

Parent-child career goal congruence and career optimism in relation to career engagement among university students

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the association between parent-child career goal congruence, career optimism, and career engagement among students. This study involved 237 students aged 19 to 21 years (M-age = 19.23; SD = 0.97), with 82.3% female and 17.7% male participants, drawn from a faculty at a university in Jogjakarta, Indonesia. The research employed a quantitative design using a survey method. Data was collected using three scales: the parent-child career goal congruence scale ($\alpha = 0.87$), the career optimism scale ($\alpha = 0.81$), and the career engagement scale ($\alpha = 0.86$). Multiple linear regression analysis (SPSS 27.0) revealed that parent child career goal congruence and career optimism were associated with career engagement ($R = 0.39$, $R^2 = 0.16$, $F = 22.08$, $p < 0.001$). Together, these two factors account for 16% of the variance in career engagement. However, when examined separately, only parent-child career goal congruence was associated with career engagement ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$), while career optimism showed no significant association ($\beta = 0.03$, $p = 0.38$). This finding highlight the value of collaborative, communication-centered approaches, suggesting that parents and career counselors can support students more effectively by engaging in joint career planning, open dialogue, and structured counseling sessions to enhance parent-child career goal congruence.

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INTRODUCTION

Young adults typically span ages 18 to 39, during which individuals begin to establish personal and financial independence. In this phase, individuals face several developmental tasks, including starting a career, building a family, managing a household, accepting responsibilities as a citizen, and joining social groups (Hurlock, 1996). In addition to these general developmental tasks, individuals also encounter specific career-related developmental tasks. According to Lent & Brown (2013), in the context of career development, individuals in early adulthood have key developmental tasks, including increasing career exploration, enhancing job readiness and skills, identifying their intended career path, gaining relevant experience in their field, setting career goals and plans, and developing professionalism. Successfully navigating each stage of career development influences an individual's ability to accomplish subsequent developmental tasks.

One of the most critical career development tasks in early adulthood is career exploration and career planning, which is closely linked to an individual's engagement in their career, commonly referred

to as career engagement. Career engagement is defined as the degree to which individuals proactively develop their careers through various career-related behaviors and commit to achieving their chosen career paths (Hirschi et al., 2014). Rather than referring to attitudes, career engagement encompasses specific behaviors individuals exhibit in activities relevant to their career development. Additionally, career engagement is limited to aspirations and career-related behaviors to advance one's career, such as securing organizational promotions. In short, career engagement reflects an individual's proactive approach to career advancement.

Referring to the concept of self-career management, Hirschi et al. (2014) describe career engagement through five key components: 1) Career planning: behaviors that reflect a future-oriented attitude and a structured approach to achieving career goals; 2) Self and environmental exploration: behaviors involving the pursuit of knowledge about oneself and the environment in relation to career planning; 3) Career engagement: proactive behaviors in career development; 4) Network development: behaviors focused on building professional relationships within one's career environment; 5) Independent skill development: voluntary efforts to enhance skills relevant to success in future career.

Higher career engagement allows individuals to establish goals and plan their careers, demonstrate a willingness to develop themselves independently, and actively seek information about themselves and their career-related environment (Hirschi et al., 2014). Past research showed that career engagement positively impacts self-efficacy, career adaptability, career identity, and academic achievement among students (Hirschi & Freund, 2014; Prafitra Nugraheni et al., 2021) as well as job and career satisfaction among employees.

However, not all individuals exhibit high career engagement, especially those in early adulthood. Some individuals show low career involvement, which is characterized by an inability to establish a strong commitment to their career choices. According to data from Educational Psychologists at Integrity Development Flexibility (IDF), 87% of students in Indonesia have chosen the wrong major and are unprepared for career planning (Zulfikar, 2021).

