

Film-based Role Models Influencing Students' Career Aspirations: A Case Study on University Students in Jakarta

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ABSTRACT: An individual's career plays a significant role in fulfilling their economic, social, and psychological needs. Throughout their career development process, individuals are often influenced by role models who align with their self-concept. Previous studies have found that role models portrayed in films can effectively help individuals make career choices. This research aimed to explore film-based role models that can help individuals determine their career paths. Four Jakarta students who chose film-based role models were selected for this qualitative case study. Data were collected through interviews, and their credibility was ensured through member checks. The collected data were processed using thematic analysis. The obtained results offered insights into the participants' choices of film-based role models according to the four dimensions of Gibson's theory of role models in career development, namely positive/negative, global/specific, superior/peer-subordinate, and close/distant. Overall, the role model categorized as positive-specific-superior-distant was found to be the most influential. Thus, role models exhibiting positive attributes are more likely to be noticed and imitated by individuals, who tend to focus more on role models demonstrating specific and in-depth attributes.

INTRODUCTION

An individual's career is a crucial aspect of their life, as it plays a significant role in fulfilling their economic, social, and psychological needs (Hidayat, 2016). External factors such as role models often play an important role in shaping career choices (Ghani, Saripah, & Nadhirah, 2023). Role models are individuals who serve as examples to be emulated based on cognitive constructs. Gibson (2003) found that individuals choose different types of role

models at various stages of their career development process, typically spanning from ages 26 to 61. These role models help individuals achieve their career goals. According to the Super Career Development Theory (Brown & Brooks, 1984), during adolescence and early adulthood, that is, around ages of 16–24, individuals begin exploring career options that align with their interests and perceived compatibility.

According to Chandra (2020), parental role models significantly influence the career aspirations of children, as they witness their

parents' career successes or failures. Additionally, King and Multon (1996) found that role models portrayed in television programs often influence the career choices of African–American middle school students, demonstrating the broad influence of role models from various sources, including films.

Based on Data Indonesia (2022), there are 83 million streaming service users in Indonesia, with 23% aged between 16 and 24 years. On average, these users spend 41.4 h per month watching movies on streaming services, which exceeds the corresponding statistics of other Southeast Asian countries (32 h per month). According to Badan Pusat Statistik (2019), Jakarta has the highest number of television viewers in both urban and rural areas. Approximately 96.77% of men and 97.87% of women in Jakarta watch television. Thus, overall, 97.32% of the entire population spends time watching television. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the impact of films on human behavior, especially on career choices.

Based on a literature review conducted by Meitasari et al. (2021), modeling techniques can help improve career understanding and planning. Rahmatyana and Iramyanti (2020) similarly demonstrate that modeling techniques are effective in helping students plan their careers. Furthermore, John B. Christiansen's (1979) study on 179 teenagers aged between 14 and 18 years in the USA showed that teenagers who watched TV programs featuring successful people had higher and more varied career aspirations compared to those who did not watch such programs. Meanwhile, King and Multon's (1996) study on 108 African–American middle school students also found that television role models could influence career choices.

Zaroh (2018) stated that role models depicted in films effectively enhanced the

career selection skills of junior high school students in Bojonegoro. Widiyawati's (2014) research also found that role models portrayed in films significantly boosted career interests, particularly in entrepreneurship, among students at SMKN 7 Purworejo. Additionally, Andrian and Undiana (2021) found that students' interests in entrepreneurship increased notably after watching the Korean drama *Start-Up*, which focuses on characters involved in a start-up business. However, no previous research has yet explored the specific types of film-based role models influencing careers choices.

Gibson (2004) categorizes role models into several types based on their characterizing dimensions. These dimensions include cognitive and structural dimensions. Among these, cognitive dimensions include positive, negative, global, and specific dimensions, while structural dimensions comprise close or distant and superior or peer-subordinate dimensions. These dimensions combine to form 16 types of role models, namely positive-global-superior-distant, positive-specific-superior-distant, positive-global-peer-subordinate-distant, positive-specific-peer-subordinate-distant, positive-global-superior-close, positive-specific-superior-close, positive-global-peer-subordinate-close, positive-specific-peer-subordinate-close, negative-global-superior-distant, negative-specific-superior-distant, negative-global-peer-subordinate-distant, negative-specific-peer-subordinate-distant, negative-global-superior-close, negative-specific-superior-close, negative-global-peer-subordinate-close, and negative-specific-peer-subordinate-close.

