

The Relationship Between Career Resilience and Subjective Well-Being: The Mediation Effect of Work Stress and Career Success

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Abstract: The relationship between career resilience and subjective well-being: The mediation effect of work stress and career success. The issue of continuous change in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 and the development of the workforce creates uncertain conditions. This requires employees to be ready and able to face the consequent challenges and changes that occur in their workplace. The numerous demands this imposes can be a threat to employee well-being. The concept of this study was based on (REF) study. However, we included a wider range of subjects, 709 individual employees from various organizations, in Indonesia. The results of a mediation analysis show that career resilience has a positive relationship with life satisfaction and work stress, but there is no mediating effect of work stress and career success in the relationship between these two variables. This result differs from previous studies, which have shown that the relationship between career resilience and life satisfaction is mediated by work stress and career success, with the exception of job level.

Keywords: Career resilience, work stress, career success, job satisfaction, life satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology and innovation in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 has occurred at an unprecedented pace, allowing innovation in various aspects, such as products, services, and business models, and has caused significant changes in human resource management (Guerra Guerra, 2018). These changes affect organizations in various ways,

such as adaptation to the future work environment, organization, and human resource systems adaptation (Volini et al., 2019). Therefore, organizations need to continually change as people learn new things, and changing job demands and the skills needed for these drives the demand for new skills and expertise (Deloitte, 2016). Although the implementation of



organizational change can have a positive impact in the long term, the change process is a challenge for organizations. As a result, individuals experience uncertainty, feelings of insecurity, worry about potential failure in facing new situations and stress at work, all of which affect employee well-being (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006; Swanson & Power, 2001; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Organizational change also has an impact on changing demands. A demanding and stressful work environment can cause work stress, and is the largest threat to employee well-being (Ilies et al., 2015; O'Donovan et al., 2019).

Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic has had many impacts on the world and exacerbates pre-existing conditions of uncertainty, such as the economic, socio-economic, income, education, and employment sectors (Hite & McDonald, 2020; Lahiri & Sinha, 2021). The significant changes felt by workers are the result of obstruction of business processes from various sectors which have led to changes in workplace policies, starting from salaries, and even employees layoff (Lahiri & Sinha, 2021). On the other hand, organizations also experience difficulties because they suddenly face such a challenging situation. Human capital must quickly find solutions to help companies adapt and cope with the fundamental changes

that have resulted from the pandemic (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Prochazka et al., 2020). From this condition, pandemics can lead to destruction, depression, loneliness, and domestic violence by individuals (Pandey et al., 2020). The lockdown policy during a pandemic also generally has been reported to have a negative impact on job and family satisfaction which impacted individual well-being (Möhring et al., 2021).

Research conducted by Han et al. 2019 using a sample of 527 working professionals shows that career resilience can support better subjective well-being, and that this is explained by the mediating role of career success and work stress. We refer to Han et al.'s study to determine whether a different population with a different demographic background shows similar results. Indonesia has also experienced changes due to the industrial revolution and the Covid-19 pandemic. Given that changes will continue to occur, every employee needs to be prepared by increasing their abilities and skills (Rohida, 2018). Further, researchers see the issue of career resilience as a soft skill needed to survive in a complex work environment, making it safer and increasing individuality. Thus, career resilience should be considered as a pillar of management in an organization (Maree, 2017).

Employee well-being is very important for the survival and development of an organization (Spreitzer & Porath, 2012) because it affects both employees and organizations. Low well-being makes employees tend to be less productive, ineffective decision-makers, prone to absenteeism, and consistently reduces their contribution to the organization. Moreover, low well-being can also affect turnover intention, job performance, and affective commitment (Price & Hooijberg, 1992; Zheng et al., 2015). On the other hand, high employee well-being benefits the organization because it has a positive correlation with higher profitability in business units (Straume & Vittersø, 2012). Well-being itself is a multidimensional concept and is defined differently in the literature (Fisher, 2014).

