

## Article

# Relationship between Marriage Immigrant Mothers' Acculturative Stress and Their Adolescent Children's Career Decidedness in South Korea: Mediating Roles of Parenting and School Adjustment

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**Abstract:** International marriages between Korean men and foreign women from other Asian countries have been increasing since the late 1990s in Korea. This study examines the mediating effects of parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and school adjustment on the relationship between immigrant mothers' acculturative stress and their adolescent children's career decidedness. Data were collected from 1181 third grade students (583 boys, 598 girls) in Korean middle schools and their foreign mothers who participated in the Multicultural Adolescents Panel Study. A structural equation modeling analysis revealed the following multiple mediation process: immigrant mothers' acculturative stress is indirectly related to their adolescent children's career decidedness through (1) the dual mediation of parenting self-efficacy and career-specific parenting behaviors; (2) the serial mediation of parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and adolescents' school adjustment; (3) the dual mediation of parenting self-efficacy and adolescents' school adjustment; and (4) the mediation of adolescents' school adjustment. This study provides directions for parent education and career counseling to enhance immigrant mothers' parenting competence and support the positive career development of adolescents from multicultural families. The study, therefore, helps them grow into well-adjusted adults in Korean society, which, in turn, contributes to the well-being of immigrant mothers and their adolescent children.

**Keywords:** marriage immigrant mothers; acculturative stress; multicultural adolescents; career decidedness; parenting self-efficacy; career-specific parenting behaviors; school adjustment



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## 1. Introduction

The increasing number of children from multicultural families in schools in Korea has ignited a social interest in their psychosocial development. A multicultural family refers to one that has been formed through international marriages between men and women of different nationalities and cultures [1]. Since the late 1990s, Korean society has become increasingly multicultural due to a rapid increase in international marriages between older Korean bachelors in rural areas—who are often marginalized in domestic marriages—and foreign brides from less developed Asian countries. Marriage migration has been fueled by global economic circumstances wherein young women from less developed countries seek to emigrate to more developed ones for better economic opportunities. In addition, the Korean Wave (Hallyu) and more active human exchanges between countries due to globalization have reduced the rejection of foreigners and of international marriages, resulting in an increase in the latter [2,3]. As of 2019, international marriages accounted for more than 10% of the total number of marriages in Korea, with the majority (75%) of international marriages taking place between Korean men and foreign women [4]. These women, most of whom come from other Asian countries such as China, Vietnam, and Japan, are called marriage immigrants.

In recent years, along with the growing number of long-term resident multicultural families in Korea, the number of students from these multicultural families has also increased. The number of elementary, middle, and high school students from multicultural families in 2020 was 146,945, representing an increase of 78.9% compared to 82,135 in 2015. In particular, the increased rate of students from multicultural families was the highest in middle schools (93.6%; from 13,827 in 2015 to 26,773 in 2020) over the past five years when compared to elementary (79.0%; from 60,162 in 2015 to 107,694 in 2020) and high schools (53.2%; from 8146 in 2015 to 12,478 in 2020) [5]. To address this trend, the Korean government has introduced various types of support for students from multicultural families. These include aids toward their academic performance and school adjustment, and bilingual skill development [6]. However, career support programs that take into account the characteristics of adolescents from multicultural families are currently insufficient. This is despite career exploration and decision-making being major developmental tasks during adolescence. Additionally, both parents and adolescents from multicultural families have a relatively higher need for career support from schools and community institutions [7].

Career decidedness refers to an individual's degree of confidence in following a specific career direction [8,9]. Adolescents' career decisions involve exploring their interests and aptitudes, setting future career directions, and establishing career exploration goals [10]. In Korea, adolescents make continuous career decisions starting from middle school (specifically, in the third grade of middle school), wherein a tentative decision about their desired career path is made in the selection of a specific high school that enables their concrete and full-scale preparation for their chosen career path. In particular, as career indecision in adolescence exerts a negative influence on adult career development, it is important to examine the variables related to adolescents' career decidedness [11]. Adolescence is a period of self-determination in various areas of life. Self-determination refers to young people's competence in engaging in volitional behaviors, as well as their autonomy in making decisions, which are nurtured in supportive social environments [12]. Therefore, the more support and attention a youth receives from their surrounding environment during the process of making their career decisions, the more likely they are to have confidence in their choices [13].

Many studies have reported that adolescents from multicultural families have lower levels of career aspirations and face more difficulties in making career decisions compared to their peers from non-multicultural families. This is catalyzed by factors such as insufficient parental career support due to their foreign mothers' lack of Korean proficiency and information about their children's career paths, worries about discrimination that may occur when entering the working world or in performing their future job duties (which arises from social prejudice propagated against multicultural families), low academic performance and achievement motivation, and school maladjustment [7,14]. As the children of immigrant mothers enter adolescence, the gap in available information about careers and educational opportunities between them and their mothers, who were not schooled in Korea, widens. Subsequently, increased difficulties in these children's school adjustment and career decision-making arise [15]. Moreover, some adolescents from multicultural families experience bullying and discrimination at school due to their skin color and appearance, undergo difficulties in forming an identity, and may eventually give up their studies [16]. These research findings show that many adolescents from multicultural families are exposed to increased risk factors caused by their family's cultural backgrounds, both at home and in their schooling, in the course of making career decisions.

However, previous research investigating the influence of immigrant mothers and schools on the career development of adolescents is limited in several ways. First, most empirical studies on immigrant mothers' parenting practices and their adolescent children's career development have mainly focused on general parenting practices, such as parental support. This research revealed that the more that parents encourage their children's achievement motivation and provide educational support and affection, the higher an adolescent's career decidedness level [17,18]. However, several recent attempts to identify the

relationship between career-specific parenting behaviors, such as parental career support, career interference, and lack of parental career engagement, and adolescents' career development, have found that these behaviors may have stronger relationships with adolescents' career development than do general parenting practices. Furthermore, these studies have outlined the fact that career-specific parenting practices provide clearer and more specific guidelines for what is needed in career education and counseling aimed at parents [19,20]. However, research results on the influence of parents' career expectations and support on their adolescent children's career decidedness are inconsistent. According to several studies conducted in either Western cultures or Asian countries such as China and Korea, higher parental career support was found to exert a positive influence on adolescents' career exploration and decidedness, whereas higher parental career interference and lack of parental career engagement resulted in increased career decision-making difficulties [19,21]. In contrast, several studies conducted in Korea found that parents having higher levels of expectations and involvement in their adolescent children's career explorations result in difficulties in the children's career decision-making due to the resulting psychological pressure and anxiety [22,23]. Therefore, the influence of parents' career-specific parenting practices on adolescents' career decidedness needs further exploration across various cultural contexts.