Career engagement is influenced by both individual and environmental factors (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). Previous studies have examined career engagement in relation to individual factors such as personality traits, self-efficacy, optimism and adaptability related to career, self-efficacy in making career decisions, and burnout (Hodkinson et al., 2022; McIlveen & Perera, 2016; Mulyawati & Saraswati, 2021; Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016). Research has also explored external factors such as social support and career obstacles (Hirschi, 2011; Hirschi & Freund, 2014; Wibasari & Kustanti, 2023). However, other influencing factors remain unclear (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). None of the previous studies investigated the role of parent-child career congruence and optimism on career engagement simultaneously, particularly among Indonesian university students. To address the gap, this study investigates career engagement in relation to those external factors (i.e., parent-child career goal congruence) and internal factors (i.e., career optimism) among university students in Indonesia. The results are expected to provide valuable insights for

parents and career counselors to support students in enhancing career engagement and achieving their career goals.

One key factor influencing an individual's career engagement in early adulthood is the alignment of career goals between children and their parents. The family, particularly parents, plays a crucial role in a child's career development. Parents instill values, serve as role models, set expectations, and facilitate career decision-making (Keller & Whiston, 2008). Additionally, they contribute to career preparation by helping individuals set career goals and offering advice on how to achieve them (Sawitri et al., 2013).

The alignment of career expectations between children and parents significantly influences career decision-making and goal attainment (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Parent-child career goal congruence is defined as the alignment of interests, preferences, and career aspirations between children and their parents (Sawitri & Creed, 2015). It reflects the harmony between children and parents regarding career paths, characterized by parental support that encourages children to explore and plan their careers. This support fosters a sense of shared interests, preferences, and career aspirations among parents and children (Sawitri et al., 2014).

Sawitri et al. (2014) identify two dimensions of parent-child career goal congruence: supplementary congruence and complementary congruence. Supplementary congruence refers to the alignment between the child's career development needs and parental support, as well as the match between the child's capabilities and career demands. Complementary congruence pertains to the alignment of children's career interests, values, plans, and goals with those held by their parents. Previous research has found that parent-child career goal congruence is associated with higher career-related self-efficacy, job search outcome expectations, and job readiness behavior (Sawitri & Creed, 2022). Conversely, a mismatch in career expectations and goals between children and parents can lead to career distress, low career engagement, reduced self-efficacy in making career decisions, and increased career uncertainty (Widyowati et al., 2023; Widyowati et al., 2024).

Another factor that influences career engagement is career optimism. In the career context, career optimism refers to an individual's tendency to expect positive career outcomes and to approach career planning tasks with confidence (Rottinghaus et al., 2005). It reflects one's expectations of positive career outcomes and focuses on future opportunities (Rottinghaus et al., 2005), motivating proactive career behavior and hopefulness in entering (Eva et al., 2020). Individuals with higher career optimism demonstrate strong belief in their ability to achieve career goals, exhibit enthusiasm toward their career development, and engage in career planning proactively (Rottinghaus et al., 2005; Agustine & Riasnugrahani, 2023). Previous research showed that higher career optimism was associated with career adjustment, career goal attainment, career satisfaction, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction (Duffy, 2010; Santilli et al., 2017; Sikora, 2024).

One theory that explains the complex interaction between individual and contextual factors, particularly the role of parents, in career development is Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent & Brown, 2013). According to SCCT, individuals' career decisions and development are influenced by both

individual factors (e.g., personality, intelligence) and contextual background factors (e.g., parental support, socioeconomic status, discrimination). These factors shape an individual's experiences, which, in turn, influence their self-perception. Self-perception forms self-efficacy and outcome expectations regarding career success. Self-efficacy fosters a positive attitude, including optimism, which influences career decision-making. Together, self-efficacy and outcome expectations drive career interests, which are then translated into career goals. These goals ultimately motivate individuals to engage in career-related actions to achieve their desired outcomes.

Additionally, SCCT recognizes the influence of contextual factors (e.g., parental support, skill development opportunities, cultural and gender roles, job availability) directly and indirectly in shaping career-related behaviors. These contextual factors can serve as either facilitators or barriers for individuals' career development, including career decision making. Specifically, they influence how individuals transfer career interests into goals and how they take action to achieve those goals. Individuals who perceive adverse environmental conditions as obstacles are less likely to pursue their career interests and translate them into concrete goals and actions. Conversely, individuals who perceive favorable environmental conditions (e.g., strong social support and minimal obstacles) are more likely to take action toward achieving their career aspirations (Lent & Brown, 2013).

