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Promoting Parental Support and Vocational Development of 8th Grade Students

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Promoting Parental Support and Vocational Development of 8th Grade Students

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Resumo

Ao longo das últimas décadas, tem-se verificado a influência imanente do envolvimento dos pais/cuidadores quanto ao desenvolvimento da carreira dos seus filhos adolescentes (Pinto & Soares, 2001). Os pais ou cuidadores são considerados como sendo as principais fontes de suporte aos processos de envolvimento na exploração e na tomada de decisão de carreira, principalmente em períodos de transição, como será o caso da mudança entre ciclos de estudos (e.g., Dietrich, Kracke, & Nurmi, 2011). Assim sendo, os adolescents procuram maiortariamente a ajuda e orientação dos seus pais/cuidadores, principalmente quando se deparam com situações relacionadas com as escolhas educacionais (e.g., Hara & Burke, 1998; Catsambis, 1999; Desimone, 1999; Stewart, 2007; Egbert & Salsbury, 2009; Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010; Khan & Siraj, 2012; Wilder, 2013), muito particularmente com a consideração das alternativas existentes no campo vocacional (e.g., Dietrich & Kracke 2009; Dietrich et al., 2011; Hargrove, Creagh & Burgess, 2002; Schultheiss, 2007; Paloş & Drobot, 2010; Kracke, 1997). O apoio dos pais é considerado um aspecto essencial para promover o desenvolvimento da carreira nos jovens, uma vez que este apoio serve para reforçar e actualizar a auto-eficácia destes em relação às atividades de exploração vocacional, bem como nos domínios relacionadas com a tomada de decisão (Hangrove et al., 2002; Bryant, Zvonkovic & Reynolds, 2006; Dietrich & Krack, 2009; Stringer & Kerpelman, 2010; Noack, Kracke, Gniewosz, & Dietrich, 2010; Dietrich, et al., 2011).

Para estudar a influência que os pais têm sobre o desenvolvimento vocacional de seus filhos, uma intervenção foi implementada - uma atividade de pais e filhos designadas de dilemas, com o objetivo de envolver ativamente os pais no desenvolvimento dos processos vocacionais de exploração e de tomada de decisão dos

filhos. Medidas como, o suporte parental percebido, a exploração da carreira, a auto-eficácia, e indecisão vocacional foram estudados numa amostra de 78 alunos do 8º ano. Recorreu-se a um desenho quasi-experimental, pré-teste/pós-teste com grupos não-equivalentes. A recolha de dados foi feita através de de questionário, a primeirra parte, constituida por um campo dedicado aos dados sociodemográficos (genero, idade, escolaridade dos pais, aspirações), sendo a segunda parte constituída por 4 escalas (a escala do suporte parental percebido, a escala de decisão da careira – utilizando a seção da indecisão na última escala, a escala da exploração da careira e a escala da autoeficácia na tomada de decisão).

Globalmente, esperávamos que, por um lado, o envolvimento parental, em virtude da intervenção vocacional, teria um impacto positivo na autoeficácia e no envolvimento nas atividades relacionadas a exploração e, por outro lado, surgisse associado a uma diminuição da indecisão.

Os resultados indicaram que a intervenção teve um impacto positivo e significativo em relação à variável de exploração do meio. As analises de correlação apontam para o facto de quando o adolescent percebe que o seu pai/cuidador mostra interesse nas opções e preparação de carreira do seu filho, existe um aumento nas actividades explorátorias por parte do seu filho (Kracke, 1997; Paloş & Drobot, 2010; Noack, et al., 2010; Hirschi, Niles, & Akos, 2011). Por sua vez, observou-se uma associação negativa entre suporte percebido e indecisão da carreira (e.g., Dietrich and Kracke, 2009).

Palavras chave: suporte parental, desenvolvimento da careira, intervenção da careira e atividades conjuntas.

Abstract

Students often seek help and guidance from their parents/caregivers when they encounter certain necessities concerning their educational alternatives and career options. Parental support is an essential aspect for promoting career development among young youth, since this support enhances an upgrade in terms of self-efficacy towards career exploration and career decision making domains. To study the influence parents have on their child's vocational development, a career intervention was implemented – a co-working parent-student activity aiming to actively involve parents in participating more in their child's education and career orientation. Measures such as, parental support, career exploration, self-efficacy, and career indecision were studied in a sample of 78 Grade 8 Portuguese students with a quasi-experimental design (pre-test/post-test), with non-equivalent groups. Overall results seem relevant since the career intervention had a positive and significant impact in relation to the environmental exploration variable.

Keywords: parental support, career development, career intervention, and conjoint activities.

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Introduction

Vocational development is a process that starts at a very young age mainly in childhood to which family plays a particularly important role throughout the life-span of the individual (Paloş & Drobot, 2010; Porfeli & Lee, 2012). According to Bryant and colleagues, (2006), it is considered to be an elaborate process which feeds on achievements and aspirations commencing from the academic domain and pursuing throughout adolescents and adulthood delivered to work settings. In this context, parent's involvement with their children alongside their school activities has been denoted as beneficial and predicting a long term effect, reflecting upon students' academic (e.g., Hara & Burke, 1998; Catsambis, 1999; Desimone, 1999; Stewart, 2007; Egbert & Salsbury, 2009; Topor, et al., 2010; Khan & Siraj, 2012; Wilder, 2013) and life achievements (e.g., Catsambis, 1999; Hargrove, et al., 2002) prospering significant outcomes, are extensive. For example, Wilder's (2013) findings revealed a positive association between parental involvement and academic achievement suggesting that this relationship was strongest if parental involvement was perceived to exert expectations for academic achievement of their children. Additionally, Catsambis (1999), also identifies the positive effect of parental involvement on academic achievements. Since it was positively influenced by consistent encouragement, high levels of educational expectations and activities which enhance students' learning opportunities.

