

THE NEXUS OF FAMILY INFLUENCE, ACADEMIC SATISFACTION AND CAREER ADAPTABILITY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ACADEMIC SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

The available literature suggested a well-studied link between parental influence and academic satisfaction in association with career adaptability. However, there was a clear knowledge gap that might explain how these variables influence each other in university students. A cross-sectional research design was proposed and 419 undergraduate university students of 3rd and 4th year were recruited using a convenient sampling technique. The study utilized the Family Influence Scale (FIS), the Academic Major Satisfaction Scale (AMSS), and the Career Adaptability Scale (CAAS) for data collection. The results indicated a positive association between family influence, career adaptability, and academic satisfaction. Moreover, family influence and academic satisfaction distinctively predicted career adaptability. In this complex dynamic association, academic satisfaction emerged as a significant partial mediator between family influence and career adaptability. Thus, it is concluded that the influence of family and academic satisfaction plays a marked role in shaping career adaptability among university students.

Keywords: Family Influence, Academic Satisfaction, Career Adaptability, University Student

INTRODUCTION

Family is a fundamental unit of society, offering a sense of identity, belonging, and continuity to individuals (Bubolz, 2001). The role of the family is crucial in the socialization of individuals and the transmission of cultural values and standards (Bales & Parsons, 2014). Family structures have evolved and diversified in recent years, impacting societal dynamics and health assessments (Cherlin, 2010; McLanahan & Percheski, 2008). In the Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner, the family acts as a significant microsystem that influences individual development (Ryan, 2001). Erikson (1994) also emphasized the role of family interactions in identity formation. Similarly, Freud's work laid the

foundation to understand how family dynamics shape psychological development (Burgess, 1939).

Primarily, parents as socializing agents, shape children's values, and educational and career choices while also contributing to their overall development (Amato, 2001; Eccles & Harold, 1991). Parental influence encompasses aspects like parenting styles, involvement, and the overall emotional and psychological environment provided by parents (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Parental influence highly impacts the academic outcomes and career decisions of individuals (Chen & Kaplan, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009). As evidenced by research, parental influence strongly correlates with academic satisfaction and career adaptability, (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994;

Hill & Tyson, 2009). Positive parental involvement leads to motivation and achievement, while unsupportive parenting can lead to disengagement (Dornbusch et al., 1987). Simmons (2008) highlighted parents' increasing involvement in students' academic lives, as supported by interviews with Brown University students. Studies indicate that parents have a huge influence in shaping children's academic decisions and paths, sometimes reinforcing gender stereotypes that impact their academic decisions and career aspirations (Steele & Aronson, 1995; McHale et al., 1999).

For university students, marked by their diverse backgrounds and aspirations, their academic journey also significantly impacts their career paths, workplace adaptability, and overall academic fulfillment. University students exploring a wide array of academic fields and activities face challenges caused by internal and external factors. (Perna, 2010). Meanwhile, academic satisfaction has grown in significance over time and Dewey also shed light on the importance of supportive learning conditions and student-centered approaches (Dewey, 1974). Academic satisfaction is the fulfillment and contentment that the students derive from their academic experiences (Lent et al., 2009). It is positively affected by parental influence and correlates with motivation, engagement, and academic performance while fostering informed choices and career adaptability (Skaalvik, 2017; Puklek & Podlesek, 2019). Maslow's hierarchy sheds light on the role of satisfaction in promoting fulfillment, well-being, and feelings of accomplishment (McLeod, 2007).

Recent education trends focus on the vital role of supportive parents in children's development as they foster essential life skills by collaborating with educators (Amatea et al., 2004; Smith-Adcock & Villares, 2006; Bryan, 2005). Recent research indicates that when parents' active involvement in their children's education leads to higher levels of academic satisfaction (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005). Higher academic satisfaction is also linked to increased career adaptability, which is the ability to cope with the at-hand and expected future tasks of career development with the individual's resources and readiness (Hirschi, 2009). In most cases, satisfied students develop a positive attitude toward their educational experiences, therefore showing enhanced

