school-related activities is declining, but there is a rise in programs that teach students how to make decisions on their own (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015). Parental expectations, rather than merely checking grades, become more crucial as pupil's progress through high school (Froiland & Davison, 2014). Expectations of a child's future, performance, or skills by parents can come from a variety of sources.

Research has shown that parents typically have gender-related expectations, and that these expectations frequently begin very early in the child's development (Halpern & Perry-Jenkins, 2016). Parents teach their children about "men's work" and "women's work" through their interactions and experiences, and these expectations may affect post-secondary choices because teenagers may be concerned that their choices do not align with their parents' notions of gender labor roles. When high school students are selecting their courses of study for college and their plans for after graduation, parents' expectations become quite important.

Children are exposed to gender roles that have historically been attributed to men or women in the home and in society. Traditionally, women are viewed as nurturers who work in offices, hospitals, and schools or stay at home to raise kids. In contrast, men are expected to be "breadwinners," working as engineers, doctors, or more physically demanding jobs like electricians or contractors. Gendered occupational segregation is the term used to describe this division in gender roles in the workplace.

Due to gender socialization roles, Lawson et al. (2015) noted that gendered occupational separation can prevent people from pursuing jobs in which they are interested or in which they would succeed. There may be more factors at play than just individual choice in the differences between the numbers of men and women pursuing jobs in various fields. Due to cultural and potentially familial expectations of what are

acceptable men's and women's employment, gender socialization roles may have an impact on the number of men and women who pursue a career. Parental expectations may have a stronger impact on professional choices than gender norms alone since they may result in parents having more power over a female child than a male child.

The career confidence component gives young people the skills to overcome obstacles in their job choice, adjust to diverse changes and novel circumstances, and have confidence in their chosen vocation (Hamtiaux et al., 2013). By working diligently and persistently to accomplish goals, this confidence will be demonstrated (Hartung et al., 2008). While some teenagers do not face significant obstacles when choosing a career, others do. These challenges frequently manifest in career indecision when the decision to pursue further education should have already been made.

Researchers today place a special emphasis on the role that parental influence has in adolescent career decision-making. (Hargrove et al., 2005; Koumoundouru, Tsaousis, & Kounenou, 2011) Parents can help or obstruct the growth of their children's interests, professional aspirations, exploration of educational or occupational options, the development of a professional identity, and the decision-making process in general.

In many different ways, parents are active in their adolescent's career decision-making process. They have an impact on the child's professional development both directly (by, for example, being willing to pay for the child's education abroad) and inadvertently through contacts with the child over career decision-making. Parents play a range of roles in their children's career decision-making at the relationship level, from supporting them to making decisions for them.

A person's career decision is crucial since it will affect how successful they are in all phases of their lives (University of Kent Careers and Employability Service, 2017). Individual short- and long-term goals and objectives that must be accomplished as part of career path planning are intertwined with career choice (Khattab, 2015). Important professional knowledge requires a proper internalization and comprehension of one's own potential in terms of academics, talents, interests, values, and other qualities, as well as the resources that are available (Guto & Magut, 2017).

According to the results of various studies, parental influence is crucial in the formation of children's career choices. Thus, a study by Zahra Zahed Zahedani et al. (2016) examined the influence of parenting styles on both academic achievement and the tendency of students to pursue this or that career. The results have shown a positive correlation between reinforcing and firm parenting styles of students' parents and their career paths. Additionally, this result is supported by previous research of Kimble and Joshi et al. Kimble reconceptualized Baumrind's Parenting Style questionnaire dimensions and presented their validation. One of the important dimensions validated in this paper is parental warmth. The dimension of Parental involvement was also validated in Kimble's research. These results are supported by the results of this research where active students often have parents with a firm parenting style (Zahedani et al., 2016; Kimble, 2014; Joshi et al., 2003). Some of the results are consistent with the moderating role of academic achievements as a buffer against parental pressure. On the one hand, authoritarian styles of parenting had a negative association with academic achievements and career choices. On the other hand, the positive association between the firm style of parenting and the abovementioned outcomes suggested the moderating role of academic achievements. According to Zahedani et al. (2016), academic achievements can moderate the effects of parental pressure in a direct or an inverse manner. This line of reasoning is supported by

other researchers who analyze the connection between academic achievement and motivation (Yusefi et al., 2009). Similarly, Rezaee and Nabeiei's investigation showed that workshop training was effective in improving students' self-directed learning skills. These results suggest that academic motivation also has an influence on the decision concerning an individual's future career (Yusefi et al., 2009; Rezaee & Nabeiei, 2015).

Career indecision is extensively discussed in the literature as a common problem for young people around the world, serving as a primary obstacle to realizing their future potential (Kelly & Lee, 2002). Previous research positioned career indecision from two angles: on the one hand, developmental indecision occurs when individuals acquire insufficient information to make a decision; on the other hand, chronic indecision represents difficulties across all stages of the decision-making process (Guay et al., 2006). Various personal, environmental, and sociocultural factors lead to career indecision (Creed et al., 2006). In order to make a clear objective while selecting their future road map in high school, it is crucial for young people to begin thinking about their careers at a young age (Jordan's Change for Children Consultancy, 2008). When students are in high school, their exposure and level of thought are appropriate for the decision and they are able to weigh all the influences and factors promoting and influencing their career choice, resulting in a more stable decision (Shin & Ryan, 2014). While high school is an important stage in adolescent career choice, family and community still see it as merely a stage that prepares students for the workforce (Tang et al., 2008). Students' choices regarding their careers at this time have a significant impact on whether or not possibilities will be available to them in the future (Razak, 2018).

However, academic achievement goes a long way to shape the future of students, which is significant in their success in higher education (Bell, 2013; Sharma, 2012; Aminu & Timothy, 2014). Abiola (2012) states that academic performance "serves as a major determinant of a person's potential success" because it indicates consistency, determinism, and focus. Academic success is not limited to high grades and attendance but also to performance in standardized tests and participation in school-sanctioned events (Sharma, 2012; Aminu & Timothy, 2014).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, career-related research has grown to be both very popular and fascinating among researchers. Most professional decisions involve some degree of career exploration, and according to Kosine and Lewis, picking a job is among life's most challenging undertakings.

