



The role of environmental career resources as a mediator on the influence of optimism and self-esteem on subjective career success of millennial employees

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Abstract

Currently, over 17.6% of employed individuals are millennials, and by 2030, this proportion will reach 70%. However, the millennial age has a propensity for employment in pursuit of more subjective career success. This study aimed to examine optimism and self-esteem's effect on millennial employees' subjective career success using environmental career resources as mediators. This is a quantitative study using 237 millennial employees as the sample size. The Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI), Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and Career Resources Questionnaire (CRQ) were used in this research. The Jamovi application uses mediation analysis for data processing. According to the findings of this study, there are direct or indirect effects on subjective career success. Positive, direct, and significant effects of optimism and self-esteem on the career success of millennial employees. However, environmental career resources only significant as a mediator in the effect of optimism on subjective career success. Optimistic employees will be more confident in their ability to make career decisions. They will be able to build higher-quality social relationships that will assist them in achieving career success. Positive self-esteem in employees will motivate them to select a more successful position.

Keywords: Environmental career resources, Subjective Career Success, Optimism, Self Esteem, Millennials.

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Introduction

Generation Y or millennials constitute most of the workforce. According to 2016 data from the Central Bureau of Statistics Indonesia, the number of workers belonging to the millennial generation is 62.57 million, or around 17.96%. It is anticipated that this number will climb each year until it reaches a peak of 70% in 2030. (Ali & Purwadi, 2016). The millennial generation consists of individuals born between 1980 and 2000. They were born during the rise of information technology and the world of education; therefore, they possess features different from those of preceding generations (Meier & Crocker, 2010).

Workplace Millennials prioritize themselves, require continuous feedback, respect, and praise from their bosses, desire meaningful work, and are pleased about their jobs (David & Kralj, 2008). In addition, they relate to self-confidence, self-esteem, and a positive outlook on their future and career success (Bannon, Ford, & Meltzer, 2011; Logan, 2008; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Millennials prioritize careers, deriving greater satisfaction from their work environment than from their income (Eith, Stummer, & Schusterschitz, 2011; Heslin, 2005; Ingarianti, Suhariadi, & Fajrianti, 2022; Jerome, Scales, Whithem, & Quain, 2014). Consequently, millennials are synonymous with generations less likely to remain in the same organization and choose to switch employment than prior generations of workers (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). This employment act is undertaken in the interests of social needs, self-esteem and self-actualization, career development, and career success (Cicek, Karaboga, & Sehitoglu, 2016; Pandey, 2019; Poornima, 2009).

An individual's sense of job success is career success (Hall, 2002). Employees that have achieved a high level of career achievement will be able to contribute fully to the organization's success (Greenhaus, J. H. Parasuraman & Wormley, 1990). According to Hughes (1958), there are two dimensions of career success: Objective Career Success (OCS) and Subjective Career Success (SCS). Objective Career Success (OCS) is something that can be directly witnessed and quantified by others, such as salary, work level, promotion history, or job prestige, among others (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005; Gunz & Heslin, 2005; Spurk, Hirschi, & Dries, 2018). In contrast, Subjective Career Success (SCS) is described as career success influenced by less tangible and subjectively interpretable criteria (Shockley, Ureksoy, Heather Rodopman, Poteat, & Dullaghan, 2015). Subjective career success can come in the form of feelings of growth and development, recognition by others, and job or career satisfaction criteria (Shockley et al., 2015).

Several factors originating from internal and external individuals can influence subjective career success in general (Hirschi, Nagy, Baumeler, Johnston, & Spurk, 2017; Ingarianti et al., 2022). Internal aspects include knowledge, experience, awareness, self-esteem, optimism, and personality traits, whereas external factor such as environmental, supervisor support, career opportunities, type of work, and work atmosphere (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014; Hirschi et al., 2017; Hobfoll, 2002; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

Grant & Swartz (2011) researched the association between subjective career success and internal characteristics and discovered a correlation between success and positive traits such as awareness, optimism, and self-esteem. In keeping with this, several past research have utilized internal factors such as optimism as a predictor of subjective career success (Spurk, Kauffeld, Barthauer, & Nixon, 2014; Wolff & Moser, 2009). Optimism is the self-interpretation of positive events as something that occurs due to oneself, is permanent, and can occur in a variety of situations, while pessimism is the self-interpretation of negative events as something that occurs due to things external to oneself, is temporary, and can only occur in specific situations (Seligman in Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2015). A person with a high level of optimism has a greater level of subjective well-being, higher quality of social relations (Mens, Scheier, & Carver, 2016), and will experience fewer career hurdles, be more confident in making career decisions, have a more substantial career focus, and have fewer career doubts (Patton, Bartrum, & Creed, 2004), so that it is considered successful in a career (Rasdi, Ismail, & Garavan, 2011).