confidence in handling future career challenges and transitions (Savickas, 2013). Research indicates that academic satisfaction helps to develop competence and self-efficacy in students, which are crucial to career adaptability (Credé & Niehorster, 2012; Ramos & Lopez, 2018). Consequently, the support and involvement of parents not only boost academic satisfaction but also open the door for their children's career adaptability indirectly (Guay et al., 2003). Furthermore, the parents play an influential role in acting as models in the career development of children, having a significant impact on their adaptability and self-confidence through emotional support and honest conversations with them (Whiston et al., 2008; Savickas, 1997; Johnston et al., 2013). The positive parental influence generally promotes career adaptability by enhanced academic satisfaction, but it is also important for parental expectations to align with the child's interests and aspirations to avoid potential negative impacts (Whiston et al., 2008).

The previous literature has extensively examined the interplay and connection among parental influence, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability. These studies collectively highlight the role parental support and influence play in shaping both academic and career outcomes for individuals. For instance, in a longitudinal study in eastern China, Li et al. (2022) found a significant link between parental academic support, the student's happiness, and their academic performance trajectories. Similarly, Kocak (2021) also noticed that parents' involvement has a beneficial influence on the career decisions, happiness, and self-efficacy of students. It also suggested that self-efficacy related to decision-making about a career does not moderate the relationship between parent income, parental education, and happiness. Meanwhile, Dietrich and Kracke's (2009) study revealed that parental involvement positively influences career exploration and decision-making challenges; it showcases the significance of parent's support in the career development of children. Noack et al. (2010) highlighted the importance of family and academic influences on adolescents' career-related development and noted the impact of parenting practices and classroom environment on the exploration behavior of students. Hirschi (2009) conducted a longitudinal study and identified the

factors that predict career adaptability and its positive association with empowerment and life satisfaction. To clarify the relationship between academic satisfaction and career adaptability, recent studies have focused on how academic satisfaction affects career adaptability. Wilkins Yel et al. (2018) found that career adaptability significantly influences intended academic persistence, with academic satisfaction mediating this relationship. This indicates that students with high satisfaction with their academic experiences are one step ahead of others in handling their career transitions and maintaining academic persistence. Similarly, Celik and Storme (2018) revealed that the trait of emotional intelligence predicts academic satisfaction through career adaptability, suggesting that this adaptability mediates the connection between emotional intelligence and satisfaction in academia. Zeng et al. (2022) revealed that hope, future career, self-satisfaction, and life satisfaction in vocational school students are positively related to career adaptability and academic self-efficacy, further emphasizing the role of academic satisfaction in career adaptability. Additionally, Oliveira and Marques (2024) highlighted that career adaptability and engagement in academia play critical roles in the life satisfaction of students, showing that academic satisfaction contributes to career adaptability and overall life satisfaction. Ghosh et al. (2019) also found that career adaptability and academic satisfaction are crucial for student veterans' career transition readiness, impacting their overall academic and life satisfaction. Some studies also explore these variables in specific cultural contexts. For example, the systematic review by Akosah et al. (2018) identified that collectivist cultures heavily influence youth career choices through familial expectations, and boost career confidence when choices align with parental aspirations. Meanwhile, Fouad et al. (2015) explored the family influence on career decisions across the US and India and found correlations with variables like family obligations and work values. Corey et al. (2015) investigated the parents' pressure and their perceived control in the career exploration of adolescents in Canada and discovered that pressure increases during university years, but parental influence diminishes over time. In Pakistan, limited research has been done on parental influence, academic satisfaction, and career

adaptability, even though children have been historically affected by family choices and decisions. According to Ishaque (2014), children significantly influence family purchase decisions, contributing about 40% of the time. Additionally, Rafiq et al. (2013) discovered that parent's involvement significantly improved the academic performance of the students. While Abbassi et al. (2014) explored the factors that influence job decisions among Pakistani graduates, and identified key variables such as opportunities for development, occupational glamor, self-esteem, inspiration from society, and other factors related to work, with women demonstrating higher social motivation in career choices as compared to men.

