

# Do My Parents Support My Career?

## Role of Adolescent-Parent Career Congruence in Employability of Vocational Education Graduates

Rezki A. Sulistiobudi and Clement E. Prasetyo

### ABSTRACT

As qualified human resources, vocational education graduates significantly sustain economic growth, specifically in developing countries. However, the graduates' age that falls into the age range of adolescents and the career pattern direction that remains centered on their parents impact the graduates' competency development. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the role of adolescent-parent career congruence in students' employability development. This study used convenience sampling. The sample size was 147 final students at one vocational school in West Java, Indonesia. Multiple-linear regression was used for data processing. The result showed that adolescent-parent career congruence had a significantly positive relationship with employability development. Specifically, the complementary congruence of adolescent-parent career congruence predicted employability development. Complementary congruence means that parents provide real social support for students to explore, plan, and set their future career goals. This study can be used practically as an alternative framework in developing vocational graduates' employability. Some development programs can be implemented to increase parental awareness about students' careers. Support provided by parents can make students more optimal in continuing to develop their capabilities for work.

**Keywords:** Adolescent-Parent Career Congruence, Employability Development, Vocational Students.

**Published Online:** June 13, 2023

**ISSN:** 2736-4534

**DOI:** 10.24018/ejedu.2023.4.3.537

**R. A. Sulistiobudi\***

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia

(e-mail: rezki.ashriyana@unpad.ac.id)

**C. E. Prasetyo**

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia

(e-mail: clementeko.work@gmail.com)

*\*Corresponding Author*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Vocational education institutions play a significant role to skilled workers in implementing new technologies (Lund & Karlsen, 2020). Qualification of skilled workers as graduates of vocational education needs to develop by adjusting to the demands of technological changes in various industrial sectors. The role of skilled workers also changes in the current industries. For example, highly skilled workers need to monitor interconnected and networked advanced industrial processes currently (Avis, 2018). Skilled workers are increasingly needed despite the fact that many roles have been replaced by technology. However, the skills required are also growing as well.

Despite the increasing need for skilled workers, unemployment rate, especially vocational education graduates in Southeast Asia, remains to be relatively high. Vocational education graduates in Indonesia had the largest contribution to unemployment rate in 2019, which stood at 8.63%. In 2016–2018, unemployment rate in Indonesia was also mainly occupied by vocational education graduates.

The high rate of unemployment of vocational graduates becomes a concern to the development of competitive human resources. In fact, vocational education institutions play a role in preparing students to work. According to Regulation of the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture no. 70 of 2013,

the vocational education curriculum was designed with purpose that students will be able to study well and will be ready to work after graduation. Specifically, the number of hours for courses taken by vocational education students is more than that of high school students because there are additional hours to learn specific skills in the vocational education curriculum. In fact, final year vocational education students are required to attend fieldwork which helps them to better apply their skills at workplace. Individuals with technical or practical and theoretical skills will usually be the top priorities to consider by employers. However, the result of previous study contradicts the situation in Indonesia. The study stated that employability of students from vocational education in Indonesia is low and contributes to the number of unemployed graduates (Hanafi, 2012; Pusriawan & Soenarto, 2019).

Employability does not only mean readiness to work and getting a job. Hillage and Pollard (1998) stated that employability is the ability to get and secure a job satisfactorily. They suggested that employability consists of four aspects. The first is employability assets such as knowledge, abilities, and attitudes. The second is deployment such as the ability to manage a career. The third is presentation which focuses on the ability to introduce oneself in order to get a job, such as writing good curriculum vitae.

The fourth is personal circumstances and external factors.

Knight and Yorke (2004) mentioned that employability consists of four components which can be shortened to USEM, namely Understanding, Skills, Efficacy beliefs, and Metacognition. Broadly speaking, USEM model is very helpful for individuals to understand employability because the model is more scientific. However, the model is not quite suitable to be used in explaining employability of vocational education students and their parents. Another employability model is “The Key to Employability.” The model was proposed by Pool *et al.* (2014) which emphasizes aspects that can encourage employability development in students. This model differs from the previous models which emphasized employability of workers and the elements of employability.

