Parental Support on College Students’ Career Adaptability: The Role of Proactive Personality as Mediator

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I. Introduction

The massive field of work transformation, illustrated as the 4.0 industry, is indicated by the rapid acceleration of technology in all human life aspects (Hirschi, 2018). According to the head of the National Development Planning Agency, as cited from (Movanita, 2019), the 4.0 industry has shifted occupational needs. The transformation within the job field carries challenges for fresh graduates to readjust (Kasih, 2019). The development of technology and information has an influence on people’s needs and the transformation of the labor market, so higher education is involved in intense competition (Akbar & Awang, 2020). The ability to adjust should be possessed by fresh graduates since they encounter their first greatest career transition after they graduate (Murphy et al., 2010). This process is frequently presumed as a laborious process (Wendlandt & Rochlen, 2008). It is caused by the substantial differences among the college’s and work field’s purposes and activities, along with the minimally expanded working skills (Wendlandt & Rochlen, 2008).

A survey carried out by INTI International University & College and International Data Corporation reveals that students mostly have minimum knowledge on the competencies required in the 4.0 industry era, so that they consider themselves as the unprepared workforce (Sani, 2019). Similar results have been obtained from a preliminary study conducted in December 2019, using focus group discussion involving nine final year college students from universities in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, dan Bekasi (Jabodetabek). The results indicate students’ negligence is caused by the minimum work field related information and different work orientation with the discipline they have taken in college.

Students can resolve those issues with career adaptability. As defined by Savickas, (1997) that career adaptability represents someone’s competence to face the predicted tasks by actively preparing and being involved in a job role, while also can acclimate to unpredicted tasks caused by changes in the work environment. According to career construction theory, someone with career adaptability demonstrates...
four characteristics, known as 4Cs (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The first characteristic is career concern, representing someone’s awareness of the importance of planning in attaining a particular career. Second, career control illustrates individual responsibility to shape themselves and their environment through self-discipline, effort, and perseverance to anticipate the future. Third, career curiosity is represented by their interest to take every opportunity and find career related issues. Fourth, career confidence is exhibited from the required behavior in career selection. Career adaptability helps individual to respond to the working environment transition (Koen et al., 2012; Murphy et al., 2010) so that the person can have better career choice and lower chances to be unemployed (Koen et al., 2012; Wilkins-Yel et al., 2018).

Career adaptability is affected by several factors (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). A meta-analysis on studies related to career adaptability reveals three primary factors affecting it, namely demographic, personality, and social support factors (Sulistiani & Handoyo, 2018). Besides, the previous study has also placed social support as the factor with the greatest influence (Ataç et al., 2018; Ebenehi et al., 2016; Hlad’o et al., 2020; Wang & Fu, 2015). Social support, in the form of psychological and physical help, aids someone in facing the issues, minimizing the pressure, and improving the adaptability skill. That support can come from family members, friends, and the closest people Cobb, 1976, in (Wang & Fu, 2015; Zimet et al., 1988). However, parental support becomes the most essential backing, because it is the most fundamental relationship since humans at a young age (Pomerantz & Thompson, 2008). Linear to that study, the preliminary study carried out using FGD on nine final year students show that students need parental support during their study process, as well as in creating the personal career related decision.

Research has investigated parental support addressed to their children’s career acceleration (Michaeli et al., 2018; Stringer & Kerpelman, 2010; Turner et al., 2003). Parental support is classified into two forms (Michaeli et al., 2018). The first support is psychosocial support, such as discussion on the uncertainties and apprehensions, creating a safe and accommodating relationship, and being a role model that can be observed. The second form of support is in the form of action, such as by giving advice, offering the available opportunities, and helping the children to establish social connections relevant for their career advancement. A study carried out by Turner et al., (2003) concludes that parental support is demonstrated through four means of 1) career-related modeling representing the modeling of the parents’ career; 2) verbal encouragement in the form of positive words and compliment addressed to the children related to their education and career development; 3) instrumental assistance in the form of financial and career-related information support, and 4) emotional support that is shown from the parents’ understanding upon the children’s positive and negative emotion.