According to one study (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005), this impact has been so significant that it has surpassed that of professors, faculty, and career counselors—who are presumably more knowledgeable about the chosen field in question but who are not as well-known and/or trusted as the student's parents for this type of decision.

According to earlier research, the relationship between parents and children is one of the characteristics that affects a person's ability to adapt in the workplace. When it comes to preparing children for early careers and supporting them in the efforts necessary to help them reach their goals, parents play a significant role. In addition, they foster a sense of trust and increase kids' self-confidence so they can succeed in reaching their objectives (Amarnani et al., 2018). Parents that encourage their kids to be career-curious will expand their understanding of the working world and encourage inquisitive behavior in their kids. According to Mung'ara's 2007 study on the educational goals of Thika West girls, parents' expectations have a significant impact on their children's job decisions. The study found



that 90% of the females stated their parents wanted them to attend college, while 7.5% said they wanted them to go university. 2.5% of the population was asked to join a family business. This suggests that a student's final job decision may be influenced by the demands and expectations of their parents.

One area where parents and children frequently disagree, according to research, which often results in them ending up on "different shores" is the extent to which parents will be expected to have an influence on their child's ultimate choices concerning his or her future career development (Zimmer-Gembecki et al., 2011). This disagreement frequently results from conflicting views held by parents and children about what the supportive role of parents should entail, such as when support turns into parental pressure or when there is neither pressure nor support. The degree to which parents and teenagers' expectations for their careers and education align is another factor contributing to the disparity. Additionally, how much they are aware of the other person's preferences and how much they discuss them also contributes to the discrepancy. It is important to emphasize that thinking coherently suggests a more beneficial professional growth (Otto, 2000).

It was formerly thought—and is still thought by many—that a person entering late adolescence would be developing their independence and progressively releasing themselves from the constraints of their families as they developed their own identities in the wider world. In reality, the person would select a position based mainly on their own interests, research, and/or career goals, with little input from others. This example, however, ignores the notion that not every decision will be made entirely on the person's own. In truth, even after young adults leave home (for college or the workforce), their families will likely continue to have a significant influence on them with regard to two big life events—marriage and their career—(Larson, 1995).

In addition, parenting styles (Jung & Ahn, 2018) and parental support (Sahin & Kirdok, 2018) have been found to have a substantial impact on how adaptable a person is in their job. Positive career conversations between parents and kids can demonstrate the parents' interest and warmth, as well as the fact that there is support accessible when kids face pressure or struggle to reach their goals (Dietrich & Salmela-Aro, 2013).

According to a study by Gutman and Ackermann published in 2007, a person's job aspirations may be inherited or developed as a result of the supportive upbringing they receive from their parents. Young people also have a tendency to set higher academic goals for themselves when they discover that their parents have high expectations for them. This was supported by a research by Taylor, Harris, and Taylor (2004), which showed that parental influence is crucial but that sometimes parents are unaware of how their children are exposed to careers and jobs at home and the underlying expectations that come with that exposure. Li and Kerpeleman's (2007) research also showed that young adults who feel close to their parents are more likely to be troubled if their parents disapprove of their career decision and are more inclined to choose a career that will win over their approval. Additionally, children are free to express their individual career choices when their parents encourage a healthy, balanced connection and separateness by offering challenge and support within the relationship (Bryant, Zvonkovic, & Reynolds, 2006).

According to Kohout and Wicherski (2011), a child's future job is greatly influenced by the daily choices made by the parents who direct the child's development. Parental trajectories that are intended to direct their children towards a preferred career development route based on the parent's preferences continue to be initiated. Parents often consider their children's qualities and academic performance in school while

deciding on their professional path. The authors also noticed that in developed nations, parents frequently enroll their kids in educational programs that expose them to the skills they want them to learn as well as people and environments that would influence their future career goals. Parents will encourage their kids to pursue the vocation they believe suits them best buy, for instance, assuring them they'll become good doctors, lawyers, or pilots (Gordon, 2008).

According to research by Kniveton (2004), parents frequently provide greater support for children who choose careers that are similar to their own. In a similar vein, some parents' expectations and ideals can be evident in the norms they set at home via their expressed preferences for particular activities (Jungen, 2008). Children just internalize their parents' norms and choose to pursue jobs that conform to those norms, as opposed to being rewarded for adhering to parental expectations. In a study, Anne (2008) underlines the difficulties that arise when parents or other family members try to train, reprimand, or stimulate young adults. It also takes into account the demands that a family places on a child and the readiness of the youngster to meet those demands.

According to a study by Maier (2005), children who receive challenge and support from their parents have different educational ideals than children who do not. Children who are not supported and challenged are more prone to develop short-term educational ideals, such as focusing on academic success. However, people who experience high levels of challenge at home are more likely to aspire to long-term educational goals, such as wanting to go to graduate school (Maier, 2005). According to Rathunde, Carrol, and Huang (2000), high challenge, high support families were the ones that best cultivated a successful occupational future. It offers young individuals uniqueness and definite expectations.

Furthermore, gender perspectives also have a significant influence on people's career choices and indecision, especially women who may struggle with societal expectations and gendered stereotypes (Correll, 2001). Some studies discovered how cultural values, family care burden, and domestic socialization shape women's career paths (Nevill & Schlecker, 1988). in a collectivist culture like Turkey, where patriarchal norms prevail, the female gender may have more difficulties in addressing career indecisiveness due to overlaying parental and societal pressure (Mutekwe et al., 2011). Therefore, paying attention to the relationship between gender norms, parent factors, and career indecision will help mitigate these issues for young women and empower them.

Career choice is a significant decision with a far-reaching impact on the future direction of a person's life (Popoola, 2004). It progresses through various developmental levels, beginning with the dreams one aspires to and maturing into a practical analysis of one's leading viable career options . While some reputable careers such as engineering, law, and medicine need a solid academic background, others like librarianship also necessitate a robust academic background to create an impactful career (Abayomi & Olawale, 2010; Burke & Peter, 1992).