To sum it all up, while the existing studies have shed light on the impact of parents' influence on satisfaction in academia and career adaptability, the exact mechanisms or processes by which parental support and academic satisfaction affect career adaptability are not yet fully understood. Further research is also needed to clarify how these various aspects contribute to each other. This research is also essential to develop a comprehensive model that integrates parental influence and provides support for individuals' academic and professional growth.

Additionally, while some studies have examined these variables in specific cultural settings, such as collectivist cultures or Western contexts, there is limited research on these dynamics within Pakistani populations and other non-Western cultures. Studying how cultural factors and family dynamics influence academic satisfaction and career adaptability can provide a better understanding of these complex relationships. By addressing these gaps, future research can develop comprehensive models that integrate parental influence, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability, offering valuable insights into individuals' professional development and aspirations across different cultural contexts.

Objectives

To examine the association between the level of family influence, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability.

To investigate the level of family influence and academic satisfaction as a predictor of career adaptability.

To examine the level of academic satisfaction as a

mediator between family influence and career adaptability.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1

There will be an association between family influence, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability.

Hypotheses 2

The level of family influence and academic satisfaction will predict career adaptability.

Hypothesis 3

Academic satisfaction will mediate the relationship between family influence and career adaptability.

Methods

Study Design

A cross-sectional survey research design with a quantitative approach was used. The data was collected only once, at a single point in time.

Sample

A convenience sampling technique was employed to recruit 419 undergraduate university students in their 3rd and 4th years, aged 18 to 25 years, consisting of 143 males and 273 females from various universities (GIFT University, Gujrat University, and University of Lahore) and a college in Gujranwala.

Research Instruments

Socio-demographic Characteristics

The demographic variables were chosen based on their relevance to the study's objectives and existing literature. They included age, gender, department, semester, family type, socioeconomic status, birth order, number of siblings, parent's education, and occupation.

Family Influence Scale (FIS)

This Scale (FIS) assesses the perceptions of how the origin of family influences career choices and work choices. Fouad et al. (2010) developed this scale and Geckil and Akin et al. (2012) adapted it to Turkish culture, the scale consists of 22 items. It consists of a Likert scale of six points, ranging from 'Never Disagree' to 'Fully Agree.' Subscales include informational support, expectations of family, and

values. The FIS has good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$ to $.89$) and validity. The total score is the extent of the family's influence on the career development. The subfactor of financial support was excluded due to low reliability and participant comprehensibility.

Academic Major Satisfaction Scale (AMSS)

This scale was developed by Nauta (2007) as a 6-item scale to assess academic major satisfaction. It utilizes a five-point Likert range, which starts with 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' This scale considers global academic satisfaction crucial for students' decision-making and program integration. The higher scores mean higher satisfaction. The AMSS scale had good acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .90$) and satisfactory construct validity. However, its reliability in the current study sample was lower ($\alpha = .57$).

Career Adaptability Scale (CAAS)

It was established by Maggiori, Rossier, and Savickas (2017). It has 12 items to assess career adaptability. It includes 4 subscales; Concern, Control, Curiosity, and Confidence about career, each having three items. The internal consistency of CAAS is high (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$) and reliability, with subscale alphas ranging from $\alpha = 0.76$ to $\alpha = 0.83$. Total scores indicate overall career adaptability. The higher scores mean greater adaptability.

Ethical Considerations

During data collection, significant research ethics were followed. The study was approved by the Institutional Ethical Review Committee, ensuring adherence to ethical standards. Participants provided written consent to participate and were informed that their participation was voluntary, and they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. They were also briefed that information was collected solely for research purposes and confidentiality of participant data would be maintained through research, data processing and result interpretation.

Procedure

The sample was selected via convenience sampling to examine the connections between family influence, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability in university students. Before data collection, institutional permission was obtained. Data collected included demographic questions and scales

measuring family influence, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability. Data was analyzed using correlation, regression, and mediation analyses. It was to assess the associations and predictive values of the variables.