In addition, several studies that specifically examined the effect of parental support on students’ career adaptability carry inconsistent results (P. Guan et al., 2016; Y. Guan et al., 2015; Indianti, 2015; Maulidiyah, 2017). Those conflicting results may have a connection to the transformed parents-children relationship related to the college students’ stages of development (Maulidiyah, 2017), along with the cultural effects (P. Guan et al., 2016). In relation to the cultural influences, a study from Liu et al., (2015) shows a greater western influence has been observed in Indonesia so that parents do not provide exaggerated control and become more open to their children. Therefore, recently, parents tend to adopt the parenting style that facilitates children to be more independent and has substantial competitiveness (Putri & Salim, 2020). That parenting style is demonstrated from their effort to encourage children to think, decide, and solve their issues, with no disproportionate intervention (Inguglia et al., 2016). In other words, the children are expected to have initiative and act actively, in which those are the features of people with proactive personality.

Bateman & Crant, (1993) define proactive personality as someone’s relatively stable inclination to transform the environment. Individual with proactive personality is not distracted by situational issues, since they actively seek the alternatives, generate initiatives, take the movement, while persistently carry the changes to attain their goals (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant et al., 2016; Seibert et al., 2001). On the contrary, a person with a low proactive personality demonstrates a contrasting pattern, such as she or he tends to react and adapt passively (Bateman & Crant, 1993). According to Rudolph et al., (2017), a proactive personality that affects someone’s career adaptability can be caused by a psychological factor from oneself. Consequently, a person with a proactive personality can easily adapt during their career transition, since they can prepare themselves for the transformation, they encountered related to their career, such as identifying the opportunity to develop and generate a working environment following their career needs (Hou et al., 2014).

Someone’s personality transformation is affected by parents’ positive attitude, such as shown by their support (Anaya & Pérez-Edgar, 2019). That theory is in line with a study carried out by Putri & Salim,
II. Method

A. Research Participants

This study involved final year undergraduate students from universities in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. The participants were selected through convenience sampling. They were chosen based on the individual willingness and availability to be involved in the research process. Through a calculation using G-Power 3.1 developed by (Faul et al., 2007), this study required a minimum of 395 participants. The data were obtained in a month, from March to April 2020, using a questionnaire distributed through Google Form. The data were collected online due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Initially, the study involved 615 students, but only data from 551 participants could be processed further. It occurred due to 64 participants’ demography data did not match the research criteria, such as their age, domicile, and educational level.

B. Research Instruments

The individual career adaptability was measured using Career Adapt Abilities Scale (CAAS) International Form 2.0 (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) that had been adapted to the Indonesian language by (Sulistiani et al., 2019). This instrument consisted of 24 favorable items, equally distributed into four subscales representing every dimension of career adaptability. Each career adaptability element, namely career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence were represented by six items in the questionnaire. Even though the questionnaire had four dimensions, the participants’ career adaptability scores were obtained by calculating the scores from all items. Meanwhile, all items within this instrument were favorable, so that it did not reverse the participant response score. The instrument used five points Likert scale with a range of 1 (weak) to 5 (very strong). The results of the CAAS instrument tried out show a reliability coefficient of 0.95 with internal consistency value ($r_{11}$) ranging from 0.51 to 0.79, for all items.

In addition, parental support was measured using the Career Related Parent Support Scale (CRPSS) Turner et al., (2003) translated to Indonesia Language by (Putri & Salim, 2020). Within this instrument, parental support was measured through children’s perception of that support. Meanwhile, the concept of ‘parent’, in this study, was translated into every person regarded as a parent figure. The scale consisted of 27 items, divided into seven items in the instrumental assistance subscale, seven items on the career related modeling subscale, six items for verbal encouragement subscale, and seven items for the emotional support subscale. With four subscales in this instrument, the participants’ career adaptability was determined by calculating the scores from all items. All items in this scale are favorable so that the obtained participants’ responses did not need to be reversed. This instrument adopted six points Likert scale, ranging from 1 (highly disagree) to 6 (very agree). The trial of this instrument suggested one item to be eliminated, resulting in 26 items, with a reliability of 0.93 and internal consistency value ($r_{11}$) of 0.31 to 0.79.