Additional research has also discovered a beneficial relationship between self-esteem and career success (Kammeyer-Mueller & Judge, 2008; Kuster, Orth, & Meier, 2013; Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2012; Waddell, 2006). Self-esteem is an individual's positive and negative opinion of oneself (Rosenberg, 1965). A person's self-evaluation consists of attitudes of acceptance or disapproval as well as the degree to which they feel deserving, capable, significant, and effective relative to other members of their social group (Coetsee & Dries, 2009). Self-esteem contributes to building a person's self-character and is a crucial feature of conduct directly related to numerous facets of life (Kaya & Saçkes, 2004). In this instance, self-esteem is considered important for a person's career satisfaction and success (Orth, Erol, & Luciano, 2018).

The previous study has demonstrated that self-esteem and optimism influence subjective career success. Nevertheless, the effect of self-esteem and optimism on subjective career success remains inconsistent among studies. Previous research has revealed a favorable relationship between optimism and self-esteem and subjective career success (Kammeyer-Mueller & Judge, 2008; Orth et al., 2012; Spurk et al., 2014; Waddell, 2006; Wolff & Moser, 2009). Nonetheless, it was discovered that a few of them had a relatively small/low effect (Kuster et al., 2013; Rasdi et al., 2011). While several other research failed to uncover a significant relationship between these two variables and subjective career success (Cai, 2015; Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020; Marcionetti & Rossier, 2021).

Internal variables are not only factor that can impact the subjective career success of an individual. Previous study has established that environmental influences have a favorable link with both subjective and objective career success in addition to optimism and self-esteem. These considerations may include supervisor support, career prospects, and type of work (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hirschi et al., 2017). A supportive workplace is one of the hopes and views of millennials for a successful career (E. S. Ng, Lyons, & Schweitzer, 2012). According to one of the meta-analytic research conducted by (T. Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005), organizational assistance in giving chances and support for career growth can influence the subjective career success of an individual. Organizational support is one of the components of Environmental Career Resources (ECR).

ECR is an environmental resource that encompasses not just social resources but also the organizational environment and other institutions that might play a role in career resources (Hirschi et al., 2017). ECR can take the form of career opportunities that provide personally attractive career advancement opportunities in an individual's current organization, organizational support for one's career development, opportunities to utilize and develop skills, as well as support from colleagues or colleagues in terms of career development.

According to the findings of Haenggli & Hirschi (2020) research, internal characteristics such as self-esteem and optimism are related to Environmental Career Resources (ECR). In contrast, self-esteem had a negative correlation with environmental career resources in this study, although optimism has a positive relationship with ECR. This contradicts the initial hypothesis that the two variables had a positive correlation with ECR. In contrast to Haenggli & Hirschi (2020), Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs (2003) discovered that self-esteem influences the environment, including interpersonal interactions and the capacity to take advantage of employment chances.

Based on the preceding description, it is necessary to explore further the characteristics of millennial employees who love to job hopping in pursuit of subjective career success. Internal factors like optimism and self-esteem, as well as external factor, have been correlated in previous studies as determinants of employees' subjective career success. Nonetheless, the effect of optimism and self-esteem on career success has not consistent across all studies. This study aimed to determine the effect of environmental career resources as a mediator of the influence of optimism and self-esteem on the subjective career success of millennial employees.

Method

Research Design

This research design is quantitative non-experimental research because it aims to measure research variables without carrying out the manipulation process. The scores reported by the research will be processed using numbers and then interpreted using statistical analysis. Specifically, this study aimed to determine the effect of environmental career resources as a mediator of the influence of optimism and self-esteem on the subjective career success of millennial employees. So, the hypothesis for this study are:

- H1. Optimism significantly predicts subjective career success of millennial employees
- H2. Self-esteem significantly predicts subjective career success of millennial employees
- H3. Environmental career resources mediated the effect of optimism to subjective career success of millennial employees
- H4. Environmental career resources mediated the effect of self-esteem to subjective career success of millennial employees.