The importance of career choice is that it also affects the behavior of individuals and their future opportunities (Popoola, 2004). Informed career choice is a multi-factor responsible activity for a decision made under the influence of personal interests and abilities, level of education, and a favorable external environment. However, due to the lack of career guidance and false stereotypes imposed on society, students often make the wrong choice, which causes discontent and poor academic performance (Salami, 1999; Fatoki, 2014).

Throughout the study, Tang et al. (1999) found that there are several components in Asian-Americans' job decisions such as family influence, socioeconomic position, and self-efficacy views. He notes that narratives indicate that Asian-Americans select stereotyped jobs not because they are fond of doings and like since their university and folks tell them they are good at them. Although work satisfaction was the primary factor of career options, approximately everybody was affected by the kind of probable employment possible upon graduation. Barbara (1991) also surveyed reactions from 1,345 older graduates who obtained full-time degree programs in 1987 and 1989.

The social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986), who describes how individuals form vocational interests, make choices related to them and eventually achieve degrees of welfare and fulfillment throughout their careers. According to the investigation performed by Rosvall and colleagues (2018), the career choice of young Swedish students might be influenced by social resources, siblings, cousins, or relatives, the cultural resources, institutional recognition or financial resources economic standing. Bandura et al. 2001 agreed that a person's upbringing, aptitudes, abilities, and schooling affect . An incorrect pronouncement, on the other hand, can lead to meager results such as disillusionment and insufficiency. Other major determinants that are claimed to be prominent include the parents' income, profession, and education level (Hearn 1984, 1988). Suutari (2003) suggested that countless research frequently exposes a great relationship between professional alternative and avocation. Studies have proven that a student's direct background, encompassing family, and people, familiarizes them to take certain jobs or ramparts job selection (Gim, 1992; Leong 1995). Watts (1996) maintains that, through analyzing students in developing nations, they are educated to get a post that satisfies the demands of the nation.

Research indicates varying approaches to educational decision-making across socioeconomic groups. Professional middle-class families are strategic in guiding their children's choices, contrasting with working-class families who prioritize their children's preferences (Power et al., 2003; Ball, 2003). Immigrant families leverage "ethnic capital" to encourage higher education aspirations (Shah, Dwyer, & Modood, 2010), though concerns exist about parental pressure on children's autonomy (Smette, 2015).

In secondary education, parental involvement is often limited, with parents attending information meetings passively and rarely participating in student-counselor interactions (Smette, 2015). Decision-making heavily considers students' interests and self-reflection on skills and beliefs (Smette, 2015). This understanding of parental roles sheds light on adolescent autonomy and negotiation (Foskett & Hemsley-Brown, 2001). Young people navigate parental expectations and desires alongside their own rationality, facing challenges in reconciling both (Pless & Katznelson, 2007). Achieving autonomy involves recognizing one's interests and talents, with parental assistance playing a crucial role (Gullestad, 1996). Thus, educational choices reflect a blend of individual introspection and parental guidance (Smette, 2015).

After high school, students face the exciting yet daunting task of charting their career paths. Many opt for higher education, but the decision of which school to attend is just the beginning. Miller, Wells, Springer, and Cowger (2003) suggest that factors influencing career decisions include educational achievements, ambition, talent, and family influence. However, Dietrich and Kracke (2009) caution that parental involvement can sometimes be perceived negatively, especially if parents are perceived as imposing their own career wishes onto their children rather than collaborating with them.

Kniveton (2004) highlights the primary motivations behind career choices, emphasizing enjoyment of the work, salary considerations, and proficiency. Interestingly, Shellenbarger (2006) discusses a shift in parental involvement in career decisions, noting a trend toward less encouragement for children to follow their parents' career paths. Darrell Luzzo, former president-elect of the National Career Development Association, observes a decline in children pursuing the same careers as their parents, reflecting changing societal norms (Shellenbarger, 2006, p. 1).

In many Asian cultures, such as India and South Asia, career choices are heavily influenced by parental expectations and societal norms. Atkins (2007) highlights the prevalent belief that success in professions like medicine and engineering is essential for gaining respect and financial stability. Parents often limit their children's career options to these fields, reflecting a cultural emphasis on academic achievement and familial obligations. Leonard (1997) further explores the intense parental aspirations for economic success, particularly in engineering, underscoring the pressure on young people to excel academically and secure lucrative careers.

Helweg and Helweg (1990) emphasize the profound impact of children's success on the self-esteem and social standing of first-generation Indian parents. The pressure to excel academically is heightened by the desire for recognition within the South Asian community. Children feel compelled to outperform their peers, as academic success reflects not only on themselves but also on their families. This intense focus on academic achievement underscores the significance of parental expectations and societal pressures in shaping career paths among second-generation Asian Americans. Research has looked at the substantial correlations between one's belief about choosing a particular vocation and high levels of perceived social support. For instance, Chan did a study on the connection between college students' social support, career exploration, job choice, and career self-efficacy in Taiwan. He discovered that there is a significant link between students' career inquiry and social support. In addition, Hui et al. discovered a substantial correlation between adolescents' perceptions of social support and their ability to adapt their careers. Another finding from a prior study indicated that teachers' attitudes and behaviors had a big impact on the students' decisions about their careers. A Bangladeshi study also found a strong correlation between students' job decisions and the social support they receive from their families and professors.

The study on aggression by Bandura and his colleagues (2001) showed how closely people monitor and mimic behaviors as well as how potent an influence imitation may have. Although the focus of their study was on young children imitating aggressive behavior, it has been found that exposure to others has the greatest influence. In a family setting, this influence may have an effect on many of the family members' decisions, particularly the young adults.

A young adult's choice of career is their most important choice. The students will particularly adore what their parents do and aspire to be just like them or other members of their immediate family. They select professions that are similar to those of their relatives (Qualifax, 2016). He continued by pointing out that parents should play a significant part in their children's professional decisions by setting good examples and excelling in their fields and that this will have a negative impact on their decisions. According to Al Yousef (2009), the daughter's education will be more closely tied to the mother's educational features than the son's education will be.

Men and women make different decisions while deciding on a career or area of study.



