The long arm of job insecurity: Its impact on career-specific parenting behaviors and youths' career self-efficacy

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Abstract

Applying a multiple-mediator model, we examine the mediating effect of three types of career-specific parenting behaviors: lack of engagement, support, and interference, on the relationship between paternal job insecurity and youths' career self-efficacy. Data were collected from a sample of undergraduate students and their fathers. Results of the full sample analysis showed that paternal job insecurity was positively related to lack of engagement and negatively related to support. The relationship between paternal job insecurity and interference was not significant. Subsample analysis showed that the relationship between paternal job insecurity and career self-efficacy was mediated by lack of engagement for sons and mediated by support for daughters.

Keywords:
Job insecurity
Parenting behaviors
Career self-efficacy
Multiple-mediator analysis
Youths

Introduction

The phrase, “the long arm of the job”, recognizes and highlights the influence of work experiences on the family (Crouter & McHale, 1993). The “long arm” impact of work also extends beyond the individual employees to affect their children (Porfeli, Wang, & Hartung, 2008). Crouter and McHale (1993) explained that employees’ work characteristics influenced their children through parenting behaviors. Parents’ work and employment experiences influence the acquisition of parenting values and opportunities to develop and hone their parenting skills. Work also affects employees’ moods, which can be carried into the family domain and affect their interactions with family members. In this paper, we focused on the “long arm” effect of job insecurity, i.e., the impact of job insecurity that goes beyond the individuals to affect their children’s career development.

Defined as individuals’ “powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation” (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, p.438), job insecurity is a work-related stressor that has a negative impact on employees (e.g., Lim, 1996, 1997; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). The “long arm” of job insecurity goes beyond the work domain to affect job insecure individuals’ family members, especially their children. Research showed that parental job insecurity has a negative impact on children’s mood, cognitive ability, school performance, world view, attitude toward money, work beliefs, attitudes, and motivation (Barling, Dupre, & Hepburn, 1998; Lim & Loo, 2003).

The present study contributes to and extends the research stream on job insecurity by examining the impact of fathers’ job insecurity on parenting behaviors and youths’ career self-efficacy. Youths’ career development begins in the family context and parents play a very significant role during this process (Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2005). Social cognitive career theory argues
that external factors, such as parental attitudes, parenting styles and family environment, influence youths' career self-efficacy level (Diemer, 2007). Hence, we expect that parental job insecurity will influence youths’ career self-efficacy.

Previous research examining the impact of parental job insecurity on youths often focused on the crossover mechanism, an interindividual transmission process in which stress experienced by one person affects another person (Westman, Etzion, & Danon, 2001). Studies have shown that youths are able to perceive the job insecurity experienced by their parents and such perception influences youths' cognition, affect and behaviors (Barling et al., 1998; Lim & Loo, 2003). In this paper, we take a different approach by focusing on the mediating role of career-specific parenting behaviors.

Research has shown that youths’ career development is influenced by parenting styles. However, previous research is limited in several ways. First, parenting behaviors are often examined independent of parents’ work-related experience. Although there are studies that examined the relationship between job insecurity and youths’ work outcomes (e.g., Barling, Zacharatos, & Hepburn, 1999) as well as the relationship between parenting behaviors and youths’ career outcomes (e.g., Bryant, Zvonkovic, & Reynolds, 2006), few studies have linked parental job insecurity to youths’ career development through the mechanism of parenting behaviors (Lim & Loo, 2003). Second, when examining parental influence on youths’ career development, majority of studies focused on the impact of parent–children relationship or general parenting behavior on youths (e.g., Lim & Loo, 2003). The impact of career-specific parenting behaviors on youths’ career development is less examined. Third, when studying the impact of career-specific parenting behaviors, researchers often focused on parental career support (e.g., Neblett & Cortina, 2006). Studies have seldom investigated the differential effects of various types of career-specific parenting behaviors on youths.

