

Career Competence and Career Engagement: The Mediating Roles of Career Adaptability

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Abstract

This current research based on phenomenon and problems experienced by students of Universitas Negeri Semarang in facing career development. The purpose of this study was to investigate the indirect effect between career competence and career engagement in terms of career adaptability as a mediator variable. Using bias corrected bootstrap method $N = 5000$ in PROCESS software shows that career competence is directly related to career engagement ($\beta = 0.15$; $p < 0.01$), furthermore career adaptability has proven as mediating effects ($\beta = 0.07$; $p < 0.01$). These findings can be used to provide practical intervention for college students to prompt how they build their career and engagement. According to the demands and career development of the 21st century, universities should provide career preparation and counseling programs that facilitate their students to design their careers.

Keywords: Career Adaptability, Career Competence, Career Engagement

1. Introduction

Career development in the current era of disruption is full of dynamics, is erratic, and undergoes rapid changes (De Vos et al., 2016). To answer career challenges and stimulate welfare, involvement and academic performance, students need to develop career management skills and resources (Jos Akkermans & Tims, 2017). This is in line with the Job-Demand Resource (JD-R) theory which examines motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) as well as personal resources that can improve well-being and career performance (Jos Akkermans et al., 2018). Individuals are said to be successful in their careers if they are able to display work, performance, involvement, school or career satisfaction and life satisfaction (Rudolph et al., 2017). Career engagement is defined as career proactive behavior through various career behaviors (Hirschi et al., 2014). The JD-R concept related to personal resources can answer the phenomenon of the transition from college to work, students need career competencies that help them in managing careers and studies (Hirschi, 2012) and adaptability to increase expectations of preparing for work roles. Career competencies are related to the proactive behavior of students in developing their careers (Jos Akkermans & Tims, 2017). Thus, students need to be directly involved in every activity process to have high career competence. Meanwhile, career adaptability enables individuals to deal effectively with various situations that occur. This is also supported by research results that reveal that career adaptability mediates emotional intelligence with work engagement (Saraswati et al., 2020).

In previous research, it was found that work engagement is influenced by career adaptability (Rudolph et al., 2017) and career competence (J. Akkermans et al., 2013). In addition, study engagement also has a relationship with student life satisfaction (Mokgele & Rothmann, 2014) and academic performance (Salanova et al., 2009). The

concept of JD-R theory explains how resources are related to career outcomes which are mediated by several reinforcing factors. In the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory (Jos Akkermans et al., 2018), career adaptability and career competencies are important career sources that need to be prepared by individuals. In the current study, we focus career engagement as outcome.

1.1 Objectives

This research investigates whether career adaptability can mediate the relationship between career competence and career engagement. In order to answer questions about the relationship between career competencies, career adaptability, and career engagement research was conducted. This mediation model can be seen in figure 1

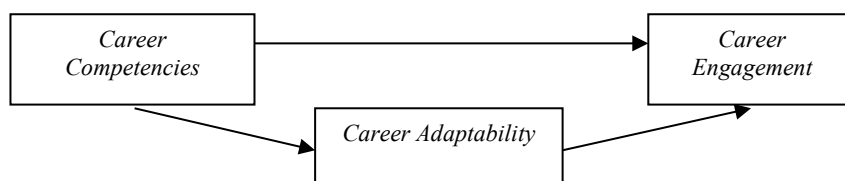


Figure 1. Mediation Model

2. Literature Review

Career competencies are based on four career perspectives, namely boundaryless career (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994), protean career (Hall, 1996), self-management (King, 2004), and human capital (Kuijpers et al., 2011). Career competencies are defined as knowledge, skills, and core skills for career development that can be influenced and developed by individuals (J. Akkermans et al., 2013). Career competencies consist of reflective competence towards career, communicative competence, and behavioral competence.

For employees who are in the middle of a career, this is a big challenge so an adaptive career attitude is needed. The ability to adapt to changes that are being carried out in work and career is also called career adaptation. An adaptive career attitude (career adaptability) is characterized by readiness in the transition process related to work, either from within or from outside the organization. According to Savickas & Porfeli (2012), career adaptation is related to a set of attitudes, competencies and behaviors that fit individuals use to work according to them. Capable career adaptations

facilitate successful career adjustment for specific tasks in terms of personal development such as defining career options. Career Adaptability has several resources that predict employees of their ability to adapt to their careers. These resources include concern (concern), curiosity (curiosity), control (control) and confidence (confidence). This study will discuss career adaptability which comes from employees' sense of concern for their future careers (concern) because according to Karatepe & Olugbade (2016), of the four resources that predict career adaptability, concern resources are the best predictors of employee adaptability to future career (Nurhaq, 2019).