According to research, parents' gender socialization of their kids and the gender roles they play at home can influence their job choices. Busch-Heizmann (2015) conducted a survey of 1,750 males and 1,697 female 17-year-old students to determine how job value and supply-side processes of occupational-gender segregation affected young people's aspirations for gender-(a)typical careers. According to supply-side theory, men grow up with stronger intrinsic work values whereas women prefer work- life balance. The hypothesis makes the assumption that ambitions for gender-specific employment are influenced by gender typicality in work values. The study investigates the relationship between parental gender role behaviors and the emergence of gender-(a) typical employment goals.

According to the Sheldon et al. pressure buffer model, having a strong social support network and having enough social support resources can help people feel stable and active support while also enhancing their capacity to deal with pressure (Cohen & Wills, 1985). This prevents people from experiencing high levels of pressure, according to the model. Families are the main source of social support for elementary school students, and strong family ties can reduce stress (Wei et al., 2018).

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Social Cognitive Career Theory**

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett in 1994, integrates theories on academic and vocational development, emphasizing the interplay of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals in shaping career decisions. This theory recognizes parents as pivotal in introducing children to career-relevant experiences, whether directly or through observation of significant others. Feedback from key figures in a child's life can either bolster or impede career-related pursuits. Positive reinforcement of career behaviors fosters self-efficacy, influencing the child's development of outcome expectations and goals for tasks they believe are achievable.

SCCT also highlights the role of cultural and contextual factors in exposing children to career-related activities and feedback, thus affecting their self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals. Parents' expectations significantly shape these components, as children absorb and emulate their parents' behaviors, attitudes, and values. This accumulation of parental influences guides children in identifying desirable behaviors and outcomes, thereby shaping their career trajectories.

Moreover, parents impact their children's career decisions through the communication of their aspirations, employing various strategies to transmit expectations. Whether intentional or not, parents influence their children's academic and career choices by providing learning opportunities, expressing views on education, and modeling values. This parental input plays a crucial role in shaping children's short-term academic decisions and long-term career goals and success. Thus, parental influence, as a component of social cognitive theory, is instrumental in the development of children's values and aspirations, directly affecting their career pathways. This underscores the significance of understanding the parental role in career development, highlighting the need for strategies that support positive parental involvement in shaping children's career choices. Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological systems (1986).

The disparity in perceptions between adolescents and their parents regarding the latter's support or hindrance in career choices highlights the nuanced dynamics of familial influence in career decision-making. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1986), it's suggested that adolescents' career development thrives when their

beliefs and values align with their parents'. Research by Lennon, Brown, and Hackett (2000) emphasizes that parental support positively affects adolescents' career decisions only if perceived favorably by the teens themselves. This conditional impact of parental influence underscores the importance of understanding adolescents' perceptions in the context of career guidance, suggesting that the effectiveness of parental support is mediated by the quality of the parent-child relationship and the adolescents' interpretation of this support.

### **Significance of the Study**

The outcomes of this research underscore the significant role of parental involvement in shaping adolescents' career decisions, offering valuable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Schools could leverage these findings to design programs aimed at enlightening and engaging parents in their children's career development processes. Similarly, government bodies, particularly the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, alongside relevant organizations, could utilize this data to formulate policies that emphasize parental participation in vocational matters. Furthermore, the insights gained from this study enrich our comprehension of career dynamics, highlighting the importance of considering parental influences in career selection processes.

This knowledge is crucial for educators, particularly those involved in Guidance and Counseling in high schools, as it supports a holistic approach to career guidance. Additionally, the study's findings are invaluable to students, researchers, and academicians focused on exploring factors influencing career choices, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of career development in educational settings.

### **Rationale**

This study investigated the impact of parental influence on the career decisions of students, delving into how parents' norms, values, and gender role perceptions shape their children's professional choices. Acknowledging the potent role parents play, this research explored the fine line between supportive guidance and excessive pressure, examining the consequences of the latter on children's ability to make autonomous career choices. The objective was to understand the dynamics of parental influence and its implications on the career success and satisfaction of the youth.

Particularly pertinent in the Pakistani context, where career decision-making is often a collaborative family effort, this study scrutinized the notion of career choices as a collective family plan, supported by parents through resources, financial aid, guidance, and networks. By highlighting the complex interplay between parental support and pressure, the research aim was to contribute to the discourse on the optimal role of parents in facilitating their children's career exploration and decision-making processes, offering insights into achieving a balance that fosters independence while ensuring informed and supportive family involvement in career development.

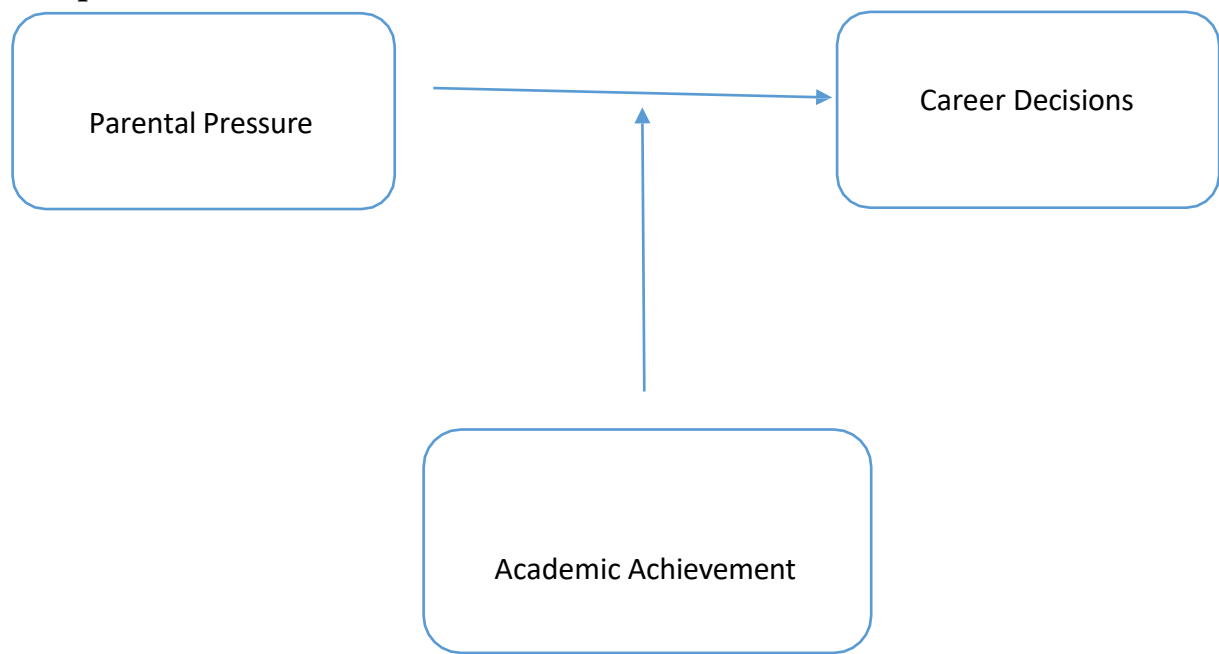
### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the relationship between parental pressure and the career decisions of young adults.
2. To investigate the moderating role of academic achievement between the relationship of parental pressure and career decisions.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

