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Effects of parental job insecurity and parenting behaviors on youth's self-efficacy and work attitudes

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Abstract

Drawing on the spillover mechanism, the relationships among parental job insecurity, authoritarian parenting behaviors, youth's self-efficacy, and work attitudes were examined. Specifically, parental job insecurity was hypothesized to be positively associated with (1) authoritarian parenting behaviors, and (2) youth's perception of parental job insecurity. In turn, we hypothesized that both authoritarian parenting behaviors and youth's perceptions of parental job insecurity were negatively associated with youth's self efficacy. Finally, self-efficacy was predicted to be positively associated with youth's work attitudes. Data were collected from 178 management undergraduates and their parents. Structural equation modeling results suggested that paternal job insecurity was positively associated with authoritarian parenting behaviors while maternal job insecurity was negatively associated with authoritarian parenting behaviors. Additionally, while the relationship between mothers' authoritarian parenting behaviors and youth's self-efficacy was supported, the relationship between fathers' authoritarian parenting behaviors and youth's self-efficacy was not. Youth's self efficacy was positively associated with their work attitudes. Implications of the findings are discussed.

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Keywords: Parental job insecurity; Spillover mechanism; Self-efficacy; Work attitudes

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1. Introduction

Recent changes in the world and the workplace have generated considerable feelings of job insecurity among employees of today. Typically defined as individuals' "powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation" (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, p. 438), job insecurity is a stressful experience for employees and has received considerable attention from various researchers (e.g., Lim, 1996, 1997). More recently, a new stream of research has emerged. Led generally by Barling and his associates (e.g., Barling, Dupre, & Hepburn, 1998; Barling & Mendelson, 1999; Barling, Zacharatos, & Hepburn, 1999; Stewart & Barling, 1996), these studies suggest that the effects of job insecurity go beyond the insecure employee. Indeed, Stewart and Barling (1996) found that children of job insecure individuals experienced social and school-related problems.

While the spillover mechanism, defined as the "effects of work and family on one another that generate similarities between the two domains" (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000, p. 180), has received considerable attention in the literatures on stress and work-family conflict (e.g., Kinnunen, Gerris, & Vermulst, 1996; Wallace, 1997), these studies have not focused on on job insecurity or youth's self-efficacy per se. This study contributes to the job insecurity literature by using the spillover mechanism as a framework to examine the effects of parents' job insecurity on youth's self-efficacy and work attitudes. The relationships among the main variables in our study are depicted in Fig. 1.

Our study is distinct from past studies in that we have chosen to focus on the effects of parental job insecurity's on youth aged 19–24 in an Asian setting, specifically Singapore. Singapore has not been spared from the recent global economic instability. Understandably, considerable feelings of job insecurity are generated

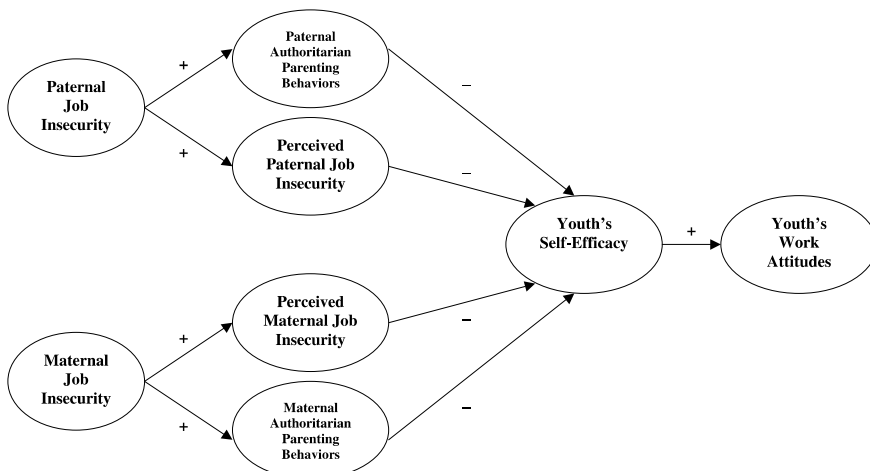


Fig. 1. Hypothesized structural equation model.

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