Participants

This survey included employees who had worked for at least one year and were born between 1981 and 2000. Background and field of work are not limited to this study. The sampling was conducted using a non-probability sampling technique. The selection of this technique was since the total population size is unknown, hence participants are sampled depending on their accessibility (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013). To calculate the sample size, the researcher used the G*Power application with a moderate effect size of 0.30, a significance level of 5%, and a statistical power of 95%, resulting in a minimum sample size of 115 individuals.

Instruments

Based on the previously mentioned model, four factors will be examined in this study. Subjective career success variables will be measured utilizing the Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI) developed by Shockley et al. (2015) and translated into Indonesian by Ingarianti et al (2022) with a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .92. This measurement tool consists of 24 items separated into 8 aspects using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = "Very Incompatible" and 5 = "Very Appropriate"). The measuring device was then re-evaluated for its reliability in this study sample and a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.93 was determined, indicating that it was reliable for the study participants in question. Examples of statements used to gauge subjective professional success are "My supervisor says I do an excellent job," "My career is personally satisfying," and "I continue to grow my skill set."

Optimism was measured by using one of the dimensions from multidimensional of Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) by (Luthans et al., 2015), that consist of six items. For self-esteem use Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale develop by Rosenberg (1965). Finally, environmental career resources variables are measured using the Career Resources Questionnaire (CRQ) by (Hirschi et al., 2017) that consist of 13 items.

Research Procedure

This study examines the role of environmental career resource variables in optimism and self-esteem's influence on millennial employees' subjective career success. Online distribution of questionnaires was employed to collect data. To ensure that participants understand their rights and responsibilities in this research, it is stated at the beginning of the questionnaire that participation is voluntary, and that people may withdraw at any time. Approximately one month was devoted to collecting data, after which the SPSS and JASP

statistical applications were used for data collection. Previously, reliability and validity tests were conducted on all measuring devices, yielding reliability coefficients between 0.70 and 0.90 and validity lambda values over 0.40 for each item.

Data Analysis

The hypotheses were analyzed using mediation–moderation analysis by using Jamovi application. This model is used to identify conditional effects, i.e., when there is an indirect effect from the independent variable to the dependent variable via a mediator whose influence is contingent on the moderator (Hayes, 2013).

Result

Table 1 shown demographic data form 237 participants for this study. This number indicating that the number of samples was sufficient to reflect the study group's entire population.

Table 1. Demographic Data

Demographic Aspect	N	%
Gender		
Male	91	38,4%
Female	146	61,6%
Age		
21-30	177	74,7%
31-40	55	23,2%
>40	5	2,1%
Length of employment		
≤2 Years	75	31,6%
2-5 Years	96	40,5%
5-10 Years	47	19,8%
>10 Years	19	8,1%
Position Level		
Staff	179	75,3%
Supervisor	17	7,3%
Coordinator	16	6,8%
Other	25	10,6%
Marital status		
Married	95	40%
Single	142	60%

Table 1 shows number of female respondents (51%) is more than male respondents (49%). Based on age, the most age category is between 21 to 30 years (74.7%) and the more than 40 years age category is the least age category (2.1%). Most of the respondents in this study had worked for two to ten years. (40.5%), 31% had worked for less than 2 years, 19.8% had worked in the 5–10 years range and 8.1% Respondents have worked for more than 10 years. Based on marital status, more than half of the respondents were not married or 60%. Based on the position level, employees at the staff level (75.3%) are the most respondents in this study.