Second, even though immigrant parents' parenting behaviors and adolescents' career development are both influenced by socio-cultural factors [24,25], there is a scarcity of studies examining the effect of immigrant mothers' acculturation or acculturative stress on their parenting practices and their children's career development [26]. Acculturation refers to the process whereby the attitudes and behaviors of people from one culture change when they interact with people of another culture (who are typically those from the dominant or host culture) [27]; as such, lower acculturation levels predict higher acculturative stress [28]. In particular, immigrants' parenting self-efficacy has been suggested as an indicator of acculturation and a predictor of positive parenting behaviors by several previous studies that were conducted on immigrant families in Western cultures [24,25]. This implies that parenting self-efficacy functions to mediate the relationship between acculturation factors and parenting behaviors in immigrants. Parenting self-efficacy is defined as parents' perception of their own ability to positively influence the behaviors and development of their children [29]. The concept of parenting self-efficacy is derived from Bandura's [30] social cognitive theory, which assumes that an individual's performance on specific activities or tasks is associated with their perception of the effectiveness of these actions. Parenting self-efficacy is also influenced by one's cultural context [24]. Thus, for immigrant parents, parenting self-efficacy involves their perception of their own ability to perform parenting roles within the culture of their host country, which ultimately affects their parenting behaviors [31,32]. Furthermore, there is an increasing number of studies exploring the pathways through which the acculturative stress experienced by immigrant parents results in dysfunctional parenting behaviors, leading to the development of problematic behaviors in adolescent children [33–35]. However, despite the assumption of complex pathways through which immigrant parents' acculturative stress influences various parenting factors, such as parenting self-efficacy and behaviors—thereby affecting their children's development—no attempt has yet been made to comprehensively identify the effects of parental acculturation and parenting factors on adolescents' career development, which is a major developmental task.

Moreover, school is another major environmental factor that provides both the instrumental and emotional support necessary for career exploration and decision-making during adolescence. In particular, adolescent career education is mainly conducted by schools, and academic achievement and information and support from teachers and peers all exert influences on adolescents' career development. Thus, adolescents' school adjustment is closely associated with their career decision-making [36,37]. Additionally, although adolescents' career decisions are made within the context of the close relationships between their families and schools, there is currently only a small body of research that simultane-

ously examines the influence of both—one's family and school—on adolescents' career decisions among those from multicultural families [17,38].

Based on a review of previous research, this study aimed to examine the pathways in which immigrant mothers' acculturative stress, parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and adolescents' school adjustment influence adolescents' career decidedness. It was determined by using national statistical data collected from third grade middle school children from multicultural families in Korea. In particular, this study focuses on identifying the multiple mediating effects of parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and school adjustment on the relationship between immigrant mothers' acculturative stress and their adolescent children's career decidedness. Ultimately, this study intends to provide basic data for use in career education and counseling programs necessary for the youth of various cultural backgrounds to grow to be productive members of a sustainable future society and to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of promoting well-being and reducing inequality among people with various cultural backgrounds.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Theoretical Background: Ecological Systems Theory and Family Stress Model

The theoretical rationale for this study is based on both the ecological systems theory and the family stress model. According to Bronfenbrenner's [39] ecological systems theory, which emphasizes the importance of the environment in human development, an individual's career development is achieved throughout their life, by interacting with their environment based on their background and personal characteristics such as their gender or ethnicity [40]. Bronfenbrenner [39] identified four major subsystems influencing human behavior: (1) the microsystem, which is the most immediate environment in which an individual lives, including their interpersonal interactions within a given environment, such as those within their home and school; (2) the mesosystem, which comprises of the interconnections between two or more microsystems, such as the interactions between an individual's school and their home; (3) the exosystem, which involves larger social settings that do not, themselves, contain individuals, but indirectly influence an individual by affecting one of their inhabited microsystems, such as an individual's neighborhood or the mass media; and (4) the macrosystem, which comprises of ideological components of a given society, including its norms and values. These subsystems are nested within one another, with the microsystem at the heart and the macrosystem encompassing all the others [39].

From the perspective of ecological systems theory, parents and schools are microsystems that influence adolescents' career development [40]. Parents are regarded as the most influential factor in adolescents' career development, especially in Asian cultures (e.g., Korea, China), wherein collectivistic values and filial piety are emphasized. This means that the influence of parents on their children's career decisions is likely greater than that in other cultures [20,41]. Schools are another microsystem that exerts influence on adolescents' career exploration and decisions [39]. Thus, having adolescents engage in increased school participation and academic achievements, as well as having more positive relationships with their teachers and peers, are associated with higher levels of career exploration and decision-making [42]. Moreover, according to this theory, positive linkages among one's various microsystems, such as between one's parents and schools, have a positive effect on adolescents' overall development. As such, parents' support for their children's school life and curriculum (e.g., engaging in career education and guidance) has a positive effect on their children's developmental outcomes, such as their school adjustment and career decidedness [17,43]. Furthermore, socio-cultural norms and values that comprise one's macrosystem may perpetuate career stereotypes and discrimination related to race and gender. Korea is a nation that highly values its single ethnicity, with the older generation of Korean society typically harboring strong prejudices toward cultural diversity [44], which may cause career barriers for children from multicultural families.

The family stress model can also be utilized to explain the process by which immigrant mothers' acculturative stress influences their parenting practices, as well as their children's school adjustment and career decision-making. The family stress model posits that the stress experienced by parents (e.g., financial or acculturative stress) causes psychosocial maladjustment in their children through the psychological distress experienced by the parents or through the creation of dysfunctional parent-child interactions [45]. Specifically, higher acculturative stress among immigrant parents increases their depression levels and impairs the emotional bond between them and their children, which, in turn, leads to the development of problem behaviors among their children [33,35]. In particular, the effects of parental stress on parenting behaviors and child development are explained by the spillover-crossover processes [46]. Spillover is a process in which stress experienced by an individual in one of their roles (e.g., in the workplace) is negatively transferred to their given roles within their family (e.g., parenting). Crossover refers to the process by which stress experienced by one member of a family (e.g., parent) affects the emotions and behaviors of its other members (e.g., children).

