



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT AMONG YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN IKENNE, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence, parental involvement, and career advancement among young professionals in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. It investigates individual and combined relationships between emotional intelligence, parental involvement, and career advancement. A quantitative research approach was adopted using a descriptive survey design. The study population comprised young professionals across various sectors within the study area, from which a sample of 382 respondents was selected using a multistage sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire measuring emotional intelligence, parental involvement, and career advancement, and were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and career advancement, as well as between parental involvement and career advancement among young professionals. It also indicated that both variables jointly contribute to variations in career advancement, and concludes that emotional intelligence and parental involvement are important factors associated with career advancement among young professionals. It recommends that individuals develop emotional intelligence competencies, while parents, organizations, and educational institutions provide supportive environments that enhance career development.

Keywords: Career Advancement, Emotional Intelligence, Parental Involvement, Ogun State, Young Professionals.

Introduction

Background to the Study

Career advancement has become a central issue in contemporary labour discourse because of its link to individual well-being, productivity, and economic stability. Across the world, career progression is widely regarded as a marker of personal success and societal development. However, progression is not guaranteed. Recent evidence shows that many young workers experience limited upward mobility during the early stages of their careers due to structural and individual challenges (Seppo, 2024). Even in advanced economies with established training and professional development systems, advancement is no longer determined solely by technical expertise. Psychological adaptability, workplace dynamics, and emotional resilience increasingly influence who advances (Sharma and Tiwari, 2024).

In developing economies, the issue is more complex because career advancement is both a personal and socio-economic concern linked to employment structures and human capital development. In many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, persistent unemployment and underemployment have caused early-career professionals to experience stagnation rather than growth (Pedro Conceição, 2024; World-Bank, 2023). This weakens productivity, slows economic progress, and may affect social cohesion. Consequently, understanding the factors that promote or hinder career progression among young professionals has become important for policymakers, educators, and employers.

Despite a large and educated youth population, many young professionals in Nigeria struggle to achieve meaningful career advancement. Labour statistics show that many employed youths remain in positions with limited advancement opportunities, while only a small proportion experience upward mobility within their first decade of work (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). Completing tertiary education no longer guarantees steady progression, as underemployment, limited promotion opportunities, and workplace dissatisfaction remain widespread. Contributing factors include limited access to structured mentoring, inadequate professional development opportunities, broader socio-economic constraints, and a poorly structured transition from education to employment (Hussain, et al., 2016). These conditions often leave young professionals without the practical and psychosocial skills needed to navigate modern workplaces. Since career advancement depends on more than academic qualifications or technical skills, modern workplaces increasingly require competencies such as adaptability, emotional

control, and effective interpersonal skills. However, not all young professionals possess these abilities, which may partly explain why some remain stagnant despite being academically qualified.

Family influence adds another dimension to this challenge. In Nigeria, parental involvement often extends into adulthood, shaping career decisions, professional behaviour, and independence. While such involvement can provide support and guidance, excessive involvement may limit autonomy. Young professionals therefore must balance family influence with personal initiative. However, limited empirical evidence exists on how these factors interact to influence career advancement, particularly among working professionals. In settings such as Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, where strong family structures and diverse socio-economic conditions coexist, this gap warrants investigation.

Career advancement has also changed with evolving workplace expectations. Although academic qualifications and technical competence remain relevant, they no longer guarantee steady progression. Contemporary organizations increasingly value soft skills such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, and leadership. This suggests that career success depends on both technical expertise and interpersonal effectiveness.

Accordingly, emotional and social competencies have become important determinants of professional growth. Emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and effective communication are essential for navigating complex workplaces and maintaining productive relationships. These competencies support resilience, motivation, and long-term adaptability, especially among young professionals in competitive labour markets (Barhate et al., 2025). The ability to manage emotions and respond effectively to workplace demands increasingly influences career progression.

Beyond structural and organizational factors, personal and family influences also shape career outcomes. Emotional intelligence and parental involvement help explain differences in career advancement. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions to support effective thinking, decision-making, and interaction. In workplace settings, it enhances communication, teamwork, and leadership, thereby supporting sustained professional growth (Ezeani et al., 2023; Pirsoul et al., 2023). Individuals who regulate emotions and respond constructively to challenges are more likely to maintain productive relationships and adapt to changing work conditions.

