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Article

The role of optimism in subjective career success of millenial employees using job crafting as a mediator variable

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between optimism and subjective career success with job crafting as a mediating variable. The approach in this study uses the theory of resource conservation (COR) to explain individual behavior based on future needs in obtaining and maintaining resources derived from self and social in achieving goals that are valued personally. The research method used is quantitative. Respondents in this study with a total of 295 people. There are three measuring instruments used in this study, namely the Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI) for subjective career success variables. One of the dimensions of the measuring instrument multidimensional Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) for the optimism variable and The Job Crafting Questionnaire for the job crafting variable. The analysis used is Hayes to see the mediating relationship between job crafting and optimism on subjective career success. The results in this study indicate that the influence of job crafting partially mediates the relationship between optimism and subjective career success. Thus, to be able to increase subjective career success, organizations need to pay attention to opportunities to do job crafting in addition to the optimism factor of its employees.

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Introduction

The millennial generation, born between 1980 and 2000 now entering employment in vast numbers, will shape the world of work for years to come. Attracting the best of these millennial workers is critical to the future of business. Their career aspirations, attitudes about work, and knowledge of new technologies will define the culture of the 21st century workplace. Millennials matter because they are not only different from those that have gone before, they are also more numerous than any since the soon-to-retire Baby Boomer generation – millennials already form 25% of the workforce in the US and account for over half of the population in India. By 2022, millennials will form 40% of the global workforce (PwC's 14th Annual Global CEO Survey, 2022). The number of the Millennial generation will continue to grow to 50% of the global workforce so that it will reach 2.5 billion out of 7 billion world population with 60% living in Asia (Chansrichawala, 2022).

The term generation refers to a group of individuals who have various experiences, both work experience and life experience (Adiawaty, 2019). The type of work dominated by the Millennial generation is work as an employee which reaches a percentage of 52.70% because the Millennial generation was born and developed in an era of rapid technology.

As individuals in early adulthood who experience the transition stage from adolescence to adulthood, employees in the Millennial generation are encouraged to explore the desired career, identity and lifestyle (Tania & Rosari, 2021). Work is one way to build the structure and rhythm of individual life so that individuals are able to spend a third of their lives working (Santrock, 2015). This causes the Millennial generation to become fixated on the orientation of their career success which plays an important role for young employees or Millennial generation employees (Lakshmi & Sumaryono, 2018).

The millennial generation does things by thinking critically, so they need appreciation and feedback from their superiors, want work that is meaningful and enthusiastic about work. This causes the Millennial generation to be less willing to stay in the same organization compared to the previous generation of workers so they still like to move around the workplace (D'Amato and Herzfeldt, 2008). They do this to achieve career interests and success in the world of work (Cicek, Karaboga & Sehitoglu, 2016). Millennial employees are willing to leave one company to another for the sake of career interests in realizing career success (Mooney, Harris & Ryan, 2016).

The job transfer has an impact on the company such as production delays, lost during employee turnover, the need to work overtime, a lot of waste due to new employees and others (Dharma, 2013). Setyawan's research (2019) shows that employees who have a good level of career success will be able to work in totality to support the organization in achieving the goals of the company. Organizations must provide sufficient space for workers so that they are not easily left behind and continue to develop employee abilities so that they are more productive in achieving targets in experiencing career success (Sugiyanto, 2007).

Career success consists of subjective career success and objective career success. Subjective career success is seen as a change, informal learning, satisfaction and life balance for employees. Subjective career success consists of eight dimensions which include authenticity, growth and development, influence, meaningful work, personal life, quality work, recognition, and satisfaction (Shokley et al, 2016). Subjective career success is critical not only to individual well-being, but to organizational success. Subjective career success can come from the subjective welfare of employees due to positive emotions that foster optimal performance (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008). Meanwhile, objective career success is defined as career satisfaction with work that occurs when employees receive appreciation in a transactional form for their abilities, for example leading to promotions (Cenciotti, Alessandri & Borgogni, 2017).

Currently, individuals are more inclined to evaluate their career success subjectively, not only through what is obtained from work aspects, but how their role is in their living environment (Shockley et al, 2016). There is research which states that subjective career success affects organizational productivity (Pachulicz, Schmitt, & Kuljanin, 2008). Researchers found that a greater percentage of employees assess career success based on subjective indicators than those using an objective perspective (Eith, Stummer, & Schusterschitz, 2011; Littler, Wiesner, & Dunford, 2003; Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Davey, 2002). Subjective career success has a broader effect with a longer duration than objective career success, this is based on that subjective career success affects self-confidence and increases the motivation and effort given by individuals to broaden their perspectives and build their own resources (Diener, Nickerson, Lucas, & Sandvick, 2002). It is important for organizations to understand how employees feel about their subjective careers and what can influence this. The factors that can affect subjective career well-being can come from internal individuals and external.