A volatile work environment due to changes in various contexts can not only affect the well-being of employees, but also affect one's career in several ways: how one chooses a career, how one approaches and develops a career, and how one evaluates a career (Mishra & McDonald, 2017). The impact of this is that individuals are required to display resilience and ability to adapt to changing demands in the work environment (Y. (Jade) Han et al., 2019). Individuals are also indirectly required to be more adaptive,

agile, employable, and resilient (Y. (Jade) Han et al., 2019). Resilience has also been considered to be one of the priorities in the 2020 health campaign carried out by the World Health Organization, both at the individual and the organizational levels (Ziglio, 2017). Career resilience is defined as the process of individual development to survive, adapt, or develop in their career despite facing challenges, changes, and disruptions (Mishra & McDonald, 2017). Resilience is a key characteristic, because it affects the individual's well-being (Di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2015).

Based on past research, there is a significant negative relationship between career resilience and job stress (Han & Kim, 2019). Job stress is defined as something in a work environment that is considered threatening or demanding, or something in the work environment that makes individuals uncomfortable (Stanton et al., 2001). One survey has shown that 87% of employees feel stress due to their work (Cigna, 2019). The high level of job stress felt by employees can trigger problems in the organization, such as low productivity, absenteeism, and high turnover, affecting well-being and increasing personal problems, such as alcohol consumption and drug use (Bell et al., 2012; Danna, 1999). Research conducted by Tien and Wang (2017) showed that career

resilience is an important factor of psychological capital and is necessary for workers to successfully manage stress. This is because the higher the match between the abilities of employees and the requirements of their roles in the organization, the more likely it is that they will be able to adjust effectively to job demands and achieve successful career outcomes (Han et al., 2019). Individuals who have career resilience tend to show adaptive behavior related to perseverance, flexibility, and determination in overcoming obstacles so that they can reduce the perception of job stress and can indirectly improve employee well-being (Han et al., 2019).

Career resilience is known to have a significant relationship with career success (Ahmad et al., 2019; Han et al., 2019). Career success can be assessed by looking at both subjective and objective career outcomes. Most people define their career success in the same way, on the basis of current income, promotion, and job satisfaction (Heslev, 2005). In more detail, subjective career success is an individual's reaction to their career experience and is generally operationalized with job satisfaction; meanwhile, career success objectives are related to quantitative success measurements such as salary and job level (Heslev, 2005). Individuals who have career resilience are

thought to have a low perception of work stress and can increase their both their subjective and objective career success (Han et al., 2019). When individuals successfully adapt to changes or failures they experience at work, individual satisfaction with their work will also increase, which will then have an impact on other aspects of life such as life satisfaction (Han et al., 2019; Heslev, 2005; Ilies et al., 2015). Moreover, success in overcoming setbacks at work means that individuals are able to complete their work demands, which generally can be measured by their salary level and the opportunity to gain promotion (Han et al., 2019).

Previous research suggests that the existence of career resilience creates a tendency for individuals to adapt and engage in effective career management behaviors. Career resilience can affect life satisfaction by increasing subjective and objective career success, such as job satisfaction, salary, and job levels, and increase employee related well-being by reducing the level of job stress experienced by individuals (Han et al., 2019). Taken from (Han et al., 2019) we then suggested the following hypotheses:

H1: Career resilience is positively associated with life satisfaction.

H2: Work stress mediates the relationship between career resilience and life satisfaction.

H3: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between career resilience and life satisfaction.

H4: Salary level mediates the relationship between career resilience and life satisfaction.

H5: Job level mediates the relationship between career resilience and life satisfaction.