To fill these gaps in the current literature, we examined the role of career-specific parenting behaviors in the relationship between father’s job insecurity and youths’ career development. We hypothesized that three types of career-specific parenting behaviors, lack of engagement, support and interference, will mediate the relationship between paternal job insecurity and youths’ career self-efficacy. Our study extends Dietrich and Kracke's (2009) work. Dietrich and Kracke’s (2009) scale was developed based on the theories that are deeply grounded on research conducted in the West and was tested among a group of youths in Germany. Although their study provided a useful categorization of career-specific parenting behaviors that can help us better understand the role of parents in youths’ career development, to date, no research has been done to test the applicability of their framework outside a western context. Our study seeks to fill this void by examining the impact of parents’ job insecurity and career-specific parenting behaviors on youths’ career efficacy in a sample of youths and their parents in Singapore. Singapore is noteworthy in several aspects. First, the nation is highly competitive and high in uncertainty avoidance. In a study that compared cultural differences among 62 societies across the world, Singapore was ranked first in terms of future orientation, second in terms of performance orientation and third in terms of uncertainty avoidance (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004).

Second, influenced by Confucianist philosophy and values, Singaporeans are family-oriented and family relationships are highly valued (Li, Ngin, & Teo, 2007). It is common for parents to provide career guidance to youths because they have high expectations of their children, viewing such career advice as an effort to ensure that their children have a head start in life (Chan, Bowes, & Wyver, 2009). Youths are used to this parenting style. They usually respect parents’ advice and take it seriously. Hence, instead of perceiving direct advice as interference, they perceive it as a form of support, a mechanism to reduce uncertainty.

Gender role expectations and practices in Singapore are also instructive. On one hand, based on meritocratic principles, equal opportunities are available for men and women. Men and women have almost the same literacy rate and average years of schooling. Female students and employees perform as well, if not better than, their male counterparts. On the other hand, the society is also influenced by traditional Chinese values that emphasize the traditional gender roles of men and women. Parents have different expectations of sons and daughters. For sons, professional proficiency and scholarly success are expected, while for daughters, finding a good spouse is more important (Tambyah, Tan, & Kau, 2009).

Because Singapore is a meritocratic society where men and women are provided fair opportunities for success, we develop the same hypotheses for both sons and daughters and tested our hypotheses in a full sample consisting of both sons and daughters. However, due to the influence of cultural values, some differences between sons and daughters may exist. Consequently, we conducted post-hoc analyses on subsamples of sons and daughters.

In this study, we focused only on the impact of fathers’ job insecurity on their children’s career self-efficacy for several reasons. First, as men are often the main breadwinners in families in Asian societies, fathers serve as role models and sources of career-related information for youths. Second, compared to women, men are more likely to experience spillover and bring work-related experience to the family domain (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010). Indeed, previous research has yielded mixed findings on fathers’ influence on sons and daughters. Some found that fathers have more influence on sons’ career development (e.g., Vondracek & Porfeli, 2003) while others suggested that paternal engagement parenting also affects daughters’ career development (Hoffman, Hofacker, & Goldsmith, 1992). Hence, the differential impact of fathers’ work experiences on sons and daughters warrants further study (Bryant et al., 2006).

Theoretical framework and research hypotheses

The research model is shown in Fig. 1. First, we introduced the three types of career-specific parenting behaviors. Second, to establish the mediating hypotheses, we explained the relationship between paternal job insecurity and paternal career-specific parenting behaviors, as well as the relationship between paternal career-specific parenting behaviors and youths’ career self-efficacy.
Three types of career-specific parenting behaviors

Parents are the most frequently mentioned sources of influence that steer youths toward their career interest and destination (Mortimer, Zimmer-Gembeck, Holmes, & Shanahan, 2002). Existing literature shows that different types of parenting behaviors exert different effects on youths’ career development. Some parents do not participate in youths’ development. Non-participation has been found to have a negative impact on youths’ self-efficacy, which in turn, influenced youths’ work attitude (Lim & Loo, 2003). Vignoli, Croity-Belz, Chapeland, Fillipis and Garcia (2005) also found that neglectful parenting had a negative impact on youths’ career exploration.