## *2.2. Parenting and School Adjustment as Mediators between Immigrant Mothers' Acculturative Stress and Their Adolescent Children's Career Decidedness*

Based on previous research results, parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and school adjustment have all been found to mediate the effect of immigrant mothers' acculturative stress on their adolescent children's career decidedness in either a serial or an individual manner. First, according to research conducted in Western cultures, immigrant parents' lower acculturative stress is associated with higher parenting self-efficacy [32]. Furthermore, higher parenting self-efficacy predicts parenting behaviors that are more sensitive to children's needs and are more affectionate and supportive [31,47]. Similar results were obtained in studies conducted with immigrant women in Korea. Immigrant mothers with lower levels of acculturative stress were more likely to have higher levels of parenting self-efficacy, leading to higher levels of school involvement and support and engagement in their children's career exploration and decision-making [26,43]. Moreover, several studies have reported that higher levels of parental career support and engagement are related to higher adolescent career exploration and decidedness [17,19]. Comprehensively, these research findings suggest that immigrant mothers with lower acculturative stress will then experience higher parenting self-efficacy and career-specific parenting behaviors, ultimately leading to higher levels of career decidedness among their adolescent children. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1).** *Immigrant mothers' acculturative stress negatively influences their adolescent children's career decidedness through the serial mediating process of parenting self-efficacy and career-specific parenting behaviors.*

Immigrant mothers' career-specific parenting behaviors can also affect adolescents' career decidedness through the effect of school adjustment. Parents with high levels of engagement and support in their children's career decision-making help increase their children's levels of academic motivation and school adjustment [17,38]. Specifically, the higher the level of parental engagement and support for their children's careers, the more parents emphasize the importance of schoolwork, which, in turn, increases their children's levels of school adjustment and academic motivation. Moreover, owing to multiple factors—such as adolescent career education mainly being conducted in schools, adolescents obtaining career-related information from teachers and peers, and academic achievement influencing both adolescent career goals and their career decision-making—adolescents with high levels of school adjustment and academic achievements tend to have a higher degree of career decidedness [36,37]. Thus, the following hypothesis was proposed:

**Hypothesis 2 (H2).** *Immigrant mothers' acculturative stress negatively influences their adolescent children's career decidedness through the serial mediating process of parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and adolescents' school adjustment.*

In addition, immigrant mothers' parenting self-efficacy directly influences their adolescent children's school adjustment. Several studies [47,48] have reported that high parenting self-efficacy among immigrants increases their children's academic achievements and alleviates problem behaviors. Specifically, when immigrant parents are better accustomed to the culture of their host country and have higher self-confidence in not only fulfilling their role as a parent but also in their life overall [24], they become a model of challenge resolution and achievement for their children [47]. Thus, learning by observing parents with a higher self-efficacy helps to reduce adolescents' problem behaviors and promote increased academic achievement and school adjustment. Thus, the third hypothesis was formulated as follows:

**Hypothesis 3 (H3).** *Immigrant mothers' acculturative stress negatively influences their adolescent children's career decidedness through the serial mediating process of parenting self-efficacy and adolescents' school adjustment.*

Furthermore, as suggested by the family stress model, immigrant mothers' acculturative stress is directly transferred to the formation of dysfunctional parenting behaviors without having to pass through the mediator of parenting self-efficacy. Furthermore, dysfunctional parenting behaviors can, in turn, cause children to experience increased problem behaviors and difficulties in their career decision-making. Several studies show that immigrant parents with a higher degree of acculturative stress are more likely to develop negative parenting practices—such as authoritarian parenting behaviors with considerable interference but with lack of warmth or support—or provoke parent–child conflicts. Consequently, this leads to the children developing both externalized and internalized problem behaviors and low academic achievement [33–35]. These findings, in addition to the aforementioned studies that identified the relationship between school adjustment and career decidedness [36,37], suggest that immigrant mothers' acculturative stress sequentially and negatively influences their career-specific parenting behaviors and their children's school adjustment, ultimately having negative effects on adolescents' career decidedness. Thus, the fourth hypothesis was put forward as follows:

**Hypothesis 4 (H4).** *Immigrant mothers' acculturative stress negatively influences their adolescent children's career decidedness through the serial mediating process of career-specific parenting behaviors and adolescents' school adjustment.*

Moreover, in addition to the pathway from career-specific parenting behaviors through school adjustment to career decidedness included in Hypothesis 4, it can be assumed that immigrant mothers' career-specific parenting behaviors directly affect adolescents' career decidedness. Several studies have reported that parents' engagement and support in their children's career explorations directly promote both their career exploration and decision-making [17,19]; thus, Hypothesis 5 was formulated as follows:

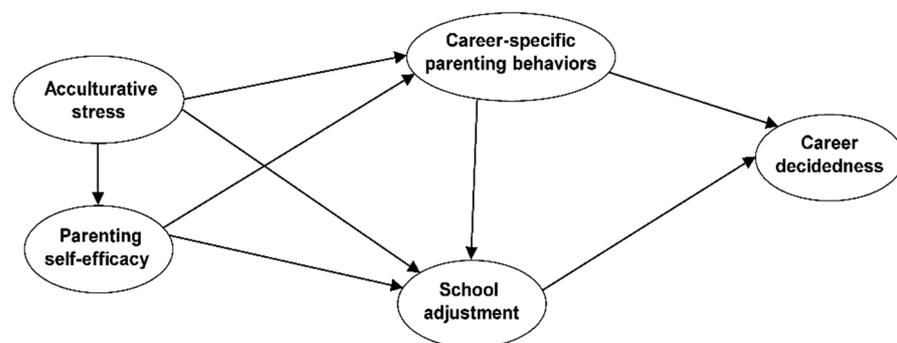
**Hypothesis 5 (H5).** *Immigrant mothers' acculturative stress negatively influences their adolescent children's career decidedness through the mediating process of career-specific parenting behaviors.*

Finally, as explained in the crossover process proposed by Erel and Burman [46], immigrant mothers' acculturative stress directly exerts a negative influence on their children's school adjustment. Parental stress is transferred to their children through the process of emotional contagion, which likely manifests as maladjustment at school through both externalized and internalized behaviors [49]. This crossover process has been supported by several studies. For example, high cumulative discrimination and acculturative stress

experienced by Mexican-origin mothers were found to predict low academic achievement among their children in the United States [50]. Similarly, several studies conducted in Korea have reported that the higher the acculturative stress experienced by immigrant mothers, the higher the level of school maladjustment and problem behaviors that arise in their children [51,52]. Therefore, as adolescents' school adjustment is closely related to their career decidedness [36,37], the following hypothesis was derived:

**Hypothesis 6 (H6).** *Immigrant mothers' acculturative stress negatively influences their adolescent children's career decidedness through the mediating process of adolescents' school adjustment.*

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed research model, which depicts the hypothetical relationships among immigrant mothers' acculturative stress as the independent variable; adolescents' career decidedness as the dependent variable; and parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and school adjustment as the mediating variables.



**Figure 1.** Research model. Note. H1 = acculturative stress → parenting self-efficacy → career-specific parenting behaviors → career decidedness; H2 = acculturative stress → parenting self-efficacy → career-specific parenting behaviors → school adjustment → career decidedness; H3 = acculturative stress → parenting self-efficacy → school adjustment → career decidedness; H4 = acculturative stress → career-specific parenting behaviors → school adjustment → career decidedness; H5 = acculturative stress → career-specific parenting behaviors → career decidedness; H6 = acculturative stress → school adjustment → career decidedness.