Internal factors can be in the form of personal characteristics such as optimism (Spurk, Kauffeld, Barthauer, & Heinemann, 2015; Lounsbury et al., 2003; Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020) While external factors that affect individuals such as job crafting (Cenciotti, Alessandri & Borgogni, 2017), retirement, labor regulations, government policies and others have an impact on salaries, facilities, positions and rules regarding promotions and career paths (Heslin, 2005).

Someone who is more optimistic will improve his performance, which then increases the chances of his career success (Tenney, Logg, & Moore, 2015). This study will look at subjective career success rather than objective career success because subjective career success has a greater influence with a longer duration than objective career success (Abele & Spurk, 2009).

Individuals with high levels of optimism will experience fewer career obstacles and are more confident in making career decisions, have more career focus and have fewer doubts (Creed et al 2004; Patton et al. 2004). Individuals who are more optimistic will improve performance so that they can increase the chances of success (Tenney, Logg, & Moore, 2015).

In this study, we will look at the relationship between optimism and career success which has not yet been answered clearly in each of the studies. According to Haenggli and Hirschi (2020) there is no relationship between optimism and subjective career success except through the mediating role of other variables such as job crafting (Cenciotti, Alessandri & Borgogni, 2016). Millennials show flexibility in working and have the mindset to be able to change their existing job designs (Lumentut & Ambarwati, 2012).

However, research by Leana, Appelbaum & Shevchuk (2009) explains that the relationship between optimism and subjective career success is limited because it only considers the operationalization of subjective construction, one of which is through job crafting. Therefore, job crafting as an investment in resources is likely to return to the individual in the form of subjective career success and act as a mediator between optimism and subjective career success. According to Luthans et al (2007), job crafting is a construct that is representative in explaining the relationship between optimism and subjective career success. Basically optimism facilitates positive career evolution by promoting individual interaction and the work environment.

Research by Nielsen and Abildgaard (2012) states that there is a significant positive relationship between job crafting and subjective career success. Employees with good job crafting tend to show better performance and are more considered for promotion as career success (Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2015). Job crafting allows individuals to create work experiences to increase satisfaction by connecting with more people at work. Job crafting can improve social relations and resources such as support and autonomy, ability to challenge and minimize job demands (Tims, Derks & Bakker, 2016).

The approach in this study uses the theory of conservation of resources (COR) to explain individual behavior based on future needs in obtaining and maintaining resources that come from themselves and socially in achieving goals that are personally valued (Hobfoll et al, 2018). The COR theory approach sees career adaptation resources as well as other career resources seen in an integrated manner as factors that help individuals achieve the valued goals of subjective career success and objective career success (Hobfoll et al, 2018). COR theory suggests that individuals must invest resources (including personal resources and energy resources) to avoid running out of resources and obtain additional resources. Thus, the more personal resources employees have, the more capable they are of forming a profitable work situation (Hobfoll, 2011). Individuals with higher optimism are more able to modify the work environment with a more suitable personality and abilities. Thus, this study aims to see the role of optimism on subjective career success with job crafting as a mediator for employees.

Method

The participants in this study were employees who had worked for at least 1 year and were born in 1981-2000 whose background and field of work in this study were not defined as boundaries. Sampling was carried out using a non-probability sampling technique because the population size was not fully known so that the sample was obtained based on ease of access to obtain participants (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). However, to obtain the number of samples, the researcher used the G*Power application to measure the number with a moderate effect of .30 assuming a significance

level of 5% and a statistical power of 95%, which resulted in the minimum required sample size of 115 people.

In this study, the number of samples that were successfully obtained was 295 people, which means that the number of samples was sufficient to represent the population of the study group. Based on the demographic information provided by the participants, there were 121 men (41%) and 174 women (59%). In terms of age, there were 204 people (70%) from 21-30 years, 82 people (27%) from 31-40 years and 9 people (3%) over 40 years. From the length of work, the respondents who filled in the most from the 2-10 year range were 171 people (58%), then less than 2 years were 92 people and over 10 years were 32 people (11%). Then, from the marital status, the most filled were those who were married as many as 172 people (58%) and those who were not married as many as 123 people (42%).

