

The Influence of Parenting Styles on Proactive Career Behavior: The Mediating Role of Career Self-efficacy

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Abstract: From a lifespan development lens, there is a burgeoning fascination with unraveling the foundational roots and pivotal influences shaping career management. Based on the social cognitive career theory, this study constructs a conceptual model of the influence of parenting styles on proactive career behaviors mediated by career self-efficacy. A multiple linear regression and Bootstrap method are employed to test the conceptual model, based on survey data from 397 employees in various regions. The results indicated that authoritative parenting style positively predicted proactive career behavior, and that career self-efficacy had a significant mediating effect between authoritative parenting style and proactive career behavior. Conversely, while the theoretical implications suggest a negative correlation between authoritarian parenting and both career self-efficacy and proactive behaviors, this nexus awaits further empirical corroboration. These results have implications for theories on parenting style as well as research fostering proactive career behaviors and provide some reference for managers and employees to better deal with the potential impact of family background.

Keywords: authoritarian parenting style, authoritative parenting style, career self-efficacy, proactive career behavior.

1. Introduction

In response to escalating employment competition and societal shifts, cultivating proactive career dispositions has become paramount for both organizational leaders and academia. In the face of obstacles to upward socioeconomic advancement, individuals encounter a reduction in perceived personal agency and a diminution of proactive tendencies towards career development[1]. This dearth of engagement stifles personal achievements and jeopardizes corporate longevity. It is pertinent to note that institutional surroundings characterized by advisory support, counseling programs, and peer recognition act as potent drivers for proactive career orientations[2]. Short-term gains from positive workplace factors notwithstanding, enduring motivational sustenance necessitates a longitudinal inquiry[3]. Parenting greatly influences psychological traits and career behaviors through long-term interaction[4-6]. Authoritative parenting boosts self-confidence and competence, whereas authoritarian styles diminish self-assurance[7]. Less involved parenting correlates with negative career coping, adversely affecting proactive behaviors and development[8-9]. The study expands literature, probing parenting styles' nuanced links to proactive career actions. Specifically,

authoritative versus authoritarian parenting's differential impacts on career behavior are examined. This deepens understanding of career choices' familial foundations and underscores family environment's role in occupation development. Insights gained refine career management comprehension through parenting styles' perspective.

2. Manuscript Preparation

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) underscores environmental and personal elements' roles in sculpting self-efficacy and outcome anticipations, driving career aspirations and achievements[10]. Centering on family as primary socialization grounds, parenting style, as a persistent familial factor, profoundly molds self-efficacy through prolonged learning exposures, underpinning proactive career manifestations[11]. Authoritative parenting, marked by respectful communication of clear expectations, fosters responsibility by prioritizing structure. Rational guidance during challenges enhances problem-solving skills, boosting accomplishment sentiments and proactive career conduct[12-13]. Additionally, parental accolades and reassurances post-setbacks cultivate self-worth perceptions, nurturing self-efficacy. Positive self-regard facilitates adaptive career navigation. Thus:

Hypothesis 1: There is an overall positive relationship between authoritative parenting style and employees' proactive career behavior.

Authoritarian parenting, enforcing strict directives sans explanation or inquiry latitude, constrains autonomous reasoning and personal initiative[14-15]. Entrants into professions display confusion, owing to scarcity of autonomy-fostering instances[16]. Disciplinary actions tend to erode self-assurance and self-esteem, affecting intrinsic motivation that is crucial for self-efficacious career planning[17]. Over-regulation can suppress exploratory skills, potentially inhibiting proactive career engagement by limiting opportunities for personal growth and development[18-19].

Hypothesis 2: There is an overall negative relationship between authoritarian parenting style and employees' proactive career behavior.

Pioneered by Hackett and Betz, vocational self-efficacy denotes one's belief in mastering occupational pursuits[20]. Authoritative parenting, marked by warmth and receptiveness, fosters elevated self-assessment in offspring, adept at career demand navigation[21]. Verbal commendation, motivation, and behavioral direction from parents significantly enhance career self-efficacy[22]. High self-efficacy catalyzes proactive career actions, given individuals inclination toward career-enhancing activities[23]. Research affirms the link between self-efficacy and proactive career behaviors[24], revealing enhanced career exploration and self-directed career administration among those with superior self-efficacy[25]. Thus:

Hypothesis 3: Career self-efficacy mediate the effects of authoritative parenting style on employees' proactive career behavior.