In career literature, previous studies have shown, adolescents normally address their guardians about career issues, as they also claim them having a major influence when it comes to assisting them during educational and career transitions, as also helping them choose a vocation (e.g., Dietrich, & Kracke 2009; Dietrich, et al., 2011;

Hargrove, et al., 2002; Schultheiss, 2007; Paloş & Drobot, 2010; Kracke, 1997). Dietrich and Kracke (2009) results present that when adolescents perceive their parents as being interested in their career choice preparation, there appears to be an increase in their exploration activities due to their parent's engagement. On the other hand, adolescents with elevated efforts regarding exploration of career options, their parents support their children to a much greater level of engagement. Dietrich and colleagues (2011), also support the fact that when adolescents find themselves facing situations regarding academic and career transitions with a decision to be made, they often consider their parents as their partners, seeking their advice and increasing their parents' initiative as for involving them as primary supporters.

In this present study, we have organized the literature review toward two major axis regarding family impact upon career development (Marchand & Pinto, 1997). First, we have verified that many earlier generation studies regarding parental influence in an adolescents' career development where based mainly upon demographic variables taking into account socioeconomic status (Ali, & Saunders, 2006; Noack, et al., 2010), and family structure (number of members) (Penick, & Jepsen, 1992). Secondly, variables such as, parenting styles (Vignoli, Croity-Belz, Chapeland, Fillipis, & Garcia, 2005; Schultheiss, 2007; Dietrich et al., 2011), attachment (Vignoli et al., 2005; Schultheiss, 2007; Paloş & Drobot, 2010; Dietrich et al., 2011; Hirschi, et al., 2011), gender (Turner, & Lapan 2002; Turner, Alliman-Brissett, Lapan, Udipi, & Ergun, 2003; Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Raque-Bogdan, Klingaman, Martin & Lucas, 2013), quality of parent-child relationships (Hangrove, et al., 2002; Kracke, 2002), among others, are also found to be linked to parental support in a child´s vocational development.

Regarding the first axel, previous research has shown that the socioeconomic variable has either been linked to connote a negative retrospective and/or a positive contribution regarding a child´s exploration self-efficacy of their career development.

On the negative account, Dempsey & Sandler (1995), report that a non-existent involvement of parents' is mainly due to the fact that low-income minority parent's don´t share the same beliefs about their roles in a students' academic course, getting less involved in comparison to parents with higher income. A limited income may also affect mutual communication related to work topics normally passed by their parents due to diminished shared time between parent and student (Bryant, et al., 2006). On the other hand, some parents with low income know that they lack of vocational knowledge and perceive low self-efficacy when wanting to promote their child's intellectual development and report having difficulties in providing career guidance and planning to their young (Byrant et al., 2006).

On the contrary, positing a positive contribution, is a wealthy socioeconomical status (SES) which reflects upon parents' will to actively participate and volunteer in their children's school activities, prospering long lasting effects on students school achievements (Catsambis, 1998) as also, the development of career exploration (Creed, Fallon & Hood, 2009; Gamboa, Paixão & Jesus, 2013). On the other hand, also regarding higher SES, Bandura, Barbaranelli, Vittorio and Pastorelli (2001) explain that parents' educational aspirations and beliefs of their efficacy for promoting their child's academic development, occupational efficacy, and career choice plays a significant but indirect effect regarding their children's perception of parental support.

As part of the second axel, studies are founded on cross-sectional designs which lack of scientific research to determine the validity of their empirical research,

suggesting that an influence from parents to adolescents was assumed based on these variables (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009).

Alongside these variables mentioned previously, recent generation studies have suggested that parental influences such as support in adolescents' career development should address a more *processual approach* examining adolescents' perceived parental support upon vocational variables (career decision-making, exploration, and self-efficacy). For this reason, we have chosen to address the latter axel since our aim is to analyze the impact of conjoint parent-student activities in referral to the vocational variables described earlier as to their interaction concerning parental support.

Still regarding the second axel, in general, many studies have been conducted in the parental support field concerning the vocational development domain, to which lead us to conclude that perceived support by young youth from their parents/guardians has a significant impact in the foundation of their behavior and future career attitudes (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Noack et al., 2010; Deitrich et al., 2011).

Furthermore, parental support, help provide better preparation for entry in an array of various occupations as also contributes for the establishment of vocational aspirations, occupational self-efficacy, expectations, planning, and attainment in one's activity (Hangrove et al., 2002; Bryant et al., 2006; Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Stringer, & Kerpelman, 2010; Noack et al., 2010; Deitrich et al., 2011).

In addition, we intend to discuss the important role of parental support regarding the vocational development, in 8th grade students to which we address its differential effect upon self-efficacy and career exploration in referral to adolescents' career indecisiveness, addressing aspects such as 1) perceived parental support upon exploration, and career decision-making, 2) perceived parental support and career

decision-making self-efficacy, and 3) the outcome of conjoint (parent - student) activities. In this context, parental support defined by Turner and Lapan (2002), is sought to provide assistance to an individual by their primary caregiver in forms such as, instrumental assistance, emotional support, verbal encouragement, and career-related modeling. Also, Turner and colleagues (2003) suggest that perceived parental support exceeds to promote exploration, self-efficacy, and career decision-making. On the contrary, Alliman-Brissett, Turner, & Skovholt, (2004) state that it was found that parental support did not predict girls' career planning, exploration and their career decision-making self-efficacy. As well as there are no significant differences between boys' and girls' perceptions of parental support regarding the four sources of self-efficacy mentioned earlier (instrumental assistance, emotional support, verbal encouragement, and career-related modeling).

Perceived Parental Support upon Career Exploration and Career Decision-Making

Transitions regarding career choice in secondary education require occupational preparation in reference to exploration activities with the influence of proximal contexts such as, parents/guardians which ensure a major impact (Noack et al., 2010). When addressing career exploration, Gamboa et al., (2013), claim it to be a multifaceted psychological process in account to exploration activities concerning the self and environmental opportunities upholding career adaptability and transitions regarding different roles academic or career wise.