Parental involvement refers to the continued emotional, financial, and informational support individuals receive from their families, even into early adulthood. Such support often influences career confidence, motivation, and decision-making (Emmanuel et al., 2025). In contexts where family ties remain strong, parental guidance can shape career paths through encouragement, resources, and access to opportunities. Emotional intelligence and parental involvement therefore play complementary roles in shaping career advancement among young professionals. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to manage stress, regulate emotions, and interact effectively in the workplace, thereby supporting communication, conflict resolution, adaptability, and performance. As workplaces become more complex, individuals who maintain emotional balance and build positive relationships are more likely to progress in their careers. Parental involvement reinforces these capabilities by providing guidance, encouragement, and resources that influence career decisions, strengthen motivation, and enhance confidence. Together, emotional competence supports workplace functioning, while parental support provides direction and stability, enhancing persistence, adaptability, and goal-oriented behaviour that increase the likelihood of career advancement.

Although previous studies have established the relevance of emotional intelligence and parental involvement in shaping individual outcomes, important gaps remain. Much of the evidence on emotional intelligence comes from Western and Asian contexts, where socio-cultural conditions differ from Nigeria (Sharma and Tiwari, 2024). Similarly, research on parental involvement has focused mainly on academic achievement, with limited attention to career advancement, particularly in African settings. There is also limited evidence on the combined influence of emotional intelligence and

parental involvement on career advancement in real workplace environments. In regions such as Ogun State, where strong family systems coexist with evolving professional structures, this gap is more evident.

Therefore, this study examines the relationship between emotional intelligence, parental involvement, and career advancement among young professionals in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. It investigates how emotional intelligence and parental involvement independently and jointly influence career progression, providing context-specific insight into career development among working young adults. It is in view of this that the following hypothesis are formulated:

- H01: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and career advancement among young professionals in Ikenne LGA.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and career advancement among young professionals in Ikenne LGA.
- H03: Emotional intelligence and parental involvement do not have any significant influence on career advancement among young professionals in Ikenne LGA.

Conceptual Model

This study is anchored on a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationship between emotional intelligence, parental involvement, and career advancement among young professionals. The framework assumes that both emotional intelligence and parental involvement independently and jointly influence career advancement outcomes.

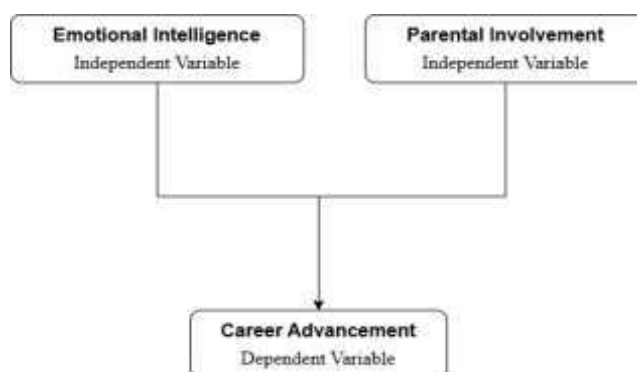


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Emotional intelligence reflects an individual's ability to manage emotions, adapt to workplace demands,

and maintain effective relationships. Parental involvement provides external support through

guidance, encouragement, and resources that shape career decisions and motivation. Together, these variables are expected to enhance adaptability, persistence, and professional growth, thereby influencing career advancement. Figure 1 shows the direct relationships among emotional intelligence, parental involvement, and career advancement.

This study provides a context-specific examination of how emotional intelligence and parental involvement interact to shape career advancement among young professionals in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design to examine emotional intelligence, parental involvement, and career advancement among young professionals in Ikenne Local Government Area. Structured questionnaires were used to collect standardized data for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

The study was conducted in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria, an economically active area in southwestern Nigeria with urban and semi-urban communities. Ikenne LGA comprises several towns with a growing population of young professionals working in sectors such as education, healthcare, finance, and small-scale enterprises. Its socio-economic diversity and strong family structures make it suitable for examining how emotional intelligence and parental involvement influence career advancement.

The population comprised young professionals employed in public and private sectors. Young professionals were defined as individuals aged 20–40 years with at least a tertiary qualification and engaged in professions such as education, banking, engineering, healthcare, administration, and related fields.

The sample size was 422 respondents, determined using Cochran's formula for large populations (Cochran, 1977 as cited in Buckley, (2024)). A multistage sampling technique was used. Ikenne LGA was stratified into four towns: Ikenne, Ilishan-Remo, Iperu-Remo, and Ogere. Respondents were then selected proportionately from each stratum using simple random sampling to ensure adequate representation.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring emotional intelligence, parental involvement, career advancement, and demographic characteristics. The instrument had four sections.

