

Career Adaptability As A Mediator Between Emotional Intelligence And Work Engagement

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Abstract: This current research based on problems experienced by college students of Universitas Negeri Semarang (Unnes). The purpose of this study was to investigate the indirect effect between emotional intelligence and work engagement in terms of career adaptability as a mediator variable. Using bias corrected bootstrap method $N = 5000$ in PROCESS software shows that emotional intelligence is directly related to work engagement ($\beta = 0.49$; $p < 0.01$), furthermore career adaptability has proven as mediating effects ($\beta = 0.05$; $p < 0.01$). These findings have implication that universities and counselors should provide career planning and counseling program as life-design counseling which facilitate students career design.

Index Terms: Career Adaptability, Emotional Intelligence, Work Engagement.

1, INTRODUCTION

Student careers need to be prepared from the start of the future compilation of their studies, college period as a critical period in career development (Dimakakou et al., 2015). Students who are continuing their studies at tertiary institutions will experience difficulties and challenges in the learning process. However, it has become a challenge, students during their college years are involved in the structure and compulsory activities (lectures, assignments and work on projects) that are needed for certain goals that have passed the examination, passed the practicum and graduated from college (Sulea et al., 2015). This is by job demand and resource models (JD-R) which explain the predictors of burn-out and work involvement (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009). The JD-R model assumes two main processes: (1) processes that are driven and started with recovery, which lead to poor repair through burnout; and (2) motivational processes supported by resources, leading to performance improvement through engagement (Salanova et al., 2009). Can be conveyed as a positive process in the JD-R model can be seen through work involvement, which is approved through an assessment submitted on the condition of cognition-affective that is captured energy levels, enthusiasm, and intensively developed (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006) on students during the study period. Personal resources are one of the important antecedents of work engagement, that engage employees as a person including optimism, self-efficacy, self-esteem, resilience, and an active coping style (Bakker et al., 2008). Personal resources in students can be seen from the self-motivational-emotional conditions when they begin to become part of the workforce during their studies. The role of emotions in individuals is considered as the energy that controls and regulates all actions. Emotional intelligence (EI) is seen as a set of interrelated abilities related to emotions. EI in the scope of work makes workers able to change and regulate their perception of the work environment (Wong & Law, 2002). In the 21st-century career development, vocational behavior is seen in terms of contextual, dynamic, nonlinear, unpredicted, rapid changes and personal patterns. The development of individual career behavior is determined by flexibility, employability, commitment, emotional intelligence, and lifelong learning (Savickas, 2012). The ability to regulate self-emotions can affect the level of adaptability (Schutte, et al. In Coetzee & Harry, 2014). EI as personal resources that influence work engagement can be understood within the framework of career construction theory (CCT), where career adaptability explains the relationship between personal ability and work engagement.

Career adaptability emphasizes the willingness and capability to cope with uncertain and unpredictable changes in the career environment through the flexibility of changing emotions, thoughts and behaviors (Johnston et al., 2016). It is therefore important to examine the relationship between EI and work engagement to understand the process of individual career adaptation. The concept places career adaptability as a mediator of emotional intelligence and work engagement.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Work Engagement

Work engagement as "a positive state of mind related to work is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigor is characterized by a high level of energy and mental flexibility at work, a desire to invest effort in work, and staying firm despite various difficulties; dedication refers to strong involvement in work and experiencing a sense of importance, enthusiasm, and challenge to work; absorption is characterized by fully concentrating and feeling absorbed in his work, so that time passes quickly and it is difficult to break away from work.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a part of social intelligence which includes the ability to monitor emotions of self and others, distinguish between these emotions and use the information in directing the thoughts and behavior of individuals (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In more detail, Wong & Law (2002) explains the emotional intelligence construct which consists of four dimensions: self-emotional appraisal (SEA), others-emotional appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE), and regulation of emotion (ROE). Emotional intelligence is a set of interrelated skills regarding the ability to accurately understand, judge, and express emotions; the ability to access and evoke feelings that help the thought process; ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions in supporting emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

2.3 Career Adaptability

Career adaptability refers to the flexibility or desire to fulfill career assignments, career transition and deal with career trauma with the right steps (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Career adaptability as readiness to deal with both predictable and unpredictable tasks and roles, to establish strategies to

enlarge opportunities to get appropriate results. Career adaptability can also be interpreted as readiness to cope with changes in work and working conditions. Career adaptability consists of dimensions: attention, control, curiosity, and confidence (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012).

3 METHOD

3.1 Participants and Procedure

This study used 286 participants from Universitas Negeri Semarang randomly drawn from 8 faculties and various study programs. The average respondent is 19 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 (Work Engagement/ WE), the independent variable (Emotional Intelligence/ EI), and the mediator variable (Career Adaptability/ CA).