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Participants and Procedure

This study used data from the Multicultural Adolescents Panel Study (MAPS), which is a nationwide study administered by the National Youth Policy Institute. The MAPS has been conducted annually since 2011 to examine both children and parents from multicultural families. When the MAPS began in 2011, it collected data from fourth grade elementary school students from multicultural families and their mothers living in Korea. Since then, annual follow-ups have been conducted with the participants regarding their family background, acculturation, parent–child relationships, and the children's school lives and development. The MAPS data from 2011 to 2018 are available to the public [53]. For this study, formal consent was not required because it adopted a retrospective approach. Informed consent was previously obtained from all individual participants included in the study. This study used the MAPS 2016 data measured when the participants were in the third grade of middle school, because during this period, these students make provisional career decisions by selecting specific high schools where they could prepare for their desired career path before middle school graduation. Specifically, this research selected 1181 third grade middle school students (583 boys, 598 girls) and their foreign mothers (who had Korean husbands), who had responded to all of the study variables, as the final participants (age (years): mothers,  $M = 43.58$ ,  $SD = 5.12$ ; adolescents,  $M = 14.97$ ,  $SD = 0.35$ ). For the mothers' country of origin, Japan (37.4%) was the most common, followed by Philippines (25.6%), ethnic Koreans from China (18.5%), and China (6.9%). In addition, in

terms of the mothers' highest educational qualification, high school graduation (46.7%) was the most common, followed by 2–3-year college graduation or higher (42.5%), and middle school graduation (10.8%). Most of the mothers perceived themselves to have a high level of Korean competency (69.4%). The average monthly household income was found to be 2.58 million Korean Republic won (KRW) ( $SD = 114.19$ ), with 2–3 million KRW (33.2%) being the most common response, followed by 3–4 million KRW (27.5%).

### 3.2. Measures

#### 3.2.1. Career Decidedness

Adolescents' perception of their career decidedness was measured using Lee and Han's [9] career decidedness subscale of the Career Attitude Maturity Inventory, which consists of 10 items, with each being answered on a four-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Each item assesses the individual's degree of confidence in a given career decision (e.g., "I have already decided what to do for a living in the future."). Of the 10 items, 6 are reverse scored. The possible range of total scores is 10–40 points, with higher scores indicating a higher level of career decidedness. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of the career decidedness scale in this study was found to be 0.89. In this study, three observation variables (three parcels), calculated using the random item parceling methods as used in prior research [54,55], were used in the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis for the career decidedness indices. The use of item parceling in SEM analysis is beneficial in ensuring normality of the data distribution while reducing the chances of random error [54].

#### 3.2.2. Acculturative Stress

To measure the degree of acculturative stress perceived by the participating mothers, Sandhu and Asrabadi's Acculturative Stress Scale [56], which was translated into Korean and adapted by Lee [57], was used. This scale consists of eight items, divided across the following three subscales: perceived discrimination (two items; e.g., "I am treated differently in social situations."), homesickness (three items; e.g., "Homesickness bothers me."), and social isolation and inferiority (three items; e.g., "I feel that my status in this society is low because I come from a foreign country."). Each item is rated on a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), with all the items being scored as is. The possible score ranges are 2–10 points for the perceived discrimination subscale and 3–15 points each for the homesickness and social isolation and inferiority subscales; higher scores indicate more frequent experiences of perceived discrimination, homesickness, and social isolation and inferiority.

The overall internal consistency of the scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) in this study was found to be 0.88. Specifically, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.88 for the perceived discrimination subscale, 0.83 for the homesickness subscale, and 0.70 for the social isolation and inferiority subscale. The current study used the variables of perceived discrimination, homesickness, and social isolation and inferiority as the indices of acculturative stress in the SEM analysis.

#### 3.2.3. Parenting Self-Efficacy

To measure parenting self-efficacy as perceived by the participating mothers, the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale, developed by Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman [58] and translated into Korean and adapted by Shin [59], was used. This scale consists of nine items pertaining to one's confidence in their own parenting and awareness of the positive influences of their actions as parents on their children (e.g., "I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good mother to my child."). Each item is answered on a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5); with the exception of one item, all the items are scored as is. The total score range is 9–45 points, with higher scores indicating a greater degree of parenting self-efficacy. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of the scale in this study was found to be 0.83. Furthermore, as with the

career decidedness scale, three observed variables, produced by the random item parceling methods, were used in the SEM analysis as the indices of parenting self-efficacy.

#### 3.2.4. Career-Specific Parenting Behaviors

The Parental Career-related Behaviors, a scale developed by Dietrich and Kracke [19] and translated into Korean and adapted by Cho et al. [60], was used to measure adolescents' perception of their mothers' career-specific parenting behaviors. The scale comprises nine items evaluating career-related parenting behaviors, which are divided across three subscales: support (three items; e.g., "My mother encourages me to seek information about careers I am interested in."), interference (three items; e.g., "My mother interferes too much with my career preparation."), and lack of engagement (three items; e.g., "My mother is not really interested in my future careers."). However, one item from the lack of engagement subscale ("My mother cannot support my career preparation, as they face difficulties at work themselves."), was excluded from the scale used in the present study because the item is only applicable to working mothers. Each of the items is rated on a four-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4); all items of the support subscale are scored as is, while all items of the interference and lack of engagement subscales are reverse scored. The possible score range is 3–12 points, each for the support and interference subscales, and is 2–8 points for the lack of engagement subscale. Higher scores indicate greater perceived support and engagement and less interference of the participating mothers in their adolescent children's careers. The overall internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of the scale in this study was found to be 0.72; additionally, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.86 for the support subscale, 0.75 for the interference subscale, and 0.79 for the lack of engagement subscale. Moreover, the present study used the variables of support, interference, and lack of engagement as the indices of career-specific parenting behaviors in the SEM analysis.

#### 3.2.5. School Adjustment

Adolescents' school adjustment was measured using the scale developed by Kim et al. [61]. This scale consists of 15 items divided across three subscales, each comprising five items: learning activities (e.g., "I find class interesting."), peer relationships (e.g., "I get along well with my classmates."), and relationships with teachers (e.g., "I feel comfortable talking to my teachers."). Each item is answered on a four-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). With the exception of two, this scale's items are scored as is. The possible score range of each subscale is 5–20 points, with higher scores indicating increased active participation in learning activities and better relationships with one's peers and teachers. The overall internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of the scale in this study was found to be 0.87; furthermore, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.79 for the learning activities subscale, 0.63 for the peer relationships subscale, and 0.89 for the relationships with teachers subscale. Additionally, in the current study, the variables of learning activities, peer relationships, and relationships with teachers were entered as the indices of school adjustment in the SEM analysis.