Additionally, attained adolescents with high competency values in the career planning and exploration domain develop confidence when encountered with career tasks to which they understand the relationship between academic studies and work as they also know the importance of career planning and how to seek and obtain useful

information regarding job options (Turner & Lapan, 2002). Moreover, other theorists suggest that career decision self-efficacy has been positively linked with career identity evaluation regarding one's goal selection, planning, accurate self-appraisal, problem solving capacity, and one's success in gathering occupational information through exploration activities and commitment to work (Porfeli & Skorikov, 2010)

Apparently, there are a great amount of scholars who suggest that a secure attachment perceived by adolescents from their parents is associated with their will to get more involved and explore their environment (Kracke, 1997; Paloş & Drobot, 2010; Noack et al., 2010). Meanwhile, Dietrich and Kracke (2009) and Kracke (2002), add that one's career development is based upon career-related family communication and actions exceeding in adolescents' career preparation. Active students when preparing their career choice may turn to their parents and seek their guidance regarding career choice issues hence, most parents acknowledge their children's difficulties and react with support, ideas, suggestions, and reflections which may in turn encourage their children to explore career options. Hirschi, Lee, Porfeli, Vondracek, (2013), also found that effects of students' proactivity in terms of exploration, is positively associated with higher self-efficacy beliefs which in turn enhances one's preparation in career choice (career decision-making). Furthermore, one's engagement of in terms of environmental exploration and active career planning increases to a fair extent one's career decidedness and choice conformation (Hirschi, et al., 2011). On the contrary, when adolescents perceive an overly controlling setting by their parents, they tend to encounter difficulties in decision-making, not understanding their parent's intention and perceiving this behavior as pressure which then results in reactant passive behavior towards career decision-making self-efficacy (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Dietrich et al., 2011).

Perceived Parental Support and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

Much has been given interest to career decision-making self-efficacy in the past decade (Betz, 2007). When assessing this topic authors normally use the social cognitive career theory (SCCT), as a guide to understand processes such as, how individuals create their own vocational and career interests, choices and determine their own goals (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; Turner & Lapan, 2002; Restubog, Florentino, & Garcia, 2010; Garcia, Restubog, Toledano, Tolentino, & Rafferty, 2012). The SCCT suggests that parental support as a contextual factor, has greater impact depending on how one perceives, interprets, and responds to its influence (Turner & Lapan, 2002). Garcia (2012) adds that high student rating (students' perception of whether their parents are supportive or not) strengthened the association between learning goal orientation and career decision-making self-efficacy. Moreover, Hangrove and colleagues (2002), suggest that the family context may play a small but yet significant role in fostering an adolescents' future career goals as to the promotion of their self-confidence in terms of career planning. Additionally, parents are considered to be the primarily providers of inspiration for their children, aspiring their children to reach vocational goals through processes such as, career-related modeling, goal pursuit behavior, and providing their young one's of information related to their career experiences (Young, 1994). Since there has been a vast majority of studies which address aspects such as parent-student relationships concerning attachment and parenting styles many of the results have confirmed that authoritative parenting has been linked to higher career self-efficacy (Guay, Senécal, Gauthier, & Fernet, 2003; Lim & Loo, 2003) which in turn increases career decision-making (Sovet & Metz, 2013).

Outcome of Conjoint (Parent - Student) Activities

There has been given grave relevance to conjoint activities (Young, Valach, Paseluikho, Dover, Matthes, Paproski & Sankey 1997; Dietrich et al., 2011) and conversations (Kracke, 2002) regarding the career topic between parents and adolescents, to which is considered as relevant when studying parental influence upon this matter in adolescents (Young et al., 1997). Joint action i.e., when a group of people gather together and attempt to engage in a common process as a result of an intentional behavior. The same authors found that as long as parents and children have a relationship based on decent communication, parents are perceived by their children as a good source of information about occupations as also, communication among the two, as being linked to generating positive outcomes related to achievement and aspirations (Bryant et al., 2006).

Parent-student activities appear to enhance greater explanatory behaviors associated to adolescents' occupational exploration. Middle school children start with an in breadth exploration of interests which then exceed to vocational exploration and career planning in adolescent years (Bryant et al., 2006). All and all, parental involvement aspires a mutual gratification between parents and students, parents who are more involved seem to participate more actively in their child's vocational development to which they acquire significant information in order to understand how the system works and acknowledge better paths and alternatives for their young ones with regard to supporting them (Hara & Burke, 1998). Another aspect is that they also generate a higher sense of self-efficacy due to the fact that their knowledge can help their children achieve higher academic scores (Bandura et al., 2001; Paloş & Drobot, 2010). Students on the other hand, who benefit of their parents involvement in academic

tasks/activities are more likely to improve their school grades in which give them a larger array of future opportunities (Dempsey & Sandler 1995).

Furthermore, it seems that verbal encouragement plays a powerful role in youth's career decision-making when they seek the support and involvement of their parents or guardians requesting a second opinion or to either consolidate their own opinion or option(s) (Catsambis, 1999) or as Young and colleagues (1997), point out, three relevant processes aspiring three types of career-related conversations such as, negotiation i.e., when subjects bargain with each other to reach an agreement. Another is exploring available information, here subjects clarify, share, evaluate and speculate alternatives regarding career options. And last but not least is struggling, where subjects address the same subject defending their own opinion and debating the issue before them.

Aim of the Study

This study is based on a process perspective, examining the role of parental involvement, namely their support regarding their children's vocational development. Turner, et al., (2003), introduced the Career-Related Parental Scale (CRPSS) and studied essentially students' ratings to which they perceive their parents support. Thus, in order to understand this effect upon certain aspects of the human agency, we examine the effect of parental support perceived by students on exploration and career decision-making, by implementing a conjoint parent – student intervention with the intent to measure whether or not students' perception of their parents support has improved, or modified once participated in the conjoint activity intervention. In our understanding this matter has typically been untested.