- 1. Higher levels of parental pressure will lead to a stronger influence on career decisions for individuals with lower academic achievement compared to those with higher academic achievement.
- 2. The relationship between parental pressure and career decisions will be weaker for individuals with higher academic achievement, as they may have greater self- efficacy and autonomy in decision-making.

Conceptual Framework



METHOD

Research Design

This study was a quantitative study employing a cross-sectional survey method.

Sample/Participants

The study involved a convenient sampling technique to collect data. A sample of 346 students was part of the current research study.

Inclusion Criteria

The Participants in this research project included those who are 16 years and above students.

Exclusion Criteria

Individuals who were uneducated or students below the 16 years were not a part of this study.

Date & Duration

The research study intended to take place in all Pakistan with students from various academic institutions. The estimated timeframe for completing this study was about 3 months, which was from February, 2024 to May, 2024.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Parental Pressure

This involves behaviors or actions by parents, or caregivers who impact the career decision-making process of their children or care recipients. Various behaviors can be termed as parental pressure, but particular interest will focus on how parents influence their children’s academic and career performance.

## **Career Decision**

The decision to choose and follow a certain career path, as well as following the necessary preparation steps for a career or educational path (Lent et al., 1994).

## **Academic achievement**

The extent to which a student or institution has achieved either short or long term educational goals. Achievement may be measured through students' grade point average, whereas for institutions, achievement may be measured through graduation rates.

## **Data Collection Measures/ Instruments**

### **Career Decision Scale (CDS)**

The Career Decision Scale (CDS) developed by Osipow et al. (1976) is a tool used to assess career indecision in adolescents and young adults. It consists of 18- 19 statements rated on a Likert scale, measuring aspects of career uncertainty like feeling unsure about interests or options. This standardized measure helps identify students who might benefit from additional support in navigating career exploration and decision-making (Osipow et al., 1976).

### **Perceived Parental Academic Pressure (PPAP)**

The Perceived Parental Academic Pressure (PPAP) scale, a recent instrument developed by Kaynak et al. (2021), delves into how adolescents perceive academic pressure from their parents. Unlike broader parental pressure scales, PPAP hones in on academics specifically. It utilizes a multidimensional approach, capturing various facets of this pressure, such as psychological pressure (feeling stressed about academics) and restriction (having limited activities due to parental demands) (Kaynak et al., 2021). The scale employs a Likert-type format, typically ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (Kaynak et al., 2021). This allows adolescents to rate statements that reflect these different aspects, providing a comprehensive picture of the pressure adolescents experience.

### **Informed Consent Form**

The consent form consists of important clauses to inform the participants regarding the research as well as to inquire about their voluntary participation in the study. The informed consent form is required to be signed by the participants themselves.

### **Demographic Sheet**

For this proposed study a self-formulated demographic data sheet was utilized to record the participant's demographic information which included gender, University, age, education level, department, CGPA, FSC marks, matric marks, and ethnicity.

### **Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software, Version 28, was utilized to analyze the data.

- Regression Analysis
- Moderation Analysis
- Pearson Correlation Coefficient

### **Ethical Consideration**

This research, approved from the International Islamic University Islamabad's departmental ethical board, adhered strictly to the ethical guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA). We committed to maintaining the highest levels of integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness throughout the project. All data collected was factual, accurately reported, and free from any form of fabrication. We also considered the cultural sensitivities of our participants, ensuring that the scales used have received both the authors' permission and supervisor approval. Participants were provided with



informed consent before taking part in the study. All data was kept confidential, used solely for research purposes, and handled with the utmost respect for participant privacy.

Results

TABLE 1: *SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS*

Sample Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Male	218	63
Female	128	37
Education		
BS	346	100
Ethnicity		
Pashtun	161	46.5
Baloch	11	3.2
Sindhi	14	4.0
Punjabi	128	37.0
Kashmiri	15	4.3
Chitrali	17	5.0
Occupation		
Student	346	100

Note. N = 346, Mean age was 22 years (SD = 3.23)

TABLE 2: *PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF STUDY MAJOR SCALES*

Range								
Measures	k	$\alpha$	Potential	Actual	M	SD	Skew	Kurt
PPAP	19	0.919	0-76	0-74	31.69	16.45	0.00	-0.61
CI	18	0.816	0-54	0-49	23.08	8.81	-0.01	-0.17

Note. PP= Perceived Parental Academic Pressure; CI= Career Indecision; Skew= Skewness; Kurt= Kurtosis

Table 2 presents the psychometric properties of two scales: Perceived Parental Academic Pressure (PPAP) and Career Indecision (CI). PPAP comprises 19 items with a high internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.919$ ). The potential range of PPAP scores is 0 to 76, while the actual range observed in the sample is 0 to 74. The mean (M) score on PPAP is 31.69, with a standard deviation (SD) of 16.45. The distribution of PPAP scores exhibits slight negative skewness ( $skew = 0.00$ ) and moderate negative kurtosis ( $kurt = -0.61$ ).

