



Social Support and Career Adaptability : A Study on Early Career Employees

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Abstract. Individuals entering the world of work will make various plans for their career planning process. Throughout their careers, individuals face challenges in adapting to their career task and responsibilities. This is known as career adaptability. This study aims to find out if there is a relationship between social support and career adaptability. This study used a quantitative approach with a simple correlational design. The population in this study were early career employees working in Salatiga City and the sample size was 52 participants. Data were collected using a combined technique of purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The scales used were the Multidimensional Perceived Social Support ($\alpha = 0.935$) with 12 items and the Career Adaptability Scale ($\alpha = 0.920$) with 22 items. Spearman's Rho correlation test showed that the value of $r = 0.443$; $p < 0.05$. It can be interpreted that social support is positively and significantly related to career adaptability in early career employees. This research is expected to provide additional information for further research and may help companies to increase the career adaptability of their employees by providing social support.

Keywords: Career Adaptability; Early Career; Employee; Social Support

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Introduction

Basically, every individual who starts entering the world of work will make various plans to determine the direction of their career development. In the process of career planning, individuals are faced with various kinds of obstacles or challenges, so individuals must start trying to do various ways so that individuals still exist in the beginning of their career. This statement is supported by Rahayu (2022) 's research which states that individuals who are able to plan their careers well tend to be more successful and feel satisfied with their careers, than individuals who do not have planning in their careers. In addition, individuals also need to make decisions and take responsibility for career choices that are in accordance with individual abilities (Lent & Brown, 2020). Individuals need to continue to learn in dealing with and adapting to their careers, the process of adjustment and adaptation known as career adaptability will lead individuals to continue to develop in their careers.

Research on career adaptability is still limited, but in a study conducted by Zacher (2014) on 659 employees working in Australia, showed that career adaptability is important for individuals to be well prepared to face their career challenges, predict what jobs support their careers, and can manage readiness in facing their career transitions successfully. This readiness includes how individuals succeed in exploring, planning careers, and how individuals can complete and adapt to their career transitions. In line with this, Chen et al. (2020) explain that career adaptability is a psychological ability possessed by individuals to maintain a balance against problems that occur due to changes in their chosen career role.

The author has conducted interviews related to the phenomenon of career adaptability conducted on Saturday, 24 February 2024 and Saturday, 2 March 2024 the author has conducted observations and interviews related to career adaptability conducted with 10 people who are classified at the early career stage. From the interviews that have been conducted, the author found that out of a total of 10 people who have been interviewed, 3 people stated that they have a desire to continue learning in improving their hopes and ideals, then 3 other people stated that they were responsive and skilful when given tasks and responsibilities. Meanwhile, there were 3 others who complained about not being able to focus when given the opportunity to complete their tasks. Finally, the author found 1 person who said that he had not been able to be given the responsibility of supervising the tasks done by his friends. The questionnaire analysis of 25 early career employees working in Salatiga City showed that 17 (68%) had high career adaptability and 8 (32%) had low career adaptability. Based on the results of some of these phenomena, it can be assumed that there are problems related to career adaptability. This is supported by the statement of Santilli et al., (2024) which says that someone who has good career adaptability will affect the individual's career, which will support someone in planning their life and career well.

Career adaptability according to Savickas & Porfeli (2012) is an individual's readiness to cope with and complete every task and responsibilities that can be predicted in building his career, as well as the individual's ability to adapt to things that are unpredictable in changing career conditions. Referring to this definition, there are 4 aspects that exist in career adaptability, namely, first concern which means as an individual's concern to see how his career choices in the future include his readiness to prepare his career plan. Second, control, which is the individual's effort to control and choosing the right environment to support their careers in the future. Third, which is the individual's curiosity to explore information, career overviews, and profitable opportunities in building their careers. Fourth, confidence when individuals successfully explore career information well, then have confidence and confidence in solving problems and overcoming career obstacles.