Table 2. Matrix Correlation

Variable	1	2	3	4
1 Subjective career success	1			
2 Optimism	0,52**	1		
3 Self Esteem	0,35**	0,27**	1	
4 Environmental Career Resources	0,63**	0,35**	0,19*	1

* Significant level 0,01 (p<0,01)

**significant level 0,001 (p<0,001)

Table 2 reveals positive correlation for all variables. Optimism had strong positive correlation with subjective career success, $r = 0.52$. The positive correlation means that in general, millennials employee who had high optimism tend to achieve their subjective career success. Self-esteem also had positive correlation with subjective career success but weak correlation, $r = 0.19$. The mediator variable, environmental career resources also had strong positive correlation with subjective career success, $r = 0.63$. The following are the outcomes of the mediation analysis conducted on the research model:

Table 3. Mediation Analysis Results

	β	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Optimism \Rightarrow ECR \Rightarrow KKS						
Direct	0,30	0,27	6,19	<.001	1,16	2,24
Indirect	1,16	0,19	4,64	<.001	0,51	0,30
Self-esteem \Rightarrow ECR \Rightarrow KKS						
Direct	0,18	0,13	3,83	<.001	0,23	0,30
Indirect	0,05	0,08	1,68	.092	-0,02	0,30

Table 3 shows the mediation study results, optimism directly affects subjective career success ($\beta = 0.30$, $p = .001$), also for the self-esteem variable, which directly influenced subjective career success ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = .001$). In addition to the direct influence, the involvement of the resource career environment as a mediator is significant in the relationship between optimism and subjective career success ($\beta = 1.16$, $BootLLCI = 1.16$, $BootULCI = 2.24$, $p = .001$). However, the effect of environmental career resources as a mediator in the effect of self-esteem to subjective career success was not significant ($\beta = 0.05$, $BootLLCI = -0.02$, $BootULCI = 0.30$, $p = 0.092$). According to the indirect effect analysis findings, the environment career resource plays a role in mediating the relationship between optimism and subjective career success. However, the environment career resources does not play a role in mediating the effect form self-esteem to subjective career success. Self-esteem variables can directly influence an individual's subjective career success, but not via career environment resources. Based on these findings, three research hypothesis can be accepted: Optimism significantly predicts subjective career success of millennial employees, self-esteem significantly predicts subjective career success of millennial employees, and environmental career resources mediated the effect of optimism to subjective career success of millennial employees. The last hypothesis is rejected because in this research environmental career resources do not mediate the effect of self-esteem to subjective career success of millennial employees.

Based on the analysis, this is the effect size form each path with the research model. Environmental career resources had the biggest effect size in this model to subjective career success rather than the other independent variables. There is no significant effect form self-esteem to environmental career resources. This effected to role of environmental career resources as a mediator toward the self-esteem to subjective career resources. The figure 1 below, shown the path and the effect size form this study models. The straight line indicates the effect is significant and the dash lines is not significant.

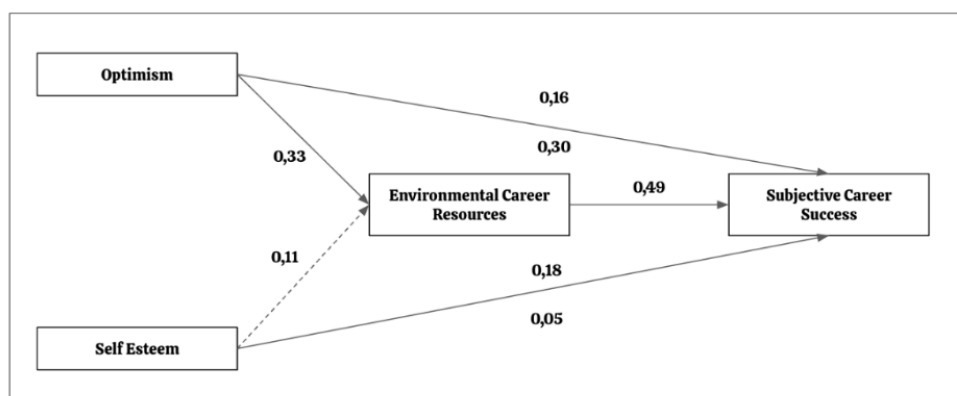


Figure 1. Effect size from each path

Discussion

This study's finds that optimism and self-esteem enhance subjective job success, particularly among millennial employees. On this measure, optimism has a considerable effect on environmental career resources but not on self-esteem. In this study also found that environmental career resources as a mediating variable influenced subjective career success.