In the model proposed by Pool and Sewell, aspects that can develop employability was shortened as CareerEDGE. CareerEDGE consists of:

- 1) Career development learning (activities that help students to be more aware and recognize themselves, to provide real consideration to what they like or what their personalities are. In addition, those activities help students make career decisions, find job opportunities, and present themselves effectively to employers in order to get employed).
- 2) Experience (work and life) (students need to be provided with work experience or daily life experiences in order to enhance their employability).
- 3) Degree subject knowledge, understanding, and skills (students should be aware to be able to gain knowledge, understanding, and skills that are suitable for the job they look for. Job seekers will always pay attention to and match applicants’ education with the job applied).
- 4) Generic skills (skills required to support certain discipline and the expertise has the potential to be widely applied, both in education and work contexts).
- 5) Emotional intelligence (the capacity to recognize feelings of oneself and others, to motivate oneself, and to regulate one’s emotions or emotions felt in relationships).

Those five aspects will be used for reflection and evaluation for individuals. Results of the reflection and evaluation will influence their self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem. These three aspects will ultimately influence employability. Efforts to enhance employability of vocational education students are ongoing. The Ministry of Education and Culture (2018) has tried to provide a revitalization program for hundreds of vocational education students. The Ministry of Industry also has provided assistance in the form of practical equipment and tried to develop a link-match program between vocational education and industry. Apart from the government, experts have also tried to examine variables that can enhance employability, including work-based learning curricula (Huq & Gilbert, 2013), curricula that provide challenges and the proper workload (Gu *et al.*, 2018), social support (Priatmojo, 2018), and parental involvement (Liu, 2016).

Social support and parental involvement variables that have a positive correlation with students’ employability indicates that people who are close to students have an impact on the development of their employability. Influence of the

closest people to the development of psychological aspects, specifically employability, is in line with Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory (*in* Santrock, 2019). Ecological theory suggests that parents, teachers, close friends, and schools are the microsystems in children, therefore they presumably interact the most and are likely to have the greatest impact on students’ psychological development.

One of the microsystems that students interact most often is parents. The involvement and role of parents in children’s education and career have a significantly positive impact. Parents who are actively involved tend to have fairly high expectations on children’s academics, always maintain good communication with children, and try to improve children’s reading habit in order to have a higher academic achievement. In addition, parents’ involvement influences children’s work salience and vocational expectations. In fact, it was found that parental support and involvement predict children’s career options (Castro *et al.*, 2015; Diemer, 2007; Ginevra *et al.*, 2015; Rogers *et al.*, 2018).

As a country with collectivism culture in nature (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010), Indonesia also contributes to the dynamics of parental support with children’s readiness in managing their career and jobs. Parents are the figures who interact most often with students; therefore, they can help control or influence children’s career options. In addition, parents are the closest authority figures to students, and considering that Indonesia has a collectivism culture, students tend to obey and fulfill their parents’ expectations (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). Career congruence between children and parents causes students to be more confident and more comfortable to carry out tasks related to their chosen career (Sawitri *et al.*, 2013). Thus, students can do better to achieve their goals and enhance their employability.

Collectivism culture correlates with students’ understanding of the career congruence with their parents. Children will be better able to prepare themselves for a career when they perceive that they have positive support from their parents. When children perceive that their chosen career or job is in accordance with what their parents expect, they will perceive that their parents are actively involved in their career development, therefore they will prepare better for the job. Career congruence is a form of parents’ role or involvement in children’s self-development (Sawitri & Creed, 2017).

Career congruence between children and parents is referred to as adolescent – parent career congruence. Career congruence consists of two dimensions, including supplementary dimension and complementary dimension. Supplementary dimension is career similarities between children and parents. A complementary dimension is parents’ active involvement in children’s career selection and development, such as children being introduced to various types of work and children’s ability to fulfill their parents’ expectations (Sawitri *et al.*, 2013). When children perceive that their parents are actively involved in their career selection and development, they will be more confident in preparing themselves for work. Thus, it is predicted that self-development activities they undertake in order to be prepared for the world of work will finally improve. Therefore, hypothetically, there will be influence of children’s perception of the suitability of their career with parents’ expectation and support on their employability development.