Table 1. Demographic Data

Demographic Aspect	N	%
Gender		
Man	121	41%
Woman	174	59%
Age		
21-30	204	70%
31-40	82	27%
>40	9	3%
Length of Work		
≤2 Years	92	31%
2-10 Years	171	58%
>10 Years	32	11%
Marital Status		
Marry	172	58%
Not Merried yet	123	42%

Research Instruments

This study will examine 3 variables and measurements using the Subjective Career Success scale are carried out using the Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI) by Shockley et al (2015) which has been translated into Indonesian by Ingarianti, Suhariadi and Fajrianthi (2022) with a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .89. This measuring instrument consists of 24 items that have been arranged based on 8 dimensions using a Likert scale of 1-5 (1 = "Very Inappropriate"; 5 = "Very Appropriate"). Then the measuring instrument was re-measured for the reliability of this study sample and found a Cronbach Alpha of .93, which means it was reliable for the research participants with the sample in question. Examples of statement items used to measure subjective career success are "The organization where I work recognizes that I am an employee with good performance", "I am proud of the quality of work I produce" and "My career is personally satisfying".

Table 2. Reliability and CRIT test results

Measuring instrument	Number of Items	Measuring Instrument Reliability Cronbach's Alpha'	Validity Corrected-Item-Total-Correlation item
Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI)	24	.93	.40 - .69
The Job Crafting Questionnaire (TJCQ)	18	.90	.44-.68
Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) (Optimism)	4	.75	.33 - .51

The job crafting variable is measured using The Job Crafting Questionnaire by Slemp and Vella-Bredrock (2013) which has a total of 18 items arranged from 3 dimensions. While optimism is carried out using one of the dimensions of the multidimensional Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) measuring tool compiled by Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman (2007), totaling 7 items.

Data Analysis Techniques

Hypothesis testing was carried out through mediation–moderation analysis. The model used was the 4 moderated mediation model, with a 95% confidence level. This model is used to see conditional effects, namely when there is an indirect effect from the independent variable on the dependent variable through a mediator that depends on the moderator (Hayes, 2018). The program used is the Macro Process from Hayes (2018) which is installed on the SPSS software version 26.0.

Results and Discussion

The results of the mediation analysis carried out on the research model, the following results are obtained:

Table 3. Mediation Analysis Results (direct effect)

Connection	Cooffecient Regression (β)	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Konstanta	0.00	0.04	0.00	1.00	-0.07	0.07
OP → SCS	0.09	0.04	2.21	0.03	0.01	0.18
OP → JC	0.58	0.05	12.27	0.00	0.49	0.68

Table 4. Results of Mediation Analysis (direct, indirect and total effect)

Connection	Cooffecient Regression (β)	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Direct	0.09	0.04	2.21	0.03	0.01	0.18
Indirect	0.42	0.05	7.73	0.00	0.32	0.53
Total	0.51					

The results of the mediation analysis can be seen in Table 3 and Table 4. In Table 3 it can be seen the direct effect of each of the optimism and job crafting variables on the subjective career success variable. These two variables have a significant direct effect ($\alpha = 5\%$) on subjective career success in a positive direction. In addition, the relationship between the optimism variable and the job crafting variable is also significant ($\alpha = 5\%$) in a positive direction. As for the mediating effect (indirect effect) of job crafting variables on the relationship of subjective optimism and career success can be seen in the table above. The results obtained indicate that there is a significant mediating effect ($\alpha = 5\%$) of the job crafting variable on the relationship between optimism and subjective career success. The type of mediating influence that exists is a type of partial mediation. This is because the Variance Accounted For (VAF) value from the influence of this mediation has reached 88%. The VAF value is obtained from the ratio between Indirect Effect and Total Effect (0.42 / 0.51 * 100%). The mediator variable in this study has a significant effect on the dependent variable, namely subjective career success.

In obtaining appreciation from the company, employees need to improve both their performance and their quality in order to get maximum support from the company. This research model is:
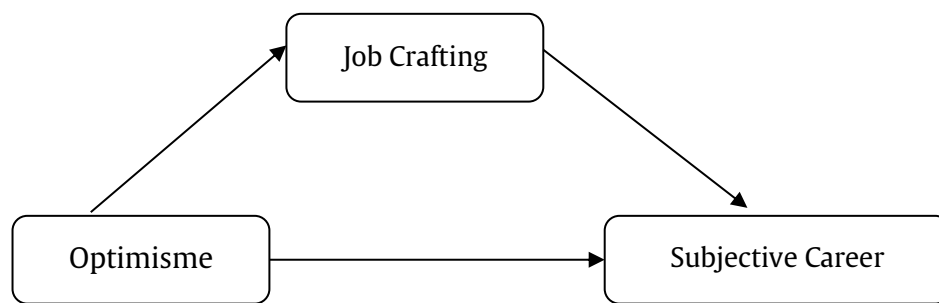
Figure 1. The relationship between optimism, subjective career success in the Millennial generation and the role of Job Crafting

The figure describes the role of psychological capital for career success with job crafting as a mediator.