CI consists of 18 items with a good internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.816$ ). The potential range of CI scores is 0 to 54, while the actual range in the sample is 0 to 49. On average, participants scored 23.08 on CI, with a standard deviation of 8.81. The distribution of CI scores shows negligible skewness ( $skew = -0.01$ ) and kurtosis ( $kurt = -0.17$ ).

TABLE 3: CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF PARENTAL PRESSURE, ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, AND CAREER CHOICES OF STUDENTS

Table 3 shows the statistical association between Parental Pressure, Academic Performance and Career Choices. The result indicated a low positive correlation between parental pressure and career choices ( $r = .43, p < .001$ ). The statistical association between CGPA and Parental Pressure was not significant ( $r = -.04, p < .001$ ) indicating negligible correlation. Also the correlation between CGPA and Career Choice was not negligible and not significant ( $r = -.008, p < .001$ ).

Variable	1	2	3
1. Parental Pressure	--		
2. Career Choice	.428**	--	
3. CGPA	-.038	-.008	--

TABLE 4: REGRESSION COEFFICIENT OF PARENTAL PRESSURE IMPACTS ON CAREER CHOICES OF STUDENTS

Variable	B	$\beta$	SE
Constant	15.81***		.93
Parental pressure	.23***	.43	.03
$R^2$	.18		

Note.  $N = 345$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 4 shows the impact of Parental Pressure on Career Choices of students.  $R^2$  value (.18) revealed that the predictor variable (Parental Pressure) explained 18% of variance in the outcome variable (career choices of students) with  $F(1, 343) = 77.03, p < .001$ . Further, the findings revealed that Parental Pressure predicted Career Choices of students ( $\beta = .43, p < .001$ ).

TABLE 5: MODERATION ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL PRESSURE ON CAREER CHOICES OF STUDENTS

Relationship	B	SE	T	P
Moderating Effect (PP*AP)→ CC	-0.071	0.066	-1.081	0.280
AP→CC	0.358	0.929	-0.385	0.700
PP→CC	0.233***	0.026	8.900	0.000

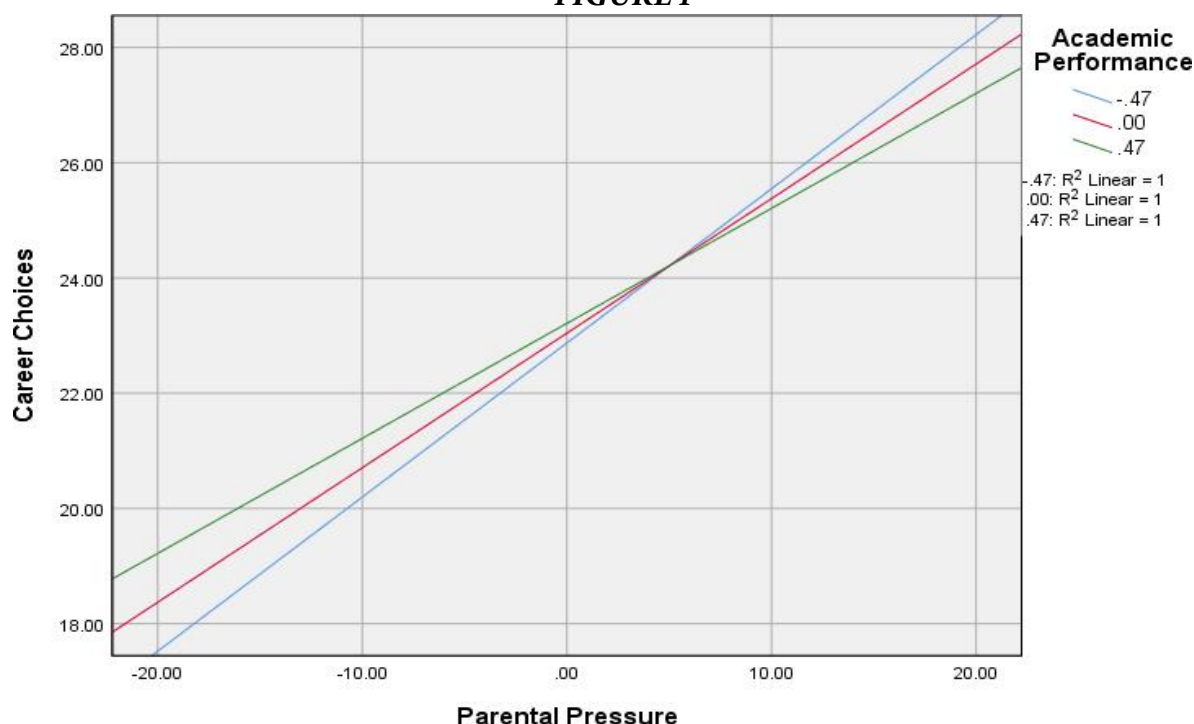
Note. PP: Parental Pressure, AP: Academic performance, CC: Career Choices, SE: Standard Error, \*\*\*  $P < .001$

A moderation analysis was conducted to examine the moderating role of academic performance (CGPA) on the relationship between parental pressure and career choices. The main effect of parental pressure on career indecision was found to be significant ( $\beta = 0.2335, p < 0.001, t = 8.900$ ), indicating that higher levels of parental pressure were associated with greater impact on career choices among participants.

However, academic performance (CGPA) did not significantly predict career indecision ( $\beta = 0.3583, p = 0.700, t = 0.385$ ), suggesting that academic achievement alone did not influence individuals career choices.

Furthermore, the interaction effect between parental pressure and academic performance on career indecision was not significant ( $\beta = -0.072$ ,  $p = 0.2801$ ,  $t = -1.081$ ), indicating that academic performance did not moderate the relationship between parental pressure and career choices. Overall, the model accounted for a modest proportion of the variance in career choices ( $R^2 = 0.1899$ ).

**FIGURE 1**



Furthermore, slope analysis is presented to better understand the nature of the moderating effects (Figure 1). Despite the insignificance of the results, figure 1 tells us that at the lower level of academic performance, the relationship between parental pressure and career choices is stronger and at the higher level of academic performance, the relationship between parental pressure and the career choices is weaker supporting H1 and H2. In other words we can say that the with the increase in academic performance, students career choices are less likely to be effected by the parental pressure and with the decrease in academic performance, it is likely to be effected by the parental pressure.

