

Putting Research to Work for Families



Focus:
Civilian

Work and School in Young Adulthood: The Role of Personal Financial Responsibilities and Parental Social Support

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SUMMARY: Young adults' decision to enter workforce or enrol in college may be impacted by their personal financial means and parental support. This study examined how personal financial responsibilities and parental social support is associated with youth's engagement in employment or attending school. The study also investigated youth's perception of the relevance of current work and school experience to future careers. The findings indicate that youth's financial responsibilities predicted their work and schooling status at later stage.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Youth who had greater personal financial responsibilities at initial data collection were more likely to be either working only, or combining school and work than to be only attending school two years later.
- Personal financial responsibilities of the youth were not related to how relevant they perceived their current work or school towards future career.
- For youth who perceived lower paternal support, personal financial responsibilities were related to belief that current schooling is relevant for career. For youth who perceived higher paternal support, personal financial responsibilities were not related to belief that current schooling is relevant for career.
- For youth who perceived lower maternal support, personal financial responsibilities were positively related to belief that current work is relevant for career. For youth who perceived higher maternal support, personal financial responsibilities were negatively related to belief that current work was relevant for career.

IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS:

- Collaborate with organizations that serve youth to teach them about the real-life implication of work and college experience on later career options
- Develop career resources to assist groups with specialized needs (e.g., individuals with less parental support) to gain training and employment in their field of interest

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM LEADERS:

- Provide education to parents of young adults to enhance positive communication skills, such as conveying emotional or social support to their children
- Provide workshops to help youth learn about available resources to pursue postsecondary education (e.g., financial aid and scholarships)

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS:

- Continue to provide support for programs that work to increase youth's readiness for the transition to adulthood (e.g., financial independence)
- Recommend collaboration among schools and community-based programs to support youth who have less financial means to pursue education

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METHODS

- Data were drawn from the Transition to Adulthood (TA) supplement of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), a longitudinal study that collects data on broad range of topics like housing, employment, and family finances in the U.S. since 1968. For the present study, data were taken from 2007 and 2009.
- Participant self-report measures assessed personal financial responsibilities, work and school statuses, beliefs about the career relevance of work and schooling, and parental social support.
- Data analyses determined how personal financial responsibilities were linked with work and school statuses, and beliefs about current work or schooling being relevant for career. Additional analysis was done to explore how these associations may be impacted by parental social support.

PARTICIPANTS

- The sample consisted of 854 young adults who participated in the 2007 TA study. For the year 2009, 765 young adults out of 854 were included for the study.
- About 49% of the participants were male and the age of participants ranged from 17 to 23 years old.
- About 62% of the participants were White, about 16% were Black, about 16% were Latino, and about 4% were Asian, Native Americans or Pacific Islanders.

LIMITATIONS

- The measures for personal financial responsibilities, parental social support, and beliefs on career relevance were limited in scope, so results should be interpreted with care.
- Participants were categorized into four groups by work or school status, but the nature of work (e.g., pay, duration, health benefits) was not examined, which might result in somewhat inaccurate interpretation of work.
- There was no description about other financial resources (e.g., aid from college, inheritance or large gifts from relatives) that may have influenced the financial responsibilities of the youth.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Replicate the study with surveys that have been conducted within the last decade
- Include standardized scales to assess personal financial responsibilities, parental social support, and beliefs on career relevance
- Investigate more factors that may impact young adults' decision to enter into workforce or enroll in school (e.g., parents' level of education, opportunities for vocational training)

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS

Design
★ ★ ★
Excellent
Research Plan
and Sample

Methods
★ ★ ★
Excellent
Measurement
and Analysis

Limitations
★ ★ ★
Minor

For more information about the Assessing Research that Works rating scale visit:
<https://reachfamilies.umn.edu/content/assessing-research-that-works>