Results

The sample size (N = 419) with an average age of 21.7 years (SD = 1.44), had 34.1% male and 65.9% female participants. Most participants were in their 6th semester (42.2%) followed by the 8th semester (28.6%). Participants were 61.6% from nuclear families, 32.5% from joint families, and 6% from extended families. Birth order was diverse, with 25.5% first-born, 27.4% second-born, and 26.3% youngest. Participants belonged to varying Income groups including 29.8% of 100k–200k, 22.6% above

400k, and 3.8% between 50k to 100k. The educational backgrounds of parents also varied among participants.

The Family Influence Scale (FIS) had a mean score of 58.60 (SD = 10.80) with good reliability ($\alpha = .87$), showing a wide range (23 to 85). Informational Support (IS) had a mean of 28.40 (SD = 6.60) with reliability ($\alpha = .78$), with scores ranging (8 to 62). Family Expectations (FE) had an average of 19.80 (SD = 4.20) with moderate reliability ($\alpha = .70$), and Values and Beliefs (VB) had 10.50 (SD = 2.70) scores $\alpha = .75$. Academic Major Satisfaction (AMSS) had a mean of 18.90 (SD = 3.80) and $\alpha = .57$, and positive skewness and kurtosis. The Career Adapt-Ability Scale (CAAS) dimensions ranged in reliability from acceptable to satisfactory, while the Financial Support (FS) was excluded due to low reliability

Table 1

Correlation Matrix between FIS, AMSS, CAAS and their Subscales (N=419)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FIS	1	.86**	.78**	.72**	.49**	.47**	.47**	.34**	.43**	.29**
IS		1	.42**	.40**	.35**	.39**	.38**	.29**	.33**	.26**
FE			1	.57**	.44**	.34**	.34**	.26**	.35**	.17**
VB				1	.35**	.38**	.37**	.29**	.35**	.23**
AMSS					1	.33**	.35**	.23**	.27**	.21**
CAAS						1	.76**	.79**	.86**	.78**
Concern							1	.52**	.60**	.39**
Control								1	.64**	.44**
Curiosity									1	.56**
Confidence										1

Note. FIS = Family Influence Scale, IS = Informational Support, FE = Family Expectations, VB = Values & Beliefs, AMSS = Academic Major Satisfaction Scale, CAAS = Career Adaptability Scale. ** p < .01

In Table 1, Pearson's correlational analysis reveals significant positive relationships between the Family Influence Scale (FIS) and its sub-factors, as well as with academic satisfaction and career adaptability. FIS shows strong correlations with Information Support (r = .86), Family Expectations (r = .78), and Values & Beliefs (r = .72). While a moderate correlation with Academic Major Satisfaction Scale (r = .49), and Career Adapt-Ability Scale (r = .47). It indicates that higher family influence scores mean greater support, greater positive expectations, high values, high satisfaction, and high adaptability levels. The Informational Support (IS) positively correlates with Family Expectations (FE) (r = .42), Values &

Beliefs (VB) (r = .40), Academic Major Satisfaction Scale (AMSS) (r = .35), and Career Adapt-Ability Scale (CAAS) (r = .39), suggesting that higher support is linked to positive expectations, values, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability. FE also positively correlates with VB (r = .57), AMSS (r = .44), and CAAS (r = .34), indicating that positive family expectations mean favorable values, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability. Moreover, AMSS also shows positive correlations with CAAS (r = .33), Concern (r = .35), and Control (r = .23), reflecting that positive academic attitudes mean higher career adaptability, academic concern, and perceived control. Overall, CAAS dimensions show

Table 2

Stepwise Regression Analysis for Exploring Family Influence and the Academic Satisfaction as a Predictor of Career Adaptability (N=419)

	B	CI		SE	β	R ²	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
Step 1						.21	.21
(Constant)	15.86	11.17	20.56	2.39			
FIS	0.43	0.35	0.51	0.04	.46**		
Step 2						.23	.01
(Constant)	12.52	7.32	17.73	2.64			
FIS	0.37	0.28	0.46	0.04	.40**		
AMSS	0.36	0.11	0.62	0.12	.13*		

Note. FIS = Family Influence Scale, AMSS = Academic Major Satisfaction Scale. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

positive correlations ($p < .01$ for all correlations). Table 2 presents findings of stepwise regression showing that family influence (FIS) and academic satisfaction (AMSS) significantly predict career adaptability. In Step 1, FIS ($\beta = .46$) predicts a 21.9% variance in career adaptability ($R^2 = 0.219$). Adding AMSS in Step 2 increases the prediction to 23.4% (R^2

$= 0.234$), with FIS ($\beta = .40$) and AMSS ($\beta = .13$) both being positively associated with career adaptability. This suggests that family influence and academic satisfaction jointly contribute to explaining variations in career adaptability.