The participants’ proactive personality was measured using an uncomplicated version of ten items Proactive Personality Scale (PPS) (Seibert et al., 2001) that had been translated into Indonesia Language by (Preston & Salim, 2019). This instrument was unidimensional so that every participant’s proactive personality score was obtained by calculating all items’ scores. Besides, the items were favorable so that the participants’ responses did not need to be reversed. This instrument also used six points Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very disagree) to 6 (very agree). The trial of this instrument obtained a 0.89 reliability coefficient and 0.49 to 0.75 internal consistency score ($r_{11}$).

C. Data Analysis

The data analysis was completed using IBM Statistic SPSS 22 program. The descriptive statistic test was used to attain the participants’ and the variables’ general portrayal, in the form of mean and standard deviation. In testing the research hypothesis, the Pearson correlation analysis technique was adopted to investigate the relationship among the three variables. Meanwhile, the role of proactive personality in mediating the effects of parental support on students’ career adaptability was investigated through hierarchical regression, in the form of mediation effect test model 4 (Hayes, 2018). That test was supported by the Macro Process v3.4 program.
III. Results and Discussion

The results of the descriptive analysis have identified that the participants’ ages in this study ranged from 19 to 25 years old. Most participants (240/43.6%) were 21 years old. Meanwhile, most of them were women, 380 (69%) participants. Additionally, the participants mostly came from state universities (55.6%) in the eight semesters (49.8%). From the working experience, most of the participants, 174 participants (31.6%) have more than one working experience. Similarly, there are relatively many participants with no working experience, 881 participants (21.4%). Also, most of them live with their parents (63.2), while 46.5% of them live in Jakarta.

The participants’ career adaptability has been measured, using a scale, with a 1-5 range. From that range of scores, the midpoint of career adaptability is 3. Table 1 illustrates that the mean of participants’ score is above the midpoint score (M = 4.002, SD = 0.549). This score represents students’ relatively high career adaptability levels. It indicates that the participants own great skills in adapting to the predictable and unpredictable working roles and assignments. Additionally, the career concern dimension obtains the highest average score (M = 4.081, SD = 0.649), while the career confidence becomes the dimension with the lowest score (M = 3.923 SD = 0.636). It shows that the students have been aware of the importance of planning to achieve their career goal, in the future, but they have minimum confidence in their skill.

The parental support and proactive personality have been measured using a one to six range scale, with a midpoint value of 3.5. As presented in Table 1, the participants’ mean score is above the midpoint score (M = 4.323, SD = 0.954). It signifies that most of the participants perceive that their parents have given proper support for their career advancement. From the four types of parental support, emotional support attains the highest average score (M = 4,139, SD = 1,240). Thus, the participants recognize that their parents tend to understand their feeling and provide affectionate support whenever they encounter career issues or hindrances. In contrast, instrumental assistance attains the lowest average score, compared to the other three types of support (M = 3,861, SD = 1,072). It indicates that the participants perceive their parents to give minimum support in fulfilling their personal needs, such as directly teaching the skills required in the future or actively involved in selecting activities that accelerate their career. Similarly, the proactive personality also obtains average participants’ scores above the midpoint score (M = 4.710, SD = 0.773). Consequently, the participants possess a high proactive personality.

