

The Role of Career Adaptability on Dysfunctional Career Thought and Academic Satisfaction Key for a Successful School-To-Work Transition

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Abstract. The transition from school to the working life is a challenge that involves many factors, which are then related to student academic satisfaction. In this study, the CCT perspective was used to find out the dysfunctional relationship between career thought and academic satisfaction through career adaptability as mediator in final-year undergraduate students. Through convenience sampling method, online questionnaires were distributed to 344 final-year undergraduate students consisting of 99 men and 245 women. Participants filled out informed consent and self-report questionnaires which includes Career Thoughts Inventory, Career Adapt-Abilities Scale Short Form and Academic Satisfaction Scale. Through the results of data analysis with a simple mediation model 4, it was found that there was a significant direct and indirect relationship between dysfunctional career thought and academic satisfaction. This means that with career adaptability as a mediator of the relationship between dysfunctional career thought and academic satisfaction, the negative relationship of dysfunctional career thought with academic satisfaction can become stronger. The main implications of this study are suggestions for career development programs and student awareness to improve career adaptability to be able to overcome negative thinking and feel satisfaction.

Keywords: academic satisfaction, career adaptability, career construction theory, dysfunctional career thought, school-to-work transition

1 Introduction

The Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Nadiem Makarim stated that 80% of university graduates work in sectors/fields that are not strictly related to their degrees [1]. According to the International Labour Organization [2], the reason why youth are unsure with their jobs are the increasing competitors and lack of competencies to get jobs. In the same research, it is found that only 35% students sought for internships to prepare their job skills. Global Employment Trends 2013 [3] also mentioned that this dissonance between skill and job is a problem impacting unemployment. According to International Labour Organization [4], people with higher education need approximately 9,7 months to secure established and satisfying employment after graduating. This discovery shows that students require quite a long time to get a job. Therefore, the school-to-work transition is a serious problem nowadays. Understanding the problem and critical success factors of school-to-work transition for youth is important to design effective interventions for them [5].

Statistic Indonesia [6] stated that the percentage of university graduates in Indonesia hold the second to last position in the workforce compared to people with other levels of education. Also, the open unemployment rate for university graduates increased by 1,27% in February 2020, from 5,7 to 6,97 in February 2021. This unemployment rate shows that the school-to-work transition problem needs to be further examined and solved. School-to-work transition involves self-development activities and increasing individuals' success opportunities in the work area. Confidence and satisfaction during this transition would play a central role in career transition readiness [7].

Vocational Education General Director of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of Indonesia mentioned that due to online learning and boredom on students' learning process, Indonesia experienced a 6-month stagnation in education [8]. As a student preparing for work after graduation, it is essential to develop the competencies needed to meet job requirements, by increasing flexibility, creating opportunities, and always wanting to learn [9]. Hence, a good transition from education to work is related to satisfaction in academic life [10].

Institutional and individual factors are two things that influence student satisfaction in higher education [11]. With Career Construction Theory (CCT), we can explain the role of individual factors in academic satisfaction. CCT describes how individuals create meaning for their chosen career and prepare to build a future career [12].

1.1 Career Construction Theory Framework

Career construction theory (CCT) is a theory asserting that individuals build their careers by imposing meaning on vocational behavior [9]. In Career Construction Theory, there are four stages of adaptation which includes adaptive readiness, adaptability resources, adapting responses and adaptation result. One of the results of adaptation in students is academic satisfaction [10], [13], [14]. Lent [15] defined academic satisfaction as a situation where individuals enjoy their role and experience as students. Academic satisfaction is an important indicator of adaptation results [16], making it a priority for career psychologists and counsellors to understand [14].

Based on Career Construction Theory (CCT) perspective, academic satisfaction—as an adaptation result—will be influenced by adaptive readiness and adaptability resources. Adaptive readiness and adaptability resources that may influence academic satisfaction are dysfunctional career thought and career adaptability. The willingness and capacity to adapt in the CCT perspective can explain how the increase in academic success opportunities, confidence, and the ability to adjust oneself to career would inflict satisfaction towards academic life in students [10], [17]. Therefore, an explanation based on CCT perspective can be a foundation for solving school-to-work transition problems that university graduates in Indonesia might have.