In contrast, parental support has a positive impact on youths’ career development. Emotional support, such as showing understanding and concern, has a positive effect on youths’ future goals, work salience and vocational expectation. Instrumental support, such as attending program regarding employment opportunities, has a positive impact on youths’ work salience and outcome expectations (Diemer, 2007). As well, several researchers have noted the importance of autonomy in young people’s development. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), experiencing a sense of autonomy is critical for youths’ functioning and higher level of self-determined functioning will predict better adjustment across development processes. Perceived autonomy of decision making was found to be positively related to youths’ career development (Schmitt-Rodermund, 2004).

While much attention has been paid to general parenting behavior, some researchers also investigated career-specific parenting behaviors. For example, parental career support, including discussing career goals with youths, supporting youths’ career choices, and providing advice, has been found to have a positive impact on youths’ career development (Neblett & Cortina, 2006). Recently, Dietrich and Kracke (2009) explained that there are three types of career-specific parenting behaviors: (i) lack of engagement, where parents do not participate or engage in their children’s career development, (ii) support, where parents encourage youths to explore their interest and provide advice whenever necessary, and (iii) interference, where parents control their children’s career development and aspirations.

Job insecurity and parenting behaviors

The relationship between fathers’ job insecurity and career-specific parenting behaviors can be explained by spillover theory, which suggests that stress experienced in the work domain has an impact on one’s family life (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010). Individuals who experience job insecurity carry the stress over to the family domain, and such negative work experience influences their behaviors at home (Lim & Sng, 2006). Fathers are often the breadwinners in the family and have higher level of work role salience. Consequently, job insecurity will affect them significantly and affect their interactions with other members in the family. We predict that fathers’ job insecurity will result in career-related parenting behaviors that are likely to be perceived by youths as non-engaging, non-supportive and interfering for the following reasons.

First, research has shown that job insecurity is a work-related stressor that has a negative impact on individuals’ emotions and energy (Lim, 1996, 1997). The anxiety and distress associated with job insecurity often lead individuals to be more irritable and hostile in their family interactions. Specifically, stressful work experiences among parents have been found to lead to less sensitive, non-participative and non-supportive interactions with their children (Porfeli et al., 2008). Previous research suggests that fathers experiencing job insecurity are more likely to engage in non-participative (Lim & Loo, 2003) and rejecting (Stewart & Barling, 1996) parenting behaviors with their children.

Second, because job insecurity instills a sense of uncertainty and powerlessness, job insecure fathers may experience a feeling of inadequacy in their roles as economic providers and sources of information about the world of work (Lim & Sng, 2006). Such feelings lead job insecure fathers to be less motivated in playing an engaging and supportive role.

Third, youths whose fathers are job insecure are more likely to perceive interference type of parenting behaviors, questioning any career-related advice provided and viewing it as an effort to steer them in a career direction that does not align with their personal goal. Both support and interference involve giving advice. However, depending on the manner in which such advice is dispensed, youths may view it as supportive or interfering.
This is somewhat related to the differences between authoritative and authoritarian parenting behaviors. Both parenting behaviors involve some level of guidance and request. However, authoritative parenting behavior is characterized by not only monitoring and authority but also warmth and autonomy while authoritarian parenting behavior involves mainly strict parental control. Authoritative parenting behaviors have been found to yield benefits while authoritarian parenting behaviors hinder youths’ career development (Schmitt-Rodermund, 2004).

Job insecurity is a form of work-related stressor, triggering feelings of anxiety, powerlessness and uncertainty (Lim, 1996, 1997). These feelings may spillover to the home domain, causing fathers to interact with their children in an interfering and controlling manner (Lim & Loo, 2003). Hence, youths are more likely to perceive less autonomy and conflict with job insecure fathers. Thus, we posit:

H1a. Paternal job insecurity is positively related to youths’ perceived lack of engagement.
H1b. Paternal job insecurity is negatively related to youths’ perceived career support.
H1c. Paternal job insecurity is positively related to youths’ perceived interference.