## DISCUSSION

### Interpretations

The primary aim of our study was to explore the impact of parental pressure on career choice and mediating role as academic achievement. The findings of our study suggested a statistically significant positive correlation between parental pressure and career choices. The findings were aligned with previous studies such as (Rey at el., 2020; Arslan et al., 2022) suggesting that parental and societal pressure had influence over shaping career choices. Furthermore, our study showed that academic performance does not significantly moderate the relationship between parental pressure and career choices.

This study found that parental pressure significantly predicted career choices, explaining 18% of the variance in career choices among students ( $\beta = .43$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This finding aligns with previous research, such as Corey and Chen (2020), who reported that parental expectations and pressures play a crucial role in shaping the career choices of young women. They found that parental pressure can lead to feelings of frustration, confusion, and anxiety during career conversations, ultimately impacting career

exploration and decisions. Similarly, Ray (2021) indicated that parental and societal influences are significant factors in shaping career choices among Indian youth, with parental demand being a crucial factor.

According to this study no significant correlation between academic performance and career choices was found, nor did academic performance moderate the relationship between parental pressure and career choices. This result is consistent with Igere (2020), who found that career choices influenced academic performance, but academic performance did not significantly influence career choices among students in a Nigerian university. Additionally, Chen (2021) highlighted that self-concept and social support play more crucial roles in occupational choice intention than academic achievement.

Hargrove et al. (2005); Koumoundouru, Tsaousis, & Kounenou, (2010) also support the findings stating that Parents can help or obstruct the growth of their children's interests, professional aspirations, exploration of educational or occupational options, the development of a professional identity, and the decision-making process in general. The influence of parents on job decisions is also consistent with the findings of Creamer & Laughlin (2005) and Mung'ara (2007).

It does, however, depart from previous research, such as those put forth by Otto (2000), which placed greater emphasis on an individual's independence while choosing a vocation in late adolescence. By showing that parental influence is still significant and frequently more effective than other types of career counseling, this study contributes to the body of knowledge.

For instance Bregman and Killen (2021) suggested that while parental influence is important, adolescents and young adults also emphasize personal choice and autonomy in career decisions, considering vocational choices as an opportunity for personal growth and self-determination.

Furthermore, this study is contradicted with (Zahedani et al., 2020). He found a significant positive relationship between academic performance and career path, suggesting that students with higher academic achievement were more likely to pursue their preferred career choices.

## **Implications**

These findings highlight the significance of actively including parents in career talks and planning for the fields of developmental psychology and career counseling. By comprehending the dynamics of parental influence, professionals can create more effective plans to assist young adults in choosing careers that take into account their families' advice without being swamped by it.

## **Limitations**

Nevertheless, several limitations must be acknowledged. The sample size was relatively small and particular demographic and culture origins which may not accurately represent the experiences of all young adults with parental influence could affect our results.

Furthermore, biases relating to personal perception and memory may be introduced by depending solely on self-reported data. Future studies should look into how different cultural contexts and socioeconomic levels affect parents' choices about careers. Further research is needed to determine the precise mechanisms by which expectations and support from parents affect young adults' professional autonomy. The long-term impacts of parental influence on job success and satisfaction could also be the subject of future research.



## CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study's findings highlight the significant and complex influence that parents have on young adults' employment selections. The study makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of career development processes by clarifying the nature and extent of this influence. These insights are significant for academic research as well as practical applications in career assistance and counseling.

## REFERENCES

- Amarnani, R. K., Garcia, P. R. J. M., Restubog, S. L. D., Bordia, P., & Bordia, S. (2016). Do you think I'm worth it? The Self-Verifying Role of Parental Engagement in Career Adaptability and Career Persistence among STEM Students. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 26(1), 77–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072716679925>
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (2001). Self-Efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and career trajectories. *Child Development*, 72(1), 187–
- Barnett, C. K., Krell, T. C., & Sendry, J. (2000). Learning to learn about spirituality: A categorical approach to introducing the topic into management courses. *Journal of Management Education*, 24(5), 562–579.
- Bryant, B. K., Zvonkovic, A. M., & Reynolds, P. (2006). Parenting in relation to child and adolescent vocational development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69(1), 149–175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2006.02.004>
- Cohen, S., & Wills, T. A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis.
- Correll, S. J. (2001). Gender and the Career Choice Process: The Role of Biased Self-Assessments. *American Journal of Sociology*, 106(6), 1691–1730. <https://doi.org/10.1086/321299>
- County. *Unpublished master's thesis Kenyatta University*. <http://ir->
- Creamer, E. G., & Laughlin, A. (2005b). Self-Authorship and women's career decision making. [ebook/dp/BoooPMG462](http://ebook.dp/BoooPMG462)
- Examining the relationship between students' and parents' Holland codes. *College Student Journal*, 37(2), 190+.
- Fan, X., & Lu, M. (2020). Testing the effect of perceived social support on left-behind children's mental well-being in mainland China: The mediation role of resilience. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 109, 104695. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104695>
- Gutman, L., & Akerman, R. (2008). *Determinants of aspirations [wider benefits of learning research report no. 27]*. Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, Institute of Education, University of London.
- Hargrove, B. K., Inman, A. G., & Crane, R. L. (2005). Family interaction patterns, career planning attitudes, and vocational identity of high school adolescents. *Journal of Career Development*, 31(4), 263–278. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10871-005-4740-1>
- Hawthorn, U. (2002). *Rethinking Careers Education and Guidance: Theory, Policy and practice*. <https://www.amazon.com/Rethinking-Careers-Education-Guidance-Practice->
- Hegna, K., & Smette, I. (2016). Parental influence in educational decisions: young people's perspectives. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 38(8), 1111–1124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2016.1245130>
- <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A103563741/AONE?u=anon~86c14519&sid=googleScho>
- Igere, M. A. (2017). Career choice and its influence on academic performance of library and information science students in a Nigerian University. *Information Impact*, 8(2), 90.