1.1.1 Adaptive Readiness: Dysfunctional Career Thought

Adaptive readiness encompasses traits and cognitive abilities related to acquiring knowledge and skills in ever-changing work context [13], [18]. One of those cognitive abilities is career thoughts. As a form of adaptive readiness, career thoughts can be defined as

assumptions, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, feelings, plans, and strategies that are related to career problem-solving and decision-making [19]. Negative career thought is deemed as dysfunctional career thought [20], which encompasses thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs on worst-case scenarios about abilities and motivations to process self-related information and individual career choices. People with dysfunctional career thoughts tend to avoid career choices and career decision-making. When dysfunctional career thought occurs, it can negatively affect the ability and motivation to process information about themselves and their work environment.

It is important for students who experience school-to-work transition to avoid dysfunctional career thought, because it may cause anxiety and may limit career development behaviors, especially those related to exploration and commitment towards career [21]. According to Krumboltz, dysfunctional career thought inhibits constructive actions, whereas individuals tend to not explore career alternatives and do not actively pursue information, opinions, or feedbacks related to career commitment. This can lead to failure in realizing one's career potentials [20].

1.1.2 Adaptability Resources: Career Adaptability

Rudolph [13] in a meta-analysis study found out that career adaptability is a construct fitting to represent adaptability resource stages in CCT. Career adaptability is a psychosocial construct that shows individual readiness and resources in overcoming current and upcoming vocational development tasks, work transition and trauma in job roles, to achieve social integration [22]. Career adaptability is a central concept in CCT, because adaptability resources can help individuals to adopt adaptive behaviors in facing the transition from school to work.

Career adaptability is an important variable for students' career development [10], students with high levels of career adaptability also have higher chances to get employed after they graduate, feel capable to seek jobs, are able to make effective career decisions, and overall are more competent and optimistic about their future career path.

Career adaptability has a positive significant association with academic satisfaction [10], [16], [17], [23]. Individuals with career adaptability make career changes proactively, display behavior that anticipates changes in work environment, and then adjust it with personal context realistically.

1.1.3 Adaptation Results: Academic Satisfaction

Adaptation results are person-environment fit indicated by success, satisfaction, and development [22]. One of its forms in students is academic satisfaction [13], which is a condition where individuals enjoy their role and experience as a student [15]. Students with high academic satisfaction will enjoy their learning environment and also enjoy doing their tasks.

Academic satisfaction refers to students' subjective positive evaluation of their education results and experience [24]. Academic satisfaction is associated with an enthusiastic attitude to learn, enjoying and liking learning process as a student, which enables student to develop their career development capabilities. Academic satisfaction is important to be attained by students

during their education process because it can affect learning success, learning result, and retention rate in learning program [24].

1.1.4 Dynamics of Adaptive Readiness, Adaptability Resources and Adaptation Results

In adaptive readiness stage, when doing a career-related cognitive process, people may face difficulties in form of dysfunctional thoughts. These thoughts are specifically referred as dysfunctional career thought, which means individuals' thought results about assumptions, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, feelings, plans, and strategies that can bring negative impact on career problem-solving and decision-making [20]. For instance, when students choose to ignore the fit between their abilities and existing work opportunities and have incorrect beliefs regarding their abilities and work, they will face difficulty in determining which career path to pursue in life. Students with dysfunctional career thoughts might also experience anxiety and avoid career development behavior [21].

Career development behavior is how someone prepares his/herself to face working life. Savickas [22] explained that this includes individual preparedness and resources to face school-to-work transition, also known as career adaptability. In Duffy [10], students with a high level of career adaptability also have a higher chance to get employed after graduating, feel efficacious in job seeking, make effective career decisions, and in general are more competent and optimistic about their future career. In the same study, it is found that students who feel like they can adapt to their future career are more satisfied with academic life. This satisfaction arises because individuals feel an increase in chance of academic success and confidence to face academic challenges [17].

Moreover, students with low level of dysfunctional career thoughts (adaptive readiness) and high level of career adaptability (adaptability resources) are able to process and use information, make decisions, and regulate themselves to overcome school-to-work transition well, hence making them experience academic satisfaction (adaptation results) because they feel like they can control their career and have freedom to choose a career. Academic satisfaction correlates with an enthusiastic attitude of learning, enjoying and liking the learning process as a student which then enables them to develop career development abilities [24].