Therefore, considering the theoretical expectation and evidence upon empirical studies assessed throughout the research, we expect that after a vocational intervention – conjoint parent-student activity, participants from the experimental group would improve on levels of exploration and indecision as well as in the different dimensions belonging to the perceived parental support (Instrumental Assistance, Career-Related Modeling, Verbal Encouragement, and Emotional Support).

Method

Participants

Participants were 78 eighth grade students (43 boys, 55.1%; 35 girls, 44.9%) enrolled in a secondary school of southern Portugal. Students ages ranged between 13 and 16 years (M = 13.88, SD = 0.864). Regarding parent's qualification, year 12^{th} level was held as a higher percentage (36.0%) for male parent and (42.7%) for female parent, and least significant for those who held an Undergraduate degree – mother (8.0%) and Doctorate Degree – father (2.7%).

When enquiring about future studies, the majority of these students plan on completing an undergraduate degree (38.5%).

Whilst looking into their year 7 grades, both subjects (Mathematics – 38.5% and Portuguese – 69.2%) were graded at a level 3 score, entitled as sufficient. In year eight we observed a slight difference regarding their grades, the Portuguese subject continues at a level 3 score belonging to the majority (39.7%) in comparison to Mathematics where (52.6%) of these students experienced a certain difficulty in this subject holding a level 2 score, determined as insufficient.

Intervention Design

Students in the 8th grade alongside their main studies subjectively explore career paths for themselves with an indirect or even direct approach. The latter approach is normally the most questioned by the young youth, leading them to better inform themselves (seeking information through the internet, asking others, and even collecting information from media and marketing suppliers). Whilst the former approach refers to what they may hear from their role models, their parents mainly, stated as a proximal context and considered as one that impacts adolescents' occupational preparation inducing greater effects on exploratory activities (Noack, et al., 2010).

This study aims to evaluate the impact, role models have on these young adolescents' vocational choices in the nearby future hence, to investigate the potential support parents give to their young, we've conducted an intervention with non-equivalent groups based upon a quasi-experimental (pre-test/post-test) design. With the purpose to understand and analyze the effect of Parental Support and its differential effect regarding vocational processes such as: exploration and career decision making, we chose to assess four instrumental scales to measure the following constructs, namely: Career-Related Parent Support, Career Decision, Career Exploration, Career Decision-Making Self Efficacy, these measures were consisted of two moments (T_1 - T_2).

Overall, there were two groups, a control group and an experimental group, hence the control group did not undergo the intervention, as they only filled out the questionnaire in both moments (T_1 and T_2).

The Intervention

We applied a conjoint parent – student activity designated as dilemmas, these dilemmas consist of problem solving situations, most adolescent's query about. Its purpose, to gather occupational information, hearing their guardian's opinion and, stimulating discussion between the two in order to work out a solution for the weekly dilemma. With the intention to promote a mutual involvement between the two parties (parents and adolescents). These dilemmas were applied once a week (five consecutive weeks) to the experimental group.

The dilemmas themselves, consist of situations an adolescent were to go through, as an example, "*Carlos has a group of friends since a very early age, they all know what they intend to study in the future except for Carlos himself. Despite this, his older brother has chosen an alternative curriculum – a professional software course, different to the regular curriculum, although Carlos has some interest in this field of studies. His father suggests he take the same course as his older brother, for his grades haven't been the highest. Carlos agrees with his father. In case his grades don´t allow him to apply for a University course he could always rely on the professional course and start working in the field. His only concern is leaving his friends because at the school they are attending, the professional software course does not exist which means Carlos would have to change schools and leave his childhood friends behind. In turn, his friends are trying to persuade him into enrolling in the regular curriculum. Carlos feels divided and confused*."

In this example, the participants would bring the dilemmas home and work on them with their guardians, resolving the weekly dilemma by working on a solution. It consists of two A5 sized cards, one with the dilemma itself and the other, for the participants to write down the solution as also, to point out with whom they resolved the

dilemma with. The participants before receiving another dilemma for the following week, would read out their weekly "solution" of the previous dilemma, and a discussion of the previous dilemma would follow, conducted and orientated by the trainee student. Each session of discussion, would last up to 30min.

Procedure

An authorization was conceded by the school executive council in order to carry out this study, as all student parents were advised with a consent letter (considering that all students who participated were all under aged) agreeing to allow their children participate in the study. Attached to the consent letter, a brief summary about what our intentions were and for what they serve, as also a simplified chart withholding useful information regarding alternative school paths (when not considering continuing normal schooling) and future opportunities related to each alternative.

Data collection of all measures were collected in two phases with a 2 month intermission, the pre-test was applied in the two first weeks of February of 2014, and the second measure post-test, late April through to beginning of May, 2014. These measures, were applied in their classroom environment. The instructions for the four measures were read out loud and participants were advised that all the data was handled in a confidential manner.

All measures and the activities (dilemmas) were applied only to those who were willing to participate signing off an informed consent, participants were informed that they could also interrupt the study by their own free will.

Measures

A sociodemographic questionnaire was used to collect information regarding students' gender, age, nationality, academic status, parents' academic qualifications, student's current grades and grades from the year before, if they have repeated and the amount of times, as also their aspirations for the future in terms of academic achievements. Followed by four individual measures as follows: Career-Related Parent Support Scale (CRPSS) - (Turner, et al., 2003; adap. Gamboa, under preparation); the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (CDMSE-SF) – Betz, Klein e Taylor, 1996; adapt. Paixão, M.P, (2004); the Career Exploration Scale (CES) – (Stumpf, Colarelli, & Hartman, 1983; adapt. Taveira, 1997); and, the Career Decision Scale (CDS) – Osipow, 1999; adapt. Silva, T, (1997).