As presented in Table 1, parental support and career adaptability have positive and significant relationship (r = 0.288, p < 0.01). It indicates that the higher students perceive their parents' support increases their career adaptability. Besides, parental support also has positive and significant relationship with proactive personality (r = 0.382, p < 0.01). It indicates that the higher students recognize their parents' support accelerates their proactive personality. The analysis results also show the positive and substantial relationship between proactive personality and career adaptability (r = 0.655; p < 0.01), with the highest correlation point. In other words, the high proactive character represents higher students’ career adaptability.

![Image](image_url)

The results of the hierarchical regression test, in the form of mediation test model 4 through macro-process are illustrated in Fig. 1. The results show that parental support carries no direct effect on the formulation of career adaptability (c' = -0.0264; p > 0.05), even if the results of the correlation test indicate that parental support has a positive and significant relationship with career adaptability. However, the results position parental support as an independent var-
iable that carries significant influence toward the mediator variable, that is the proactive personality ($a = 0.3825; p < 0.001$). Additionally, the proactive personality is observed to substantially affect the career adaptability ($b = 0.6646; p < 0.001$). Thus, the results demonstrate that the high parental support represents an improvement in an individual’s proactive personality, which also suggests the acceleration of career adaptability ($ab = 0.2542; p < 0.001$). In other words, proactive personality positively mediates the influences of parental support toward career adaptability.

![Fig. 1. Results of Proactive Personality Mediation on Parental Support Effect toward Career Adaptability](image)

The results of this study signify that the effects of parental support on career adaptability have been confirmed to be mediated by proactive characteristics. The mediator role positively accentuates that parental support carries no direct effect on career adaptability. It is linear to the study carried out by Yousefi et al., (2011) that identifies the indirect influence of parental support toward career adaptability. Meanwhile, Maulidiyah, (2017), reveals that parental support gives no influence on college students’ career adaptability due to the more influential personal component observed in the individual. Besides, it is also affected by parents’ limited knowledge in explaining the working environment transformation caused by the 4.0 industry (Ulrich et al., 2018). Consequently, the children exhibit proactive behavior, primarily in responding to the rapid working environmental changes in this modern era (Lin et al., 2014). In relation to that rapid transformation, individuals with proactive nature tend to present initiative in seeking the information and preparing to achieve their career goals (Fawehinmi & Yahya, 2018).

The effects of parental support on students’ proactive personality have been observed in the studies related to someone’s personality development, as the person getting older (Bleidorn & Schwaba, 2017; Caspi & Roberts, 2001; J. Specht, 2017). Further, the human personality is generally illustrated in Big Five Personalities (extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, dan neuroticism) that have been shaped starting from human’s early ages (Herzhoff et al., 2017). In the young adult age, conscientiousness, and agreeableness characteristic increase, meanwhile the agreeableness tends to be stable, and the neuroticism reduces (Bleidorn & Schwaba, 2017; Caspi & Roberts, 2001). Research carried out by (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Fuller Jr & Marler, 2009) describe that extraversion, conscientiousness, and low neuroticism are the predictors of proactive personality. Thus, proactive characteristic tends to significantly appear during the young adult age. Besides, the transformation during the young adult age brings the opportunity for the parents to give their influence. The assumption on parental support effect toward proactive nature is also reinforced by a previous study conducted by Putri & Salim, (2020) that shows the career related support from parents is given since the children are at an early age, while that support tends to be consistently presented until the children get adult.

In addition, Putri & Salim, (2020) explain that proactive character can be developed through supportive and liberating reinforcement. That study also presumes parental support effect on students’ proactive personality is closely connected to their current stage of development. Most of the participants in this study are in the young adult period. In that stage of development, people develop their responsibility for themselves and make their personal decision, individually (Lowe & Dotterer, 2018). Therefore, parental support should follow the needs in every stage of development, to improve their success in their exploration (Fingerman et al., 2009). Parents act as the primary agent of socialization during the young adult period that determines children’s independence (Lowe & Dotterer, 2018; Tanner et al., 2009). Consequently, parental support encourages children to think, decide, and solve their issues with no involvement of their parents (Inguglia et al., 2016).