The majority of studies on employability of vocational education students in Indonesia mainly focuses on the hard skills, and only a limited number of studies that have examined how various aspects of individual psychological abilities can develop. The majority of the studies predicted employability of vocational education students based on their self-concept, learning achievement, work experience (internship experience), work readiness, and social support. As far as the authors are concerned, there has been no study that addresses the specific role of parents in the employability development of vocational education students. In this study, authors examined the relationship between adolescent – parent career congruence and the employability development of students who are preparing for the world of work, specifically at the level of vocational education.

## II. METHODS

This study was cross-sectional research and used a quantitative approach. Participants in this study were selected using convenience sampling technique. The number of participants who participated was 147 students from a vocational education in West Java, Indonesia. Participants were comprised of several disciplines, including light automotive engineering, computer and network engineering, motorcycle engineering, office administration, and accounting.

The data was collected using survey questionnaires which were distributed to students and took them 20 minutes to fill it out. The authors provided an explanation first of the research purpose, duration of filling out the questionnaires, and confidentiality. The students were then asked to fill out informed consent before moving on to the questionnaires.

There were two variables used in this study, including complementary congruence (X1) and supplementary congruence (X2) as predictors; employability development as the independent variable. This study used two instruments:

- 1) *The Adolescent – Parent Career Congruence Scale* developed by Sawitri *et al.* (2013). The questionnaire consisted of two dimensions, including complementary congruence and supplementary congruence. Reliability of the two dimensions was 0.844 and 0.726 respectively.
- 2) Each item had six response options using the Likert scale. Participants had to choose one of the six options provided. The scale ranged from 1 – “very inappropriate”, 2 – “inappropriate”, 3 – “slightly inappropriate”, 4 – “slightly appropriate”, 5 – “appropriate”, and 6 – “very appropriate”.
- 3) *The employability development profile* developed by Pool *et al.* (2014) to measure students’ employability development. The instrument had a reliability of 0.810. There were 34 items which consisted of six dimensions, including emotional intelligence & self-management, academic performance & study skills, career development learning, problem solving skills, and work life experience.
- 4) The data obtained was processed using 23.0 version of SPSS software. The analysis technique used was descriptive and multiple linear regression to predict the relationship between variables and their dimensions.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table I summarized descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation, variance, and minimum and maximum scores for each variable examined. Each dimension of employability development was also summarized. Based on Table I, emotional intelligence & self-management dimension had higher mean score compared to the other dimensions of employability development variable. Complementary development dimension had higher mean score as well compared to the other dimensions of Adolescent – Parent Career Congruence variable.

TABLE I: THE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean (SD)
Employability Development	Channel 1	Channel 2	...	Channel c
EI & SM	Channel 2	Channel 3	...	Channel 1
AP & SS				
CDL				
PSL				
WLE				
Complementary Congruence				
Supplementary Congruence				

\*EI: Emotional Intelligence, SM: Self-Management, AP: Academic Performance, SS: Study Skills, CDL: Career Development Learning, WLE: Work Life Experience.

Table II illustrated the result of regression analysis between the variables. Complementary congruence had a significantly positive relationship ( $r = 0.463$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ) with employability development. Supplementary congruence had also a significantly positive relationship ( $r = 0.387$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ) with employability development.

Given the level of significance was at 0.05, the regression analysis result indicated that there was a linear relationship between complementary and supplementary dimensions of employability development. The complementary and supplementary congruence dimensions together explain the 18.9% variance of employability development.

TABLE II: THE REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

Channels	B	SE B	$\beta$	t (p-value)
(Constant)	70.010	6.284		11.14 (0.000)
Complementary Congruence	1.031	0.260	0.361	3.962 (0.000)
Supplementary Congruence	0.596	0.320	0.170	1.862 (0.065)

Table II summarized the regression equation. Based on Table II, the constant and complementary congruence values had p-value of 0.000 ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the constant and complementary congruence is significant and used in the regression equation. Meanwhile, p-value of supplementary congruence is 0.065 ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ). This means that supplementary congruence is not significant and excluded from the regression equation. Therefore, the regression equation formed was  $Y = 70.010 + 1.031X_1$ . The regression model indicates that when the value of complementary congruence (X1) is zero (0), the value of employability development will be 70.010. When the value of complementary congruence is equal to one, the

employability development value will increase by 1.031. The regression equation shows that only complementary congruence dimension that can predict employability development. The significance value of each dimension shows that supplementary congruence is not significant ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ).