Career-Related Parent Support Scale (CRPSS) - (Turner, et al., 2003)

Inspired on Banduras' (1997), Self-Efficacy theory, this scale is composed by 27 items, evaluating parental support regarding career aspects (Turner, et al., 2003). The scale itself is organized and based on four sources of Self-efficacy information a) past experiences accomplishments (7 items) labeled as Instrumental Assistance, in reference to parents` support of their adolescents career related skill development (e.g., my parents help me pick out classes that will help me in my career); b) vicarious learning (7 items) entitled Career-Related Modeling, based upon the provision parents` have regarding career-related modeling behavior and its effects on their siblings (e.g., my parents have taken me to their work), c) social persuasion (6 items) in referral as Verbal Encouragement regarding encouragement and appraisal toward educational and career development of their siblings (e.g., my parents encourage me to make good grades), and d) emotional arousal (7 items) known as Emotional Support, this last construct refers to the affection and support adolescents perceive from their guardians regarding career

development (e.g., my parents talk to me about what kind of job they would like me to have).

All answers are given on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). In the original version (Turner et al, 2003), the internal consistency estimates r = .92 for the entire CRPSS scale, defined as an overall strength of perceived career-related parental support for educational and career development. For the sub-scales of the CRPSS scale Instrumental Assistance *r* = .72; Career-Related Modeling *r* = .87; Verbal Encouragement *r* = .76, and, Emotional Support *r* = .77.

In the Portuguese version, reliability analyses showed optimal internally consistent levels (α =.89) for its total scale, as also for its sub-scales, Instrumental Assistance (α = .73), Career-Related Modeling (α = .85), Verbal Encouragement (α = .77), and Emotional Support (α = .79). The exploratory factor analyses suggested that the Portuguese version of the scale reports the structure as the original version.

Career Decision Scale (CDS) - (Osipow, 1999; adapt. Silva, T, 1997)

The scale is made up of 19 items and organized in two sub-scales namely: Indecision Scale composed of 16 items (Items 3-18) which intend to measure causes and background factors related to career indecision. The Certainty Sub-Scale, career-decidedness (Items 1 and 2), in referral to future career aspirations. The last item, item 19 is an open question and asks individuals to portray their concerns regarding the career domain. All responses with the exception of Item 19 are made on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all like me to 4 = exactly like me). Higher scores on the on the first 2 items indicate career certainty, whereas higher scores on the remaining 16 items indicate career indecision.

In the Portuguese version Silva (1997), internal consistency values are .86 for the certainty scale (items 1 and 2), and .87 for the total of the items regarding the indecision scale (items 3 to 18). In our study, we only administrated the Indecision Scale.

Career Exploration Survey (CES) – (Stumpf, Colarelli, & Hartman, 1983; adapt. Taveira, 1997)

To measure exploration behavior it was used the Portuguese version of Career Exploration Survey (Taveira, 1997) translated from (CES, Stumpf, et al., 1983). It is a multidimensional inventory, and its main aim is to evaluate components such as: behavior (exploration behaviors), cognitive (exploration beliefs) and, emotional (exploration reactions) resulting from the vocational exploration process (Taveira, 1997). Nevertheless, items in referral to exploration behaviors, dispersed on a 5-point continuum ranging from very little (1) to a great deal (5). These behaviors are characterized by four sub-scales, environmental exploration referring to exploration activities related to professions and, employments (4 items, $\alpha = .76$), self-exploration which evaluates personal exploration in the last 3 months (5 items, $\alpha = .70$), intentional and systematic exploration which evaluates the subjects´ intention and frequency in which he/she practices exploration activities concerning their self and their environment (2 items, $\alpha = .62$), the last sub-scale is sustained by the quantity of information obtained by the subject, referring to the amount of information gathered by an individual regarding his/her self and environment (3 Items, $\alpha = .68$).

The validity, reliability and multidimensionality of the CES have been widely demonstrated (e.g., Bartley & Robitschek, 2000; Kiener, 2006; Rowold & Staufenbiel, 2010; Koestner, Taylor, Loiser & Fichman, 2010; Stumpf et al., 1983). Regarding the Portuguese version, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), conducted by Taveira (1997),

with a sample of 9th and 12th grade students, supported a 12 first-order factor structure of the CES.

Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form

This scale corresponds to the Portuguese version of *Career Decision-Making Self Efficacy Scale – Short Form*, de Betz et al., 1996, translated and adapted by M.P. Paixão, U. Coimbra. The short form measures individuals` beliefs concerning their capability to achieve with success tasks that are necessary for vocational decision-making, based on Banduras' original model (Paixão, 2004). The CDMSE-SF, is composed of 25 items consisting of statements that describe necessary tasks of achievement based upon career decisions and, divided by 5 sub-scales: self-evaluation precision – 5 items (e.g., evaluating with precision your capabilities, $\alpha = .71$); the gathering of occupational information – 5 items (e.g., talking with someone who is employed in the domain you're interested in, $\alpha = .59$); selection of goals – 5 items (e.g., choose a career path appropriate to your interests, $\alpha = .56$); preparation of future plans – 5 items (e.g., planning goals for the next five years, $\alpha = .60$) and, solving problems – 5 items (e.g., identifying satisfactory career paths or alternatives, if your unable to choose your first alternative, $\alpha = .65$). Individuals are asked to indicate the level of trust they feel regarding their capability to achieve the tasks mentioned by the items, this scale uses a 5-point Likert scale whereas, 1 = no trust and 5 = total trust. In M.P. Paixão (2004) version, the internal consistency of the scale is .88 for its total.

Results

Results have been organized in three phases. First, as represented in Table 1, where there are correlations between the studied variables (within moments, T1 and T2; and between moments, T1 x T2). As a second phase, represented in Table 2, results show mean values, standard deviations, and *t* test for paired samples. Concerning the third and last phase, results show interaction effects (ANOVAS with repeated measures).