Section A captured age, gender, educational qualification, occupation, and work experience. Section B assessed emotional intelligence using items adapted from the Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Schutte et al. (1998), as cited in Davies et al., (2010), and validated in later studies (Adamakis & Dania, 2021). The scale covered self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Section C measured parental involvement using items adapted from the Parental Involvement Scale by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005), as cited in Mocho et al., (2025), covering emotional, instrumental, and informational support. Section D evaluated career advancement using items adapted from the Career Satisfaction and Advancement Scale developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990) and revised for the study context (Peiris, 2024). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating higher levels of each construct. The instrument was reviewed for clarity and relevance.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was established through content and face validity. The questionnaire items were adapted from previously validated scales measuring emotional intelligence, parental involvement, and career advancement, ensuring adequate coverage of the study constructs. The instrument was further reviewed by experts in Educational Psychology, Research Methodology, and Measurement and Evaluation to assess clarity, relevance, and appropriateness within the study context. Their suggestions were incorporated to improve the quality of the instrument.

Reliability was determined through a pilot study involving 42 young professionals with similar characteristics to the study population. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The Emotional Intelligence Scale yielded a coefficient of 0.797, the Parental Involvement Questionnaire 0.790, and the Career Advancement Scale 0.827, all exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70. These results indicate that the instrument is reliable for measuring the study variables.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires to selected respondents who met the study criteria. The questionnaires were distributed with the assistance of trained research aides across selected locations and professional settings within Ikenne Local Government Area. Where physical administration was not feasible,

electronic versions were shared through email and online survey platforms to enhance participation.

Respondents were provided with clear instructions and assured of confidentiality, and participation was voluntary. Completed questionnaires were retrieved, screened for completeness, and coded for analysis using SPSS (Version 25).

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and key study variables. Inferential statistics were applied to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to examine relationships among emotional intelligence, parental involvement, and career advancement, while multiple regression analysis was employed to assess their combined influence on career advancement.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section presents the results and findings derived from the analysis of the data collected for this study. It encompasses the presentation of both descriptive and inferential statistics, using tables to illustrate the data and explain the findings. This section is organized under the following sub-headings: Analysis of demographic data, analysis of research questions, test of hypotheses, and discussion of findings.

Analysis of Demographic Data

A total of 382 young professionals in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State participated in the study. The distribution of respondents based on age, gender, highest educational qualification, marital status, sector of employment, years of work experience, current job level, and number of promotions received since starting their current career is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Data

S/N	Variable	Category N = 382	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Age (in years)	20-25	100	26.2
		26-30	134	35.1
		31-35	82	21.5
		36-40	66	17.3
2	Gender	Male	232	60.7
		Female	150	39.3
3	Highest Educational Qualification	HND/OND or Equivalent	103	27.0
		Bachelor's Degree	135	35.3
		Master's Degree	77	20.2
		Doctorate Degree	21	5.5
		Others	46	12.0
4	Marital Status	Single	169	44.2
		Married	183	47.9
		Separated/Divorced	30	7.9
5	Sector of Employment	Public (government)	108	28.3
		Private (company/firm)	87	22.8
		Non-governmental/NGO	62	16.2
		Self-employed/Entrepreneur	89	23.3
		Others	36	9.4
6	Years of Work Experience	0 to 2 years	78	20.4
		3 to 5 years	128	33.5
		6 to 8 years	102	26.7

		9 years and above	74	19.4
7	Current Job Level	Entry-level / Junior staff	29	7.6
		Mid-level / Senior staff	123	32.2
		Manager / Supervisor	149	39.0
		Executive / Senior management	81	21.2
8	Number of Promotions Received	0	47	12.3
		1	82	21.5
		2	104	27.2
		3	57	14.9
		4	73	19.1
		5	19	5.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The demographic data in Table 1 show that most respondents were aged 26–30 years, indicating a concentration of young professionals in early to mid-career stages. Males constituted a higher proportion of the sample than females. The majority of respondents held at least a bachelor’s degree, while a smaller proportion had postgraduate qualifications.

Most respondents were either married or single, with only a few separated or divorced. Participants were distributed across employment sectors, with a slightly higher representation in the public sector. In terms of work experience, most respondents had between 3–8 years of experience, reflecting early career progression.

Furthermore, a large proportion occupied mid-level to managerial positions, and most had received at least one promotion, indicating that the sample consisted largely of individuals experiencing career advancement.