In line with SCCT, parent-child career goal congruence is a contextual factor that supports career development. It helps individuals translate their career interests into goals and take action to achieve those goals. Individuals who experience alignment between their career development needs and parental support—and who share similar aspirations, values, and career goals with their parents—tend to be more engaged in their careers. They are more proactive in career planning, explore their interests and work environments, and actively engage in independent career development. Previous research found that parent-child career goal congruence is related with positive career behaviors, such as self- and career exploration, and career-related information gathering (Sawitri & Creed, 2021; Sawitri & Dewi, 2015).

In line with SCCT model, Lent & Brown (2013) assist career behaviors, including career engagement, are influenced by self-efficacy, which is shaped by personal perceptions and experiences. Self-efficacy fosters positive attitudes, such as optimism and outcome expectations, which, in turn, motivate individuals to engage in career-related actions. Career optimism reflects an individual's confidence in their career choice and belief in their capacity to achieve career goals. This optimism encourages individuals to take actions that align with their career aspirations. Confidence in achieving career and professional goals drives individuals to become more actively involved in their careers. Agustine & Riasnugrahani (2023) explain that individuals with positive beliefs about their career goals engage in greater self-exploration to achieve them. Thus, career optimism contributes to an individual's confidence in making career-related decisions, such as selecting a major and job, and planning their career path.

Based on the theoretical framework and previous research findings, this study aimed to examine whether parent-child career goal congruence and career optimism are associated with career engagement. Thus, we expected that:

Major hypothesis: Parent-child career goal congruence and career optimism are associated with career engagement.

Minor hypothesis: 1. Parent-child career goal congruence is positively associated with career engagement.

2. Career optimism is positively associated with career engagement.

METHOD

This study involved 237 university students (42 males, 17.7%; 195 females, 82.3%) aged 19 to 21 years (M -age = 19.23 years, SD = 0.97). Participants were voluntarily recruited from the Faculty of Psychology at a leading private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. We involved individuals who studied in Psychology as participants, as individual and career development is a compulsory subject that all psychology students in Indonesia must learn. Thus, they are expected to be more engaged in their careers compared to students in other faculties. Additionally, the selection of a private university (swasta) was based on considerations of ease of access and relative homogeneity in the participants' socioeconomic backgrounds, as they tend to come from middle to upper-class families. These families might have specific access to resources and career expectations from their families.

This study employed a survey approach, utilising standardised scales as data collection instruments. All scales were assessed with a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree), unless otherwise stated. The overall score was derived by aggregating the individual item scores, with higher scores indicating a greater level of each respective construct.

1. Career engagement

We used the 9-item Career Engagement Scale (Hirschi et al, 2014) to measure the extent to which individuals are proactively engaged in their career-related activities. The scale was translated into Indonesian using the translation back-translation method by bilingual experts and underwent content validation through expert judgment by professionals in industrial and organizational psychology. This scale assesses career engagement across five key aspects: career planning, career exploration, environmental career exploration, networking, and voluntary human capital and skill development. An example item is: "To what extent have you actively planned your future career?". Hirschi et al., (2014) reported that the original scale demonstrated good reliability (α = 0.88) and validity, as indicated by its correlation with career self-efficacy and career satisfaction. In the Indonesian version, the corrected item-total correlation (r_{it}) ranged from 0.54 to 0.72, and the scale demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's α = 0.86).

2. Parent-child career goal congruence

The 13 items of the Parent-Child Career Goal Congruence Scale (Sawitri et al., 2013) were utilised to measure the degree of career goal agreement between parents and their children. This scale assesses

the perceived alignment in career interests, orientations, and goals between parents and children. An example item is: “My parents support my career plans.” Sawitri et al. (2013) reported that the scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.89 and demonstrated validity through its positive correlation with goal orientation and career aspirations. In the current study, corrected item-total correlations (rit) ranged from 0.49 to 0.68, and the scale demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.87).