Preliminary Results

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics of all variables included in the study (means and standard deviations) regarding the groups (experimental and control) and moments (pre-test and post-test). Considering vocational variables mean values at T_1 (pre-test), paired sample *t* test didn't show significant differences between experimental and control groups. However, the control group presented superior value means in comparison to the experimental group, in all the variables. In relation to social demographic variables, students in the control group are older (M = 13.67; DP = .69) than their colleagues in the experimental group (M = 14.14; DP = .99), ($M_{difference}$ = -2.475, $p > .05$). In referral to year repetition, students belonging in the experimental group have repeated a more amount of times in comparison to those in the control group (χ^2 = 10,713, df = 1, $p < .001$). Moreover, parents of the control group held higher education when compared to the parents' level of education of the experimental group. The female parent in the control group (M = 3.05; DP = 1.182), represented as highest in comparison to the experimental group (M = 2.50; DP = .896). The same observation was verified within the male parent's level of education – in the control group (M = 2.98; DP = 1.220) and in the experimental group (M = 2.27; DP = 1.069). Finally, in

terms of gender, no statistically significant differences were found regarding its distribution in each group.

Table 1.

Intercorrelations among variables within the two moments (T_1 & T_2) and between moments (T_1 x T_2) *(N=78)*

	Subscale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1.	IA T1	-																			
2.	CM T1	.47**	-																		
3.	VE T1	.71**	.43**	-																	
4.	ESUP T1	.71**	.50**	.81**	-																
5.	INDECISION T1	-.05	.10	-.05	-.001	-															
6.	CDMSES T1	.24*	.27*	.33**	.37**	-.13	-														
7.	SE T1	.16	.13	.21	.27*	.10	.28*	-													
8.	EE T1	.30**	.15	.42**	.41**	-.09	.34**	.63**	-												
9.	ISE T1	.30**	.23*	.27*	.35**	-.02	.17	.35**	.48**	-											
10.	AI T1	.20	.16	.15	.13	-.31**	.24*	.20	.35**	.36**	-										
11.	IA T2	**.76****	.39**	.73**	.75**	-.01	.04	.29*	.33	.20	.39**	-									
12.	CM T2	.39**	**.38****	.32**	.44**	-.08	.23*	.23	.13	.09	.73**	.39**	-								
13.	VE T2	.73**	.32**	**.74****	.73**	.00	.14	.12	.19	.14	.75	.73**	.32**	-							
14.	ESUP T2	.75**	.44**	.73**	**.64****	.20	.11	.23*	.32**	.21	-.01	.75**	.44**	.73**	-						
15.	INDECISION T2	-.01	-.08	.00	.20	**.59****	-.31**	-.08	-.12	-.01	.04	-.01	-.08	.00	.20	-					
16.	CDMSES T2	.04	.23*	.14	.11	-.31**	**.64****	.21	.35**	.18	.29*	.04	.23*	.14	.11	-.31**	-				
17.	SE T2	.29*	.23*	.12	.23*	-.08	.21	**.38****	.56**	.45**	.33**	.29*	.23*	.12	.23*	-.08	.21	-			
18.	EE T2	.33**	.13	.19	.32**	-.12	.35**	.56**	**.52****	.51**	.20	.33**	.13	.19	.32**	-.12	.35**	.56**	-		
19.	ISE T2	.20	.09	.14	.21	-.01	.18	.45**	.51**	**.34****	.31**	.20	.09	.14	.21	-.01	.18	.45**	.51**	-	
20.	AI T2	.31**	.24*	.23*	.26*	-.28*	.49**	.54**	.68**	.54**	**.56****	.31**	.24	.23*	.26*	-.28*	.49**	.54**	.68**	.54**	-

Note. Career-Related Parent Support Scale – CRPPSS (IA = Instrumental Assistance; CM = Career-Related Modeling; VE = Verbal Encouragement; ESUP = Emotional Support), Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale – CDMSE, Career Decision Scale = Indecision, Career Exploration Scale – CES (SE = Self-Exploration; EE = Environmental Exploration; ISE = Intentional and Systematic Exploration; AI = Amount of Information).

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

Main Results

In a first phase regarding correlations we can observe that, there were significant results found between an adolescents' career decision-making self-efficacy and perceived parental support variables - Instrumental Assistance, *(r* = .24), Career-Related Modeling, *(r* = .27), Verbal Encouragement, (*r* = .33), and Emotional Support, *(r* = .37).

Similarly reporting significant results are, the exploration variables (Self-Exploration, Environmental Exploration, Intentional Systematic Exploration, and Amount of Information) with the latter variables mentioned above - perceived parental support variables, with highest correlations between Environmental Exploration and Verbal Encouragement *(r* = .42), and least, but also significant, Intentional Systematic Exploration and Career-Related Modeling *(r* = .23). Regarding the T1 moment (pre-test), correlation values oscillate between .81 (Verbal Encouragement and Emotional Support), and .23 (Intentional Systematic Exploration and Career-Related Modeling), while in a T2 moment (post-test), values found fluctuate between .75 (Emotional Support and Instrumental Assistance), and .23 (Career-Related Modeling and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy).

Also, considering correlations between moments (T1 x T2), we have found that, Career-Related Modeling, Self-Exploration, and Intentional Systematic Exploration, are situated below .50. All the other variables, are positioned above .50.

To sum, our results point out to the fact that, perceived parental support has been positively correlated to an adolescents' Career decision self-efficacy, and exploratory activities, whilst negatively correlated to an adolescents' Indecision.

Table 2.