Career-specific parenting behaviors and youths’ career self-efficacy

Career self-efficacy refers to one’s confidence in pursuing career related tasks (Hackett & Betz, 1995) and can be viewed as an indicator of career adaptability (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Social cognitive career theory suggests that youths’ career self-efficacy is influenced by external factors such as parents’ behaviors (Lent et al., 1994). Youths are at a particularly vulnerable stage in their lives as they are on the verge of entering adulthood, where new experiences are encountered, and attitudes and beliefs further crystallized (Lim & Sng, 2006). Faced with many options and uncertainties, youths do need career guidance from adults. Although youths can seek help from other sources, the resources and information provided by parents cannot be easily substituted nor replaced (Mortimer et al., 2002). Non-participative and neglectful parenting behaviors have been found to be negatively related with youths’ work attitudes (Lim & Loo, 2003). Therefore, we expect a lack of engagement to be negatively related with youths’ career self-efficacy.

Considering the significant role that fathers play in youths’ career development, we argue that paternal career support has a direct impact on children’s confidence in their career choices, decisions and development. Fathers often served as role models for youths regarding career-related matters and information. If fathers discuss future career plan and possibilities with youths, provide advice and introduce them to career opportunities or social networks that are potentially beneficial, youths’ confidence in their future career will be increased.

Interfering parenting behaviors, characterized by the exercise of control and lack of autonomy are likely to inhibit youths’ sense of mastery and erode their efficacy. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), interfering behavior impairs youths’ need for autonomy. Youths who perceive interference parenting behavior will think that they do not have many options and that there is nothing much they can do regarding their future. Indeed, parental controlling behaviors, characterized by an attempt to limit children’s autonomy, were found to be negatively related to youths’ self-efficacy (Lim & Loo, 2003). In summary, we expect that paternal lack of engagement and interference are negatively related with youths’ self-efficacy, while career support is positively related with youths’ self-efficacy. Based on the above reasoning, we hypothesize that:

H2a. Lack of engagement mediates the relationship between paternal job insecurity and youths’ career self-efficacy.
H2b. Career support mediates the relationship between paternal job insecurity and youths’ career self-efficacy.
H2c. Interference mediates the relationship between paternal job insecurity and youths’ career self-efficacy.

Method

Participants and questionnaire survey

Data were collected using questionnaire surveys. Respondents comprised undergraduates enrolled in a management course at a large university in Singapore. Fathers reported on their levels of job insecurity while youths provided data on career-specific parenting behaviors and career self-efficacy. One hundred and ninety-six full data sets were obtained and the response rate was 91.6%. The mean age for youths was 22 years old ($SD = 2.7$). The mean ages for fathers were 54 years ($SD = 4.5$).

Measures

Father’s job insecurity

This variable was measured with the 5-item scale developed by Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison and Pinneau (1980). Items were scored on a 7-point scale. The Cronbach’s alpha of this scale was 0.91 in this study.
Career-specific parenting behaviors

This variable was measured with the scale developed by Dietrich and Kracke’s (2009). Items were scored on a 7-point scale. For lack of engagement, Cronbach’s alphas were 0.81 for the full sample, 0.85 for sons and 0.77 for daughters. For support, Cronbach’s alphas were 0.84 for the full sample, 0.83 for sons and 0.85 for daughters. For interference, Cronbach’s alphas were 0.87 for the full sample, 0.91 for sons and 0.84 for daughters.

Career self-efficacy

This variable was measured with Higgins, Dobrow and Chandler’s (2008) scale. Items were scored on a 7-point scale. The Cronbach’s alphas were 0.91 for the full sample, 0.92 for the sons and 0.90 for daughters.

Multiple-mediator analysis

Scholars have suggested a sample size of at least 150–200 to perform structural equation modeling analyses (Hoe, 2008; Iacobucci, 2010). As the subsamples of sons and daughters fall below this threshold, we did not adopt the structural equation modeling method. Instead, the multiple-mediator model (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) was used. We also split the sample into two and further examined father–son relationship and father–daughter relationship.