The level of career adaptability possessed by an employee certainly has both beneficial and detrimental effects, career adaptability is one of the important things that can have an impact on an individual's career. Someone with good career adaptability will have a strategy to deal with changes to their career choices, so that in the end this will improve their well-being (Magnano et al., 2021). The level of career adaptability possessed by an employee certainly has both positive and negative effects. This ability can also be a significant impact on individuals to deal with unfavorable circumstances at work. Employees with good career adaptability also have the possibility of staying longer in an organization or company. This is in line with research conducted by Al-Ghazali (2020) which says that when the individual's ability in career adaptability, which is able to adapt to the environment, company values, and organizational systems that exist in a company will affect his work, which means that individuals will work better and the career they choose now as a long-term career prospect.

Super & Knasel (1981) also explained that career adaptability is the ability of individuals who are able to adapt to the transition process in their careers and are able to maintain balance when something happens to their career changes, individuals are also considered to have foresight towards their career choices, and proactively shape their careers and can adapt to face tasks in their career transitions. There are several findings that find that career adaptability has various factors, this is based on findings conducted by Karacan & Guneri (2017) that general self-efficacy, optimism, and social support are factors that can affect individual career adaptability. In line with this, Hirschi (2009) suggests that there are four factors that influence career adaptability, namely positive emotional dispositions, goal decidedness, capability beliefs, and social context beliefs (social support). One of the factors that can influence career adaptability is social support provided by family, friends, and people in the environment around the individual.

Social support is something that has a good impact if given to an individual who is starting to explore and build their career. The interaction that occurs between individuals and the environment around them is something that can help them develop their career adaptability (Chen et al., [2020](#)). There are 3 types of social support received by individuals according to Zimet et al. (1988), namely through family support, friend support, and support from special people. Shumaker & Brownell ([1984](#)) say that social support that is given and is reciprocal can improve well-being for recipients of this support.

Based on this, several studies have been found to support this, such as those conducted by Hlad'o et al., ([2020](#)) on vocational students who show that career adaptability owned by individuals is not influenced by factors within the individual alone, but various types of social support received by individuals have a significant influence on the career adaptability of individuals. These various supports provided by parents, teachers or lecturers, peers, and other close people provide an important role in this career adaptability, this is what helps individuals in career planning, decision making, and facing challenges in careers which results in individuals feeling more confident in their career choices. Panggabean et al., ([2023](#)) and Atqakum et al., ([2022](#)) have also conducted research to examine the relationship between social support and career adaptability in final year students which shows that social support has a positive and significant relationship with career adaptability for final year students. However, in addition to these studies, Kvasková et al. ([2023](#)) conducted a study that conveyed that social support provided by the role of parents and peers did not provide a significant relationship to individual abilities in career adaptability.

Research conducted by Atqakum et al., ([2022](#)) shows the results that social support is positively related to career adaptability, in measuring social support variables using the Sarafino & Smith ([2011](#)) theory scale, with final year students, and the technique used is simple random sampling. In addition, in a study by Nurul & Suhariadi ([2021](#)), they measured the social support variable using Cohen et al., ([1985](#)) theory and used a sampling technique by selecting anyone who could be found named accidental sampling and the results of this study also showed that the two variables, namely social support and career adaptability, had a positive relationship.

Then, Hlad'o et al., ([2020](#)) also conducted similar research on these 2 variables where there were 3 measuring instruments used to measure social support variables, data collection was done in 2 ways, namely via web-based and also paper-and-pencil-based, then the measuring instruments used for social support variables used measuring instruments to measure parental support, teacher support scale, and close friend support scale. The results of this study indicate that social support from teachers and close friends shows a positive relationship, but social support provided by parents does not show significant results with individual career adaptability.

Furthermore, research conducted by Ibrahim et al., (2021), in this study the variables measured were not only social support and career adaptability, although the social support variable used was also different because it used the theory scale of Rottinghaus et al., (2017).