Means, Standard deviation, t Test for Paired samples, ANOVAs' and Effect –size

	Experimental Group (*N* = 42)				Control Group (*N* = 36)						
	Pre-Test	Post-Test			Pre-Test	Post-Test					
Dimensions/Subscales	Means (DP)	Means (DP)	*t*	*P*	Means (DP)	Means (DP)	*t*	*P*	F	p	η2
Instrumental Assintence	3.64 (.743)	3.63 (.737)	.051	.960	3.75 (.855)	3.63 (.772)	1.282	.207	.325	.57	.005
Career-Related Modeling	4.06 (.877)	4.09 (.666)	-.233	.817	4.27 (.614)	4.15 (.688)	1.139	.261	.07	.79	.001
Verbal encouragement	4.24 (.619)	4.07 (.737)	2.227	.032	4.40 (.620)	4.25 (.665)	1.831	.074	.005	.94	00
Emotional Support	3.49 (.94)	3.48 (.95)	.061	.952	3.86 (.86)	3.69 (.84)	1.37	.177	.417	.521	.006
Indecision	2.20 (.715)	2.37 (.641)	-1.986	.055	2.43 (.572)	2.39 (.563)	.526	.602	1.78	.187	.24
Self-efficacy	3.21 (.736)	3.29 (.698)	-.845	.404	3.51 (.678)	3.44 (.628)	.772	.445	.940	.336	.013
Self Exploration	3.02 (.844)	3.18 (.835)	-1.245	.221	3.11 (1.009)	3.16 (.909)	-.263	.794	.305	.583	.004
Environmental Exploration	2.49 (.865)	2.84 (.920)	-2.575	.014	2.71 (1.091)	2.65 (1.149)	.346	.731	6.46	.013	.081
Systematic Exploration	2.55 (1.113)	2.75 (.866)	-1.118	.271	2.76 (1.066)	2.64 (1.043)	.604	.549	2.19	.143	.03
Amount of Information	3.30 (.774)	3.44 (.747)	-1.159	.254	3.44 (.749)	3.36 (1.008)	.623	.537	1.18	.281	.016

Considering results from a second phase, and analyzing the differences between mean values, we verified an inexistence of significant results between T1 and T2 concerning the control group. On the other hand, there were significant differences found in relation to the experimental group when considering variables such as, Environmental Exploration (t = -2.575; p = .014), Verbal Encouragement (t = 2.227; p = .032), and Indecision (t = -1.986; p = .055).

Ultimately, ANOVAS with repeated measures reveled significant interactions (moment vs. group), regarding Environmental Exploration (F = 6.46; p = .013; $\eta 2$ = .081). This variable determines whether or not an active exploration in activities and professions has taken place between the two moments. The intervention had a positive effect on the experimental group reporting more significant gains in comparison to the control group, as observed in Figure 1.

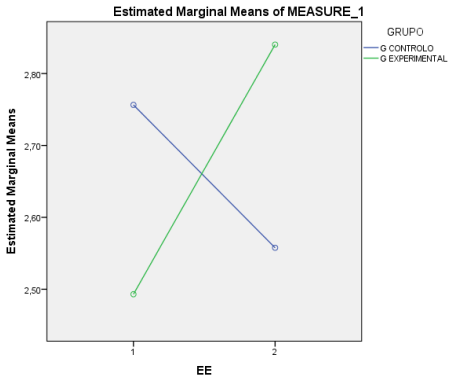

Figure 1. ANOVAS with repeated measures regarding the Environmental Exploration factor

We can also observe a similar tendency in which the experimental group presented lower mean values in T1 when compared with the control group and eventually suppressed mean values of the control group in a T2 moment. Although no statistical significance was found, this observation can be observed with the following variables, Indecision – Figure 2, Intentional Systematic Exploration – Figure 3, Self-Exploration – Figure 4, and Amount of Information – Figure 5.

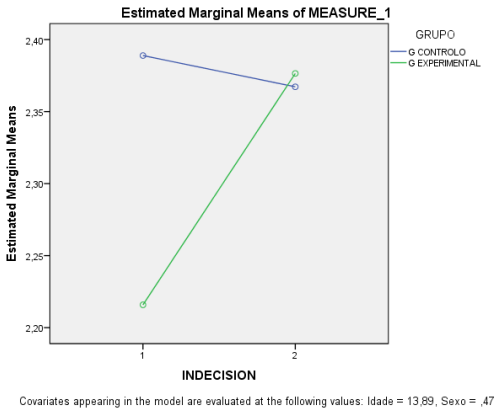

Figure 2. ANOVAS with repeated measures regarding the Indecision factor

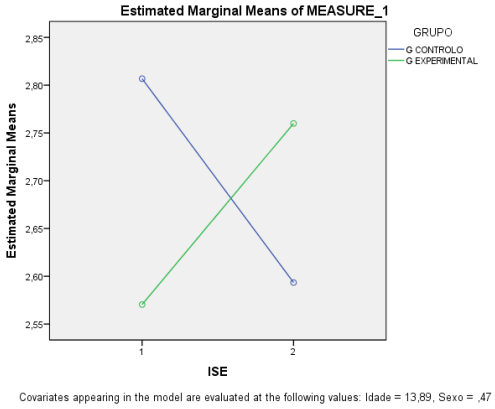

Figure 3. ANOVAS with repeated measures regarding the Intentional Systematic Exploration factor

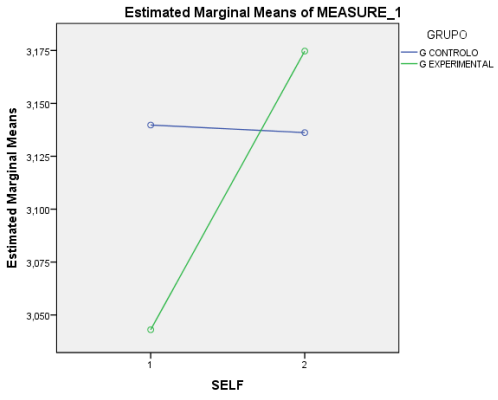

Figure 4. ANOVAS with repeated measures regarding the Self Exploration factor

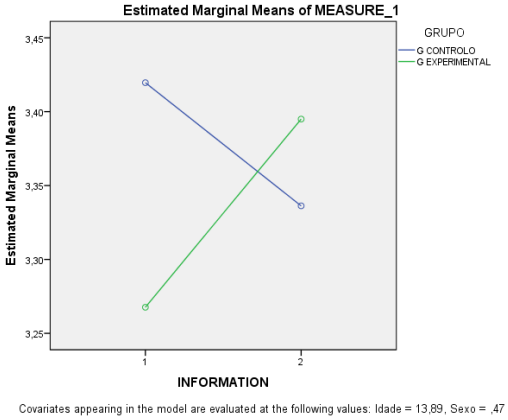

Figure 5. ANOVAS with repeated measures regarding the Amount of Information factor