Employees who have good career adaptation abilities are employees who have concern for their future career as an employee (career concern). Career concern reflects trust every employee has a future that deserves to be pursued because a career is valuable and worth fighting for. For that, it is necessary to have careful preparation that will improve the future of employees. According to Gunawan, the employee's concern about his career is related to future orientation and optimism in reaching the desired career. An employee who cares about his / her career will show a distant view to the future and believe that the future that has been planned will be achieved through the preparation made. Conversely, employees who do not care about their career will ignore their responsibilities in making career planning, avoid and dare not decide on solutions to problems that are closely related to the employee's future career (Nurhaq, 2019).

Given the importance of perceived employability, it is necessary to pay attention to the factors underlying the level of individual understanding of perceived employability, especially in professional workers. Professional workers are required to have work competence according to requirements and must meet predetermined standards which contain values and professional code of ethics. The factors that influence the level of understanding of perceived employability consist of situational factors and individual resource factors. Berntson (2008) states that situational factors are the main factors affecting the perceived employability of individuals and can be seen from; (a) the structural state of the labor market; (b) career opportunities, (increased wages, better working conditions, job

stability, better career changes and fairness in careers); and (c) organization (policy regulation). Meanwhile, individual resource factors play a fundamental role in the perceived employability developed by individuals and consists of; (a) knowledge, skills, expertise and potential learned from formal or vocational education and experience; (b) subjective evaluation to change a situation as a form of motivation to achieve career goals (Kanto et al., 2020; Nuraini et al., 2019); (c) ability to relate to networks that provide information and support; (d) the ability for personal flexibility to adapt more easily; (e) demographics (age and sex) and personality (character) (Ervin et al., 2019); (f) the ability to use adaptive career strategies is useful for career development, career exploration abilities, goal achievement, indicators of perceived employability can emerge from within (internal) and from outside (externally) (Lestari & Kusumaputri, 2017).

Internal indicators arise because of an individual's assessment of his own use as a "worker" and show a suitability for his work environment through the use of adaptive career strategies. Meanwhile, external indicators come from better suitability of individuals with other jobs based on similarities in work experience and organizational similarities. In addition, there are other factors that affect the level of an individual's perceived employability, namely the source of career calling. Career calling that is felt by individuals is driven by the desire to do work with great love (religiosity) and the desire to pursue personal gain (secular) (Lestari & Kusumaputri, 2017).

Career adaptability is a characteristic that shows flexibility or a desire to fulfill career assignments, career transitions, and dealing with career trauma with the right steps (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The career dimension is a strategy for dealing with career obstacles, including: (1) concern about future careers; (2) self-control and career; (3) self-exploration curiosity and a supportive career direction; (4) self-confidence to achieve goals (Matheus Coolen, 2014).

Career engagement is a study of proactive career behavior based on self-initiative and deliberation (Jos Akkermans & Tims, 2017). Career engagement constructs include career self-management behavior, which is used to increase career opportunities and future success (Wiernik & Kostal, 2019). Career engagement is a career study that is specific, clear and focuses on the context of career development in general, so the construct of study is based on various study constructs in other work contexts. Career engagement is composed of six specific career behaviors that are deemed adequate to represent different manifestations of the general level of individuals who are proactive regarding their career development (Hirschi et al., 2014) including (1) career planning, (2) self-exploration of career, (3) environmental exploration of career, (4) networking, (5) deliberate skill development/self-capital, and (6) positioning behavior.

3. Methods

This study used 512 participants from Universitas Negeri Semarang randomly drawn from 8 faculties and various study programs. The average respondent is 20 years old. This study was analyzed using the SPSS PROCESS software. Calculation of the significance of indirect effects through mediator variables was analyzed using the biased corrected bootstrap method $N = 5,000$ with a 95% confidential interval in PROCESS software. Simple mediation in this study uses template model number 4, the dependent variable (Career Competencies/ CC), the independent variable (Career Engagement/ CE) and the mediator variable (Career Adaptability/ CA).

4. Data Collection

The career competencies variable uses the Career Competencies Questionnaire (CCQ) instrument (J. Akkermans et al., 2013) which consists of 21 items. Instrument points are built from the constructs of reflection on motivation, reflection on qualities, networking, self-profiling, work exploration, and career control. Respondents choose answers on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). Cronbach's alpha reliability is 0.900.

The instrument used was the career adaptability ability scale (CAAS) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) developed with 12 items consisting of constructs of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Respondents choose answers on a 5-point Likert scale, from not strong (1) to strongest (5). This scale reliability has a Cronbach's alpha value in this instrument 0.878.