Based on previous research, many chosen students as subject for the research on social support variables and career adaptability, especially students who are in their final year. However, researchers are interested in choosing subjects that are different from previous studies, namely by choosing employees who are in the early career stage as the subject of this study. Therefore, this study was conducted to see the relationship between Social Support and Career Adaptability in early career employees working in Salatiga City. It is hoped that this study can contribute to adding more information and knowledge about the relationship between social support and career adaptability in employees.

Methods

This research was conducted using a quantitative approach with a simple correlational design. Quoted from El Hasbi, et al., (2023) the correlational approach aims to determine the relationship between two variables, in this study is Social Support and Career Adaptability. This study uses non-probability sampling techniques, which are a combination of purposive sampling to determine samples with special characteristics for this study and snowball sampling with a small number of samples that initially become large (Sugiyono, 2013). The population of participants in this study are early career employees working in Salatiga City, specifically graduates of Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana who have graduated or graduated in the period of 2022-2024, also have 0 -2 years of work experience. The total number of participants in this study was 52 people. According to Melamed (in Super, 1980) the early career age criteria in question are in the age range of 18 - 28 years. Data collection in this study used two scales and the distribution was carried out by questionnaires distributed through google form media. Determination of the sample of this study was taken by spreading the google form link through whatsapp and instagram media, the sample was also taken using snowball sampling technique where the author spread the link to friends who had the appropriate criteria for this study which initially had a small number, then this friend recommended other friends who had the same criteria for sampling this study, then the results were collected as many as 52 early career employees working in Salatiga City.

The scale used to measure social support variables is the Multidimensional Perceived Social Support by Zimet et al., (1988), this scale totals 12 items with 6 answer choices. The validity of the items of the social support variable has a range of 0.625 - 0.816. Where in this scale there are 3 aspects of social support according to the theory of Zimet et al., (1988), namely family

support, friend support, and support from special people. This Multidimensional Perceived Social Support scale has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.935. Furthermore, the scale used to measure career adaptability variables is Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) owned by Savickas & Porfeli (2012) and has been translated into Indonesian by Sulistiani et al., (2018). This scale has 24 items with a total of 22 valid items used. The validity value of the items on this scale has a range of 0.390 - 0.681. The aspects in the career adaptability scale are concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. This scale has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.920.

Data management was carried out using statistical analysis and using Spearman Rho's correlational test because based on the normality test showed that in one of the variables, namely Social Support, the data were not normally distributed. Then the data that has been collected is processed using SPSS version 30.0 for windows. The results of this test are used to determine the relationship between social support and career adaptability in early career employees in Salatiga City.

Results

The questionnaire was distributed using google form for 14 days, and collected a total of 52 respondents who are early career employees of Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana graduates, who are currently working in Salatiga City, with 0 - 2 years of work experience, and aged between 18 - 28 years old.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 1.
Variable Descriptive Statistics Table

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Support	52	18	72	53.17	11.513
Career Adaptability	52	69	96	82.37	8.029

Based on Table 1, it shows that the minimum value on the social support variable is 18, then the maximum value is 72. The mean value is 53.17 and for SD (standard deviation) is 11.513. In the career adaptability variable, the minimum number is 69 and the maximum value is 96. As well as for the mean of the career adaptability variable of 82.37 and the SD value of 8.029.

Norm Categorization

Furthermore, based on the results of data analysis, it will group into 5 norm categorizations, namely very low, low, medium, high, and very high categories, this is based on the calculation of norm categorization from Azwar (2016).