Discussion

In the present study, our main goal was not merely to contribute to the validation of the Career-Related Parent Support Scale (CRPSS) to a Portuguese population, which in turn was developed in the Portuguese language (Gamboa, under preparation), but we sought to proclaim it's contribution. This instrument, is set to evaluate one's perception of support given by their parents/guardians regarding educational and vocational

development alongside Bandura's four sources of information related to self-efficacy expectations (Turner et al., 2003). Items consisted in this scale were then correlated among themselves, and other variables consisted in the three other measures namely, the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale; the Career Exploration Scale; and the Career Decision Scale. As expected, correlational analyses showed that perceived parental support as being associated with career options and exploration activities (e.g., Kracke, 1997; Paloş & Drobot, 2010; Noack et al., 2010; Hirschi, et al., 2011), as also with indecision (Dietrich and Kracke, 2009), and self-efficacy (Turner & Lapan, 2002; Betz, 2007), the latter correlation was also observed in Turner et al., (2003) and Stinger and Kerpelman, (2010) studies.

However, correlations between the perceived parental support variables (Instrumental Assistance, Career-Related Modeling, Verbal Encouragement, and Emotional Support) and Indecision were nonexistent, this finding might lead us to suggest that, the Indecision variable, in spite of other factors, is associated to one's "human agency" and its development, depending on one's self and not so much on perceived parental support. Nevertheless, we found that, the self-exploration variable (one's ability to know themselves), and also associated with one's "human agency", only correlated significantly with one of the perceived parental support variables namely, Emotional support (related to parents' affectionate support regardless the experience, and related to future career options).

Conversely, our findings suggest that there is a slight progression associated with career decision making self-efficacy and perceived parental support, correlating positively.

Consulting information from Table 2, we have found that, two of the four dimensions of the perceived parental support namely, verbal encouragement (M = 4.40)

and, career-related modeling (M = 4.27), have higher means in comparison to the other two dimensions, instrumental assistance, and emotional support. In other studies, Turner, et al., (2003) and Stinger and Kerpelman, (2010), also found that these two dimensions held higher means in comparison to the other two. Which lead us to believe that perceived parental support is related to parents' encouragement in leading their children to learn and achieve higher grades in order for he/she to peruse higher education, and or find a good job as well as, when parents share information and thoughts about work experiences and vocational activities with their children (Cheng & Yuen, 2012).

Therefore, it has come to our understanding that parental support, help provide adolescents for better preparation for access in an array of various occupations as well as formation of vocational aspirations – one's self-efficacy, expectations, planning/exploration, and attainment in one's activity (Hangrove et al., 2002; Bryant et al., 2006; Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Stringer, & Kerpelman, 2010; Noack et al., 2010; Deitrich et al., 2011).

Findings of the present study showed that parental support as a processual approach upon variables such as, career decision-making, exploration, and self-efficacy with the aid of an intervention – co-parent-student activity (joint activities) has sought to have added to existing literature, regarding parental support upon a child's career development.

Our main aim was to evaluate the impact of a conjoint parent-student activity regarding a child's vocational development according to one's self-efficacy, indecision and exploration activities. As expected, the intervention applied to the experimental group has shown positive results regarding environmental exploration as also interactions between other vocational processes. (Young et al., 1997) In this study, we

have found two major contributions. First, we found that conjoint parent-student activities has been positively related to a child's vocational development.

Despite this, there were positive associations in regards with environmental exploration as well as the amount of information which would also enhance their career decision-making. As Young et al., (1997), suggested, joint activities is a concept they found essential to human agency as also to its enhancement. Moreover, the same authors claim that studies which have been undertaken by parents with regards to career development programs have ceased to increase a child's sense of agency linked to the career domain.

As a second contribution, we have that, a child's perception whether their parents/guardians exceed to promote their exploration, self-efficacy, and career decision-making, has been accounted to positively endorse their career agency. Our findings suggest that, the four sources of efficacy information, one's past performance – parent's support of their child's career-related skill development (Instrumental Assistance), observation of other's behavior (Career-Related Modeling), verbal encouragement provided by other's, and the experience and management of emotions that accompanies one's own or another's performance (Emotional Support) theorized by Banduras' Social Cognitive Theory (1997) has been positively associated with the child´s career development, where one's beliefs about his or hers self-efficacy are developed by the exposure and reflection upon these sources. Our findings advocate, that verbal Encouragement i.e., conversations between the two parties – child and parent/guardian are positively associated with emotional support from their parents/guardians, which in turn enhances one's sense of self-exploration and environmental exploration through their ability of self-efficacy. These findings support

the fact that, parental support through a conjoint activity with their children might inflict on a child's career development in a positive manner.

In addition to our findings, parental support was positively linked to enhancing a child's career agency (Turner and colleagues 2003), and, when parents are perceived as positing a positive contribution to their child's education and career pursuits they are considered as the primary significant source of support and encouragement (Cheng & Yuen, 2012) outlying the importance of parental support on young youths career/vocational development.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the fact that our study has supported the structure of the CPRSS translated to a Portuguese version, and assessed to a Portuguese population, and that there were significant results between the two moments of applying our measurements, we could not control the quality of the intervention itself. Reason being, our intervention was based upon an indirect approach, where the student would work on the activity with their parents/guardians at home. Whereas, if a direct approach were to have been addressed, as an example, workshops (delivering information about the importance of parental support and joint activities) which then would lead to practical situations – addressing the dilemmas. The results of this study is limited due to the fact that we addressed an indirect approach. The sample size itself also appears to be insufficient in order to produce worthy results.

Another limitation would be the fact we did not create a virtual platform which could account for a daily or weekly update reporting on how co-parent-student activities are seen as helpful as also resolving certain exploration activities together online.

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