Contrarily, authoritarian parents, prioritizing dominance and exacting strict acquiescence, may trigger low self-esteem and autonomy deprivation, jeopardizing welfare[26-27]. Sparse family investment and backing can sap career self-efficacy, sharply curtailing proactive career maneuvers. Reduced self-efficacy breeds a conviction of incapacity in surmounting career trials, prompting passive engagement in developmental quandaries, bereft of exploration, enterprise, and perseverance. Thus:

Hypothesis 4: Career self-efficacy mediate the effects of authoritarian parenting style on employees' proactive career behavior.

3. Method

3.1. Sample and Data collection

The research sample, drawn from a Jiangsu university and multiple enterprises, involved 411 surveyed participants, with 397 valid responses (96.59% efficiency). The valid set includes 70 job-eligible postgraduates, 163 from a corporate sector A, 101 from sector B, and 63 online contributors. Demographics show 59.2% males, 40.8% females; ages span 15.4%-18-25, 27%-26-30, 47.9%-31-40, 7.3%-41-50, 2.5%+50. Educational levels comprise 40.3%-junior high or less, 36.8%-high school, 13.1%-junior college, 9.6%-bachelor's, 0.3%-graduate or higher.

3.2. Measures

All the multi-item scales originated in English, undergoing Brislin's translation-back-translation protocol to align both language versions[28]. Unless stated, assessments used a standard 5-point Likert scale.

1)Proactive career behaviors: The construct was operationalized using Hirschi's unidimensional scale[29], comprising nine items such as "making plans and goals for future career", achieving a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91.

2)Parenting style: Used Alkharusi's 14-item scale[30], measuring separate father/mother styles authoritative (rule-setting;7items) and authoritarian (enforced actions;7items). Fatherly authoritative alpha was 0.922, maternal 0.918, paternal authoritarian 0.887, maternal equal 0.887.

3)Career self-efficacy: Rigotti's validated 6-item scale encapsulating[31] "Whatever happens at work, I can handle it." registered a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95 within the current sample.

4)Control variables: Acknowledging the role of organizational demographics, several employee attributes were accounted for as control variables: gender, age, education, and service duration. Prior research substantiates their influence on work-related dispositions and conduct. Additionally, informed by Parker's insights on motivation's pivotal role alongside incentives in proactive career behavior[32], corroborated by Hirschi and Andreas highlighting internal drive's enhancement of self-efficacy and proactive career engagement[33], Brien's Career Aspirations Measurement Scale was deemed appropriate for gauging personal ambition[34]. Moreover, given established links between organizational career management and outcomes, Sturge's Organizational Career Management Scale was selected to evaluate institutional factors[35].

3.3. Data Analysis

Analyses leveraged SPSS25.0 and Amos24, covering descriptive stats, reliability checks, correlations, regression, and Bootstrap tests. SEM with latent variables was applied to validate hypotheses, deeming indirect effects significant at $p < .05$ if 95% CI didn't overlap zero. Gender differences were assessed through multigroup SEM comparisons.

4. Results

4.1. Discriminant Validity

For gender disparity exploration, multigroup SEM comparisons were conducted. A Harman single factor test confirmed minimal common method bias across constructs rated by subordinates. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) ensured discriminant validity and evaluated model fits. Treating authoritative and authoritarian parenting as distinct, both displayed optimal performance under the four-factor model, showcasing favorable fit indices.

(Father: $\chi^2=1154.646$, $df=344$, CFI= .901, TLI= .892, RMSEA= .077, SRMR= .052; Mother: $\chi^2=1116.974$, $df=344$, CFI= .905, TLI= .895, RMSEA= .075, SRMR= .059).