### 3.3. Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 26.0) and AMOS 26.0 (IBM Co., Armonk, NY, USA). Participants' demographic characteristics and the general tendencies of the measured variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with Pearson's correlation coefficients being computed among the study variables. Furthermore, a SEM analysis was performed to examine the mediating effects of parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and school adjustment on the relationship between immigrant mothers' acculturative stress and their adolescent children's career decidedness. Maximum likelihood estimation was used for the SEM analysis, with model fitness being determined based on a comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square

error of approximation (RMSEA). In general, CFI and TLI values over 0.90, as well as an RMSEA value below 0.08, indicate an adequate fit [62].

In addition, a bootstrapping procedure was applied to investigate the overall significance level of the indirect effects of mothers' acculturative stress on adolescents' career decidedness through parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and school adjustment. While conducting the bootstrapping analysis, the number of bootstrap samples was assigned as 1000 with 95% confidence intervals. However, the bootstrapping procedure used in AMOS cannot verify the statistical significance of each potential pathway among mothers' acculturative stress, parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, adolescents' school adjustment, and career decidedness, if multiple pathways exist. To solve this problem, the present study used phantom variables, which is a method proposed by previous scholars [63] as a means to test the statistical significance of each indirect path while ensuring that the fit of the model and its parameters are not influenced. Finally, in addition to the study variables, the mothers' educational level (i.e., mothers' highest educational qualification), which was suggested as a variable affecting adolescents' career decidedness in previous studies [64], was added to the SEM analysis as a control variable.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Preliminary Analysis

Table 1 displays the means and standard deviations of the study variables and the correlations among them. First, the average score on each subscale of the mothers' acculturative stress scale was found to be low out of a possible score of five, with perceived discrimination at 2.41 ( $SD = 0.98$ ), homesickness at 2.34 ( $SD = 0.85$ ), and social isolation and inferiority at 2.46 ( $SD = 0.88$ ). The mean score of the mothers' parenting self-efficacy scale was relatively high at 3.58 ( $SD = 0.52$ ) out of a possible score of five. The average scores on the career-specific parenting behaviors subscales (support, interference, and lack of engagement) ranged from 2.87 ( $SD = 0.64$ ) to 3.22 ( $SD = 0.65$ ). Considering the possible range of scores (1–4 points), adolescents' perception of their mothers' career-specific parenting behaviors was found to be relatively high; furthermore, the mean score on the lack of engagement subscale was slightly higher than the scores on the other two subscales. Additionally, given the possible range of scores (1–4 points), the average score on each school adjustment subscale was relatively high, with learning activities at 2.88 ( $SD = 0.52$ ), peer relationships at 3.18 ( $SD = 0.38$ ), and relationships with teachers at 3.11 ( $SD = 0.56$ ). The mean score on the learning activities subscale was found to be lower than the scores on the peer relationships and relationships with teachers subscales. The average score on the career decidedness scale was found to be 2.59 ( $SD = 0.57$ ), which approximated the central score in the possible scoring range (1–4 points). To determine whether the measures of the variables satisfied the assumption of multivariate normality in SEM, the present study examined the skewness and kurtosis of the study variables. The variables satisfied the threshold for normality as suggested by West et al. (absolute skewness value  $< 2$ ; absolute kurtosis value  $< 7$ ) [65].

The correlational analysis conducted among the variables (Table 1), which was performed prior to the SEM analysis, revealed that all of the subscales measuring the participating mothers' acculturative stress were significantly and negatively correlated with the parenting self-efficacy scale. However, the homesickness and social isolation and inferiority subscales of the acculturative stress scale had statistically meaningful correlations with some of the career-specific parenting behaviors subscales. Specifically, the homesickness subscale was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with both the support and lack of engagement subscales of the career-specific parenting behaviors scale. The social isolation and inferiority subscale was significantly and negatively correlated with the support subscale of the career-specific parenting behaviors scale. Additionally, the perceived discrimination subscale of the acculturative stress scale showed no statistically significant correlations with any of the subscales in the career-specific parenting behaviors scale. Moreover, the correlations between all the acculturative stress and school adjustment

subscales were found to be significant and negative, except for the correlation between the homesickness and relationships with teachers subscales and between the social isolation and inferiority and learning activities subscales. Mothers' parenting self-efficacy scale was found to be significantly and positively correlated with the support and lack of engagement subscales of the career-specific parenting behaviors scale, as well as with all the subscales of the school adjustment scale. Furthermore, each career-specific parenting behavior subscale showed significantly positive correlations with all the school adjustment subscales and the career decidedness scale. Finally, all of the school adjustment subscales were found to be significantly and positively correlated with the career decidedness scale.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the study variables and the correlations among them ( $n = 1181$ ).

Variables	1.1	1.2	1.3	2	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	4.3	5
1.1. Perceived discrimination											
1.2. Homesickness	0.52 **										
1.3. Social isolation and inferiority	0.60 **	0.57 **									
2. Parenting self-efficacy	−0.23 **	−0.20 **	−0.26 **								
3.1. Support	−0.05	−0.11 **	−0.07 *	0.14 **							
3.2. Interference	0.00	−0.03	0.02	0.02	−0.09 **						
3.3. Lack of engagement	−0.04	−0.08 **	−0.02	0.17 **	0.35 **	0.33 **					
4.1. Learning activities	−0.08 **	−0.09 **	−0.05	0.21 **	0.30 **	0.13 **	0.28 **				
4.2. Peer relationships	−0.11 **	−0.10 **	−0.09 **	0.18 **	0.30 **	0.14 **	0.28 **	0.53 **			
4.3. Relationships with teachers	−0.10 **	−0.05	−0.13 **	0.17 **	0.25 **	0.10 **	0.22 **	0.45 **	0.49 **		
5. Career decidedness	−0.03	−0.06 *	−0.07 *	0.07 *	0.13 **	0.20 **	0.14 **	0.20 **	0.18 **	0.18 **	
<i>M</i>	2.41	2.34	2.46	3.58	2.87	2.98	3.22	2.88	3.18	3.11	2.59
<i>SD</i>	0.98	0.85	0.88	0.52	0.64	0.64	0.65	0.52	0.38	0.56	0.57
Skewness	0.34	0.36	0.15	−0.06	−0.45	−0.32	0.56	−0.16	0.17	−0.30	0.47
Kurtosis	−0.66	−0.18	−0.42	0.16	0.65	0.12	0.24	0.33	0.45	0.51	0.09

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

#### 4.2. Mediating Roles of Parenting Self-Efficacy, Career-Specific Parenting Behaviors, and School Adjustment in the Relationship between Immigrant Mothers' Acculturative Stress and Adolescents' Career Decidedness