METHODS

This study used a cross-sectional survey for data collection. The survey was administered online using survey software (SurveyMonkey.com) and distributed via social media, including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp Messenger. Using convenience sampling, people who were willing to participate could directly access the questionnaire via the shared link on the broadcast message. The participants in this study were employees living in Indonesia; data was obtained from convenience sample of 937 participants. Among these, only 729 participants completed the entire questionnaire; 20 participants incorrectly answered the attention check question, so the

final sample was 709. This included 66% women and 34% men. Most participants had an undergraduate educational background (80%), 8% were high school graduates, 7% had a Master's-level education, and 6% had a diploma-level education. There were no participants with a doctoral-level education.

Common Method Bias

Common method variance is important to note when the instrument used to collect data is a self-report questionnaire. The possibility of common method bias in a study occurs when the data for the predictor variables and criterion variables are obtained from the same person and have similar measurement contexts, item contexts, and item characteristics (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To reduce errors in internal consistency or common method variance, and in accordance with previous research suggestions, we employed an *ex ante* strategy by using several measurement instruments, mixing the order of questions, and using the principles of anonymity and confidentiality in designing and administering the questionnaire (Chang et al., 2010). The researchers also used an attention check item to reduce bias in filling out the questionnaire. Harman's single-factor test gave an 18.79% variance score, which means that there was no single factor identified and hence CMV was not an issue in this study (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Measures

This study used the same measures as those of Han et al. (2019). All instruments were adapted to Bahasa Indonesian using the procedure of Sousa and Rojjanasrirat (2011). Data were collected using a self-report online questionnaire that included a statement of conformity with the conditions on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; and 4 = Strongly Agree).

Career Resilience

The measure used was the Career Resilience Scale by Noe et al. (1990). This scale consists of 13 statement items that measure a person's career resilience. The Cronbach's alpha (α) value for this scale was .73 and the omega (ω) value was .71. Examples of items on this measuring instrument are "I have you outlined ways of accomplishing jobs without waiting for my boss" and "I help co-workers with their projects".

Work Stress

Work stress was measured using a 6-item questionnaire by Lait and Wallace (2002), as this tool is useful for measuring employees' perceptions of the level of stress they feel at work. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha (α) gave a value of .76 while the omega (ω) value was .77. Confirmatory factor analysis ($\chi^2 = 26.870$, $df = 9$, $RMSEA =$

.053, $CFI = .983$, $TLI = .971$) indicated a good fit to the data. One example of an item used in this measuring instrument is "I feel overwhelmed by my work."

Job Satisfaction

The instrument was a questionnaire consisting of 36 items, the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985). Reliability testing by Cronbach's alpha (α) obtained a value of .91 and an omega (ω) value of .91. Examples of items included in this questionnaire are "I feel a sense of pride in doing my job." and "Communication seem good within this organization."

Salary and Job Level

Salaries and job level were measured by questions where participants were asked their income per year starting from \leq IDR 50,000,000 up to \geq Rp 600,000,001, and their job level, categorized as 1 = Staff to 6 = Executive Director or equivalent.

Life Satisfaction

Employee life satisfaction was measured using the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener et al. (1985). This measuring instrument gave a Cronbach's alpha (α) value of .73 and an omega (ω) value of .72. One example of an item used in this measurement instrument is "I am satisfied with my life."

Control Variables

The control variables used in this study were those that are known to have a relationship between life satisfaction and career success: age (Super, 1980), gender, education level, and job tenure (Morrow & McElroy, 1987).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To assess the measurement model of this study, researchers conducted the same test as in Han et al. (2019) can be seen in Figure 1. AMOS 21 was used to perform a confirmatory factor analysis comparing the four-factor model, the three-factor model, and the one-factor model. The results indicated that the hypothesized model ($\chi^2 = 6347.479$, $df = 1704$, $RMSEA = .062$, $CFI = .663$, $GFI = .729$, $TLI = .650$) provided the best fit to the data. The alternative three-factor ($\chi^2 = 7250.326$, $df = 1707$, $RMSEA = .068$, $CFI = .598$, $GFI = .675$, $TLI = .583$) and one-factor ($\chi^2 = 15568.467$, $df = 1770$, $RMSEA = .105$, $CFI = .000$, $GFI = .290$, $TLI = .000$) models also did not provide a good fit to the data based on Hooper et al's (2008) goodness of fit criteria.



Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Descriptive statistics, including means, correlations, and standard deviations for all study variables are presented in Table.1. The correlation analysis gave the same results as previous research showing that there was a significant relationship between career resilience and life satisfaction, $r = .120$, $p < .05$, two tails. This result supports Hypothesis 1. With an effect size of $r^2 = .014$, it can be concluded that only 1.4% of the proportion of life satisfaction variance is associated with career resilience variance. According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2017), the effect size $r^2 < 9\%$, can be said that there is a small relationship between career resilience and life satisfaction. The descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations of all study variables can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations of Study Variables.*

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Career Resilience	38.938	3.517	-								
2 Work Stress	13.492	2.815	-.094*	-							
3 Job Satisfaction	95.317	12.439	.079*	-.667**	-						
4 Salary	1.865	0.641	.035	-.039	.094*	-					
5 Job Level	1.520	0.981	.009	.015	.097**	.310**	-				
6 Life Satisfaction	12.415	2.298	.120**	-.283**	.364**	.210**	.102**	-			
7 Gender	-	-	-.043	.164**	-.096*	-.157**	-.117**	-.009	-		
8 Age	27.151	3.678	-.027	.012	-.020	.178**	.201**	.107**	-.085*	-	
9 Education	2.853	.643	.049	.013	.053	.264**	.083*	.114**	.011	.119**	-
10 Job Tenure	-	-	-.061	.035	-.036	.167**	.073	.108**	-.050	.442**	.088

Note: *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Model testing was carried out using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2018) in IBM SPSS 24. Mediator testing using PROCESS was used because it allows simultaneous testing with multiple mediators, which can reduce estimation bias (Hayes, 2018). Based on the model provided by Hayes (2018), which stated that the inclusion of an additional mediator does not require a different model number, we used Model 4, which includes work stress variables, job satisfaction, salary, and job level as a

mediator. PROCESS automatically detects the number of variables listed and estimates a parallel multiple mediator model if there is more than one variable in the list (Hayes, 2018). This analysis was carried out with control variables; namely, age, gender, highest education level, and length of time in work. The results showed differences from the previous research conducted by Han et al. (2019). A comparison of the results of mediator testing can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. *Path Coefficients and Indirect Effects for Mediation Model on Life Satisfaction*

Path	Present Study		Han et al., (2019)	
	SE	β	SE	β
Career Resilience → Life Satisfaction	.01	.06**	.04	.05
Career Resilience → Work Stress	.02	-.07**	.05	-.27**
Career Resilience → Job Satisfaction	.06	.25	.04	.44**
Career Resilience → Salary	.47	.01	.04	.13**
Career Resilience → Job Level	.97	.00	.04	.09*
Work Stress → Life Satisfaction	.03	-.08**	.05	-.29**

	Present Study		Han et al., (2019)	
Job Stress → Life Satisfaction	.00	.05**	.05	.21**
Salary → Life Satisfaction	.00	.52**	.05	.19**
Job Level → Life Satisfaction	.38	.08	.05	-.03
Career Resilience → Work Stress → Life Satisfaction	.01	.01	.02	.08**
Career Resilience → Job Satisfaction → Life Satisfaction	.01	.02	.03	.09**
Career Resilience → Salary → Life Satisfaction	.01	.00	.01	.02*
Career Resilience → Job Level → Life Satisfaction	.00	.00	.00	-.00
Total Effect Career Resilience → Life Satisfaction	.00	.08**	.04	.24**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

To see the mediating effect of work stress (Hypothesis 2) and career success, which includes job satisfaction (Hypothesis 3), salary (Hypothesis 4), and job level (Hypothesis 5), we examine the indirect effects identified in the mediation test. Based on the results in Table 2, it seems that job satisfaction, work stress, salary, and job level do not mediate the relationship between career resilience and life satisfaction, and thus do not support Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 3, Hypothesis 4, and Hypothesis 5. These results differ from those of Han et al. (2019), who showed that only job-level variables lacked any mediating effect, while work stress, job satisfaction, and salary variables mediated the relationship between career resilience and life satisfaction.