3. Career optimism

Career optimism was measured using the Career Optimism subscale from the Career Future Inventory (CFI) Scale, which consists of 12 items, developed by Rottinghaus et al. (2012) and modified by Akmal (2023). An example item is: “I get excited when I think about my career”. The original scale demonstrated strong reliability ($\alpha = 0.87$) and validity, as it correlated positively with life orientation, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and neuroticism (Rottinghaus et al., 2005). In the Indonesian version, Akmal (2023) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.78. In this study, a scale trial was conducted, and corrected item-total correlations (rit) ranged from 0.36 to 0.69. The scale demonstrated adequate reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.81).

Data Analysis and procedure

The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis, conducted with Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 27.0 for Windows. Prior to hypothesis testing, assumption tests- including normality tests, linearity tests, and multicollinearity tests- were conducted to confirm that the data conformed to requisite statistical assumptions. The research instruments were distributed to students directly through their course lecturer. Before data collection, institutional permission was obtained, and participants provided informed consent to confirm their voluntary participation. To ensure confidentiality, all responses were collected anonymously, without including participants’ names. As a token of appreciation, participants received souvenirs for their involvement in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The normality test results indicated that the data were normally distributed ($Z=0.40$, $p>0.05$). The linearity test showed that the relationship between career engagement and parent-child career goal congruence was linear but not ideal (Sig. Linearity: .001 ($p < .05$), Sig. Deviation From Linearity: .013 ($p < .05$), meaning that while the data exhibited a linear trend, the relationship was not perfectly linear. Similarly, the relationship between career engagement and optimism was not linear (Sig. Linearity: .77 ($p > .05$), Sig. Deviation From Linearity: .75 ($p > .05$). Despite this, the data for both independent variables were still considered suitable for regression analysis. Furthermore, the multicollinearity test results indicated no multicollinearity between the independent variables, suggesting no significant overlap between them in the regression model. Parent-child career goal congruence shows (VIF: $1.003 < 10$ and Tolerance: $.997 > 0.10$). While career optimism shows (VIF: $1.003 < 10$ and Tolerance: $.997 > 0.10$). Give

that the associations between age, gender, and career engagement were negligible, so these variables were excluded from further analyses.

Based on Table 1, this study’s multiple linear regression analysis revealed that the regression coefficient for parent-child career goal congruence and career optimism with career engagement was $R = 0.39$, $R^2 = 0.16$, $F = 22.08$, $p < 0.001$. These findings indicate a significant relationship among students between parent-child career goal congruence, career optimism, and career engagement. The central hypothesis is supported, as parent-child career goal congruence and career optimism together contribute 16% to career engagement, as calculated by $R^2 \times 100\% = 0.16 \times 100\% = 16\%$. This result suggests that these two factors play a meaningful role in influencing students’ career engagement.

Table 1. Central hypothesis test results

Variable	Hypothesis Results				
	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Sig. F Change</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Description</i>
Parent-child career goal congruence and career optimism in relation to career engagement	0.39	0.16	0.001	22.08	Significant

The results of the minor hypothesis test, as presented in Table 2, indicates that parent-child career goal congruence has a highly significant positive relationship with career engagement. However, the analysis found no significant relationship between career optimism and career engagement.

Table 2. Minor hypothesis test results

Variable	Hypothesis Results			
	<i>Partial (r)</i>	<i>β</i> <i>Unstandardized</i>	<i>Sig.(p)</i>	<i>Description</i>
Parent-child career goal congruence in relation to career engagement	0.39	0.21	0.001	Significant
Career optimism in relation to career engagement	0.02	0.03	0.38	Not Significant

The results of the partial correlation test for parent-child career goal congruence and career engagement indicate a partial correlation coefficient of $r = 0.39$, $\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$. These findings suggest a highly significant correlation between parent-child career goal congruence and career engagement among students. In contrast, the partial correlation test between career optimism and career engagement yielded a partial correlation coefficient of $r = -0.02$, $\beta = 0.03$, $p = 0.38$ ($p > 0.05$), indicating no significant correlation between career optimism and career engagement among students.