There are at least two advantages of testing a multiple-mediator model rather than testing several mediators separately. First, it is possible to determine the extent to which a specific mediator mediates the X→Y relationship, conditional on the presence of other mediators. Second, including multiple mediators in one model allows us to examine the relative magnitudes of the specific indirect effects associated with all mediators.

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis of career-specific parenting behaviors

We compared three confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results. First, we analyzed the original three-factor model proposed by Dietrich and Kracke (2009). Second, because in Dietrich and Kracke’s (2009) study, support and lack of engagement were moderately correlated and seemed to capture substantively similar aspects of parental career-related behaviors, we combined support and lack of engagement into one factor and analyzed the two-factor model. Third, we put all items in a single dimension and analyzed the one-factor model. Table 1 showed results of CFA analyses based on the full sample and subsamples (sons and daughters). The results confirmed that the three-factor structure of career-specific parenting behaviors had the best model fit.

Means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and correlations of the variables under study are presented in Table 2. To screen for outliers, we calculated the Mahalanobis distance values for each case and compared them with chi-square distribution (Schinka, Velicer, & Weiner, 2003). All the distance values were below 99% percentile, suggesting that the probability of these data points falling in the center mass was 99%, which was higher than the critical cutoff criterion suggested by Schinka et al. (2003). Hence, we concluded that there were no outliers.

The hypotheses testing consisted of two steps. First, a simple regression was conducted to test the total effect of paternal job insecurity on youths’ career self-efficacy. Second, a multiple-mediator model was conducted to test a) specific indirect effect of paternal job insecurity on youths’ career self-efficacy via three mediators: support, lack of engagement, and interference; and b) direct effect of paternal job insecurity on youths’ career self-efficacy. The multiple-mediator model results for full sample and subsamples are shown in Fig. 2.

<p>| Table 1 |</p>
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<th>CFA results for paternal career-specific parenting behavior.</th>
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<td>Full sample (N = 196)</td>
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<td>3 factor solution</td>
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<td>2 factor solution (lack + support)</td>
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<td>1 factor solution</td>
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<td>Sub sample: sons (N = 86)</td>
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<td>3 factor solution</td>
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<td>2 factor solution (lack + support)</td>
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<td>1 factor solution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub sample: daughters (N = 110)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 factor solution</td>
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<td>2 factor solution (lack + support)</td>
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<td>1 factor solution</td>
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Results for the full sample

Results of simple regression showed that the total effect of paternal job insecurity on youths’ career self-efficacy was not significant (β = −0.07, n.s.). Paternal job insecurity was positively related to lack of engagement (β = 0.24, p < 0.01); negatively related to career support (β = −0.20, p < 0.05); but not significantly related to interference (β = −0.08, n.s.). Hence, H1a and H1b were supported. Fathers who perceived job insecurity were less engaged in their children’s career development and less likely to provide career-specific support. Neither lack of engagement (β = −0.06, n.s.) nor support (β = 0.10, n.s.) was significantly related to youths’ career self-efficacy. Interference was negatively related to youths’ career self-efficacy (β = −0.09, p < 0.05). Finally, the direct effect of paternal job insecurity on youths’ career self-efficacy was not significant (β = −0.05, n.s.).

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The $R^2$ value was .05 and the adjusted $R^2$ was .03. The F-value was significant ($F=2.44, p<.05$), meaning that the three mediators as a whole, explained the relationship between paternal job insecurity and youths' career self-efficacy. However, we were not able to conclude which specific type of parenting behavior mediates the relationship because a mediation effect exists only when both a and b are significant. The lack of significant relationship between support and lack of engagement to youths' career self-efficacy may be due to two reasons. First, Preacher and Hayes (2008) noted that the effects of mediators on the dependent variables are often attenuated depending on how much the mediators are correlated. Because support and lack of engagement are modestly correlated, the significance of each path may be attenuated. Second, the significant relationship between another mediator, interference may also suppress the magnitude of these two paths.