Hypothesis:
Ha: Job crafting acts as a mediator between psychological capital and career success

This research is a quantitative correlation research to determine the relationship between psychological capital and career success variables. This study also looks at the role of mediating job crafting variables. The population of this study is all Indonesian citizens who have worked for at least 1 year and were born in the range 1981-2000. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, which is a technique used based on certain criteria that is considered capable of representing a previously known population (Hadi 2004).

The results showed that participants reported that optimism had an effect on subjective career success which could be seen from the t-statistic value which showed the number 2.21> 1.64, this means that the influence shown by this value is unidirectional. This is in accordance with the research of Spurk (2015), namely that the variable optimism is one of the triggering factors in changes from subjective career success. This shows that the more optimistic the individual is, the higher the chance he is subjectively satisfied with his career. Individuals who have a positive view of their careers tend to have the same view of career success (Ingarianti, Fajrianthi and Ahmad (2020). This is in line with the research of Creed et al (2004), namely individuals who have high optimism will experience fewer career obstacles and more confident in making career decisions, has more career focus and has low career doubts so that he is able to achieve career success in the future.

The effect of job crafting on optimism is also unidirectional, it can be seen from the t-statistic value which shows the number 12.27 > 1.64. Individuals with high job crafting will be optimistic in creating activities that are in accordance with work, values and intrinsic desires so that they can experience career success at work (Tims, Derks & Bakker, 2016). Job crafting or employee behavior that changes challenges or support can be in line with their ability to complete their work (Slemp & Bordrick, 2014).

This study also found that job crafting plays a role in the influence of subjective career success known from the t-statistic value which shows the number 16.23> 1.64. This means that the influence shown by this value is unidirectional so that if job crafting increases, subjective career success will increase. Job crafting plays a role in facilitating individuals to experience career advancement and helping to shape behavior in accordance with work relationships. Preferences that are in accordance with the expectations of the organization and superiors can encourage employees and create employees to be more skilled in the future in dealing with situational matters. Determining these preferences can be done according to challenges from oneself to work in accordance with the goals to be achieved. With this career achievement, the individual will experience career success in the long term, both in terms of career commitment and satisfaction (Kim & Beehr, 2008).

Based on the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) that coping behavior is carried out by employees in an effort to maintain, protect and collect resources to improve their welfare (Hobfoll,

2001). COR theory suggests that individuals must invest resources (including personal resources and energy resources) to avoid running out of resources and obtain additional resources. Thus, the more personal resources employees have, the more capable they are of forming a profitable work situation (Hobfoll, 2011). Individuals who do job crafting have optimism to deal with and modify the jobs they get with the ability they have in experiencing subjective career success.

There are many benefits of job crafting to achieve subjective career success. Job crafting allows individuals to create work experiences to increase satisfaction by connecting with more people at work. Job crafting can improve social relations and resources such as support and autonomy, ability to challenge and minimize job demands (Tims, Derks & Bakker, 2016). Research by Nielsen and Abildgaard (2012) states that there is a significant positive relationship between job crafting and subjective career success. Employees with good job crafting tend to show better performance and are more considered for promotion as career success (Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2015).

Conclusions

This study shows that optimism influences subjective career success in millennial employees. In addition, optimism also has a positive effect on job crafting which shows that if job crafting increases, then subjective career success will also increase. Likewise, job crafting has a significant and positive effect on subjective career success. Individuals with a high sense of optimism feel fewer career obstacles and are more confident in making career decisions, have more career focus and have fewer doubts so that they are able to solve challenges or problems they face while working and will achieve career satisfaction. he was headed.

The weakness in this study is that all variables use self-report, causing common method biases (CMB) as a consequence of using a questionnaire because the data is only taken once. Questionnaires that are distributed online allow for differences in understanding between respondents and researchers that affect the accuracy of the data. Respondents in this study are still not targeting more specific types of industries because each organization has different goals for forming the organization which will create different characteristics so that they can determine the effect on subjective career success.

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