Based on our results, career resilience is significantly positively related to life satisfaction. It has small relationship and this relationship cannot be explained by the mediating role of work stress and career

success (job satisfaction, salary, and job level). Career resilience is also known to be significantly negatively associated with work stress.

Discussion

The analysis conducted on Hypothesis 1 provides evidence that career resilience has a significant and positive relationship with life satisfaction, although it has small relationship. This means that the higher a person's career resilience, the higher their level of life satisfaction. These results provide evidence that there are aspects related to work (career resilience) that have a relationship with an individual's life satisfaction. When individuals are able to adapt to changes or setbacks experienced in their work, they become more persistent in achieving their goals, which leads to career satisfaction (Mishra & McDonald, 2017). Individual achievement and satisfaction in one's career is one aspect that can improve life satisfaction (Zheng et al., 2015), and

thus being an adaptive individual can also increase one's life satisfaction.

This study indicates that career resilience has a significant and negative relationship with work stress. This means that the higher the level of career resilience a person has, the lower their perception of work stress will be. These results indicate that a person's work stress is related to their ability to adapt to change when the environment is not supportive. Individuals who have the ability to adapt when facing failures or setbacks in their careers will be more able to withstand difficulties and perceive their workload as less heavy. Individuals with career resilience have higher self-efficacy (Mishra & McDonald, 2017), and their belief in their abilities allows them to be optimistic when managing work demands and overcoming the obstacles they face at work. This may help individuals form their perceptions of their workload so that their work stress is low.

The results of confirmatory factor analysis were similar between Han et al., (2019) and our results. It showed that the hypothesized four-factor model provided the best fit to the data, although our model fit was not as good as Han et al., (2019). We use the same procedures with previous research by

specified career resilience, work stress, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction as the unique factors. In the three-factor model test, we combined career resilience and work stress into one factor and added job satisfaction to the one-factor model test. This means that the hypothesis proposed shows a correlation between the tested variables, which are career resilience, work stress, and job satisfaction with life satisfaction (Field, 2013). The test results of confirmatory factor analysis best fit the data when each variable is tested in a separate construct (four-factor model), this shows that each variable measures different things so that they cannot be combined into one factor.

The results of this study are different from previous study conducted by Han et al. (2019). This is interesting because our study was designed using the same model, measuring instruments, and procedures with the previous study. The data collection process was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, from July to August 2020, five months after the first positive Covid-19 case was found in Indonesia. The pandemic has had a very significant negative impact on many aspects of life (Tuzovic & Kabadayi, 2020), including on mental health, working conditions, changes in working hours, insecurity, work

performance, productivity, work-family conflict (Moretti et al., 2020; Muslim, 2020; Pandey et al., 2020; People Element, 2020; Serafini et al., 2020). This could be a factor that triggers failure or setback in work, apart from the job itself. Moreover, during the pandemic there have been layoffs in many organizations, reorganization at work, and a reduction in wages as a form of adaptation that organizations undertook to deal with a pandemic (Agba et al., 2020; Gallant et al., 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has also caused a career shock and in general, it has an impact on the current careers that people have (Akkermans et al., 2020). This may also explain why career resilience did not show a direct relationship with a person's salary and job level, because their salary and job levels may have changed, or be changed, at any time due to their organization's policies during the Covid-19 pandemic. In other words, an individual's ability to adapt in the face of change and failure becomes an asset for employees, allowing them to cope with a reduced income or changes in their position at work. Research shows that resilience and career adaptability are needed to deal with these conditions because they can help individuals to bounce back from obstacles, reduce stress levels, and increase job satisfaction (Restubog et al., 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has also directly impacted people's life satisfaction, as a result of the uncertainty in income for those who experienced layoffs, or decreased income for those in business, reduced time alone due to increased time spent at home, and reduced freedom to make decisions and enjoy physical activity outside the home (Hamermesh, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). Thus, many factors affect a person's life satisfaction during the Covid-19 pandemic, and so the results of the relationship test between career resilience and life satisfaction mediated by work stress and career success may be insignificant due to other factors. Further, factors not measured in the study may affect the results of the participants' life satisfaction scores. Therefore, it may not be as simple as having high career resilience allowing increased job satisfaction, which then leads to increased life satisfaction, because other factors outside the research variables can affect a person's life satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study was conducted to assess whether the relationship between career resilience and life satisfaction could be mediated by work stress and career success when