2 Purpose of the Study

There have been a number of studies that discussed the correlation between dysfunctional career thought, career adaptability and academic satisfaction separately, but there has not been any study which examines these three variables at once based on CCT perspective. Therefore, this study's purpose is to analyze the relationship between dysfunctional career thought and academic satisfaction, with career adaptability as a mediator, in accordance with the perspective of CCT. Through this study, it is hoped that there will be a deeper understanding of those variables and a development in the educational and I/O psychology field in general. In addition, it is hoped that this study can generate practical recommendations for students and institutions on how to increase academic satisfaction and encouraging high career adaptability among students.

3 Method

3.1 Participants

In this study, there are 344 participants consisting last-year undergraduate students from private universities in Bandung majoring in economy, law, literature, engineering, arts and design, psychology, and information technology. The data are obtained by convenience sampling. Most participants are between 19-21 of age (67.15%) and are currently in 8th semester (67.73%).

Measures

Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI). This inventory is used to identify dysfunctional thoughts that disturb participants' abilities to solve problems related to career effectively and make career decisions [20]. This instrument consists of 29 items, each containing a 4-point Likert-type scale which displays 1 as "Highly Disagree" and 4 as "Highly Agree". Internal consistency tests resulted in a Cronbach's alpha value of 0,94, which is classified as a highly reliable instrument by Guilford [25].

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale-Short Form or CAAS-SF. This measurement is a multidimensional instrument which is a shortened version of CAAS 2.0 developed by Maggiori et al. [26]. It has been translated by back-to-back translate method into Indonesian [27]. CAAS-SF consist of 12 items, assesses each of the four subscales concern, control, curiosity and confidence with 3 item which can portray participant's career adaptability. Each item has 6 answer choices, whereas (1) stands for "Not a strength at all", (2) for "Not a strength", (3) for "Slight strength", (4) for "Fair strength", (5) for "Strength", and (6) for "Greatest strength". The Cronbach's alpha value of this instrument is 0,88, which is classified as a highly reliable instrument [25].

Academic Satisfaction Scale. This instrument was developed by Lent et al. [28]. Research participants show how much they feel satisfied with various academic experience through 7 statement items. Each of which has 5 answer choices, starting from 1 (highly disagree) to 5 (highly agree). In this study, Cronbach's alpha value of this instrument reaches 0,91, which is classified as a highly reliable instrument [25].

3.2 Data Analysis

In this study, the data is analyzed using Process Macro by Andrew F. Hayes. Process Macro is a technique based on a regression analysis that is able to identify mediation and moderation [29]. Researchers use model 4 (mediation model) upon conducting this study to obtain the direct and indirect effect, including effect size for each variable.

4 Results

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation

	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1	Age	21.2	.85	1		
2	Dysfunctional Career Thought	2.1	.56	.09	1	

3	Career Adaptability	4.95	.64	.13*	-.38**	1
4	Academic Satisfaction	3.92	.59	-.06	-.28**	.49**

N = 344, Age stated in years

Table 2. Simple Mediation Model Summary

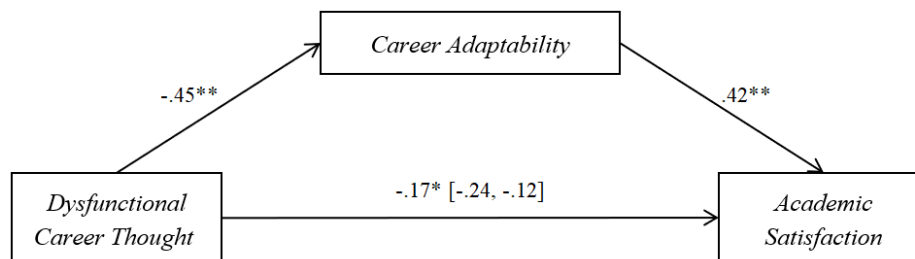
<i>Antecedent</i>	<i>Career Adaptability</i>			<i>Academic Satisfaction</i>		
	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE.</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Dysfunctional Career Thought</i>	-.45	.05	.00**	-.11	.05	.03*
<i>Career Adaptability</i>				.42	.04	.00**
Constant.	5.86	.12	.00**	2.04	.29	.00**