Table 3. Empirical score categorisation

Table Head	Empirical Score					
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interval Score</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Career engagement			$X \leq 21$	Low	0	0
	28	7	$21 < X \leq 35$	Moderate	31	13.1
			$45 < X$	High	206	86.9
Total					237	100%

Table Head	Empirical Score					
	Mean	SD	Interval Score	Category	Total	
Parent-child career goal congruence	42	10	$X \leq 21$	Low	2	0.8
			$21 < X \leq 35$	Moderate	70	29.5
			$45 < X$	High	165	69.6
Total					237	100%
Career optimism	28	7	$X \leq 21$	Low	1	0.4
			$21 < X \leq 35$	Moderate	79	33.3
			$45 < X$	High	157	66.2
Total					237	100%

The results of Table 3, present the empirical score categorisation data for the research sample. Most participants demonstrated high levels across the variables, with 86.9% for career engagement, 69.6% for parent-child career goal congruence, and 66.2% for career optimism.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between parent-child career goal congruence and career optimism with career engagement among university students. The results indicate that parent-child career goal congruence and career optimism are associated with career engagement. This suggests that individuals who perceive alignment between their career interests, values, and goals with those of their parents and maintain optimism about their careers are more likely to exhibit proactive engagement in relevant career activities. These results support Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which posits that congruence in career orientation between children and parents, along with positive expectations and beliefs about achieving career goals, facilitates individuals in translating career aspirations into action (Lent & Brown, 2023).

These findings align with a previous study by Sawitri et al., (2014), which indicated that adolescents perceiving parental support in career exploration, planning, and goal-setting, alongside parental satisfaction with their career progress, exhibited enhanced career engagement. Adolescents who perceived shared beliefs in career-related interests, values, and goals with their parents demonstrated more involvement with their career. Similarly, research by Rottinghaus (2005) revealed that individuals who feel confident in their abilities and future career prospects tend to exhibit greater optimism and engagement in career development activities.

The findings also support the first minor hypothesis, demonstrating a significant positive association between parent-child career goal congruence and career engagement. It suggests that when individuals perceive their career aspirations as aligned with parental expectations and receive adequate parental support, they are more engaged in career-related activities such as planning, networking, and self-development. These results are consistent with the past research, which found that career congruence with parents is strongly associated with students' career development and work readiness (Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2014). Parents exert a fundamental influence on the formation of children's career-related values, interests, and skills, thereby promoting heightened motivation and sustained effort in achieving children's career goals (Duffy & Dik, 2009). The alignment of career goals between parents and children is

associated with increased engagement of children in career development activities.. This alignment fosters a supportive environment that encourages career exploration and commitment.

Moreover, congruence between parents and children in career goals enhances the perception of parental support, ensuring that the resources provided align with the child's career development needs. When children feel that their career aspirations are accepted and supported by their parents, they become more proactive in self-development efforts (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Research by Ginevra et al. (2015) highlights the importance of parental support in shaping children's career goals by providing guidance, encouraging self-exploration, and helping them reflect on career choices. Career goal congruence between parents and children significantly enhances career engagement, as parental support fosters confidence in choosing and pursuing a career aligned with personal aspirations. Conversely, misalignment between parental expectations and individual career goals may result in lower career engagement and motivation (Sawitri & Creed, 2015; Widyowati et al., 2023). This implies parents can play a crucial role by fostering open communication, staying informed about evolving career opportunities, and providing informational and material support that enables students to plan, build professional networks, and engage in self-development. They can promote career-related dialogue by engaging in conversations about their children's interests, strengths, values, and aspirations. Practical strategies include attending career fairs together and initiating conversations with professionals in fields aligned with the child's interests. Beyond emotional encouragement, parents can provide instrumental support by facilitating access to skill-development programs, internships, or volunteer opportunities, ensuring their involvement aligns with the child's evolving career goals. This alignment is best achieved through sustained dialogue that helps reconcile parental expectations with the child's authentic interests and capabilities.

The results also imply how career counselors may support this dynamic by conducting joint counseling sessions that focus on enhancing communication skills within the family system. Career counselors can facilitate this process by encouraging parents to be more receptive to their children's career aspirations while guiding students in effectively communicating their career goals to their parents. Role-playing exercises and case-based discussions can help parents and children navigate conversations around career decision-making and address potential conflict areas. In these sessions, counselors serve as neutral mediators, allowing each party to express their perspectives and co-construct shared understandings of career pathways. Moreover, counselors can offer psychoeducational resources to parents, emphasizing their influential role and equipping them with actionable strategies to constructively support their child's career development. Such targeted collaboration between parents and career counselors can foster greater student engagement and agency in career-related decision-making.