METHOD AND PARTICIPANTS

This study investigated the prevalence of the above film-based role models among

university students. For this, students from Jakarta aged between 19 and 23 years who selected film-based role models were recruited to the study. These participants, including both male and female students, pursued majors that aligned with the career choices of their role models. In total, four students, including two males and females, participated in this study. Data collection was performed through interviews. The collected data were then analyzed using thematic analysis to assess the description of each participant's role model. These descriptions were subsequently categorized based on the types of role models proposed by Gibson (2004).

RESULTS

Our results revealed that film-based role models of type 2, 2, 1, 2, 2, 6, 6, 2, 2, and 2 predominantly impacted the career choices of participating students. This implies that type 2 role models are the most dominant among participants. These role models feature positive attributes and higher status; they engage in infrequent interactions, come from different environments, and are imitated for specific attributes.

Type 6 and type 1 role models also influenced the career aspirations of participants but to a lesser extent. Among these, type 6 role models demonstrate positive attributes and higher status. They engage in frequent interactions, come from similar environments, and are imitated for specific aspects. Meanwhile, type 1 role models exhibit positive attributes and higher status. They engage in infrequent interactions, come from different environments, and are imitated entirely.

Three out of four students reported having specific and distant role models. Notably, the key difference between film-based and live role models lies in the distant/close

dimension. The role models of all participants included both the positive and superior dimensions. Additionally, our findings revealed that an individual could have more than one role model, which may include more than one figure from the same film, different films, or a combination of film-based and live role models.

PROFESSIONALISM: THE MOST IMITATED POSITIVE ATTRIBUTE

Participants focused more on positive attributes. These positive attributes included positive behaviors and characters that inspired the career choices of the participants and influenced their career development. The most frequently mentioned positive behavior was professionalism. For instance, one participant noted, "*...like in the realm of work you have to be professional, don't overshare because it will impact not only yourself, but also your office colleagues too, and the company too...*" (MG02055). Furthermore, the definitions of professionalism varied across participants based on their career aspirations. For instance, a participant elaborated, "*...psychologists and psychiatrists have to be professional and work appropriately ethics and remember his ethics, and Doctor Charles is very wise with his words, he could persuade his rebel patients, he can handle it very well, so calm down...*" (CF001012). Another participant stated, "*as a doctor professionals when they work according to their competence, and they work wholeheartedly, in my opinion, and again, not look at the person's status.*" (WC03207).

IMITATION OF SPECIFIC ATTRIBUTES

Notably, most participants only focused on imitating the career-related positive

attributes of their role models. In particular, although films depicted various other attributes of the role models, including friendships or romantic relationships, most participants chose to ignore these. When asked about their choices of imitated attributes, most participants indicated that they only emulated career-related attributes applicable to the university curriculum. One participant stated, "*I don't pay attention on other aspects. Personal life and other things, I don't follow. I just follow his career.*" (WC03250).

Factors Contributing Toward the Superiority of Role Models

Skills and Workplaces

Apart from position, status, and experience, which are indicators of the upper/lower hierarchy dimension, the participants stated that attributes such as capability, age, and workplace also contribute to a role model's perceived superiority. In particular, a role model who possesses superior abilities and works at a well-known organization is deemed superior. In addition, the level of knowledge and academic degree also contribute to the status of the role model. This is exemplified by a participant, who stated that "*because he nimble and hard worker and work in a famous place.*" (GJ04296).

Relatability

In terms of the distant/close dimensions, all participants' role models were categorized as distant, characterized by infrequent interactions and differences in working groups. However, the participants stated that similarities between themselves and their role models created a sense of closeness. The participants indicated that their choices of distant/close dimensions were not only based on interactions but also on their perceived similarities with their role

models. One participant remarked, "*We have the same passion and interests, I like socializing and making friends, so when I saw Emily's character I feel relatable*" (MG02069). In general, similarities between participants and their role models may include common trauma, background, and interests.

CONCLUSION

The findings of our study identified type 2 role models, namely positive-specific-upper-far hierarchy, as the most dominant type of film-based role model influencing students' career choices. These role models demonstrate positive attributes, such as superior abilities, behavior, and values. They have a higher status, engage with different social environments, and rarely/never interact. Furthermore, participants tended to imitate only specific attributes. Our results also proved that well-portrayed film characters can effectively provide career insights and serve as role models for students. Overall, the results of this study can help students choose appropriate role models with similar attributes to themselves to aid their career development or gain a clearer picture of their desired career.

The limitation of this research is that its findings cannot be generalized to the entire population; hence, further research is still required to identify role models exerting the greatest influence on the career choices of students. Furthermore, the interviews conducted in this study did not consider sociocultural aspects and other film elements beyond film characters that can potentially influence the choice of role models. Our findings also reveal that live role models can influence the career aspirations of students. Future research must investigate differences in the impacts of film-based role models and live role models.

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