Table 3

Mediation Analysis and Model Summary between Family Influence and Career Adaptability through Academic Satisfaction (N=419)

Antecedent		M (AMSS)			Consequent	Y (CAAS)		
		Coeff	SE	p		Coeff	SE	p
FIS (X)	a	.16	.015	.000	c'	.37	.05	.000
AMSS(M)	---	---	---	---	b	.37	.13	.005
Constant	i	9.11	.897	.000	i	12.52	2.64	.000
					R ² = .232			
					F= 125.54			
					R ² = .234			
					F= 63.576			

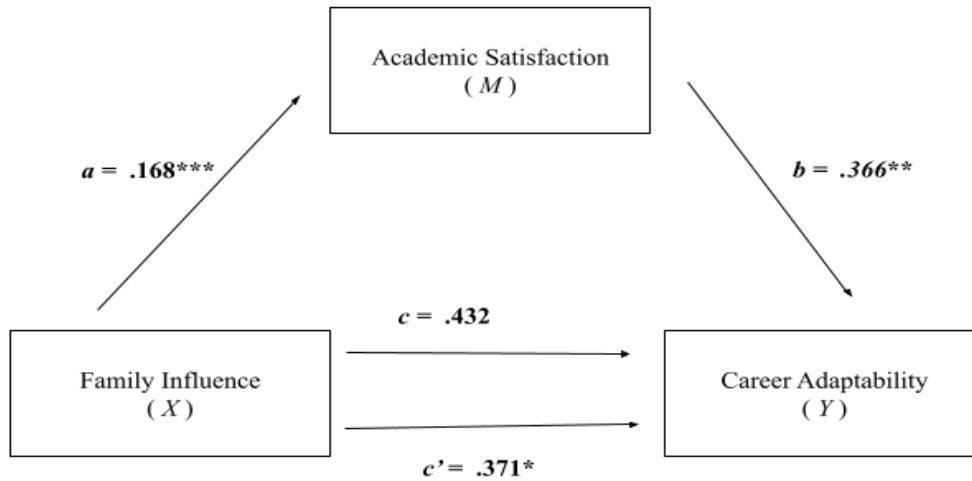
Note. Coeff = standardized regression coefficient, FIS = Family Influence Scale, AMSS= Academic Major Satisfaction Scale, CAAS = Career Adaptability Scale, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 3 shows the significant findings of partial mediation between the Family Influence Scale (FIS), Academic Major Satisfaction Scale (AMSS), and the dependent variable (Y). Despite the mediation role of AMSS, FIS has a direct effect ($\beta = 0.371$, *** $p < .001$) on Y. The indirect effect of AMSS on Y ($\beta = 0.366$, ** $p < .01$) suggests a partial mediation,

indicating that academic satisfaction partially explains the relationship between FIS and Y. The R-squared values reveal that collectively, FIS and AMSS account for approximately 23.2% of the variance in Y, with FIS alone explaining about 23.4% of the variation in Y. Direct, indirect, and total effect path diagram is displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The Academic Satisfaction (M) Mediating Role in the Relationship between Family's Influence (X) and Career Adaptability (Y)



Note. The above model followed by (Hayes et al., 2012) indicates that the family influence directly affect the career adaptability with $c'=.371$, and an indirect effect on career adaptability with mediator (Academic Satisfaction) and value of $a= .168$ (family influence effect on academic satisfaction) and $b= .366$ (academic satisfaction effect on career adaptability). The total effect (c) is calculated by the formula of $c= c'+ a (b)$. By putting values in it, $c= .371 + .168 (.366) = .432$. It indicates that the total effect was .432.