**Results for the subsample: sons**

We first tested the total effect, and found that the regression path was negative but not significant ($\beta = -0.12, n.s.$). Paternal job insecurity was significantly related to lack of engagement ($\beta = 0.25, p<.05$) but not significantly related to either support ($\beta = -0.13, n.s.$) nor interference ($\beta = -0.01, n.s.$). Support was not significantly related to sons' career self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.01, n.s.$). Both lack of engagement ($\beta = -0.19, p<.05$) and interference ($\beta = -0.16, p<.05$) were negatively related to sons' career self-efficacy. Finally, the direct effect of paternal job insecurity on youths' career self-efficacy was not significant ($\beta = 0.16, n.s.$).

The $R^2$ value was .12 and the adjusted $R^2$ was .07. The F-value was significant ($F=2.65, p<.05$), meaning that the three types of parenting behaviors, as a whole, mediated the relationship between paternal job insecurity and sons' career self-efficacy. Moreover, the bootstrap analysis produced confidence intervals for the indirect effects ($aibi$) of three mediators: lack of engagement ($-0.17$ to $0.00$), support ($-0.03$ to $0.06$), and interference ($-0.05$ to $0.06$). Only lack of engagement had a confidence interval excluding 0, suggesting that the mediation was mainly through sons' perceived paternal lack of engagement. Therefore, $H2a$ was supported for the sons subsample. Lack of engagement mediated the relationship between paternal job insecurity and sons' career self-efficacy. Job insecure fathers were less likely to engage in their sons' career development. Sons who perceived fathers' lack of engagement tended to have lower levels of career self-efficacy.

**Results for the subsample: daughters**

Simple regression analyses showed that father's job insecurity was negatively related with daughters' career self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.23, p<.01$). The total effect from paternal job insecurity to daughters' career self-efficacy was $-0.23$. Paternal job insecurity was significantly related to both lack of engagement ($\beta = 0.24, p<.05$) and career support ($\beta = -0.25, p<.05$) but not to interference ($\beta = -0.13, n.s.$). Paternal career support was positively related to daughters' career self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.18, p<.05$). However, neither lack of engagement ($\beta = -0.01, n.s.$) nor interference ($\beta = -0.06, n.s.$) was significantly related to daughters' career self-efficacy. Finally, the direct effect of paternal job insecurity on daughters' career self-efficacy was still significant, although the effect was less strong ($\beta = -0.19, p<.05$).

The $R^2$ value was .14 and the adjusted $R^2$ was .01. The F-value was significant ($F=4.31, p<.01$), meaning that the three types of parenting behaviors, as a whole, mediated the relationship between paternal job insecurity and daughters' career self-efficacy. Moreover, the bootstrap analysis produced confidence intervals for the indirect effects ($aibi$) of three mediators: lack of engagement ($-0.05$ to $0.04$), support ($-0.13$ to $0.00$), and interference ($-0.01$ to $0.06$). Only support had a confidence interval excluding 0, suggesting that the mediation was mainly through daughters' perceived paternal career support.

Therefore, $H2b$ was supported. Career support mediated the relationship between paternal job insecurity and daughters' career self-efficacy. Fathers who perceived job insecurity were less likely to provide career related support to their daughters. Daughters who perceived less paternal career support tended to have lower level of career self-efficacy.

**Discussion**

Results of factor analysis confirmed the factorial structure of career-specific parenting behaviors. Similar to Dietrich and Kracke's (2009) findings, lack of engagement and support were negatively correlated but still appeared as distinct constructs. However, while Dietrich and Kracke's (2009) findings showed that lack of engagement and interference were positively correlated, these behaviors were not significantly correlated in our study. It seems that youths can clearly distinguish between lack of engagement (a non-action oriented behavior) from interference (an action-oriented behavior), though both behaviors are perceived negatively.