Table 2.
Social Support

Criteria	Score Range	Total	Percentage
Very Low	$X \leq 35,90$	5	10%
Low	$35,90 < X \leq 47,42$	8	15%
Medium	$47,42 < X \leq 58,93$	22	42%
High	$58,93 < X \leq 70,44$	16	31%
Very High	$70,44 < X$	1	2%
Total		52	100%

Table 2 shows that the categorization of social support variables, found results with an average of 53.17 and classified as moderate categorization. It can be seen that out of a total of 52 participants, there are 5 participants who have social support in the very low category or the percentage is 10%, in the low categorization there are 8 participants or 15%. Then there are 22 participants or 42% included in the moderate category, then 16 participants, amounting to 31%, are included in the high social support category, and the last in the very high social support category is only 1 participant or the percentage is 2%. Thus, the social support possessed by early career employees in Salatiga City is classified as moderate.

Table 3.
Career Adaptability

Criteria	Score Range	Total	Percentage
Very Low	$X \leq 70,32$	2	3.8%
Low	$70,32 < X \leq 78,35$	16	30.8%
Medium	$78,35 < X \leq 86,38$	16	30.8%
High	$86,38 < X \leq 94,41$	13	25.0%
Very High	$94,41 < X$	5	9.6%
Total		52	100%

Table 3 shows that the categorization of the career adaptability variable, the results of the norm categorization analysis on the career adaptability variable explain that a total of 52 participants of early career employees in Salatiga City are classified in the medium category. There are 2 people in the very low category with a percentage of 3.8%, while in the low category there are 16 participants or a percentage of 30.8%, then in the medium category there are 16 participants with a percentage of 30.8%, and 13 participants fall into the high category with a percentage of 25%, the last in the very high category the percentage is 9.6% or as many as 5 people in the very high category.

Normality Test

Table 4.
One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov

Variabel	Asymp.Sig	Description
Social Support	0.018	Not Normally Distributed
Career Adaptability	0.200	Normally Distributed

Source: Research Results, processed with IBM SPSS, 2024.

It can be seen from Table 4, that the asymp. sig. value on the social support variable is 0.018 and the career adaptability variable is 0.200. Based on the results of this normality test, then the social support variable is declared not normally distributed and the career adaptability variable is declared normally distributed.

Linearity Test

Table 5.
ANOVA Linearity Test

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Career Adaptability * Social Support	Between Groups	Deviation from Linearity	2188.537	27	81.057	2.791	.007

Source: Research Results, processed with IBM SPSS, 2024.

Table 5 shows that the Sig. value is 0.007 < 0.05, it can be said that there is no linear relationship between variables.

Hypothesis Test

Table 6.
Correlation Test between Social Support dan Career Adaptability

Variables	coefficient	Correlational (r)	Sig.
Spearman's Rho Social Support and Career Adaptability		0.443	0.001

Source: Research Results, processed with IBM SPSS, 2024.

Table 6 shows that the correlation coefficient $r = 0.443$, meaning that the social support variable is positively related to career adaptability. The significance value is 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that there is a significant relationship between social support and career adaptability.

Discussion

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant correlation or relationship between social support and career adaptability in early career employees in Salatiga City. This means that the higher the social support, the higher the

career adaptability of the employees. Likewise, the lower the social support received, the lower the career adaptability owned by an employee. These results are supported by the results of research by Atqakum et al., (2022), which states that social support shows a positive and significant relationship with career adaptability.

The results of this study may be due to first, some early career employees consider that social support is the basis for their footing so that they can face changes in tasks and responsibilities so as to increase career adaptability, this statement is supported by research conducted by Hlad' o et al., (2020), Nurul & Suhariadi (2021) who say that the social support received by individuals has a positive role with career adaptability.

Second, some early career employees explained that the social support received is considered to provide a feeling of security and comfort for individuals and can increase their career adaptability. This statement is supported by the findings of Panggabean et al., (2023), which states that social support provided by those closest to individuals is considered to play an important role in their career adaptability. In line with this, research by Handayani & Kurniawati (2023) also said that social support is proven to have a role in increasing individual career adaptability. Individuals who get social support and can utilize it well, will tend to be better at career adaptability, so they are able to cope with changes and work on responsibilities in their career environment.