Career engagement is measured using the Career Engagement Scale (CES) (Hirschi et al., 2014). This instrument consists of 9 items, which assesses the general degree to which a person has demonstrated various proactive behaviors to develop his or her career in the past 6 months. Answers were provided on 5-point Likert scale, from never (0) to always (5). Cronbach's alpha reliability value of 0.825.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Summary of intercorrelations, means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alpha among the assessed constructs.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1.Career Competencies	79.02	9.58			
2.Career Adaptability	43.28	7.10	.37**		
3.Career Engagement	31.55	5.36	.39**	.43**	-

N = 512, ** p < .01 (one tailed)

The results in table 1 show the average scores, standard deviations and correlations found among all variables. Based on the research results, all variables have a significant relationship. Thus, career competencies showed a significant correlation with career engagement ($p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.43$). Career competencies is positively correlated with career adaptability ($p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.37$). Likewise, the career adaptability relationship also correlates with career engagement ($p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.39$).

Table 2. Specific direct, indirect, and conditional indirect effects on career competence

Predictor	Dependent variable model (specific direct effects)			
	β	SE	t	p
Outcome : Career Adaptability				
Career Competence	0.27	0.03	9.20	0.000
Outcome: Career Engagement				
1. Career Competence	0.15	0.02	6.53	0.000
2. Career Adaptability	0.25	0.03	8.05	0.000
Total Effect	0.22	0.02	9.74	0.000
Indirect effects				
	β	SE	Bootstrapping BC 95 % CI	
Mediator			Lower	Higher
Career Adaptability	0.07	0.01	0.04	0.09

Table 2 presents the effects of direct and indirect effects between variables. The direct effect between career competencies and career engagement was proven to be significant ($p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.15$). Likewise, the direct relationship between career adaptability with career engagement shows the significant value of $p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.25$. The total effect of the relationship between variables was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.22$). Indirect effects can also be seen in table 2 which are proven to be all statistically significant. The indirect effect between career competence and career engagement mediated by career adaptability proved to be significant ($\beta = 0.07$, LL CI (95%) = 0.04, UL CI (95%) = 0.09). Thus, it can be concluded that this study supports the research objectives contained in Figure 2.

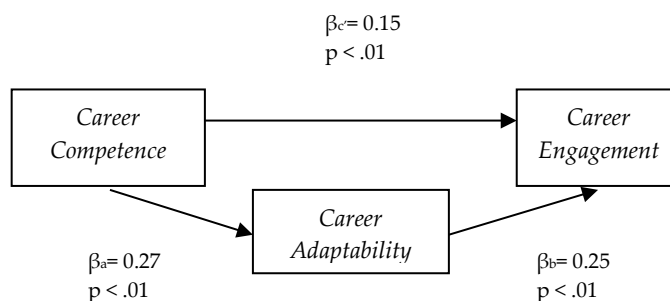


Figure 2. Mediation Model

Based on figure 2, Both career adaptability and career competencies sees as career resources for students (Jos Akkermans et al., 2018). This study shows a relationship between career competence, career adaptability and career engagement among students. These findings of confirm and highlight the existence of partial mediation career adaptability in the relationship of career competence and career engagement shown through direct and indirect effects. This finding supports the explanation (Jos Akkermans et al., 2015) that career competencies are primarily proactive in that they are about achieving “person-career fit” while that is career adaptability are primarily response in that it is about being able to adapt to constant changes.

Indirect effect of career adaptability, showed career competence prepare student for such situations by allowing to proactively craft their career while mastering adaptability resources allows individuals to effectively deal with situations that they face (Jos Akkermans & Tims, 2017). Career adaptability is a set of adaptive ability that encourages proactive career behavior in the form of career engagement. This finding also in support explanation (Hirschi et al., 2015) that four aspects of career adaptability can be understood more in terms of psychosocial resources and that career engagement is general degree to which someone is engaged in different career behaviors in order to proactively develop career.

Partial mediation in this study could be said, career adaptability (psychosocial resources) developing career competencies (personal resources) that help individuals to thrive career engagement (career outcome) in concept of JD-R theory. These findings can be used to provide practical intervention for college students to prompt how they build their career and engagement. According to the demands and career development of the 21st century, universities should provide career preparation and counseling programs that facilitate their students to design their careers.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, this research provides a source to explain that career adaptability mediates the relationship between career competencies and career engagement. The results of this research support the JD-R theory that career adaptability and career competencies are career resources. Counselors need to help individuals to prepare various competencies, so that they are able to survive conditions and support career attachments. Counselors can also advocate for individual management through various training activities and special education to reinforce career-supporting behaviors.

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Biography

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