In contrast to Dietrich and Kracke's (2009) findings that support and interference were not correlated, our study found a positive correlation between these two career-specific parental behaviors. It seems that the distinction between the two types of parental behaviors, support and interference is not so clear in our study. This may be attributed to the culture in Singapore, which is influenced by traditional Chinese family values on parents–children interactions. In Singapore, it is common for parents to provide advice to their children. In general, Singapore children tend to heed closely their parent's advice. Thus, what constitutes interference and support is often not clear for Singaporean children. Different from their Western peers who perceive parents' interference negatively, Singaporean children view interfering parenting behaviors as necessary for their well-being and perceive it to be a form of support.

This paper provides some preliminary evidence of the validity of the three-factor scale among a group of Singaporean youths and shows some differences in the correlations among the three factors delineated by Dietrich and Kracke (2009). These
differences can be attributed to cultural differences. More research is needed to understand the extent to which this scale is applicable in the East and whether it is necessary to develop a scale that can assess Asian parents’ career-specific parenting behaviors.

Consistent with our initial predictions, results showed that fathers’ job insecurity has an impact on two types of career-specific parenting behaviors, specifically, lack of engagement and support. Fathers who perceived job insecurity were more likely to lack engagement in children’s career development and less likely to provide support for their children. The results provided empirical support for our prediction that job insecurity can and does spillover to the family domain, triggering negative career-specific parenting behaviors.

However, paternal job insecurity is not significantly related with interference as a parenting behavior. This non-significant relationship can be explained by cultural influences on parental expectations of their children. Singapore is a highly competitive society and parents tend to have high expectations of their children in academic pursuits and career goals. Similar to Asian parents elsewhere, Singaporean parents often make high demands on their children, explicitly (by forcing children to study and monitoring their study closely) or implicitly (by reminding them of the importance of being prepared for the world). It is also common for parents to make important decisions for their children (Ho, Ang, Loh, & Ng, 1998). As a result, fathers may interfere with their children's career development regardless of their job insecurity level. This may account for a lack of variance on career-specific parenting behaviors, and the weak relationship between fathers’ job insecurity and youths’ career self-efficacy.

The regression analysis showed that the total effect of paternal job insecurity on career self-efficacy was significant only for the subsample of daughters. The direct effect was significant after controlling for the mediating effect. The non-significant relationship between paternal job insecurity and career self-efficacy for the whole sample may be due to the non-statistically significant results in the sons subsample. These results are due to gender differences in perceptions of and reactions to fathers’ stress.

Previous studies have shown that parental work-related stress influences children’s work attitude through emotion-related socialization behaviors (ERSBs) and children’s perception of parents’ negative work experience (Porfeli et al., 2008). Parents demonstrate different ERSBs with sons and daughters. Parents use more emotional utterances during conversation with daughters (Fivush, Brotman, Buckner, & Goodman, 2000). Daughters are also socialized to be more relationship-oriented and empathic compared to sons (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998). Hence, compared to sons, daughters are more sensitive to fathers’ negative emotions resulting from job insecurity and such perception has a direct and significant impact on their career self-efficacy.

Thus, for daughters, paternal job insecurity affects them through both the crossover of emotions and parenting behaviors. For sons, on the other hand, the impact of job insecurity on career self-efficacy is mainly through fathers’ parenting behaviors.

Results of multiple-mediator analyses showed that for sons and daughters, the parenting styles that mediated the relationship between paternal job insecurity and career self-efficacy were different. Subsample analyses for sons showed that lack of engagement was the only significant mediator. Fathers’ job insecurity was positively related with lack of engagement, which in turn, was negatively related with sons’ career self-efficacy. In contrast, support was the only significant mediator in the subsample consisting of daughters. Fathers’ job insecurity was associated with a decline in career-specific support for daughters. Career-specific support, in turn, was positively related with daughters’ career self-efficacy.