4.2. Descriptive statistics and Correlations

The results of the correlation analysis indicate that an authoritative parenting style has a positive effect on the mediating variable, career self-efficacy. Furthermore, career self-efficacy has a positive effect on the dependent variable, proactive career behavior. Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. However, father's authoritarian parenting style was positively correlated with proactive career behavior ($r= .14$, $p < .01$); mother's authoritarian parenting style and proactive career behavior were also significantly positively correlated ($r= .15$, $p < .01$). Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

4.3. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 1, positing authoritative parenting's positive impact on proactive career behavior, gained robust support. Table II revealed paternal authoritative parenting significantly predicted proactive behavior (Model A1: $B = .232$, $p < .01$; direct effect: $B = .186$, $p < .01$) and bolstered career self-efficacy (Model A2: $B = .215$, $p < .01$). Maternal counterparts mirrored these effects (Models B1-B2: B -values = .238 & .192 for behavior, .216 for self-efficacy, all $p < .001$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 received substantial empirical endorsement. To examine Hypothesis 3, the PROCESS add on by Hayes was employed[36], conducting a bootstrap test. Results confirmed the direct effect of paternal authoritative parenting on proactive career behavior as significant ([.079, .298] at 95%, CI excluding zero), along with a significant indirect effect via career self-efficacy ([.009, .099] at 95%). Similarly, maternal authoritative parenting showcased equivalent significance ([.092, .293] for direct, [.008, .096] for indirect), substantiating Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 2, asserting a negative predictive link between authoritarian parenting and proactive career behavior, was unsupported. Paternal authoritarian parenting neither significantly influenced proactive career behavior ($B=.069$, $p=.124$) nor career self-efficacy ($B=-.016$, $p=.668$). Career self-efficacy's mediating effect ($-.005$; 95% CI $[-.028, .018]$) between paternal authoritarianism and proactive behavior, excluding zero, underscored non-significance. Hypothesis 2 thus lacked empirical foundation. Likewise, maternal authoritarianism displayed no adverse effect on career self-efficacy ($B=-.004$, $p=.916$) with a non-significant mediation effect ($-.023, .023$), and Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Considering gender differences in the influence of parenting styles on individual cognition, the dataset was segregated following Lang's guidance, conducting comparative multiple linear regressions post-segregation to assess the theoretical framework's universality[37]. The cohort comprised 162 females and 235 males. Analyses spotlighted authoritative parenting's affirmative sway on proactive career conduct via career self-efficacy, irrespective of gender, mirroring whole sample outcomes and underscoring the model's resilience[38]. Strikingly, female offspring experienced stronger boosts in career self-assurance and proactive inclinations under authoritative parenting compared to males. Conversely, authoritarian parenting exhibits no significant tie to offspring's proactive career behavior, unaffected by gender. Mediation scrutiny bore no validation, aligning with overarching sample insights.

5. Conclusion

Within social cognitive career theory, this study probes parental influence on employee proactive career dynamics over extended periods. It delineates parenting styles' effect on individual initiative, framing a model where styles indirectly spur proactive behavior via career self-efficacy. Authoritative parenting notably fosters heightened self-efficacy and proactive action; yet, authoritarian approaches lack negative predictive power over proactive career moves, displaying no discernible tie to self-

efficacy. Findings imply nuanced parental impact, warranting further exploration of family context in workforce behavior analysis, recognizing varied parenting-style effects on career perspectives and endeavors. This investigation synthesizes extant literature on parenting styles and career development, centered around adolescents, by delineating a continuum of influence extending into organizational settings. It advances a comprehensive understanding of career self-management behaviors by empirically confirming a nexus between rearing practices and proactive career orientations amongst working professionals. The empirical corroboration of a positive association between nurturing parenting styles and dynamic occupational conduct serves as a clarion call to parents, emphasizing the pivotal role they play in sculpting their progeny's professional trajectories. Advocating a balanced approach encompassing warmth, judicious guidelines, and empowerment, this study champions formative career development rooted in the familial sphere[39]. Societally, it portends the cultivation of a generation emboldened with self-assurance and enterprise, counteracting adversarial societal dispositions amongst youth.

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