Analysis of Research Questions/Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Emotional intelligence has no significant linear relationship with career advancement of young professionals in Ikenne LGA.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Career Advancement

Variables	Mean	SD	R	Adj. R ²	R ²	B	t	F(1, 380)	P
Emotional Intelligence	61.95	5.68	.177	.029	.031	.177	3.496	12.224	.001
Career Advancement	33.92	4.63							

Note: $p < .001$

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and career advancement. The Pearson correlation coefficient shows a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and career advancement ($r = .177, p < .05$). This indicates that higher levels of emotional intelligence are associated with higher levels of career advancement among young professionals.

The null hypothesis which stated that emotional intelligence has no significant relationship with the

career advancement of young professionals in Ikenne LGA is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. It is subsequently concluded that emotional intelligence has a significant relationship with the career advancement of young professionals in Ikenne LGA.

Hypothesis 2

Parental involvement has no significant linear relationship with the career advancement of young

professionals in Ikenne LGA.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between Parental Involvement and Career Advancement

Variables	Mean	SD	R	Adj. R ²	β	t	F	P
Parental Involvement	38.46	5.03	.271	.071	.271	5.495	30.203	.000
Career Advancement	33.92	4.63						

Note: $p < .001$

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between parental involvement and career advancement. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a statistically significant positive relationship between parental involvement and career advancement ($r = .271, p < .05$). This implies that higher levels of parental involvement are associated with higher levels of career advancement among young professionals.

The null hypothesis which stated that parental involvement has no significant relationship with the

career advancement of young professionals in Ikenne LGA is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. It is subsequently concluded that parental involvement has a significant relationship with the career advancement of young professionals in Ikenne LGA.

Hypothesis 3

Emotional intelligence and parental involvement will not have any significant joint relationship with the career advancement of young professionals in Ikenne LGA.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Combined Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Parental Involvement on Career Advancement

Variables	Mean	SD	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	β	t	F(2, 379)	p
Emotional Intelligence	61.95	5.68	.318	.101	.097	.167	3.425	21.392	.001
Parental Involvement	38.46	5.03				.265	5.444		.000
Career Advancement	33.92	4.63							

Dependent Variable: Career Advancement

Table 4 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the combined influence of emotional intelligence and parental involvement on the career advancement of the participants. The overall result is statistically significant ($F(2, 379) = 21.392, p < .001$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis, indicating that emotional intelligence and parental involvement jointly have a significant influence on the career advancement of the respondents.

The regression coefficients further show that emotional intelligence makes a significant positive contribution to career advancement ($\beta = .167, t = 3.425, p < .05$). This indicates that higher levels of emotional intelligence are associated with higher levels of career advancement among the young professionals.

The result also indicates that parental involvement significantly contributes to career advancement ($\beta = .265, t = 5.444, p < .001$). The standardized beta coefficients indicate that parental involvement ($\beta =$

.265) contributes more strongly to career advancement than emotional intelligence ($\beta = .167$). This suggests that parental support plays a relatively greater role in influencing career advancement among the respondents. In other words, individuals who experience higher levels of parental involvement are more likely to report greater career advancement.

Table 4.2.3 further shows that emotional intelligence and parental involvement jointly account for 9.7% of the variance in career advancement among the young professionals ($\text{Adj. } R^2 = .097$).

Discussion of Findings

A The findings of this study demonstrate that emotional intelligence and parental involvement are both significantly associated with career advancement among young professionals in Ikenne Local Government Area. Although the strength of these relationships is modest, the statistical significance observed suggests that these variables

play a meaningful role in shaping early career outcomes within the study context. In particular, emotional intelligence showed a positive relationship with career advancement ($r = .177$, $p < .05$), indicating that individuals with higher emotional competence tend to experience better professional progression.

This relationship suggests that career advancement is not determined solely by technical qualifications but is also influenced by individuals' ability to manage emotions, adapt to workplace dynamics, and maintain effective interpersonal relationships. A plausible explanation is that emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to handle workplace stress, respond constructively to feedback, and build productive professional networks. These capabilities enhance their visibility and effectiveness within organizations, thereby increasing opportunities for advancement. This finding reinforces prior empirical evidence that links emotional intelligence with workplace adaptability, job performance, and career success (Pirsoul et al., 2023; Sharma & Tiwari, 2024). However, the relatively low correlation coefficient observed in this study suggests that while emotional intelligence is important, it operates alongside other factors not captured within the present model.