The result of statistical analysis showed a positive relationship between adolescent – parent career congruence and employability development in vocational school students who were about to graduate. This indicates that when prospective graduates perceive that they have similar vocational expectations as their parents', they will be more confident in developing their own employability to start working. Specifically, the contribution of each dimension of career congruence to employability development was examined. As a result, only complementary congruence contributes significantly to employability development. Meanwhile, when the children perceive that their chosen career is in line with their parents' choice (supplementary congruence), it apparently does not influence their employability development.

This finding indicates that students will be able to prepare themselves better for work when they perceive that their parents provide support in concrete efforts that help them prepare for the world of work. The efforts include introducing children to various types of work, providing directions or advices, providing information on various alternative options, and introducing children to various job fairs.

In Indonesia specifically, children tend to be more obedient to the rules and expectations of their parents, including in preparing for career and job (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010; Sawitri, Creed, & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2013; Sawitri & Creed, 2017). When they perceive that their desired career is contrary to their parents' expectations, it will make these prospective graduates less confident in carrying out various self-development activities in order to be prepared for work. This is certainly different from the conditions in other countries which tend to be not collectivists. Proven in several studies (Sawitri *et al.*, 2013) that found that prospective graduates are confident in determining various actions for themselves even though their parents' vocational expectations are different from theirs.

As graduates, they are provided by options whether to continue their studies to higher education or to find job as workers. However, the majority of vocational graduates are more likely to immediately work than to continue to higher education (Apriliyadi, 2018). Therefore, prospective vocational education graduates who are in their adolescence towards early adulthood stage will encounter challenges in the world of work. Thus, they are required to prepare themselves through various ability development, through technical competency curricula provided in high school. Various studies found that technical ability alone does not really improve their abilities due to the increasing demands in industries. They are expected to have excellent technical skills or hard skills as well as soft skills, such as effective communication, self-regulation, problem solving, etc. If they only have excellent technical skills, they will have less opportunity to be able to get a job (Acevedo *et al.*, 2018; Aprianti & Sugandi, 2015; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017; Pusriawan & Soenarto, 2019; Sakti &

Ariati, 2014; Stone, 2009). Thus, they require other improvements that will support their employability development in the future.

Students' closest figures will contribute greatly to their success. They will be more able to determine career options through guidance and support from various parties (Rogers *et al.*, 2018; Sawitri & Creed, 2015), to carry out various activities that will make them better prepared for work. Having high employability does have not only generic skills, but also other abilities. In the employability development model, several other things that students must develop include preparing themselves are career development learning, self-management and emotional maturity (self-management and emotional intelligence), and solving problems that will possibly arise at work. Having all of these components fulfilled indicates that prospective graduates are ready and able to face future job demands.

Improving those aspects certainly takes time, which can be started from the selection of programs in vocational education. Students' parents and other closest figures can provide career direction or future career options. Thus, various career development can be carried out in a structured and planned manner as long as they are in vocational education. The students are expected not only to make use of what has been provided by the school, but also to explore other activities that can improve their abilities as potential and competitive workers.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The practical suggestion of this finding would be that parents must have a deep understanding of how to direct and provide optimal support for children as prospective vocational education graduates. Parents are also expected to have broad knowledge about job and career options for their children, especially in this technological era where technology and various types of new jobs are emerging. Schools and practitioners in education field can also play a significant role in increasing parents' awareness and ability to provide career direction and support for children. Congruence between parents and children in identifying the children's best ability as prospective graduates also contributes to their employability development in the future.

Future studies suggest involving varied participants for a more comprehensive discussion, such as comparing participants between big and small cities. In addition, the perspective of parents and schools also needs to be analyzed in different views in order to produce a more comprehensive employability development model for students in vocational schools, involving various environmental aspects that contribute to the employability of prospective graduates.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.



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