N= 344; SE (*Standard Error*), Regression Coefficient (*Coeff.*), *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01

Table 3. Direct and Indirect Effect Result

	<i>Path</i>	<i>Standardized Effect</i>		<i>Bootstrap Bias Corrected 95% Confidence Interval</i>	
		β	SE	LLCI	ULCI
<i>Direct</i>	DCT→AS	-.11	.05	-.22	-.01
<i>Indirect</i>	DCT→CA→AS	-.17	.03	-.24	-.12

N=344; completely standardized indirect effects; DCT (*Dysfunctional Career Thought*), AS (*Academic Satisfaction*), CA (*Career Adaptability*), SE (*Standard Error*), LLCI (*Lower Limit Confidence Interval*), ULCI (*Upper Limit Confidence Interval*). *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01.



*p < 0.05. **p < 0.01

Fig. 1. Mediation Model on the Relation of Dysfunctional Career Thought to Academic Satisfaction.

5 Discussion

This study was conducted to analyze the direct and indirect effects of dysfunctional career thought towards academic satisfaction through career adaptability mediation based on Career Construction Theory (CCT) perspective. It was found that career adaptability partially and significantly mediates the relationship between dysfunctional career thought and academic satisfaction in final-year students.

The direct relationship between dysfunctional career thought and academic satisfaction was found to be significant (p<0.05). This result is consistent with CCT perspective that

adaptive readiness involves cognitive abilities in processing information, and when this ability dysfunctions, individuals may find it difficult to believe in their abilities, making them dissatisfied with their current academic life. Students with dysfunctional career thoughts tend to engage in passive behavior such as slacking off in doing assignments, experiencing negative emotions such as depression, anger, anxiety, and display verbal expressions such as complaining. These behaviors will then contribute to anxiety, which will limit career development behavior [21].

Limited career development behavior can make people fail in conducting career-related problem solving [22], fail to realize their potential in career and make decisions related to their career [20]. Based on previous studies, these failures can make students lose faith in their abilities [30], hence feeling dissatisfied with their academic life [31].

In this research, we also found out that there is an indirect relationship between dysfunctional career thought and academic satisfaction, with career adaptability as students' adaptability resource. Students that are safe from dysfunctional career thought will be readier to manage information about themselves and existing career choices, thus igniting motivation to exert effective career decision-making and proper career decisions [20]. The motivation that arises from the absence of dysfunctional career thought will encourage students to practice their career adaptability, which helps form self-regulatory behavior, an adaptive action strategy.

It is also important to note that there is a strong positive correlation between career adaptability and academic satisfaction ($r=.41, p<.05$). This finding is consistent with previous theories and studies which stated that career adaptability facilitates individuals in proactively developing their career, by anticipating environmental changes and adjusting it with personal context realistically [12], [22], [32], [33]. The behavior manifested from career adaptability capacity will result in the perception of having control over career and increase of success beliefs, hence making the students more satisfied in living their current academic life. This notion is also supported by previous studies by Duffy [10] and Wiklins [17].

From this study, career adaptability is proven to be partially mediating the relationship between dysfunctional career thought and academic satisfaction. Through its role as mediator, the negative correlation between dysfunctional career thought and academic satisfaction could become stronger (direct effect coeff.: $-.11 >$ indirect effect coeff.: $-.17$). Academic satisfaction may decrease due to dysfunctional career thought, but with career adaptability, this decreasing academic satisfaction can be experienced less by final-year students. In the meantime, students with dysfunctional career thoughts will find it difficult to process and utilize information on themselves and jobs to solve problems related to career and make career decisions [34].

6 Conclusion

Based on this research, it can be concluded that dysfunctional career thought in final-year student can decrease academic satisfaction, but it can be overcome by career adaptability, which is a belief that oneself has control over career and is able to succeed in academic life, by doing career development proactively and anticipating environmental changes.

Authors' Contributions

Both authors contributed in determining research topic, data collection, data processing, and data analysis. The interpretation and article writing process are also done together. First author wrote the draft, while second author reviewed and enriched the writing.

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