Similarly, the study found a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and career advancement ($r = .271$, $p < .05$), with a comparatively stronger association than emotional intelligence. This indicates that individuals who reported higher levels of parental support tend to achieve better career outcomes. In practical terms, parental involvement may provide emotional encouragement, financial assistance, and career-related guidance, all of which can strengthen confidence and persistence during the early stages of professional life. This finding aligns with previous studies which emphasize the role of family support in shaping motivation, career decision-making, and long-term goal orientation (Emmanuel et al., 2025; Ezeani et al., 2023). At the same time, the strength of this relationship highlights the continued influence of family structures within the Nigerian socio-cultural context, where career-related decisions are often closely tied to parental expectations and support systems.

When both variables were considered jointly, the results further revealed a significant combined influence on career advancement ($F(2, 379) = 21.392$, $p < .001$), with parental involvement ($\beta = .265$) contributing more strongly than emotional intelligence ($\beta = .167$). This indicates that while internal competencies are important, external support systems may exert a relatively greater

influence on career outcomes within this context. The model explained approximately 9.7% of the variance in career advancement ($\text{Adj. } R^2 = .097$), suggesting that emotional intelligence and parental involvement, though significant, account for only part of the broader set of factors influencing career progression. This relatively modest explanatory power points to the likelihood that additional variables, such as organizational support, mentorship, and labour market conditions, may also play important roles.

Another important observation relates to the contextual nature of these findings. In a setting such as Ogun State, where strong family ties coexist with evolving professional structures, the interaction between personal competencies and social support becomes particularly relevant. The stronger contribution of parental involvement may reflect the socio-cultural environment in which family networks continue to shape access to opportunities, career choices, and professional advancement. This contrasts with findings from some Western contexts, where individual autonomy tends to play a more dominant role in career progression (Sharma and Tiwari, 2024). Therefore, the results of this study highlight the importance of considering cultural context when interpreting the influence of psychosocial variables on career outcomes.

Overall, the findings suggest that career advancement among young professionals is influenced by a combination of internal capabilities and external support systems. Emotional intelligence enhances individuals' ability to function effectively within professional environments, while parental involvement provides additional reinforcement that supports career navigation and persistence. The interplay of these factors underscores the multidimensional nature of career development, particularly within socio-cultural contexts where family and individual attributes are closely intertwined.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have several implications at the individual, organizational, and policy levels. At the individual level, the results highlight the importance of developing emotional intelligence competencies such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness. These skills appear to support better workplace interactions and adaptability, which are essential for sustained career growth. In addition, the influence of parental involvement suggests that supportive family environments can provide valuable

motivation and guidance, particularly during early career stages.

At the organizational level, the findings suggest that employers should recognize emotional intelligence as a key component of workforce development. Organizations can incorporate emotional intelligence training, mentoring programs, and professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing employees' interpersonal and adaptive skills. Such interventions may improve employee performance, workplace relationships, and career progression within organizational settings.

At the policy level, the results underscore the need to integrate socio-emotional development and family support considerations into educational and career development frameworks. Educational institutions and policymakers can promote programs that foster emotional intelligence from early stages, while also encouraging constructive parental engagement in career development processes. This approach may help young individuals transition more effectively into the workforce and achieve sustained career advancement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence, parental involvement, and career advancement among young professionals in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that both emotional intelligence and parental involvement are significantly associated with career advancement, with parental involvement showing a relatively stronger influence. In addition, the joint effect of these variables highlights the combined role of individual competencies and social support systems in shaping career outcomes.

These results suggest that career advancement among young professionals extends beyond technical qualifications to include psychosocial and contextual factors. Emotional intelligence contributes to effective workplace functioning through improved emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships, and adaptability, while parental involvement provides external support that enhances motivation, confidence, and access to opportunities. Together, these factors offer a more comprehensive explanation of early career progression within the study context.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. At the individual level, young professionals should actively develop emotional intelligence competencies to enhance workplace

effectiveness and long-term career growth. At the organizational level, employers should incorporate emotional intelligence training, mentoring, and professional development initiatives to support employee performance and progression. Educational institutions should also integrate socio-emotional learning into career development programs to better prepare graduates for workplace demands. Furthermore, parents should provide supportive involvement that encourages independence while offering guidance and resources during early career stages. At the policy level, there is a need for initiatives that promote emotional intelligence development and supportive social environments as part of workforce development strategies.

While this study provides important insights, the relatively modest explanatory power of the model suggests that other factors may also influence career advancement. Future research may therefore explore additional variables such as mentorship, organizational culture, and labour market conditions, as well as adopt longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to provide a deeper understanding of career development among young professionals.

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