Furthermore, the results of the norm categorization test show that the career adaptability category belongs to the moderate level. However, to support the statement of Santilli et al., (2024) that someone with good career adaptability will later support someone in planning their life and career well too. In addition, Al-Ghazali (2020) also states that individuals who have the ability to adapt to their careers, where individuals are able to adjust to the cultural environment, and the organizational or company system, this will affect their work.

Employees with good career adaptability tend to stay longer with a company, and choose and make their current career a long-term career prospect, this of course will also have a good influence on the owner of the company or organization. An individual's ability to adapt to his career, if successfully carried out, will also lead to his success in a career (Savickas, in Haenggli & Hirschi (2020). Likewise, the results of research conducted by Sinamo & Simamarta (2023) show that individuals with good career adaptability will be better able to prepare themselves for tasks in the world of work.

There are several dynamics in career adaptability and social support. In career adaptability, individuals have concern or the ability to see how their career choices include their readiness to prepare their career plans, then individuals have control where individuals can

control and choose the right environment to support their careers, then individuals have curiosity or curiosity in exploring information and opportunities that are beneficial to their careers, and the last is confidence or when individuals succeed in exploring career information well, then have confidence and confidence in solving problems and overcoming career obstacles. On the other hand, social support provided by family, friends and special people and accepted by individuals, can provide a feeling of security and comfort for individuals in undergoing this career adaptability process.

Some early career employees say that social support is one of the factors that influence career adaptability, however, there are several other factors that can increase career adaptability. This statement is supported by the findings by Kvasková et al., (2023) which shows that the social support provided does not provide a significant relationship to increase career adaptability. Based on the large correlation results in this study, it can be said that there are other factors that may affect career adaptability. Some other factors that can affect career adaptability are emotional disposition, goal decidedness, and capability beliefs that individuals have (Hirschi, 2009).

This study used a simple correlational design and was conducted using the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) measuring instrument owned by Savickas & Porfeli (2012) which has been translated into Indonesian by Sulistiani et al., (2018). The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) has a total of 24 items and consists of 4 dimensions namely concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. After conducting an item discrimination test, it was found that there were a total of two invalid items so there were 22 valid items. Another variable measured to see its relationship with career adaptability is social support. This research can contribute to future research, where the subject used can also be a renewal in later research.

The results of this study can be a contribution to renewal for the development of science and further research, based on previous research early career employees are still a few choices for subjects or research participants related to social support variables and career adaptability. So that the selection of early career employee subjects is a differentiator from the studies that have been done before. However, this study has limitations that can certainly have an influence on the results and interpretation of the data. This limitation includes the data collection process also carried out by distributing through links and google form media, which due to limited information makes the sample obtained not too much and cannot be comprehensive.

In addition, the number of participants is still relatively small and small, future research will be better if the population reach with more specific and expanded respondent criteria, such as conducting research in larger companies, populations by adding personality factors, gender differences, educational status, or from organizational culture. This research was conducted using

the correlation test method, but future research can also change the method by using regression tests to see how much influence social support has in influencing employee career adaptability. It is hoped that this can help for future research related to social support and career adaptability in early career employees.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, data analysis, and discussion, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between social support and career adaptability among early career employees working in Salatiga City. This means that the higher the social support received by the individual, the higher the individual's career adaptability. Conversely, the lower the social support received by the individual, the lower the individual's career adaptability.

Social support is important in helping early career employees to process their career adaptation. Employees who receive support from family, friends, and special people around them will tend to have higher career adaptability, be able to control information, want to take advantage of good opportunities for their careers, and have the confidence in completing each task and career responsibility well.

This can help company management to provide means or opportunities in providing social support for early career employees, such as providing regular career counselling sessions, conducting focus group discussions, as well as providing special training that can help early career employees to increase their career adaptability. Employees are also expected to be able to take advantage of any support provided by the company, family, friends, and other people around the individual so that when facing changes in all career roles and responsibilities.

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