A SEM analysis was conducted to examine the pathways among immigrant mothers' acculturative stress, parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, adolescents' school adjustment, and career decidedness. First, to determine whether the data used in this study are appropriate for the hypothesized research model, the model's fit was examined. The results showed a relatively good fit:  $\chi^2 = 370.911$  ( $df = 80$ ), CFI = 0.956, TLI = 0.943, RMSEA = 0.056. Next, to conduct a stronger test of the proposed research model, two rival models were developed, and then the fit of the proposed research model was compared with that of the two rival models. The proposed research model focuses on the mediating effects of parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and school adjustment on the relationship between mothers' acculturative stress, and their children's career decidedness, as depicted in Figure 1. The two rival models, as presented in Figure 2, contain the paths that the research model does not hypothesize. Specifically, rival model 1 added the direct path from mothers' parenting self-efficacy to their children's career decidedness to the research model. Rival model 2 added the direct path from mothers' acculturative stress to their children's career decidedness to rival model 1. Table 2 summarizes the comparison between the research and rival models. The comparison among the three model is done on a pair basis comparing the research

model vis-à-vis each rival model. As the research model is nested within the rival models, this study used the  $\Delta \chi^2$  statistics as well as CFI, TLI, and RMSEA values. As can be seen in Table 2, neither the differences in  $\chi^2$  statistics between the research model and rival model 1 ( $\Delta \chi^2 = 0.603$ ,  $\Delta df = 1$ ) nor between the research model and rival model 2 ( $\Delta \chi^2 = 2.53$ ,  $\Delta df = 2$ ) were statistically significant, with CFI, TLI, and RMSEA values being almost the same across the three models and the models' fit being determined as good. Thus, both rival models did not result in a significant improving of fit compared to the research model. Additionally, the direct effects of mothers' parenting self-efficacy on their children's career decidedness ( $\beta = -0.04$ ,  $p = 0.225$ ) and of mothers' acculturative stress on their children's career decidedness ( $\beta = -0.05$ ,  $p = 0.164$ ) were not statistically significant. Therefore, the research model was selected as the final model.

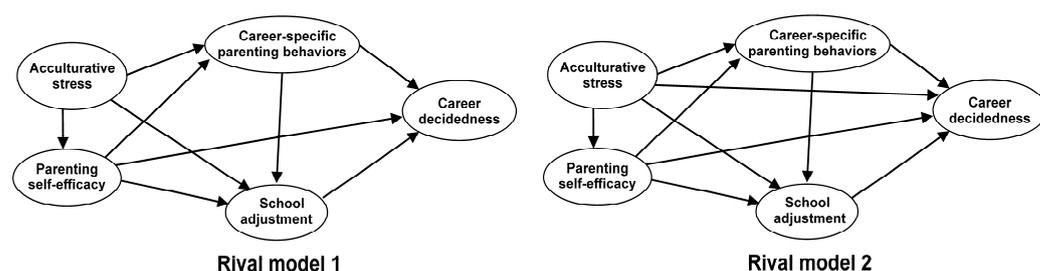


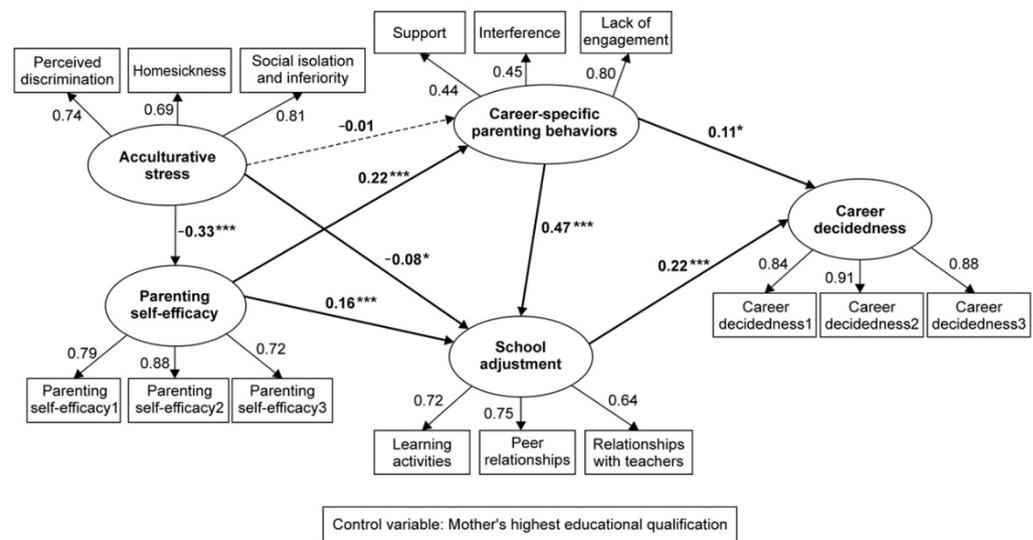
Figure 2. Rival models.

Table 2. Comparison of research and rival models ( $n = 1181$ ).

Models	$\chi^2$	$df$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Research model	433.154	95	0.950	0.936	0.055
Rival model 1	432.551	94	0.949	0.935	0.055
Rival model 2	430.624	93	0.950	0.935	0.055

Figure 3 displays the results of the SEM analysis for the research model, with seven of the eight paths being statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$  and  $p < 0.001$  (Table 3). The results of the SEM analysis revealed the pathways as suggested in Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 6. First, mothers' acculturative stress was significantly and negatively related to parenting self-efficacy ( $\beta = -0.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with parenting self-efficacy being significantly and positively related with career-specific parenting behaviors ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, mothers' career-specific parenting behaviors were significantly and positively related to adolescents' career decidedness ( $\beta = 0.11$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, as suggested in Hypothesis 1, the pathway from mothers' acculturative stress, through parenting self-efficacy and career-specific parenting behaviors, to adolescents' career decidedness was identified. Second, the relationship between immigrant mothers' career-specific parenting behaviors and adolescents' school adjustment ( $\beta = 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was also found to be significant, with adolescents' school adjustment being significantly and positively related with their career decidedness ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Considering these results, together with the pathway from mothers' acculturative stress through parenting self-efficacy to career-specific parenting behaviors, the pathway suggested in Hypothesis 2 (acculturative stress  $\rightarrow$  parenting self-efficacy  $\rightarrow$  career-specific parenting behaviors  $\rightarrow$  school adjustment  $\rightarrow$  career decidedness) was revealed. Third, mothers' acculturative stress was significantly and negatively related to their parenting self-efficacy ( $\beta = -0.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with parenting self-efficacy being significantly and positively related to adolescents' school adjustment ( $\beta = 0.16$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, as the relationship of school adjustment to career decidedness was also found to be significant ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), the pathway suggested in Hypothesis 3 (acculturative stress  $\rightarrow$  parenting self-efficacy  $\rightarrow$  school adjustment  $\rightarrow$  career decidedness) was identified. Furthermore, mothers' acculturative stress was found to be significantly and negatively related with adolescents' school adjustment ( $\beta = -0.08$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); thus, given that school adjustment was significantly and positively related with career decidedness

( $\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$ ), the pathway suggested in Hypothesis 6 (acculturative stress  $\rightarrow$  school adjustment  $\rightarrow$  career decidedness) was revealed.