3.2 Measures

Emotional Intelligence is measured using the Wong and Law emotional intelligence scale (WLEIS) developed by Wong & Law (2002). This instrument consists of 16 items consisting of the construct of self-emotional appraisal, others-emotional appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion with a 7-point Likert scale, from never (0) to always (6). Cronbach's alpha reliability value of 0.902. The instrument used was the career adaptability ability scale (CAAS) developed by Savickas (2012) with 24 items consisting of constructs of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Respondents were asked to rate their responses 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 0.925. The work engagement variable uses the student version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) instrument (Schaufeli et al., 2002) which consists of 14 items. Instrument points are built from the constructs of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Respondents choose answers on a 7-point Likert scale from never (0) to always (6). Cronbach's alpha reliability is 0.910.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results in table 1 show the average scores, standard deviations and correlations found among all variables. By the objectives of this study, all variables correlate significantly with each other. Thus, emotional intelligence showed a significant correlation with work engagement ($p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.54$). Emotional intelligence is positively correlated with career adaptability ($p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.31$) Likewise the career adaptability relationship also correlates with work engagement ($p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.32$).

Table 1

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

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Emotional Intelligence	70.83	11.75			
2. Career Adaptability	61.57	13.62	.31**		
3. Work Engagement	56.38	11.81	.54**	.32**	

$N = 286$, ** $p < .01$ (one tailed)

Table 2

Specific direct, indirect, and conditional indirect effects on work engagement

Predictor	Dependent variable model (specific direct effects)			
	β	SE	t	p
Outcome : Career Adaptability				
Emotional Intelligence	0.36	0.06	5.56	0.000
Outcome: Work Engagement				
1. Emotional Intelligence	0.49	0.05	9.58	0.000
2. Career Adaptability	0.14	0.04	3.16	0.000
Total Effect	0.54	0.05	10.96	0.000
	Indirect effects			
	β	SE	Bootstrapping 95% CI	BC
			Lower	Higher
Mediator				
Career Adaptability	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.10

Table 2 presents the effects of direct and indirect effects between variables. The direct effect between emotional intelligence and work engagement was proven to be significant ($p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.49$). Likewise, the direct relationship between career adaptability with work engagement shows the significant value of $p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.14$. The total effect of the relationship between variables was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.54$). Indirect effects can also be seen in table 2 which are proven to be all statistically significant. The indirect effect between emotional intelligence and work engagement mediated by career adaptability proved to be significant ($\beta = 0.05$, LL CI (95%) = 0.01, UL CI (95%) = 0.10). Thus it can be concluded that this study supports the research objectives contained in Figure 1.

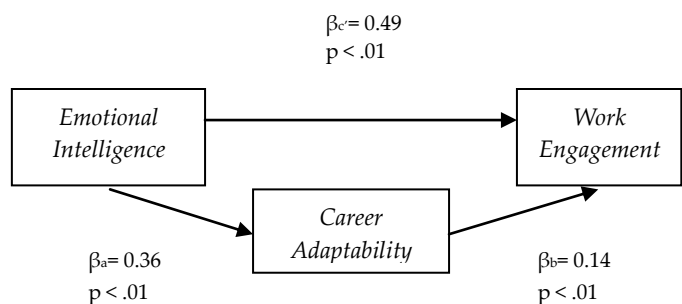


Figure 1. Mediation Model

This finding is in line with previous studies showing the role of career adaptability as a mediator at the core of the CCT concept. The career adaptability dimension is proven to mediate the relationship between specific personality and career engagement (Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016). Career adaptability is proven to be a full mediation between EI trait and academic engagement (Merino-Tejedor, Hontangas, & Petrides, 2018). Career adaptability partial mediation of positive personal trait towards work engagement (Yoo & Lee, 2019). The findings of this study confirm and confirm the existence of partial mediation career adaptability in the relationship of emotional intelligence and work engagement shown through direct and indirect effects. This finding supports the explanation (Merino-Tejedor, Hontangas, & Petrides, 2018) clarifying the interrelationship between EI as an antecedent, career adaptability as mediator and work engagement as an outcome variable. Specifically, these results highlight the

existence of partial mediation as the core concept of CCT that emphasizes the process of adaptation which includes concern, control, curiosity, and confidence that occurs in the formation of work engagement that begins with personal resources in the form of EI in the JD-R model. The link between adaptability and personal resources in a career can be described as a set of emotional-motivational abilities that constantly strive to integrate individual psychosocial relationships that aim to overcome, anticipate vocational development, work transitions and work trauma to realize engagement with their vocations. These findings can be used to provide practical intervention for college students to prompt how they build their career and engagement. Optimizing career adaptability means (a) becomes aware and concerned in preparation about vocational future, (b) enhances personal control (self-regulation and decision making), (c) shows curiosity in collecting information and exploring possibilities, (d) full of confidence in active-flexible attitude and appropriate performance to pursue their aspiration. Universities should provide career preparation and counseling programs that facilitate their students to design their careers according to the demands and career development of the 21st century. Suggested interventions according to the findings in this study are life-design counseling (Savickas et al., 2009; Savickas, 2012) through the process of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction.

5 LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. This research is still limited to knowing the mediating role of career adaptability. This study uses a work engagement instrument with 14 items and has not used the full version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) instrument. Further studies are needed to be related to career adaptability to job satisfaction and well-being in a broader concept related to career construction theory.

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