examined in different populations from previous study. This study was conducted on 709 employees in Indonesia, while the previous research was conducted in the United States. Another difference in this study was the addition of attention checks to the online questionnaire as well as the analysis of common method bias, which had not been carried out in previous studies. The results of this study also differ from those of previous studies; the current study shows that career resilience has a positive relationship with life satisfaction, but that this relationship cannot be explained by the mediation by work stress and career success (job satisfaction, salary, and job level). Career resilience also has a negative relationship with work stress. In other words, employees' perceptions of their level of work stress and their assessment of life satisfaction are related to their levels of career resilience. The difference in the results obtained between this study and the previously published one caused by other factors that were not measured by the researchers. In particular, it should be noted that this research was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had a major influence on individual's work and home lives, and thus may have affected their judgment of life satisfaction.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The generalizability of the results of this study depend on the quality of the data and the use of an appropriate statistical analysis. Therefore, this study has several limitations. First, the sample size cannot describe the population chosen in this study, because the sample population was very general and the total population is not known. Thus, in future research we suggest increasing participant numbers so that the results of future analyses are more representative of the target population.

Second, the sample used in this study had differences in demographic background characteristics with those of previous studies. Further research might use samples such as those suggested by Han et al. (2019). Other previous research has suggesting using samples with different demographic backgrounds and individuals with non-professional jobs.

Third, the use of a cross-sectional research design limits any further analysis of the causal relationships between each of the variables studied. Future research could use longitudinal or experimental designs to assess any cause-effect relationships between variables. If further research is carried out during a pandemic, longitudinal

or experimental designs may be used to compare the conditions of participants during and after the pandemic.

In this study, researchers used attention check items to reduce bias in self-report measurements, but Hauser and Schwarz (2015) found that including an attention check item can lead respondents to understand the next question differently. In addition, using an attention check item was not effective in this study, because it did not result in a significant difference in the analysis of data using the attention check item and not using it. Therefore, we suggest considering the use of another form of attention check item, such as instructional manipulation checks (Oppenheimer et al., 2018).

Regarding the use of measuring instruments, future research may undertake a careful adaptation of measuring tools that is sensitive to the context of the language and the suitability of the culture in which the research is to be carried out. This is necessary to improve the validity of the measuring instruments used in this study. Future research also needs to consider whether there is a contextual factor or other conditions outside the research variables that may affect the study results so that it

can be included in the research variables or used as a control variable.

Finally, further research needs to explore the relationship of career resilience with other variables related to well-being in a more specific context within the scope of work, such as employee well-being or workplace well-being. Previous research on career resilience has examined the antecedents of career resilience, and so it is necessary to further explore the outcomes of career resilience. In addition, the existing research discusses more personal factors as antecedents of career resilience, and to understand this better, research on work-family related antecedents should also be carried out. The researchers also suggest examining the mediating role of career resilience with other outcomes, such as looking at the correlation between career resilience predictors and turnover intention or intention to change careers (Carless & Bernath, 2007). Further research can also see the effect of risk and protective factors affecting a person's career resilience (Maree, 2017), because not many sources have examined the relationship between the two concepts (Hite & McDonald, 2020).

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