**Figure 3.** Results of the structural equation modeling analysis conducted on the research model ( $n = 1181$ ). \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 3.** Maximum likelihood parameter estimates for the structural equation modeling analysis ( $n = 1181$ ).

Paths	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	Standard Error	Critical Ratio
Acculturative stress $\rightarrow$ Parenting self-efficacy	−0.19	−0.33 ***	0.02	−8.91
Acculturative stress $\rightarrow$ Career-specific parenting behaviors	−0.01	−0.01	0.02	−0.31
Acculturative stress $\rightarrow$ School adjustment	−0.04	−0.08 *	0.02	−2.15
Parenting self-efficacy $\rightarrow$ Career-specific parenting behaviors	0.15	0.22 ***	0.03	4.78
Parenting self-efficacy $\rightarrow$ School adjustment	0.14	0.16 ***	0.03	4.01
Career-specific parenting behaviors $\rightarrow$ School adjustment	0.62	0.47 ***	0.07	8.82
Career-specific parenting behaviors $\rightarrow$ Career decidedness	0.22	0.11 *	0.10	2.32
School adjustment $\rightarrow$ Career decidedness	0.36	0.22 ***	0.07	5.04

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

To verify the statistical significance of the mediating effects that parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and school adjustment exert on the relationship between mothers' acculturative stress and adolescents' career decidedness, a bootstrapping procedure was applied. The results revealed that the total indirect effect was statistically significant ( $b = -0.04, p < 0.01$ ).

Next, to verify the statistical significance of the specific indirect effects, phantom variables were used; the findings are displayed in Table 4. The results indicated that four of the mediated models were statistically significant. Specifically, Hypothesis 1 (acculturative stress  $\rightarrow$  parenting self-efficacy  $\rightarrow$  career-specific parenting behaviors  $\rightarrow$  career decidedness), Hypothesis 2 (acculturative stress  $\rightarrow$  parenting self-efficacy  $\rightarrow$  career-specific parenting behaviors  $\rightarrow$  school adjustment  $\rightarrow$  career decidedness), Hypothesis 3 (acculturative stress  $\rightarrow$  parenting self-efficacy  $\rightarrow$  school adjustment  $\rightarrow$  career decidedness), and Hypothesis 6 (acculturative stress  $\rightarrow$  school adjustment  $\rightarrow$  career decidedness) were supported.

**Table 4.** Statistical significance tests of specific indirect pathways from acculturative stress to career decidedness ( $n = 1181$ ).

Indirect Pathways	<i>b</i>
Acculturative stress → Parenting self-efficacy → Career-specific parenting behaviors → Career decidedness	−0.01 *
Acculturative stress → Parenting self-efficacy → Career-specific parenting behaviors → School adjustment → Career decidedness	−0.01 *
Acculturative stress → Parenting self-efficacy → School adjustment → Career decidedness	−0.01 *
Acculturative stress → School adjustment → Career decidedness	−0.02 *

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

## 5. Discussion

This study identified the multiple mediating effects of parenting self-efficacy, career-specific parenting behaviors, and school adjustment on the relationship between immigrant mothers' acculturative stress and adolescents' career decidedness using the national statistical data of Korea.

A SEM analysis revealed four pathways in which immigrant mothers' acculturative stress exerts an influence on their adolescent children's career decidedness through parenting and school adjustment. First, Hypothesis 1 (acculturative stress → parenting self-efficacy → career-specific parenting behaviors → career decidedness) was supported by the present study's findings. This is consistent with the result of a previous study, which found that immigrant parents with lower levels of acculturative stress tend to have higher levels of parenting self-efficacy [32]. Additionally, compliant with previous research reports, the higher an immigrant mothers' parenting self-efficacy, the higher their levels of school involvement and support and their engagement in their children's careers [26,43]. Furthermore, the results of this study, which showed that adolescents who perceived their mothers' support and engagement in their careers as high and interference as low reported higher career decidedness, are in line with several previous studies that examined the positive relationships between career-specific parenting behaviors and adolescents' career decidedness and exploration [17,19].

Second, Hypothesis 2 (acculturative stress → parenting self-efficacy → career-specific parenting behaviors → school adjustment → career decidedness), which assumed the existence of an additional pathway from career-specific parenting behaviors through school adjustment to career decidedness, together with the preceding pathway from acculturative stress through parenting self-efficacy to career-specific parenting behaviors suggested in Hypothesis 1, was supported. This finding is also consistent with earlier studies, which reported that parents' engagement and support in their children's career exploration and decision-making facilitates adolescent children's academic motivation and school adjustment [17,38], as well as the positive relationship between adolescents' school adjustment and their career decidedness [36,37]. Career guidance programs and counseling are primarily provided in middle and high schools in both Korea and other countries [66]. Moreover, adolescents obtain career-related information from both their teachers and peers, with their academic performance then influencing their career aspirations and decisions [36,37]. Therefore, when parents are more engaged and supportive in their children's career development, they also provide increased support for school adjustment, which, in turn, leads to higher levels of school adjustment and career decidedness among their children.

Furthermore, this study's results also supported Hypothesis 3, which proposed the existence of a direct pathway from parenting self-efficacy through school adjustment to career decidedness (acculturative stress → parenting self-efficacy → school adjustment → career decidedness). This finding supports the results of several previous studies, wherein parents who showed high self-efficacy in immigrant or economically vulnerable families had positive influences on their children's academic achievement and school adjustment, as they became models of achievement and challenge resolution in difficult environments [29,47,48]. Therefore, this finding indicates that, as immigrant mothers experience less acculturative stress, their self-efficacy as a parent increases, which sequen-

tially exerts a positive influence on their adolescent children's school adjustment and career decidedness.