- <https://doi.org/10.4314/ijikm.v8i2.8>  
*Journal of College Student Development*, 46(1), 13–27. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2005.0002>  
 Jungen, K. A. (2008). Parental influence and career choice: how parents affect the career aspirations of their children. <http://www2.uwstout.edu/content/lib/thesis/2008/2008jungenk.pdf>  
 Kaynak, S., Koçak, S. S., & Kaynak, Ü. (2021). Measuring adolescents' perceived parental academic pressure: A scale development study. *Current Psychology*, 42(2), 1477–1489. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01347-w>  
 Kazi, A. S., & Akhlaq, A. (2017). Factors affecting students' career choice. *Journal of research and reflections in education*, 2(2), 187–196.  
 Kniveton, B. H. (2004). The influences and motivations on which students base their choice of career. *Research in Education*, 72(1), 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.7227/rie.72.4>  
 Koumoundourou, G., Tsaousis, I., & Kounenou, K. (2010). Parental influences on Greek adolescents' career Decision-Making Difficulties: The Mediating Role of Core Self-Evaluations. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 19(2), 165–182. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072710385547>  
[lar&id=b2bf8doe](http://lar&id=b2bf8doe)  
 Larson, J. H. (1995). The use of family systems theory to explain and treat career decision problems in late adolescence: A review. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 23(4), 328–337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01926189508251363>  
 Li, C., & Kerpelman, J. (2007). Parental Influences on Young Women's Certainty about Their Career Aspirations. *Sex Roles*, 56(1–2), 105–115. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-006-)  
[library.ku.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/123456789/5434/Mung%20ara%20Elizabeth.pdf?sequence](http://library.ku.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/123456789/5434/Mung%20ara%20Elizabeth.pdf?sequence)  
 Meyer, B. W. (1987, August 1). *The Career Decision Scale as a measure of chronic indecision*. <http://hdl.handle.net/2346/10596>  
 Miller, M. J., Wells, D., Springer, T. P., & Cowger, E. J. (2003). Do types influence types?  
 Mung'ara, E. L. I. Z. A. B. E. T. H. (2011). Factors affecting career aspirations of girls; emerging issues and challenges: a case of Thika west district, Kiambu  
 Mutekwe, E., Modiba, M., & Maphosa, C. (2011). Factors affecting female students' career choices and aspirations: a Zimbabwean example. *Journal of Social Sciences/Journal of Social Sciences*, 29(2), 133–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2011.11892963>  
 Mwaa, M. A. (2018). Parental Factors Influencing Career Choice among High School Students in Nairobi County [Graduate Diploma Thesis, University of Nairobi]. <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/97628>  
 Nevill, D. D., & Schlecker, D. I. (1988). The Relation of Self-Efficacy and Assertiveness to Willingness to Engage in Traditional/Nontraditional Career Activities. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 12(1), 91–98. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1988.tb00929.x>  
 Okesina, F. A., & Famolu, F. B. (2022). Parental Influence on Choice of Career among Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth*, 14(3), 78–91. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cjfy29851>  
 Onyekwere, O. I., & Nwosu, K. C. (2024). Parenting Styles as a Predictor of Adolescents' Career Making Difficulties in Secondary Schools in Anambra State. *Journal of Guidance and Counseling Studies*, 8(1), 65–80. Retrieved from <https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/jgcs/article/view/3556>  
 Oplatka, I., Foskett, N., & Hemsley-Brown, J. (2002). Educational Marketisation and the Head's Psychological Well-Being: a speculative conceptualisation. *British Journal of*

- Educational Studies*, 50(4), 419–441. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8527.t01-2-00212>
- Otto, L. B. (2000). Youth Perspectives on Parental Career Influence. *Journal of Career Development*, 27(2), 111–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089484530002700205>
- Pečjak, S., & Pirc, T. (2020). PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S CAREER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN SLOVENIA: PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE. *Journal of Psychological and Educational Research*, 28(2), 31–54.
- Pless, M., & Katznelson, N. (2007). Parents, choice of education and guidance: on parents' direct and indirect influence on young peoples' choices. In P. Plant (Ed.), *Ways: on Career Guidance* (1 ed., pp. 127–149). Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitets Forlag.
- Psychological Bulletin*, 98(2), 310–357. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.98.2.310>
- Rosvall, P., Rönnlund, M., & Johansson, M. (2018). Young people's career choices in Swedish rural contexts: Schools' social codes, migration and resources. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 60, 43–51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2018.02.007>
- Schoon, I., & Silbereisen, R. K. (Eds.). (2009). *Transitions from school to work: Globalization, individualization, and patterns of diversity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shah, B., Dwyer, C., & Modood, T. (2010). Explaining Educational Achievement and Career Aspirations among Young British Pakistanis: Mobilizing 'Ethnic Capital'? *Sociology*, 44(6), 1109–1127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510381606>
- Singaravelu, H. D., White, L. J., & Bringaze, T. B. (2005). Factors influencing international students' career choice. *Journal of Career Development*, 32(1), 46–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845305277043>
- Sortheix, F. M., Dietrich, J., Chow, A., & Salmela-Aro, K. (2013). The role of career values for work engagement during the transition to working life. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 83(3), 466–475. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2013.07.003>
- Strandbu, Å., Stefansen, K., Smette, I., & Sandvik, M. R. (2017). Young people's experiences of parental involvement in youth sport. *Sport, Education and Society*, 24(1), 66–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2017.1323200>
- Tang, M., Fouad, N. A., & Smith, P. L. (1999). Asian Americans' Career Choices: A path model to examine factors influencing their career choices. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 54(1), 142–157. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1998.1651>
- Tillman, K. (2015). Parental influence on college students' career aspirations.
- Wibowo, D. H., Ambarwati, K. D., & Crescenzo, P. (2020). The role of grit and parent-child communication in career adaptability. *Psikohumaniora*, 5(2), 185–196. <https://doi.org/10.21580/pjpp.v5i2.5727>
- Zahedani, Z. Z., Rezaee, R., Yazdani, Z., Bagheri, S., & Nabeiei, P. (2016). The influence of parenting style on academic achievement and career path. *DOAJ (DOAJ: Directory of Open Access Journals)*, 4(3), 130–134. <https://doaj.org/article/85d9072f6800445b8484b8debca4d09c>