In contrast to the first minor hypothesis, the second minor hypothesis, which proposed a relationship between career optimism and career engagement, was not supported. These results differ from the findings of Agustine & Riasnugrahani (2023), who reported a positive association between career optimism and self-exploration among students. Their study suggested that individuals with high confidence and optimism about their future careers tend to be better prepared for challenges and more proactive in

achieving their career goals. A possible explanation for the absence of a significant relationship between career optimism and career engagement in this study could be the influence of socioeconomic background. We only involved university students in a private university in Indonesia, which was dominated by those from middle to upper-class families. Individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have greater optimism regarding their career prospects and possess more resources to maintain a positive outlook on their professional future. Research by Sikora (2024) indicates that socioeconomic status plays a crucial role in determining access to career opportunities, with individuals from affluent backgrounds exhibiting higher levels of career optimism and stability. Other research has shown that career optimism is significantly influenced by contextual support such as parental encouragement and teacher guidance, which bolsters career-decision self-efficacy and enhances optimistic career expectation (Garcia et al., 2015). This indicates that obtaining support from their environment, including their parents, improves their confidence in career decision-making, ultimately fostering greater optimism toward their future employment prospects. Conversely, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may encounter greater challenges, reducing their confidence in achieving career success. Future research could further explore how socioeconomic factors influence the relationship between career optimism and career engagement. However, we did not specifically measure the socioeconomic background of the participants. Thus, future research should examine the socioeconomic background to understand the relationship between career optimism and career engagement.

Additionally, cultural factors may also contribute to these findings. In Eastern cultures, parental influence dominates career decision-making, potentially limiting individuals' optimism about achieving their career goals independently. Career congruence with parents may hold greater significance for individuals raised in collectivist cultures, where familial expectations often shape career decisions. It is in line with the study conducted by Ma & Yeh (2005), which explains that in collectivist cultures, such as Chinese society, career decision-making is not solely an individual choice but is also viewed as a familial responsibility. It suggests parental involvement can positively influence career goal clarity for children who align with their parents' expectations. Within this study, career optimism may be shaped by how individuals perceive their families as supportive or restrictive in pursuing career goals. According to the SCCT model (Lent & Brown, 2013), the support provided by parents and families is considered a contextual factor that shapes individuals' self-efficacy and outcome expectations. When individuals feel supported, their self-efficacy increases and they develop more positive outcome expectations. This increase then contributes to higher career optimism. Conversely, when the involvement of parents or family is viewed as a barrier, it can decrease self-efficacy and outcome expectations, thereby reducing career optimism. In contrast, young adults in an individualistic culture are more internally motivated to decide their career and are more optimistic about the future. Consequently, they tend to deprioritise interpersonal factors like parental guidance, favouring autonomous decision-making and actions in their career development. (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

This study emphasises the critical role of parent-child career goal congruence in enhancing university students' career engagement. Specifically, only parent-child career goal congruence demonstrated a significant positive relationship with career engagement. Conversely, career optimism did not significantly affect career engagement in this study. These results highlight how crucial parental alignment and support are to the process of career development. Despite its substantive contributions, this study is constrained by several limitations. First, the research sample is relatively homogeneous, as it was drawn from a single department at one university. This restricts the extent to which the findings can be applied to broader populations. Future studies should expand the sample to involve students from multiple academic disciplines, different universities, or even individuals in early adulthood who are either employed or pursuing careers outside of higher education. Second, the sample composition is uneven in terms of gender, with a higher proportion of female participants. Future research should ensure a more balanced sample composition or specifically investigate the role of gender in shaping the relationships among the studied variables. Moreover, future research should explore additional factors mediating or moderating the parent-child career goal congruence, career optimism, and career engagement relationships. Lastly, this study employs a cross-sectional design, which restricts the capacity to determine causal relationships among variables. Further research may employ longitudinal research to assess the long-term impact of parent-child career goal congruence and career optimism on career engagement.

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