However, both Hypotheses 4 and 5, which proposed a direct pathway from immigrant mothers' acculturative stress to their career-specific parenting behaviors, were not supported. This finding is not consistent with several prior studies in which immigrant parents' acculturative stress was found to predict increased levels of dysfunctional parenting, such as authoritarian or permissive parenting, or parent-child conflicts. Consequently, this resulted in children's development of problem behaviors and low academic achievement [33–35]. This discrepancy between the results of this study and previous research may be due to differences in the parenting behavior indicators adopted. Specifically, the present study employed mothers' task- or domain-specific parenting behaviors, such as career-specific parenting, whereas previous studies focused on mothers' context-general or global parenting styles (e.g., authoritarian, permissive, etc.) or mother-child emotional relationships. In addition, the career-specific parenting behaviors examined in this study are a type of domain-specific parenting practice that is highly influenced by both social and cultural norms [67]. In particular, when immigrant parents experience fewer difficulties and lower stress in accommodating the culture of their host country, they become more aware of their children's education, the world of work, and their role as parents in their children's development and adjustment through actively participating in social interactions with people of the host country. Specifically, they acquire relevant information and resources on their children's education, careers, and their own parenting strategies through engaging with schools and social networks in the host country, which increases their confidence in their own parenting practices related to their children's developmental tasks [24,32]. Therefore, while stress and negative emotions associated with acculturation are directly transferred to global parenting behaviors or parent-child emotional interactions, as suggested in previous studies [33–35], this research found that parenting behaviors related to children's specific developmental tasks as assigned by a given society, such as career-specific parenting behaviors, are directly affected by parenting self-efficacy. Immigrants' parenting self-efficacy represents their recognition of abilities to perform parenting practices effectively in a host country; this confidence is built on their knowledge and available information about the key developmental tasks of their children, as acquired from their social networks and relationships in the host country. Therefore, this study highlights that immigrant mothers' parenting self-efficacy is a major mediating factor linking their acculturation factors to their parenting behaviors related to their adolescent children's developmental tasks, that are required for the children to grow into well-adjusted adults in the host country (i.e., career decision).

Moreover, this research's findings supported Hypothesis 6 (acculturative stress → school adjustment → career decidedness). This is in line with the results of earlier studies that reported that immigrant parents with higher acculturative stress tend to have children with lower academic achievement, increased problem behaviors, and increased difficulties in school adjustment [50–52]. This result is also consistent with the findings of previous studies that reported that lower school adjustment was associated with lower career decidedness [36,37]. Several explanations are possible for this finding. First, parental stress results in both internal stress and negative emotions in children through the process of emotional contagion, ultimately leading to externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors and difficulties in the children's school adjustment [49]. Additionally, the greater the difficulty faced by immigrant mothers in adjusting to Korean culture, the greater the gap between them and their children who were born in Korea in terms of information and knowledge about schoolwork and career paths, which causes difficulties in the adolescents' adjustment to schools and their career decisions [15].

In sum, based on the family stress model and the ecological systems theory, this study contributes meaningfully to the current literature through its identification of multiple pathways in which immigrant mothers' acculturative stress affects adolescents' career decidedness through the mediators of parenting and school adjustment in multicultural

families in Korea. These findings have practical implications for both parent education institutions and school authorities in their development of interventions aimed at adolescents' career development for those from multicultural families. First, parent education for immigrant mothers with adolescent children needs to be reinforced. In Korea, a local public institution called the multicultural family support center provides Korean language education and information, as well as guidance on living in Korea for married immigrant women, in addition to parent education and counseling. However, although 228 multicultural family support centers operate nationwide, the utility rate of these centers is relatively low at 47.6% [68], with child-rearing support mostly focusing on raising infants and young children, with relatively less emphasis on adolescents.

Moreover, it is necessary to raise the level of immigrant mothers' parenting self-efficacy and address their career-specific parenting practices for their children's career development through parent education. To increase immigrant mothers' parenting self-efficacy through parent education, it would be helpful to share successful cases of educating children in multicultural families, teach desirable communication skills to interact with one's adolescent children, and educate mothers on ways to cope with their negative emotions and stress. In particular, by providing individual career counseling programs tailored to help immigrant mothers with adolescent children in supporting their children's school adjustment and career decision-making, schools and multicultural family support centers need to better equip immigrant mothers with career-related information and support. In addition, because the husbands' and parents-in-laws' support has significant effects in facilitating cultural adaptation and improving parenting self-efficacy among immigrant mothers [69], these two groups need to be encouraged to participate in parent education. Furthermore, the results of the correlational analysis in this study demonstrate the fact that the higher the level of immigrant mothers' engagement and support in their children's career decisions—accompanied by lower levels of interference—the higher their children's career decidedness becomes. However, some previous studies conducted among Korean adolescents have shown that higher parental expectations and involvement in their children's career decision-making can cause increased difficulties among adolescent children's decision-making process regarding their careers due to an increased sense of psychological pressure [22,23]. Thus, in parent education for multicultural families, it is necessary to emphasize the role of parents in supporting their children to voluntarily make career decisions based on their own aptitudes and interests. Finally, considering the result of this study that outlined the fact that adolescents' school adjustment is closely associated with their career decidedness, it is necessary to expand current opportunities to employ professional school counselors who can provide both school adjustment assistance and career counseling for students with various family backgrounds.

The present study offers several future research directions in light of its limitations. Although this research found that immigrant mothers' acculturative stress influenced their adolescent children's career decidedness through the mediation of school adjustment, the linking mechanism underlying the effect of the mothers' acculturative stress on their children's school adjustment was not identified. However, given that several studies have found that immigrant parents' acculturative stress limits their academic support or even causes depression among their children [50,70], it is necessary to continuously investigate the variables mediating the relationship between parents' acculturative stress and their children's school adjustment. Second, this study investigated the pathways through which immigrant parents' acculturative stress affects their parenting-related characteristics and their children's school adjustment and career decidedness; however, future research needs to consider the type of immigrant parents' cultural adaptation in this process. The results of several previous studies suggest that levels of acculturative stress or positive parenting practices vary according to the specific type of acculturation being undertaken [25,71]. Specifically, according to Gassman-Pines and Skinner's study on Mexican immigrant families in the United States, parents' levels of positive parenting behaviors increased when they accepted the cultures of their home country and the United States in an integrated

manner [25]. In contrast, Yu et al. reported that, as Chinese immigrant mothers in the United States became more American culture-oriented, they displayed higher levels of psychological well-being and their parenting behaviors toward their children became more authoritative [71]. As such, the effects of acculturation types on immigrants' parenting behaviors and psychological states differ by their cultural backgrounds of origin. Thus, future research should consider identifying the pathways in which immigrant mothers' acculturation types affect their acculturative stress and parenting practices among immigrants with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Lastly, as this study utilized a cross-sectional design, it was not possible to clearly identify the causal relationships between mothers' acculturative stress and their adolescent children's career decidedness, considering the mediating processes of parenting and school adjustment. Therefore, future research is needed to identify these causal relationships through the use of a longitudinal approach. In particular, this study examined parent-driven processes by which immigrant mothers' acculturation and parenting factors influence their adolescent children's school adjustment and career decidedness. However, as children move into middle adolescence (14 to 17 years), the effects of their problem behaviors or maladjustment on parenting (i.e., child-driven processes) become greater [72]. As such, it is necessary to explore the bidirectional effects between mothers' parenting or parenting-related stress and their adolescent children's career decisions using longitudinal data.

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**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Ethical approval was not required for this study, because it was a retrospective study.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was previously obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** This research was conducted using publicly available national data.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

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