This study had proven that optimism influences the subjective career success of millennial employees. Following the findings of Spurk et al. (2014), the optimism variable influences the subjective career success of individuals. This suggests that the more optimistic an individual is, the greater the likelihood he is subjectively satisfied with his career. Individuals' guiding concept at work is learning from any challenge they encounter and always looking on the bright side. Individual optimism is a reasonably persistent trait defined by a propensity to experience optimistic emotional states (Lau & Shaffer, 1999; Levin & Stokes, 1989; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). This is reinforced by Ingarianti et al. (2022) assertion that an individual who views his career favorably tends to have a similar view of his career success. Positive feelings can assist individuals in overcoming obstacles and adopting appropriate career behaviors to attain career success on their career journey (Langworth, 2017; Lin, Luan, & Zhao, 2022).

Millennials are optimistic and self-confident, particularly regarding their function as employees, and tend to be ambitious, success-oriented, and achieve (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). Furthermore, millennials are viewed as youthful employees that are enthusiastic, self-esteem, and believe they have the right to have their opinions heard and expectations satisfied as "valuable" employees (Donnison, 2007). As a result, they are willing to do anything, even exaggerate their work, to obtain subjective career success.

This study also found that self-esteem is a significant and advantageous predictor of an individual's subjective career success. Individuals with high self-esteem will want to take on roles at work that are compatible with their positive self-image, with a particular emphasis on difficult, fulfilling, and "high status" positions. (Gottfredson, 1981; Super, 1980). Thus, positive self-esteem can generate self-fulfilling prophecies manifested in career successes (Chen & Klimoski, 2003; McNatt & Judge, 2004). The features of the millennial generation, the topic of this study, are consistent with these findings. According to David & Kralj (2008), the millennial generation has a high sense of self-esteem and a critical disposition. They will prioritize themselves at work, require continuous feedback, gratitude, and praise from their superiors, desire meaningful work, and are happy about their jobs (David & Kralj, 2008).

Environmental career resources have also been proven to predict millennial employees' subjective career success significantly. Environmental career resources such as peer and organizational support, career opportunities, and work challenges have a bigger impact on influence, recognition, personal life, and overall satisfaction (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020; Mens et al., 2016). Individuals who receive support from their peers and organizations will feel acknowledged for their accomplishments. Individuals' ability to make greater and more significant contributions to their organizations is also influenced by the availability of job support and difficulties. This indicates that professional environment resources significantly affect the type of success centered on meaningful work and individual work-life balance (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020).

This study also discovered that the environment / environmental career resources mediate optimism and millennial employees' subjective career success. This might mean that a person who is optimistic about his career will affect his career environment to help him achieve his career success. Individuals with a strong sense of optimism are motivated and confident in their talents, allowing them to take advantage of possibilities in their surroundings and face work challenges that can lead to subjective perceptions of success (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020).

However, the significance of environmental career resources as a mediator in effect of self-esteem has not significantly impact the subjective career success of millennial employees. Millennials are characterized by their high self-esteem (David & Kralj, 2008). Extremely high self-esteem can cause individuals to become overconfident, putting them in danger of making bad career decisions and harming their relationships with coworkers (Vancouver & Kendall, 2006). A high level of self-esteem can also result in the belief that everything can be accomplished independently through one's abilities, making it less able to see possibilities and cultivate environmental resources that can help obtain subjective career success. Haenggli & Hirschi (2020) established a correlation between self-esteem and optimism regarding the utilization and development of environmental resources. People with high self-esteem but no optimism develop fewer environmental resources since they may only rely on themselves without an optimistic outlook on the future.

This study has several limitations that could be addressed in future research. First, the data in this study are self-reported; therefore, there is a possibility of bias on the part of the respondents. Second, common method

bias testing was not performed in this research, therefore measurement mistakes are conceivable. This research is also not concerned with the respondents' background or type of work industry. Researcher believed that differences in background and industry play a role in the company's environmental career resources.

Conclusion

This study had found there is positive and significant impacts of optimism and self-esteem on the subjective career success of millennial employees. Environmental career resources also mediated the impact of optimism to subjective career success of millennial employees, but not in self-esteem to subjective career success. Optimistic employees will be more confident in their ability to make career decisions. They will be able to build higher-quality social relationships that will assist them in achieving career success. Optimistic employees are more equipped to realize their potential, allowing them to overcome job obstacles and attain the desired career goals and satisfaction. Individuals with high self-esteem evaluate themselves favorably, allowing them to choose and solve their challenges, yet they prefer to rely only on themselves.

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