This study identifies that the effects of parental support toward children's proactive personality tendency may be caused by the participants’ demography, in which most of them live in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Bekasi, and Tangerang. As explained by Putri & Salim, (2020), currently, the urban community is affected by westerns values, following the easy access of information. These cultural effects result in the minimum control from parents, they tend to accept children’s aspirations and actively ask the children to have a discussion (Liu et al., 2015). That parent’s behavior belongs to emotional support Fingerman et al., (2009); Lowe & Dotterer, (2018). Additionally, the study carried out by Hirschi & Freund, (2014) indicates that emotional support attains by individuals increases their tendency to have proactive behavior in obtaining their career goals. Therefore, the proactive personality of the participants in this study is relatively high, since they perceive emotional support as the highest element of parental support they have attained. Meanwhile, in-

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instrumental assistance tends to reflect parental control that is perceived as the lowest parental support element by the participants.

Lin et al., (2014) argue that proactive personality has three essential features, namely self-initiation, orientation for changes, and focus for the future. Therefore, someone with proactive characteristics tends to focus on developing new skills and the ability to master the unusual assignments (Fuller Jr & Marler, 2009). Additionally, they also perceive challenges in their work as an opportunity to learn, not as a threat (Fuller Jr & Marler, 2009). This study confirms that proactive personality carries a significant and positive effect on career adaptability. It is in line with the previous study revealing similar findings (Fawehinmi & Yahya, 2018; Hou et al., 2014; Jiang, 2017; Yahya et al., 2019). This influence is caused by the proactive person who may have prepared themselves to encounter changes, identify opportunities, and create a working environment based on their career needs (Hou et al., 2014). Besides, a proactive person also tends to have a high standard by using every available resource, such as finding information, skills, and advanced method to obtain their goals (Lin et al., 2014). Relatively, the participants in this study tend to have great career adaptability. It is connected to their status as final year students who will graduate and seek jobs (Baiti et al., 2018). It is also linear with the meta-analysis carried out by Rudolph et al., (2017) that an individual’s career adaptability tends to increase stages, such as in the transition period to the working world. Meanwhile, career concern and control become the highest career adaptability elements possessed by the participants. (Y. Guan et al., 2013) describe those two aspects as the most substantial predictors of individual success in finding jobs. Further, that study also explains that people with undergraduate degrees generally have a minimum understanding of the job field, so that the previous two aspects encourage them to have better preparation and be more cautious in making career decisions (Y. Guan et al., 2013). Those behaviors lead to greater opportunities for the individual to get jobs according to their values, interest, and ability (P. Guan et al., 2016).

In its practice, this study also has some limitations. First, it carries no investigation into the parents’ proactive personality. It only examines students’ proactive characteristics. Referring to a study carried out by Anaya and Anaya & Pérez-Edgar, (2019) that parents’ characteristics affect the support they provide. Second, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to all Indonesian college students, since they may have different characteristics, such as the parents of the participants of this study mostly live in Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, Depok, and Bekasi. Thus, their domicile may affect the form of support perceived by the participants. Third, the results of hierarchical regression analysis show influences of parental support toward career adaptability mediated by proactive personality, only contribute 5.2%. The percentage shows that the effect of parental support toward career adaptability remains low, even after being mediated. Consequently, students’ career adaptability may be affected by other factors, besides parental support.

IV. Conclusion

The effects of parental support on career adaptability have been thoroughly mediated by students’ proactive personalities. Therefore, parental support carries no direct effect on career adaptability. It affects students’ proactive personality, first, which later improves students’ career adaptability. According to the limitations of this study, further research is recommended to measure the proactive personality of parents and investigate its effect on the parental support they provide. In addition, further research is also suggested to involve students with various characteristics, such as different demographics. In addition, future studies may also examine other variables that may influence career adaptability as it is known that there are several predictors of career adaptability, such as emotional intelligence, learning goal orientation, core self-evaluation, desire, and optimism.

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