These findings revealed gender differences in the need for career support and perception of parenting behaviors. Daughters are socialized to be more relationship-oriented and nurturing while sons are socialized to be more competitive (Fivush et al., 2000). Thus, daughters are more likely to seek advice from their fathers and paternal support is very important for daughters’ career development (Hartung et al., 2005). Moreover, daughters are more likely to perceive fathers’ advice and help in a positive manner (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009). For sons, fathers’ lack of interest in their career development would not be perceived positively. However, it seems that sons have a higher desire for autonomy and sometimes, may interpret their fathers’ advice and help as negative interference. Our findings showed that the correlation between support and interference was higher and more significant for sons than for daughters, suggesting that sons tend to view career support and interference in a similar manner. These findings are also consistent with Dietrich and Kracke’s (2009) findings that sons reported less support and more interference.

R² values were .05, .12, and .14 for full sample, sons subsample and daughters subsample, respectively. The difference in R² can be explained by our results which showed clearly that fathers’ job insecurity had a differential impact on sons’ and daughters’ career self-efficacy. Without the presence of parenting behaviors as mediators, the relationship between paternal job insecurity and son’s career self-efficacy was not significant. However, the relationship between paternal job insecurity and daughters’ career self-efficacy was significantly negative. Moreover, this relationship was not significant in the full sample.

Fig. 2 showed that lack of engagement and interference were negatively related with sons’ career self-efficacy. However, the finding in daughters subsample was different in that career-specific support was positively related with daughters’ career efficacy and paternal job insecurity had a negative relationship with daughters’ career self-efficacy. These findings suggested that distinctly different constructs affected sons’ and daughters’ career self-efficacy. Consequently, when we combined the sons and daughters in the full sample for our analyses, the effects were attenuated. This may explain why the R² was much lower in the full sample compared to the sons or daughters subsamples.

This finding is novel and instructive as it demonstrated that paternal job insecurity and parenting behaviors had differential effects on sons’ and daughters’ career self-efficacy. Lack of engagement and interference affected sons’ career self-efficacy more than daughters’ career self-efficacy, while paternal job insecurity and career support affected daughters’ career self-efficacy more than sons’ self-efficacy. Our results suggested that sons and daughters differ in the kinds of support they value and parents do need to tailor the type of support they provide to sons and daughters. Also, parents should be aware that paternal job insecurity affects daughters more than sons, perhaps because daughters are more sensitive to their fathers’ feelings and emotions.
Hackett, G., & Betz, N. E. (1995). Self-efficacy and career choice and development. In J. E. Maddux (Ed.), "play an important role in career guidance during this period (Bryant et al., 2006). Focusing on father many challenges. It is also a time during which they prepare to be independent, enter adulthood and join the workforce. Parents that it sheds light on how fathers' work experience impacts sons and daughters differently.

Youths are at a very important stage during which they experience biological, psychological, and contextual changes and face many challenges. It is also a time during which they prepare to be independent, enter adulthood and join the workforce. Parents play an important role in career guidance during this period (Bryant et al., 2006). Focusing on father—children relationship, our study suggested that fathers influenced the career development of both sons and daughters through different career-specific parenting mechanisms. Lack of engagement mediated the relationship between fathers' job insecurity and sons' career self-efficacy. Supportive parenting behaviors mediated the relationship between fathers' job insecurity and daughters' career self-efficacy. Results of our study suggested that parents should take gender differences into account in their parenting behaviors for sons and daughters.

Conclusions

The impact of job insecurity is far-reaching and does spill over to the family domain, influencing the job insecure individuals' interactions with family members. This study offers contributes to the job insecurity literature by showing that fathers' perceived job insecurity has an impact on their children's career self-efficacy through career-specific parenting behaviors. It also adds to the body of literature that focuses on the effects of parents' work experiences on their children (Lim & Sng, 2006; Porfeli et al., 2008). As well, since previous studies on this topic focused largely on the crossover mechanism, i.e., parental job insecurity impacts youths through youths' perception of parents' stress and attitudes, our study extends the theoretical focus of this body of work by examining the mediating effects of three career-specific parenting behaviors simultaneously. Our study is also instructive in that it sheds light on how fathers' work experience impacts sons and daughters differently.