Discussion

The findings from this study revealed a complex structure of interrelationships between family influence, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability. Family influence showed a significant correlation with both academic satisfaction and career adaptability. According to the mediation analysis, the impact of Family influence on career adaptability was partially explained by academic satisfaction, although a stronger direct effect was also observed. Gender differences indicated that men exhibit higher career adaptability and slightly greater academic satisfaction as compared to women, while the family influence had consistent positive effects on both genders.

These results were supported by the earlier literature highlighting the notable impact of family's influence on educational and career outcomes. Studies by Fuligni (1997) and Trusty (2002) highlighted the importance of family beliefs, emotional support, and expectations in shaping academic and career decisions. Eccles and Harold (1991) further emphasized how family support and expectations

foster academic engagement and satisfaction. Emotional support, identified by Bandura's Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as a factor enhancing self-efficacy and motivation (Lent, 2016), also appeared as a key component that influences both career adaptability and academic satisfaction.

Additionally, Informational support was connected with career adaptability, as Brown and Lent (2005) emphasized that Informational support helps individuals make informed career choices. Family expectations and values which determined and predicted the academic satisfaction and career adaptability aligned with Bowen's Family Systems Theory. The theory states that the family is an interconnected system that functions to shape the values and actions of individuals (Crossno, 2011).

The study also revealed that Family influence, including parental expectations, values, and support, positively correlated with academic satisfaction. Moreover, a conclusive positive correlation was present in academic satisfaction and career adaptability, indicating that content students ten. This

finding is supported by Mau and Bikos (2000), who found that academic satisfaction positively influenced career decidedness and satisfaction in life in college students. It emphasized the importance of a fulfilling academic experience in shaping students' career aspirations and adaptability.

The exploration of academic satisfaction's mediating role suggests that family dynamics significantly influence career adaptability through their impact on student's academic experiences. Robbins et al. (2004) supported this idea by demonstrating that psychosocial factors, including academic satisfaction, predict college outcomes. Similarly, Duffy et al. (2015) say that components of career adaptability, such as work volition and self-efficacy of career-related decision-making (CDSE), are strongly influenced by satisfaction in academia. This highlights the intricate interplay between family dynamics, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability.

Overall, this analysis contributes to the understanding of how family influence shapes our career adaptability through academic satisfaction. It reinforces the status of family support and expectations while highlighting the mediating role of academic satisfaction in this process. The study's findings provide new insights into the mechanisms linking family dynamics with career adaptability and call attention to the need for further testing to examine these connections in diverse cultural contexts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that there is an association between family influence, academic satisfaction, and career adaptability, emphasizing the significant roles of these variables in shaping academic roads and career paths. It highlights the importance of a supportive family and the influence of family in making decisions in career processes. This emphasizes the need for educational institutes and career counselors to acknowledge and leverage this influence to support the students and the aspiring professionals effectively.

Limitations

The findings of this study may have limited generalizability, as the data was collected from three educational institutes only. Therefore, to increase the generalizability of results, it is recommended for the

future to test these relationships on larger datasets with more diverse samples. Additionally, in future studies, mixed-method approaches should be used, such as qualitative interviews, which can deepen the understanding of the motivations behind identified associations, as only self-report measures were used in this study. Moreover, studying Pakistani cultural norms and values regarding education and career decisions is crucial, as in Pakistan, they have a heavy influence on familial expectations and decision-making processes.

Recommendations

Further research should explore the complexities of the different cultures and the impact of family's influence on academic satisfaction among these different cultural contexts, as it will offer a more culturally sensitive understanding. In addition, conducting longitudinal studies can offer insights into the gradual progression of parents' influence on academic paths and decisions about careers in students. Additionally, in-depth probing and inspecting of the association between family influence and other socioeconomic factors like status, race, and ethnicity can shed light on the diverse challenges and possibilities. Moreover, research on intervention strategies can help to enhance academic satisfaction and proper family support can contribute to the practical solutions for students to navigate through the academic and career decisions.

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